

The Girvan Gazette

Monday 17th November 2003

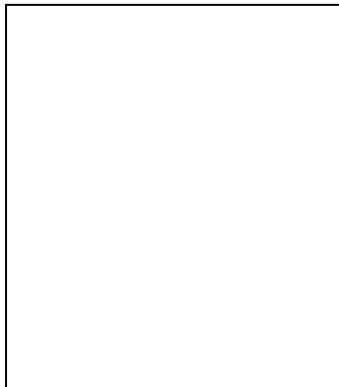
55 pence

ASYLUM-SEEKERS CAMP – RUMOURS GROW Chapeldonan site for detention centre?

Girvan was this weekend swept by rumours concerning the possible building of a large detention centre for asylum-seeking families on the outskirts of town. Over the past three or four weeks, teams of surveyors have been seen taking measurements at various sites around the town, and over the past week, the surveyors have been concentrating on the Chapeldonan site, just north of Girvan.

US GUESTS

Exactly what the surveyors might be planning became the subject of excited



A surveyor at work

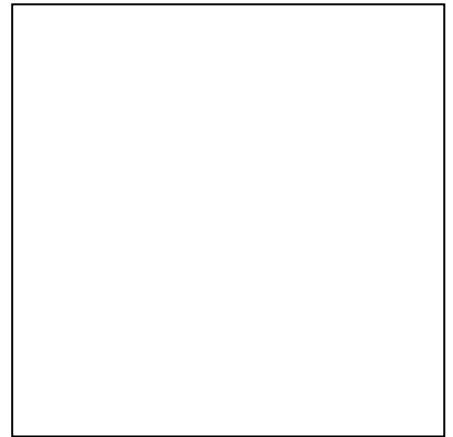
discussion in the town's bars and cafes after it was reported that executives of the American company Secure Futures were staying at Turnberry Hotel over the weekend, and had visited the Chapeldonan site on both Saturday and Sunday.

CAMPS

Secure Futures are the company responsible for running and maintaining Portleven House Holding Centre, in North Lothian. Portleven House has recently been in the spotlight as the location for the detention of around 150 asylum-seeking families, and it has been suggested that they are looking for a suitable site for another detention centre. If so, there is no doubt that there would be heated debate on a subject that is very emotional.

REACTION

Reaction in the town over the weekend was mixed. 15 year old Kyaileegh Crimper said "I think it



Portleven House Holding Centre would be just like so totally like cool, you know? All those kids from all those different countries in our school!"

Effie McGlumphy (57), however, said "I'm totally against the whole idea. We should be welcoming these people with open arms, not locking them up."

Her partner Doddy Eck disagreed. "These people can't just come running from everywhere to our country and expect to get in straight away. We've got to check them out, find out who they are. If that means building a holding centre, then that's fine. It'll mean some good jobs for local folks as well."

A passer-by said "Put them on Ailsa Craig, away from decent folk. I don't want this thing here".

Scottish Thunder

Wednesday 19th November 2003
50 pence

New detention centre planned for south Ayrshire town

The small South Ayrshire town of Girvan was reeling last night, but it was impossible to say if it was reeling from shock or delight. The reason for this reaction was the announcement by the American private prison company Secure Futures that they had won the contract to build and then to run a 'holding' centre for asylum-seekers, many with families. This centre, to be called Chapeldonan House, will be sited just north of the town, by the A77 to Ayr and Glasgow.

JOBS

Speaking at a press conference at Turnberry Hotel, Secure Futures chief executive Roland Gammon said "This is a very good move for the local area, for the country as a whole, and for the asylum-seekers and their families".

As far as the local area was concerned, the building of the centre would take 4-6 months and would create about 20 jobs in the construction industry, as

well as jobs for skilled workers such as electricians, plumbers, etc. Mr Gammon went on "Once the centre is open, we will need about 30 staff. These will include admin staff, cooks, cleaners, social workers, as well as security guards. We will recruit as many staff as possible from the local area. We will also try to buy as much of our food, meat, vegetables, etc. from local suppliers. This will help the local economy."

FUTURE

Mr Gammon also had a vision of the future of the centre. "If we get permission, we would like to build a leisure centre, and make this available to local people at certain times. Also, once the asylum situation is sorted out, and there is no need for a centre like this, why not turn it into an amusement park like Alton Towers?"

Questioned as to whether it was right to detain families, some with very young children, Mr

Gammon was interrupted by Alisa DeLaCourt,

Yesterday's press conference company Press Spokesperson, who said, "We're not here to discuss politics. We're here to tell you our really exciting news."

Asked about numbers, Mr Gammon said "Numbers of asylum seekers in the centre will vary, but will normally be around 150. Of these, perhaps 40 will be children. We are making arrangements with South Ayrshire Council to have these pupils bussed to and from Girvan Academy and Girvan Primary."

At Girvan Academy, Depute Head Mrs Barr said, "We do our very best to provide top quality

education for all our

pupils, no matter their
background.”

The Girvan Gazette Letters Page

Where YOU have YOUR say!

Monday 24th November 2003

Dear Sir/Madam,
As a local resident, I am
all for this proposed
new centre. It will
provide jobs for the
area that are badly
needed, and if it was no
longer being used as a
holding centre at some
point in the future, the
company involved have
told us it could be
turned into a tourist
attraction, which would
both attract visitors to
the area and provide
jobs. Come on Girvan,
let's make the most of
this chance!
G. Loftus, Girvan

Dear Sir/Madam,
How many times are we
going to be fooled by
these empty promises?
These promised jobs
will either be taken by
people brought in from
outside, or else they
will be badly paid,
temporary jobs that are
not what we need. And
anyone who thinks that
this centre will one day
be our very own Alton
Towers, is living in a
dreamworld!
R. Trafford, Barr

Dear Sir/Madam,
As a senior pupil at
Girvan Academy, I

personally welcome the
idea of asylum seeker

children joining us at
the school. This would
be a great chance for us
to learn about other
ways of life, other
cultures, and the
problems that other
children face around the
world. We should
welcome these new
pupils as living
textbooks who can teach
us so much.

S. Elland, Girvan

Dear Sir/Madam,
I am a parent with three
children at Girvan
Academy. I am very
concerned about reports
that the children of
asylum seekers will be
bussed from the new
centre to school. These
children will speak
many different
languages, and probably
not much English. Who
will pay for the special
teachers? Who will pay
for the buses? These
children will have many
different beliefs, and
even eat different food.
We are making
problems for our own
children, and wasting
money doing this. Let
these children be taught
in the Centre.

R. St James, Girvan

Dear Sir/Madam,
I think the whole idea of

Putting asylum seekers
in a detention centre is
sick. These people have
done nothing wrong.
They are fleeing
persecution, but we
treat them like
criminals.

B. Stamford, Dailly

Dear Sir/Madam,
The good thing about
keeping asylum seekers
in a Centre is that we
know where they are.
Also, they can receive
much better help,
company, food and
education if they are all
together. It's better for
everyone.
G. Dell, Girvan

Dear Sir/Madam,
The whole issue with
asylum seekers is very
simple: if they really are
in danger, let them stay:
if they're lying, send
them packing!
B. Maine, Pinwherry

Dear Sir/Madam,
We are all getting far
too worked up about
asylum seekers. The
population of Scotland
is falling. We are short

**of doctors, nurses,
teachers, etc. These
people want to be here,
we need them, so we
should welcome them!**
.S Annfield, Girvan