

Colinsburgh Community Trust

Colinsburgh Town Hall – Community Car Park: a possible future project for Colinsburgh

One of the recurring themes in the recent community survey was the desire for a **car park serving Colinsburgh Town Hall**.

We have listened to this feedback. We recognise that parking around the Hall can be difficult, particularly for people with mobility problems, for larger events and for users coming to the Hall from outside the village. A properly designed car park could also reduce pressure on parking in the surrounding streets and make the Hall easier and safer to access.

We do not want to dismiss this idea. However, we also want to be realistic about what would be involved. A car park of the size that would potentially be needed is a significant construction project in its own right, and it would require planning permission, professional design, substantial funding and ongoing maintenance.

Our immediate priority remains the **renovation and future proofing of the Town Hall itself**. Nevertheless, we believe it is worth investigating whether a car park could become a future phase of the Hall's wider regeneration.

What might be possible?

The Community Trust leases the field immediately to the east of the Town Hall from the Balcarres Estate. It already contains the Community Garden and connects to the woodland walk.

There is an existing opening in the stone wall onto the B942 which is already wide enough for a vehicle. The road has a 20-mph speed limit at this point. There is also an existing pedestrian path along the B942 which is proving popular with walkers and connects the Community Garden to the woodland walk.

Subject to planning permission and agreement with the landowner, the field could potentially accommodate a **community car park of around 65–75 spaces**.

Importantly, we would not envisage simply covering the field in tarmac. A modern community car park could be designed as part of the wider green space, retaining the existing hedges and incorporating:

- accessible parking spaces close to the pedestrian route;
- a safe, accessible route from the car park to the Town Hall;
- cycle parking;

- electric vehicle charging points and infrastructure for future expansion;
- sustainable drainage;
- permeable or other environmentally sensitive parking surfaces;
- additional trees and planting where appropriate;
- retention of existing hedges and areas of wildflower habitat;
- appropriate, low-level lighting;
- sympathetic treatment of the existing stone boundary wall.

The intention would be to create **a landscaped community access facility rather than a conventional urban car park.**

Why isn't it happening immediately?

The short answer is **cost, planning and priorities.**

A car park of this size is much more than simply laying down a surface and marking out parking spaces.

Before construction could begin, we would need professional advice and design covering matters such as:

Access from the B942

The existing access would need to be assessed by a traffic/transport engineer. Particular consideration would have to be given to visibility, the width of the entrance, vehicle movements and the relationship with the BP garage entrance directly opposite.

Fife Council's Roads & Transportation Service would need to be satisfied that vehicles could enter and leave safely.

Drainage

Although the field appears to be sandy and well drained, the ground conditions would need to be investigated. A drainage and Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) design would probably be required.

A permeable surface could potentially be advantageous, allowing rainwater to infiltrate into the ground rather than creating large areas of surface-water runoff.

Accessibility

A major consideration would be how people get from their cars to the Town Hall.

At present there is not an ideal accessible surface between the field and the Hall. A future scheme would therefore need to include a properly designed accessible pedestrian route.

Biodiversity and landscape

The field currently contains wildflowers and other vegetation, and the existing hedging and woodland connections are valuable features.

An ecological assessment would be needed, and the scheme would ideally retain and enhance biodiversity rather than simply removing vegetation.

Impact on neighbouring houses

The field is overlooked by houses on Main Street. The design would therefore need to consider visual impact, headlights, noise and lighting.

The existing hedging is a significant advantage and would be retained wherever possible.

Conservation and heritage

The Town Hall and surrounding area have considerable historic character. The design of the car park, entrance, wall, lighting, signage and landscaping would need to respect the character of the village and its conservation area.

What could it cost?

This is where we need to be particularly realistic.

Our initial assessment suggests that a properly designed **65–75 space community car park could potentially cost somewhere in the region of £350,000–£450,000 to construct**, although a simpler scheme might potentially be less and a higher-quality scheme could cost £500,000 or more.

The eventual cost would depend particularly on:

- the design of the B942 entrance;
- ground conditions;
- the type of parking surface;
- drainage requirements;
- the accessible route to the Hall;
- lighting and electrical infrastructure;
- EV charging;
- landscaping and biodiversity measures.

