
From:
Sent: 11 July 2016 15:18
To:
Subject: RE: Breakish Village Hall Association, Breakish Isle of Skye IV428PY

Dear

Thank you for your email regarding the water and sewerage charges exemption scheme. Please accept my apologies for the delay in replying.

Following the public consultation, which closed on 14 February 2014, much consideration was given to respondents' views on the rules that should underpin the new Scheme including income levels and categories of organisations that should be considered for exemption. As you will appreciate, there are a wide variety of voluntary organisations working across Scotland. It was noted that determining which categories of voluntary organisations should be eligible is very difficult and would require a detailed assessment, similar to that already undertaken by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator as part its duties to determine which organisations can be charities. Furthermore, it was recognised that not only does Scottish Water not have the necessary skills currently to make the assessment, but verifying additional documentation would increase the administrative costs of the scheme. It was therefore concluded that eligibility should be restricted to Charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs.

In addition, the information held by OSCR is published and is independently assessed. Organisations with charity status will also have passed the public benefit test and would not need to be assessed on an individual basis to determine if the scheme applies.

I recognise you will be disappointed with this response. Breakish Village Hall will need to consider if there are benefits of becoming a charity. Further information is available on OSCR's website at <http://www.oscr.org.uk/charities/becoming-a-charity>. Alternatively you can contact OSCR on 01382 220446.

It should be noted that, in contrast to the previous scheme, the requirement for all charities to apply annually means that if a charity does not qualify in one financial year, it will not be prevented from applying in future years should it meet the criteria of the scheme. In addition, Ministers have agreed that organisations that receive charitable status in 2016-17 will have exemption backdated to 1 April 2016.

Regards,

Policy Officer
Water Industry Team
Scottish Government

From:
Sent: 20 May 2016 11:32
To: Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill
Cc: customer.service@business-stream.co.uk
Subject: Breakish Village Hall Association, Breakish Isle of Skye IV428PY

We are a local community village hall and until recently were exempt from water and council tax. We are now required to apply annually for continued exemption, however we understand from business stream that only registered charities or amateur sports clubs are automatically eligible, although business stream say that they will be flexible for water charge exemption to other community non profit organizations. Our annual average income is less than £6000 raised from local events an grants and is used for maintenance and general costs. Our hall has been in operation since 1926 and therefore requires regular maintenance and improvements. We feel that our hall should continue to have exemption from these charges and we would be grateful for any help you can give us.

Many thanks

Breakish Village Hall Association.

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From:
Sent: 05 April 2016 14:32
To:
Cc:
Subject: RE: Water Exemption Consultation

Good Afternoon

Many thanks for your response, I appreciate you taking the time. Myself and colleagues would be happy to provide you with the fullest of information specifically in relation to Dumfries and Galloway community facilities.

Thanks again for your thoughts, help and support.

I look forward to discussing this further with you

Regards

Dumfries & Galloway Council
Community & Customer Services

Tel: ✓
Tel:
Mobile:
Email: _____

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From: ✓
Sent: 05 April 2016 11:06
To:
Cc:
Subject: RE: Water Exemption Consultation

Thank you for your email.

We are aware of the difficulties that you raise. We have been asked by Ministers to work with the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations and the Office of the Charity Regulator to provide advice for the new Government following the election on 5th May 2016. Input from Dumfries and Galloway Council so that the advice accurately reflects the position in relation to the village halls to which you refer would be much appreciated.

My colleague
forward.

will contact you directly to discuss how this will be taken

To answer your specific questions, a letter was sent to all Local Authorities to inform them of the consultation. SCVO and OSCR were involved in developing the consultation and helped raise awareness amongst charities, voluntary organisations and representative bodies.

The publishable responses can be found here

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/11/6640/0>. As you will note, there were a number of responses from individual village halls and federations of halls.

Regards,

Policy Officer
Water Industry Team
Scottish Government

From:

Sent: 01 April 2016 10:48

To:

Subject: Water Exemption Consultation

Morning

I wonder if you could possibly help. I note you were the contact for the above consultation. We have some issues in Dumfries and Galloway where many voluntary committee particularly relating to village halls and community centres were not aware of the changes in legislation in particular the exemption changes.

Could you possibly advise the following:

- How was consultation sent out to communities, local authorities, federation of halls?
- Are all the responses detailed on the website?

