



How difficult can it be to spend a penny?

Following announcements from Rochford District Council of their planned intentions to close local toilets in the District, Hockley Parish Council has jumped to the rescue and made arrangements with Rochford District Council to lease the Hockley toilets from them for a period of 10 years. There is of course an argument this is in some respects double charging, as any costs involved would therefore be added to the Hockley Parish Council precept and distributed through the precept for collection from Hockley residents. In the mean time Rochford District Council do not appear to be reducing their claim on rate payments as a result of such closures, but this is a story you will hear up and down the country in various matters. The fact is, whilst we could continue arguing the rights and wrongs of this so-called double charging, the bottom line is that the residents of Hockley have made it quite clear that they wish to have usable toilet amenities in the heart of our village.

Very roughly, the cost of such a facility equates to around about 85 pence per resident per year, obviously more than just spending a penny, but we hope will agree a worthwhile contribution for such an important service.

Hockley Parish Council is finalizing the legalities. At this point the plan is for the District Council to fully refurbish the existing toilets, reducing current capacity down to just two workable toilets, both with totally modern facilities and electronic locking systems to ensure that costs are kept to a minimum. This part of the plan has already been approved by the Parish Council and agreed with Rochford District Council who will then hand over the refurbished building on completion.

Within the lease agreement, we are ensuring that Hockley Parish Council has the ultimate opportunity to continue at the end of 10 years to supply this worthwhile service for the residents of the community. The council has regretfully found that there is a certain amount of back peddling on the part of Rochford District Council, who now seem a little reluctant to follow through on the agreements made with the Parish Council. We are working hard to remedy this situation, but please be assured we will do everything in our power to ensure that what was agreed by Rochford District Council gets delivered upon. As this project develops, we will of course bring you more news, but rest assured we are doing our very best to make certain that good quality toilet facilities are available in the heart of Hockley for a long time to come.