For example, a relatively simple conventional car park would probably be cheaper than a high-quality landscaped car park incorporating extensive permeable surfacing, SuDS, planting, EV charging and enhanced pedestrian facilities.

We would also need to allow for **professional fees, surveys, planning, design, ecological and transport work, project management and contingency**. Consequently, a £400,000 construction project could require a total project budget approaching **£500,000**, depending on the final design and VAT position.

These are very early estimates and would need to be tested by a qualified designer and contractor before being relied upon.

Where could the money come from?

This is probably the biggest challenge.

The Town Hall renovation itself is already a substantial project, and we are actively looking at appropriate funding sources for that work. A car park of this scale would require a **different funding strategy**.

Potential sources could include:

Scottish Government and Fife Council regeneration funding

The project could potentially form part of a wider community regeneration or place-making project, particularly if it could demonstrate benefits extending beyond simply providing parking.

However, such funds are competitive and there is no guarantee that a car park would be eligible. We have already made a stage 1 application to the regeneration fund for the monies to pay for the Town Hall renovation and would need to make a fresh application in 2027/28, or later, for a car park scheme.

Fife Council

We would need to discuss with Fife Council whether there are any relevant transport, accessibility, active travel, rural development or place-making programmes which could contribute to the project.

Community ownership and regeneration funding

If the car park were demonstrated to be an essential part of improving access to an important community facility, there may potentially be opportunities through community regeneration programmes.

Again, eligibility would need to be established.

Charitable trusts and foundations

Some charitable funders support community facilities, accessibility, rural regeneration and improvements to community buildings.

However, it may be difficult to find a single funder willing to contribute several hundred thousand pounds to a car park.

A more realistic approach could be a **package of contributions from several funding sources**.

Future Town Hall fundraising

If the car park became part of a future phase of the Town Hall regeneration project, it might be possible to seek funding for elements such as accessibility, landscaping, EV charging or sustainable drainage alongside other capital works.

Why the Town Hall itself must come first

Although we recognise the importance of parking, the Community Trust has to prioritise its limited time, volunteer capacity and financial resources.

The Town Hall currently needs significant investment to address issues including the building fabric, heating and energy efficiency, internal finishes and other essential works.

Without securing the future of the Hall itself, there is little point in providing a major new car park to serve it.

Our immediate objective is therefore to:

1. secure funding for the essential renovation and future-proofing of the Town Hall;
2. ensure that the building remains a safe, sustainable and accessible community facility;
3. develop the Hall's longer-term programme of activities and services;
4. then investigate whether a car park can form part of a subsequent phase of the wider regeneration of the site.

This does **not** mean that the car park idea is being rejected.

Rather, we see it as a potentially valuable **future project which needs to be properly investigated and funded**.

What happens next?

We propose to keep the car park idea under consideration while concentrating our immediate efforts on the Hall renovation.

As part of that process, we can explore the feasibility of the car park with the Balcarres Estate and Fife Council and seek an initial view from planning and Roads & Transportation.

A sensible next step would be to prepare a **simple feasibility design** showing what a 65–75 space landscaped car park might look like, including the B942 access, pedestrian connection to the Hall, drainage, accessible parking, cycle parking, landscaping and EV charging.

This would allow us to establish:

- whether the proposed access is acceptable;
- how many spaces can realistically be provided;
- what the environmental and planning issues are;
- what the likely cost would be;
- and, crucially, whether there are realistic funding opportunities.

If the project proves technically feasible and a viable funding route can be identified, the Community Trust could then decide whether to pursue it as a future phase of the wider Town Hall and Community Garden regeneration.

Thank you

We are grateful to everyone who took the time to complete the community survey and, in particular, to those who raised parking and access to the Town Hall.

The survey has demonstrated that there is a strong interest in improving the Hall and its surrounding facilities. **Your comments help us understand what matters to the community and will inform our priorities for the future.**

The Community Trust cannot promise that a new car park will be built, but we can promise that the idea will not simply be ignored. We will look at what is possible, what it would cost and whether funding can realistically be found.

Our immediate priority is securing the future of the Town Hall. A community car park could potentially be an important next step in making that investment work even better for Colinsburgh and the surrounding community.