Sorry for the questions but I was trying to determine why only one community in D&G responded (Kirkmaiden Church) and if Dumfries and Galloway Council responded.

I look forward to your response.

Many thanks

Regards

Dumfries & Galloway Council
Community & Customer Services

Tel: 0131 552 2527

Tel: 0131 552 2527

Mobile:

Email: community@dg.gov.scot

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Dh'fhaodadh gum bi teachdaireachd sam bith bho Riaghaltas na h-Alba air a chlàradh neo air a sgrùdadh airson dearbhadh gu bheil an siostam ag obair gu h-èifeachdach neo airson adhbhar laghail eile. Dh'fhaodadh nach eil beachdan anns a' phost-d seo co-ionann ri beachdan Riaghaltas na h-Alba.

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From:)
Sent: 22 February 2016 14:07:17
To: Ministerial Correspondence Unit
Subject: FW: Tavish Scott MSP - correspondence to Keith Brown, Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment & Cities (subject: Public halls in Shetland / Water and Sewerage Charges Exemption Scheme for charities and voluntary organisations)

Attachments: 190216 K Brown Shetland halls water exemption scheme.pdf

MACCS, for MR please.

Thanks,

Keith Brown MSP - Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment and Cities
2N.08 | St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG
CSIIC@gov.scot

From:
Sent: 22 February 2016 13:55
To: Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment and Cities
Subject: Tavish Scott MSP - correspondence to Keith Brown, Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment & Cities (subject: Public halls in Shetland / Water and Sewerage Charges Exemption Scheme for charities and voluntary organisations)

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find attached a letter from Tavish Scott MSP to Keith Brown, Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment & Cities regarding representations on behalf of public halls in Shetland related to the new Water and Sewerage Charges Exemption Scheme.

Mr Scott looks forward to receiving acknowledgement of receipt of this letter.

Regards

Secretary to Tavish Scott MSP
Shetland Parliamentary Office
Tel: [REDACTED]
Fax: 01595 69 0055
E-mail:

tscott@supanet.com<mailto:tscott@supanet.com>

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The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Tavish Scott MSP
Member of the Scottish Parliament for Shetland

Keith Brown MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment & Cities
The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
EDINBURGH
EH1 3DG

Our Ref: Lyal001\180216\TS\ts
Date: 19 February 2016

Dear Keith,

I write on behalf of numerous public halls in Shetland, who have contacted me regarding their water rates and the exemption scheme for charities and voluntary organisations, which halls in Shetland were eligible for last year.

However earlier this year it became apparent that the new exemption scheme would result in halls having to re-apply every year. Most halls in Shetland are not eligible for the new Water and Sewerage Charges Exemption Scheme as the majority of them hold alcohol licences to sell alcohol at their premises.

As a result of losing their exemption from water rates, halls in Shetland will now have to spend a considerable proportion of their incomes having to pay water rates, several halls even mentioned the possibility of closure in the near future as a result.

I would urge the Scottish Government to consider the case for an extension to the exemption scheme as these are all voluntary organisations where any bar income is used for the maintenance of the building. These bodies do not have shareholders and are not run for profit, and they all reinvest their monies in the facilities which serve their respective communities.

I look forward to your reply on this serious matter.

Tavish
Tavish Scott MSP

Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment and Cities
Keith Brown MSP



T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Mr Tavish Scott MSP
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

Our ref: 2016/0006841
7 March 2016

Dear Tavish,

Thank you for your letter of 19 February 2016 on behalf of the voluntary organisations that operate public halls in Shetland regarding the water and sewerage charges exemption scheme.

Following a public consultation, which closed on 14 February 2014, much consideration was given to respondents' views on the rules that should underpin the new Scheme including income levels and categories for exclusion – for example holding a permanent alcohol licence or operating a retail outlet. Ministers decided, in light of the responses, that to ensure that the Scheme did not result in unfair competition between alcohol licence holders, charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) in possession of a permanent alcohol licence would not be eligible for the scheme.

The previous scheme, which ended on 31st March 2015, also had a similar condition in relation to permanent alcohol licences. However, because beneficiaries were not asked to reapply to this scheme and to confirm their compliance with the rules, the Scottish Government did not remove the exempt status for 2015-16. Furthermore, transition measures mean that these clubs benefit from full exemption in 2015-16 and a discount in 2016-17.

It should be noted that the conditions of the scheme require organisations to apply annually. This means that if an organisation does not qualify in one financial year, it will not be prevented from applying in future years should it meet the criteria of the scheme. The public halls may be interested to note that occasional alcohol licences do not affect a charity's eligibility for the scheme.

Kind regards

KEITH BROWN

Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ
www.gov.scot



From: Murray E (Elaine), MSP
Sent: 11 March 2016 18:29:53
To: scottish.ministers@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
Cc:
Subject: Community Halls - New Water Charge

Keith Brown MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure and Capital Investment

Dear Keith

My constituent is the treasurer of the management committee of a small village hall in Clarencefield. After years of exemption from water charges this voluntary committee has now become aware that it will be liable for over ?500 of Scottish Water charges, which the management committee can ill afford.

Community halls are vital to village life in rural areas and I was unaware that the new system of water charges exemptions would not longer apply. Can you please advise why? Is this an oversight and can it be rectified?

Thanks

Yours sincerely

Elaine

Elaine Murray
Member of the Scottish Parliament for Dumfriesshire
Constituency Office 01387 279205; Parliamentary Office 0131 348 5826
Mobile XXXXXXXXXX
Twitter @elainekmurray

From:
Sent: 11 March 2016 15:17
To: Murray E (Elaine), MSP
Subject: Community Halls - New Water Charge

Dear Dr. Murray,

(Please Note; This email replicates an earlier one that I believe may have been lost in transmission.)

I am treasurer of the management committee for the McFarlan Memorial Hall, Clarencefield, DG1 4NF; we are an unpaid, voluntary group that administer the hall for the benefit of the local community on behalf of its owner, D&G Council. We provide a locus for around 23 local groups (sports, craft, social groups, Community Council, clubs, etc); we run monthly coffee mornings to raise funds and provide a social space for residents to meet and connect with services; our annual 'footfall' is around 3,000 attendances. We keep hire charges as low as possible to encourage use and we raise circa ?1,500 from hire charges; in the past 4 years we've raised over ?5,000 from fund-raising events; income is used to pay our running costs and maintain

& improve the Hall.

On 9th March I received a letter from 'Scottish Water Business Stream Ltd' headed "Urgent Reminder" saying "The Scottish Government has made some changes to its Charities Exemption Scheme. This includes amendments to the eligibility criteria and how and when you apply, even if you are currently exempt". It went on to say that to apply for exemption, I must apply online ("Applications cannot be submitted via telephone or via e-mail") and that we must register by 31st March 2016 (i.e. at 21 day notice) or we would incur charges from 1st April. Oh, and we'll have to re-apply every year by 31st March.

Our Hall has been exempt from Council Tax & Water Charges for as long as anyone on our committee can remember and we'd been unaware of any changes or consultations regarding this, so I attempted to register for exemption. After 2 or 3 screens I found that, because we are neither a OSCR registered Charity or a Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC), we could not be exempt. I contacted Scottish Water's "helpline" who confirmed that we could not continue to be exempt and that our Water charges would be ?536.51p for 2016/17 - around one third of our regular annual income.

I contacted our liaison officer at D&G Council who said he was aware of the change and that we'd be liable to pay the charge, saying this was in the agreement between the Council and our management committee. I have disputed this as we have no knowledge of any such agreement.

Some thoughts arise from this situation;

How can the Scottish Government justify imposing a 'stealth tax' (via its wholly-owned company) on community halls that are endeavouring to run facilities to support community cohesion by removing this exemption, yet maintain it for two very restricted groups with parallel overall objectives?

Why has there been no prior notification to or consultation with Scottish Water's "customers"?

Why has D&G Council not seen fit to notify or consult us and what have they done to oppose this change?

What have the opposition parties in the Scottish Parliament done to stop this damaging tax on our communities, surely the tax generated is inconsequential in the context of their overall receipts and out of all proportion to the social damage it will cause?

Being 'mugged' for over ?500 every year by the Scottish Government is not exactly motivating to people who voluntarily spend their time and money to support their communities; we don't put in that effort to see a third of our money go to the Government. Frankly I feel like just giving up!

Please, is there anything you and your opposition colleagues can do to get our exemption back?

Regards,

*

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Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment and Cities
Keith Brown MSP

T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Dr Elaine Murray MSP
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP



The Scottish
Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Our ref: 2016/0009671
16 March 2016

Dear Elaine,

Thank you for your email of 11 March 2016 on behalf of your constituent Treasurer of a village hall in Clarencefield, regarding the water and sewerage charges exemption scheme.

