

Premises Committee Discussion Paper (22 June 2019)

Trevor Cree, Chair, SPC Premises Committee

Preliminary Assessment of the Car Park Public Toilets

1. Proposal for a Public Toilet Upgrading Project

The day to day operation, cleaning and maintenance of the public toilets situated adjacent the Clock Tower car park will be dealt with in a separate paper. This paper discusses potential projects that might need funding in the very near future or need to be included in the 2020/2021 budget. It has been put together in time for the 2nd July 2019 meeting to assist the appropriate Premises working party in their deliberations once it has been established.



Further detailed investigation is still required but the preliminary conclusion is that certain internal fittings of the car park public toilets in Steyning are not fit for purpose and they are not up to the standard expected by residents, visitors and tourists alike. The preliminary proposals are as follows:

(a) A toilet seat or whole toilet replacement of the appropriate design for heavy duty public use should be installed in the large toilet. The current installation is insanitary and extremely off putting for someone to use and no doubt many do not do so even after entering the facility.

(b) A urinal should also be fitted in the large toilet since that would reduce the soiling of the current and future toilet seat. At present male users may enter the toilet and not be aware that there is a urinal at the other end of the building. Locating the single urinal in place of the mirror would reduce plumbing requirements. The mirror could be relocated within the room.

(c) There is a toilet at the rear of the building that is usually locked and therefore the utilisation level is very low. At this stage it is a preliminary idea but it may be possible to

provide an entry through the cupboard in the urinal where the caretakers equipment is currently kept and subsequently relocate the caretakers cupboard to the large toilet. This would require creating access from the men's urinal but the advantage is that it would allow males alerted by the 'Mens' sign to have access to a sit down toilet as well as to the two existing urinals. I have not specifically researched this potential option but will do so before the Premises meeting with anyone who is interested.

(d) A 'Mens' sign on the end wall adjacent to the Steyning Partnership notice board might alert more male users to the existence of the urinal.

(e) Any other proposals welcomed?

2. Men's Urinal - The Men's Urinal has been recently upgraded by the SPC and has a modern appearance that appears to a layman to be very acceptable. Within the urinal is the SPC caretakers cupboard where the necessary cleaning materials and it is assumed protective clothing are stored.



There are two urinals with one slightly lower than the other for the younger generation. The sink, taps and soap dispenser are attractive whilst the wall painting is a suitable neutral colour. Overall the men's urinal seems to be in an acceptable condition for residents and visitors alike. There might be a case for locating the 'Mens' sign that currently is located on the bus shelter itself and move it to the wall so that it is more visible to potential users. At present visitors might believe that there are only two self-contained toilets available.

3. Unisex Main Toilet - The unisex and disabled main toilet is located at the left-hand side of the bus shelter next to the ladies toilet. It is a very large room that used to be the men's urinal and its size is unusual and a bit disconcerting being so far from the door. The installation looks fairly recent and is of stainless steel which gives it an unfriendly feel more familiar to a prison, I assume. The toilet itself is closer than ideal to the wash basin and that gives a very cramped feel. The reason may well be to enable disabled users easy access to the support rails.



A significant shortcoming is the toilet seat itself which is totally unacceptable. It is very likely that many people refuse to use it. The primary reason for this seat design is likely to be for ease of cleaning and hygiene. However if people are unwilling to use it then the installation has failed in its objective. Adapted toilet seats are available for use in prisons and for use in public toilets that are made to be vandal proof. Initial enquiries have been made to see if the current stainless toilet can have a heavy duty plastic toilet seat and hinged cover fitted to it. However it will probably be necessary to contact the original supplier to confirm if that option is available.



It is totally unacceptable for residents and visitors to be faced with the current facility. If an adaption cannot be located then it may, in my personal opinion, require that the present unit be replaced with something that is far more acceptable.

The unisex main toilet should also include a urinal because the seat will currently be contaminated by male users who are not aware of the urinal location. This is very unfortunate and may need to be treated as a priority by the SPC. The urinal could be located where the mirror is currently situated giving ready access to the sewage drainage outlet.

The baby changing facilities appear to be acceptable on first appearance.



The locking system does not appear to be entirely satisfactory because the door frame and door do not seem to be entirely compatible. Since the toilet itself is some distance from the door any uncertainty about the lock would be disconcerting. There are numerous windows that can be left open to dissipate odours. The caretaker visit frequency record board is very visible and the twice a day entries are reassuring.

4. Ladies Toilet - Photographs and an inspection of the Ladies toilet have yet to be undertaken.

Annex 1: Crematorium Toilet

The crematorium installation in Worthing provides an example of a well designed public toilet that has a clean and welcoming appearance. The proposal is not to replace all of the stainless steel fittings in Steyning because they may have been fairly recently installed by the SPC at significant cost. However a sensible toilet seat or complete toilet unit similar to that shown is felt to be a minimum requirement.



The other end of the crematorium toilet is equally attractive whilst on the wall not illustrated here there is a baby changing unit.



Annex 2: Billingshurst Toilets

The Billingshurst public toilets have been recently upgraded and have been awarded a Gold standard certificate by the 'Loo of the Year' organisation. I therefore made an informal visit in order to determine why they had been considered worthy of such an award. The Billingshurst toilets are not too dissimilar externally to the Steyning toilets.



I was not able to gain access to the disabled toilet and perhaps another visit will be required.

The two other Unisex toilets were visited and the main features were a more standard seat made of marble that was fixed in place. The hand washing facilities comprised of an all-in-one soap, water and drying unit whilst the toilet paper unit consisted of what I would consider unsatisfactory design.



I had major concern about the toilet unit because there was no urinal in the room and male users would make the seat insanitary. The failure to install a hinged seat and cover was in my view a major failing even if a urinal were to be installed in the toilet.



The other feature of the Billingshurst toilets were that they had a 15 minute timer on the door lock. Overall I do not believe that the Billingshurst solution is the one to follow particularly because of the absence of a urinal.