

Two village schools in East Lothian to remain closed for another year

Two village schools in East Lothian will remain closed for another year after fewer than five new pupil requests were received by each of them.

Humbie Primary School and Saltoun Primary School were both mothballed last year as the cost of educating pupils soared to three times the county average.

The low numbers attending the schools, both of which had less than 10 primary school students across all years when they were closed, meant the cost of educating a pupil at Saltoun was £26, 210 each year while Humbie pupils cost £21, 129.

The average cost of educating primary school pupils in East Lothian is £8, 096 over the last year.

East Lothian Council said the situation at the two village schools would be reviewed in 12 months time.

Pupils who would have attended the school will continue going to Pencaitland Primary School with free home-to-school transport provided for those living more than two miles away.

East Lothian Council's Head of Education Nicola McDowell has written to families to confirm the decision to extend the mothballing of the buildings.

She said: "This decision is based on the best possible educational experience for children, given the very small rolls that would exist. Educational benefits and the quality of learning for children is compromised when operating with such small numbers.

"As an authority we also have a responsibility to ensure that we are providing best value throughout our services and across East Lothian. Having schools operating significantly below capacity does not represent best value for our council or demonstrate equitable allocation of financial resource across the county.

"I would like to thank Pencaitland Primary School Head Teacher, Ms Crossan, and the entire school community for the warm welcome that Humble and Saltoun children have received."

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter