

INTO THE NEW YEAR WITH THE “SAVE OUR VILLAGE POST OFFICE” CAMPAIGN

By Lizzie Mickery

THANK YOU, everyone who has donated to the Save Our Village Post Office Fund; you have donated over £30,000 with promises of more. Now we're rolling out our fund raising to local business, small, medium and big. The more we can raise from individuals and businesses, the greater the amount we can raise from government 80/20 grant match funding. Local MP, Nick Gibb, is supporting our campaign. Detailed plans have been drawn up and we've been canvassing your thoughts and opinions. If you haven't already filled it in, please find a questionnaire at – <https://friendsoffelpham.org>. We'd be very grateful if you could spare the time to answer it. If you would like to read our mission statement and vision, go to our website – you can also find how to donate there.

The emotional and financial devastation of the Horizon Scandal has shaken us all. But it also revealed something else – the love we have as a nation for our local post office, and the important role it plays in the life of our community. The campaign to Save Our Village Post Office is a good example of the affection, not to mention the need, to protect this vital asset. In the past few months the community, both residents of Felpham and beyond, as well as local businesses, have overwhelmingly supported the campaign. Why? Not just because of the services it will provide, the prospect of a much-needed banking hub, a community hub, the plans to extend the shop facilities and hours, the prospect of providing cabins for start-ups... Yes, all of that is important. But we're looking at something beyond that; the preservation of community. A healthy post office means more footfall for local businesses. And using our Village Post Office makes us all feel part of something – the chatter, the laughter, the brilliant staff – it's confirmation that we belong, that we're not alone.

If that sounds sentimental, good, let's make no apology for that. It is too easy to feel cut off and powerless these days. It's too easy to feel that we no longer have any say in our lives. Well, not here, in Felpham and its environs. The Save Our Village Post Office Campaign is a shining example of that. We want to keep the Post Office central in our lives because unlike the cliché, *you don't know what you have until it's gone* – the residents of Felpham do. Our VILLAGE POST OFFICE.

AND here's an event to look forward to. **A MAGIC SHOW**, for kids aged 4 to 400!!

Magic Away the February Grey! With the one and Only Malcolm the Magician

Saturday February 17th at 3.30pm in St Mary's Centre, Felpham – Tickets £3/£11 for 4 from the Post Office, £4/£12 on the door. Refreshments included!!