

SAVE OUR POST OFFICE

BY LIZZIE MICKERY

Despite terrible traffic gridlock, St Mary's Centre was packed to hear the Friends of Felpham's plans to Save the Village Post Office. The Post Office is up for sale, posing a grave risk that its facilities and shop may well be lost. Residents heard that by purchasing and running a community Post Office, this important centre of the village would not only be retained but improved, including all day opening, six days a week.



The Village Post Office is a Branch, having 'fortress' status, which means it can provide many more services than other counters including Summerley. As GPO rules change, vital banking services would be increased filling an essential gap as Bognor High Street banks rapidly close. The retail stock would be revitalized, and the shop and Post Office made more accessible. Further community facilities are envisaged, including cabins for small businesses in the garden area. Plus, a community hub providing social facilities, eg, book exchange, workshops and local resilience information – useful in times of flood and sewage dumps!

The first floor of the house would be adapted for letting, existing Post Office and shop staff retained and new job opportunities provided with openings for volunteering. The campaign's intention is not to intrude on existing businesses – local businesses would benefit from the increased footfall. There are successful Community Interest Company projects around the country – Findon Post Office and shop was saved by community action.

Local accountant, Peter Rollison, took the meeting through the financial viability of the plans and projected future income. The financial projections are on the website www.friendsoffelpham.org. Residents' suggestions are most welcome plus help from anyone skilled in this area. By an overwhelming majority the attendees gave the campaign their full support.



How our new post office might look.

The meeting ended on this thought. Imagine a revitalised post office, full time, user friendly with increased banking facilities, a revamped shop, artisan cakes and bread in one of the cabins, a community hub. Outside, people chatting, a lively, fun place to be. Now imagine – nothing, no post office, maybe even no building, a deserted, dead corner. It is within our power to stop Felpham village becoming just another collection of houses.

Please help save our Village Post Office. £10,000, £10 pounds, whatever you can afford to donate. Not sure what you want for Christmas, how about asking for a donation for the Post Office? And please, spread the word. Many previous residents, now living away, maintain great loyalty to Felpham, tell them they too can help. We can do this. Together, we can do this.

Donations can be made via GoFundMe, details are on the website. Cheques can be left at the Post Office or Rolly's at 79 Felpham Rd made payable to Friends of Felpham CIC together with your name and address. Cash may be deposited at the Post Office Counter. **IN THE EVENT THAT THE PURCHASE DOES NOT PROCEED, CONTRIBUTIONS MADE VIA GOFUNDME AND BY CHEQUE WILL BE REFUNDED IN FULL.** Merry Christmas to you all!