Village halls can benefit from the exemption scheme provided they are registered as a charity and meet the conditions of the scheme. The scheme is funded, in the main, by business customers – through a 5% uplift in their charges. As you will appreciate, it is therefore important to reassure them that the scheme is robust and transparent, and that there are tight controls in relation to eligibility. For this reason, it was agreed that information held by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) should be used to assess the eligibility of applicants. Not only is the information held by OSCR published, but it is independently assessed. As such, the Scottish Government currently has no plans to change this arrangement.

Your constituent has noted he was not aware of any consultation on the plans to change the exemption scheme. I can confirm that the Scottish Government consulted on its proposals from 22 November 2013 to 14 February 2014. 143 responses were received. The consultation document as well as the summary of the responses can be found here <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Business-Industry/waterindustry/scot/publications/Consultations>.

Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ
www.gov.scot



I recognise your constituent will be disappointed with this response. McFarlan Memorial Hall will need to consider if there are benefits of becoming a charity. Further information is available on OSCR's website at <http://www.oscr.org.uk/charities/becoming-a-charity>. Alternatively you can contact OSCR on 01382 220446.

It should be noted that, in contrast to the previous scheme, the requirement for all charities to apply annually means that if a charity does not qualify in one financial year, it will not be prevented from applying in future years should it meet the criteria of the scheme.



KEITH BROWN

From: Murray E (Elaine), MSP
Sent: 17 March 2016 14:28:06
To: Scottish Ministers
Cc:
Subject: Community Halls - New Water Charge

Mr Keith Brown
Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure and Investment

Dear Keith

I have now been contacted on behalf of the Nithsdale Federation of Halls, which has we members in Nothsdale alone. I have copied an email received today on their behalf and would be grateful for further information regarding the consultation on these changes, in particular which organisations in Dumfries and Galloway were consulted

Thanks

Yours sincerely

Elaine

Elaine Murray
Member of the Scottish Parliament for Dumfriesshire
Constituency Office 01387 279205; Parliamentary Office 0131 348 5826
Mobile [REDACTED]
Twitter @elainekmurray

Dear Elaine,

We provide development support to Nithsdale Federation of Halls which currently has 23 Hall members in the Nithsdale area of Dumfries and Galloway.

I have contacted all Halls in Nithsdale, as well as Elected Members, with what I consider to be an urgent issue that could well have a negative impact on halls in terms of their sustainability.

Changes to Business Stream eligibility for discounted water rates come into force from 1st April 2016 which means only charities and community sports clubs will now be able to claim a rebate on their water bills.

Many halls are not charities and I would argue should not have to adopt a legal structure which is not appropriate for them. Form should follow function in that many Hall Committees do not own the asset, do not employ staff, and manage minimum levels of grant/income. They are exposed to a very low risk both individually and collectively and do not need to have incorporated limited liability status or charitable status. They should certainly not be forced into adopting a structure merely on the basis of attracting a rebate.

Business Stream has only recently contacted Federation member halls with an application deadline of the 31st March to apply for a rebate which can't be applied retrospectively. So even if a Hall decided to pursue charitable status they would be unable to obtain a rebate now for 2016-17 as OSCR can take up to 90 days to award charitable status.

I understand these changes were consulted on before the Scottish Government

implemented the changes. I am attempting to identify which organisation/agency in Dumfries and Galloway was advised of the consultation and how many responses were submitted from Dumfries and Galloway. I have ascertained that Dumfries and Galloway is the most adversely affected by these changes in Scotland. Of the 117 village halls only 40 are registered on the OSCR site as a charity.

I would welcome your support in raising this as an issue with the Scottish Government.

Kind regards,

]

the hub - your community action centre

24-26 Friars Vennel

Dumfries

DG1 2RL

Tel: [REDACTED]

Fax: 01387 269026

Email: [REDACTED]

Web: www.thehubdg.org.uk <<http://www.thehubdg.org.uk>>

Keith Brown MSP

Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure and Capital Investment

Dear Keith

My constituent [REDACTED] is the treasurer of the management committee of a small village hall in Clarencetield. After years of exemption from water charges this voluntary committee has now become aware that it will be liable for over ?500 of Scottish Water charges, which the management committee can ill afford.

