# Concerns grow over public toilet accessibility in Caerphilly



Concerns have been raised regarding the limited opening hours of public toilets in parks and cemeteries across the Caerphilly borough, highlighting a pressing issue for residents and visitors alike. Councillor Steve Skivens, who represents the Penyrheol ward for Plaid Cymru, has reported that locals frequently voice their frustrations about the accessibility of these facilities, especially for older individuals.

Speaking to the South Wales Argus, Cllr Skivens remarked, “People ask ‘where, oh where, can I go to the loo when out and about?’” His comments shed light on the challenges faced by those seeking to enjoy outdoor spaces, where toilets are often not available or remain locked, turning the matter into what he described as an “unhealthy” or “unsafe” situation if individuals are compelled to resort to public urination.

In response to these concerns, a spokesperson for Caerphilly County Borough Council asserted that toilets are indeed accessible throughout the borough. They mentioned that facilities are available in libraries, leisure centres, various attractions, and new developments such as the Ffos market in Caerphilly town centre. Furthermore, the spokesperson indicated that an interactive map is available on the council's website, which outlines where public toilets can be found.

However, data gathered by Plaid Cymru through the Freedom of Information Act reveals that many public toilets are subject to limited opening hours, with some dependent on the operational hours of their respective locations, like parks and cemeteries. Disturbingly, the data also indicated that two toilets—located at Abercarn Cemetery and Ystrad Mynach Park—are currently closed due to vandalism.

Cllr Skivens acknowledged the potential for antisocial behaviour and accepted that increasing the number of accessible toilets would incur additional costs. Nevertheless, he argued that it is essential for the council to provide basic sanitary facilities, particularly in light of the borough's aspirations for tourism and community engagement. “What about people with health issues or conditions – are they being restricted to movement close to a private toilet facility?” he questioned.

In light of these issues, the Local Democracy Reporting Service engaged with two organisations advocating for older residents' rights, who expressed growing concerns about the availability of public toilets across Wales. Age Cymru highlighted that public toilets are crucial for creating age-friendly communities. The charity stated that a shortage of toilet facilities can severely impact older individuals, inhibiting their access to essential services and diminishing their ability to stay active within the community. They noted that many older individuals are hesitant to leave their homes due to fears of not finding accessible toilets, leading to increased loneliness and isolation.

Gareth Parsons, chair of the Wales Seniors Forum, added to the discourse by emphasising that the lack of public toilets in Wales is a significant issue that has been ignored for an extended period. He stated, “Public toilets are essential in giving people the confidence to go out and take part in their communities.” Parsons remarked that the absence of such facilities hampers individuals’ ability to remain engaged in outdoor activities and impacts how often they can leave their homes.

As discussions continue surrounding the need for improved public toilet accessibility in Caerphilly, these statements reflect a broader concern for the well-being of residents, particularly among older populations who may rely on these facilities to enjoy community life fully.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://democracy.caerphilly.gov.uk/documents/s44569/Appendix%202.pdf?LLL=0> - This document from Caerphilly County Borough Council outlines their local toilets strategy, including efforts to ensure accessibility and promote facilities available for public use, particularly in light of financial constraints that led to the closure of traditional public toilets.
* <https://www.gov.wales/find-toilets-open-public> - This webpage on GOV.WALES provides a national toilet map that helps identify toilets available for public use across Wales, including those in Caerphilly, which aligns with the council's efforts to promote accessible facilities.
* <https://ground.news/article/people-diving-behind-bushes-due-to-restrictive-public-toilet-opening-hours> - This article highlights concerns about restrictive opening hours of public toilets in parks and cemeteries, which resonates with the issues raised in Caerphilly and underscores the broader challenge across similar areas.
* <https://www.agecymru.org.uk/> - Age Cymru's website would likely contain resources and statements about the importance of public toilets for older individuals in creating age-friendly communities, aligning with concerns raised about the impact on older residents in Caerphilly.
* <https://www.wales.nhs.uk/ourwork/Our-Work-By-Region/Gwent/health-boards/aneurin-bevan-university-health-board/who-we-are> - This webpage about Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, mentioned in the context of working with local authorities on toilet access, highlights the potential for healthcare providers to contribute to accessible facilities.