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Thanks

Yours sincerely

Elaine

Elaine Murray

Member of the Scottish Parliament for Dumfriesshire

Constituency Office 01387 279205; Parliamentary Office 0131 348 5826

Mobile [REDACTED]

Twitter @elainekmurray

From:

Sent: 11 March 2016 15:17

To: Murray E (Elaine), MSP

Subject: Community Halls - New Water Charge

Dear Dr. Murray,

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Please, is there anything you and your opposition colleagues can do to get our

exemption back?

Regards,

*

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Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment and Cities
Keith Brown MSP

T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot



Dr Elaine Murray MSP
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

Our ref: 2016/0010379

22 March 2016

Thank you for your further email of 17 March 2016 on behalf of village halls in your constituency regarding the water and sewerage charges exemption scheme.

The current water and sewerage charges exemption scheme is only open to charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs. This is because the consultation undertaken in 2014 showed that there was no formal definition of a voluntary organisation. Furthermore, the regulatory activities undertaken by the Office for the Scottish Charity Regulator means that the business community, which funds this scheme, can be reassured that exemption is being granted on a robust and transparent basis.

However, I understand there are particular issues relating to the village halls to which you refer that mean that gaining charitable status is very difficult. I have asked my officials to work with the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations and the Office for the Scottish Charity Regulator with a view to providing Ministers with some advice after the election.

Meantime, these village halls will be required to pay water and sewerage charges. A 50% discount in wholesale charges will be applied automatically in 2016-17 in line with the transition arrangements. I would also encourage these village halls to actively consider how they might achieve charitable status so that they may be eligible for the benefits that are available to charities including exemption from water and sewerage charges.

KEITH BROWN

From: [redacted]
Sent: 18 March 2016 11:20:48
To: Ministerial Correspondence Unit
Subject: FW: Changes to eligibility for discounted water rates

MACCS Fast track for MR please.

Private Secretary to Keith Brown MSP, Cabinet Secretary for
Infrastructure, Investment & Cities
The Scottish Government | St Andrew's House, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG | Web:
www.gov.scot<<http://www.gov.scot>>
| Email:
CSIIC@gov.scot<<mailto:CSIIC@gov.scot>>

From: [redacted] On Behalf Of
McAlpine J (Joan), MSP
Sent: 18 March 2016 11:15
To: 'johanna.dow@business-stream.co.uk'
Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment and Cities
Subject: Changes to eligibility for discounted water rates
Importance: High

Dear Ms Dow

Please see the correspondence below received from one of my constituents regarding the changes to eligibility for discounted water rates.

I believe she raises an extremely salient point. I am therefore writing to request that as a goodwill gesture you recognise the special nature of these halls, which are in no position to pay the commercial water rate.

Failing this, and should it be the case that the halls are indeed required to assume charitable status, do contingency measures exist that could be put in place to ensure the award of discounts retrospectively? Due to the tight application deadline and the length of time it takes to be awarded charitable status, the sustainability of halls in my constituency could be jeopardised by an inflexible enforcement of these new rules.

I have copied in the Cabinet Secretary for his reference and to ask if he is able to provide a response on the final point regarding the administration of the consultation on the changes in Dumfries and Galloway - particularly given that these changes appear to have disproportionately negative implications for community halls in my region.

Many thanks in advance of your response.

Yours sincerely

Joan McAlpine MSP

On 17 Mar 2016, at 14:03, [redacted] wrote:

Dear Joan,

We provide development support to Nithsdale Federation of Halls which currently has 23 Hall members in the Nithsdale area of Dumfries and Galloway.

I have contacted all Halls in Nithsdale, as well as Elected Members, with what I consider to be an urgent issue that could well have a negative impact on halls in terms of their sustainability.

Changes to Business Stream eligibility for discounted water rates come into force from 1st April 2016 which means only charities and community sports clubs will now be able to claim a rebate on their water bills.

Many halls are not charities and I would argue should not have to adopt a legal structure which is not appropriate for them. Form should follow function in that many Hall Committees do not own the asset, do not employ staff, and manage minimum levels of grant/income. They are exposed to a very low risk both individually and collectively and do not need to have incorporated limited liability status or charitable status. They should certainly not be forced into adopting a structure merely on the basis of attracting a rebate.

Business Stream has only recently contacted Federation member halls with an application deadline of the 31st March to apply for a rebate which can't be applied retrospectively. So even if a Hall decided to pursue charitable status they would be unable to obtain a rebate now for 2016-17 as OSCR can take up to 90 days to award charitable status.

I understand these changes were consulted on before the Scottish Government implemented the changes. I am attempting to identify which organisation/agency in Dumfries and Galloway was advised of the consultation and how many responses were submitted from Dumfries and Galloway. I have ascertained that Dumfries and Galloway is the most adversely affected by these changes in Scotland. Of the 117 village halls only 40 are registered on the OSCR site as a charity.

I would welcome your support in raising this as an issue with the Scottish Government.

Kind regards,

the hub - your community action centre
24-26 Friars Vennel
Dumfries
DG1 2RL
Tel: 01387 269161
Fax: 01387 269026
Email:

Web: www.thehubdg.org.uk<<http://www.thehubdg.org.uk>>

This e-mail and any attachment is confidential. If you have received it in error please delete it from your system do not use or disclose the information in any way and notify the sender immediately. The contents of this message may contain personal views which are not the views of the hub Dumfries and Galloway unless specifically stated. the hub Dumfries and Galloway is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Scottish Charity Number SC043384. We receive funding from Dumfries and Galloway Council.

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Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment and Cities
Keith Brown MSP

T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot



Ms Joan McAlpine MSP
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

Our ref: 2016/0010417
22 March 2016

Dear Joan

Thank you for copying me into your email to Business Stream's Chief Executive, Johanna Dow, regarding the removal of the exemption from water and sewerage charges for a number of village halls in Dumfries & Galloway.

The new Water and Sewerage Exemption Scheme which started on 1 April 2015 is only open to Charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs. This decision was taken because during the consultation period it became clear that there is no single definition of a voluntary organisation. Furthermore, the regulatory activities undertaken by the Office for the Scottish Charity Regulator means that the business community, which funds this scheme, can be reassured that exemption is being granted on a robust and transparent basis.

However, I recognise that there are particular issues relating to the village halls to which you refer. I have asked my officials to work with the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations and the Office for the Scottish Charity Regulator with a view to providing Ministers with some advice after the election.

Meantime, these village halls will be required to pay water and sewerage charges. A 50% discount in wholesale charges will be applied automatically in 2016-17 in line with the transition arrangements. I would encourage these village halls to actively consider how they might achieve charitable status so that they may be eligible for the benefits that are available to charities including exemption from water and sewerage charges. I would also like to clarify that applications for exemption in 2016-17 can be submitted until 31 March 2017. The exemption will apply from the date that the organisation becomes a charity provided the charity applies before the closing date.

KEITH BROWN

Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ
www.gov.scot



From: ([redacted])
Sent: 05 July 2016 15:07:47
To: Scottish Ministers
Subject: Water & Sewerage Charges for Village Halls ***IHM***

Attachments: 20160322 Response from Keith Brown.pdf

Dear Paul,

I am hoping that you can help. Back in March I received the attached letter from Keith Brown MSP, in relation to the removal of the exemption from water and sewerage charges for villages and halls.

The letter states that officials would be working with SCVO and OSCR to provide advice to Ministers post-election.

I was wondering if there is any update from this?

It is clear to me that this is causing quite a lot of difficulty locally.

Best wishes,

Joan

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Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform
Roseanna Cunningham MSP

T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot



Ms Joan McAlpine MSP
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

Our ref: 2016/0022381
20 July 2016

Dear Joan,

Thank you for your email of 5 July 2016 to Paul Wheelhouse MSP, Minister for Business, Innovation and Energy regarding the water and sewerage charges exemption scheme. I am responding as the water industry in Scotland falls within my Ministerial portfolio.

I recognise there are issues relating to village halls losing exemption from charges, particularly in rural areas such as in Dumfries and Galloway. Scottish Government officials recently met with the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) to discuss the issue.

Following this meeting, I have agreed that the exemption scheme should continue to be restricted to registered charities and CASCs. This means that village halls will need to register as a charity with OSCR to continue to receive 100% exemption from charges. However, I recognise that it will take time for organisations to secure charitable status. I have therefore agreed that for 2016-17, all newly registered charities and CASCs will have their exemption backdated to 1 April 2016 provided they comply with the additional criteria of the scheme as set out here <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Business-Industry/waterindustryscot/watercharges/exemptionscheme>.

I hope you find this information helpful.

Yours

Roseanna

Roseanna Cunningham

