

Post Office Survey 2017

Landewednack Parish Council had been advised by Len Trott, the Postmaster, that the Post Office in the Lizard was likely to close by December 2017. The Council was very concerned about this and had discussed with Mr Trott the options for saving the Post Office. The Council decided to ask the residents about this situation and what they would like to see happen. Over 500 surveys were printed and distributed with the Village Magazine, Lizard Lives and left in the Post Office. The survey was also available on the Parish Council website. 25 were returned by on line and 59 returned as hard copies. **The results of the survey carried out in February 2017 are set out below:**

Option 1: Do nothing – with the result that by the end of 2017 at the latest, our Post Office closes and the village is visited by a Post Office operated van 2 mornings per week, with a much reduced service eg no business banking facilities. **No votes**

Option 2: Seek to identify an existing business in the village to embed a Post Office within. **46 votes (54%)**

Option 3: Undertake to establish a Community Shop with embedded Post Office with a mix of paid & volunteer manning. **32 votes (38%)**

Option 2 or 3 = **7 votes (8%)**

The majority of on line responses were in favour of a community shop and the majority of hard copy returns were in favour of seeking to identify an existing business

Residents were asked if they preferred Option 3 would they:

- a. Be willing to volunteer to help operate the shop = **13 (41%)**
- b. Be willing to help operate the shop as a paid employee. = **6 (19%)**
- c. Be willing to join a group working together to establish a Community Shop = **7 (22%)**
- d. None of the above = **0**

Additional Comments (18):

'With Jeremy at Steps having already had his contract terminated with Premier and publicly announcing he is "giving up"; the Parish should focus their attention on ensuring that whoever takes over Steps runs it as a proper local store with post office incorporated'

'It is obvious to me that it should be an existing business and that is Steps'

'It would be a real asset for the village to maintain a post office and I support either a new community venture, or the shop being sited in an existing business. However the politics in the village may negate any possibility of the latter! I would be happy to help as necessary within my availability as I work full time'

'I've Recently Moved To The Lizard And I Don't Want To See The Post Office Close, I'm Also Autistic And Struggle With People'

'I agree with options 2 and 3 above. If option 3 goes ahead I am not in a position to assist but my daughter would be able to assist with the group working together to set up a community shop. She does not live in the Lizard but spends a lot of time here and is keen to keep the Post Office in some form, it is one of the reasons we bought my current house'

'I feel this a great opportunity to create a vital hub for the village, a shop that actually sells everyday groceries at realistic prices and keep our post office. We need both so we need to be proactive and help ourselves'

'I believe option 3 to be the best solution. If I had the money but I do not at this current time, I would endeavor to bring back a local store that offers a wide range of products for local needs. Prices would be competing with local supermarkets. I would also offer a free delivery service for local customers that would keep up with modern day logistics. Incorporated of course within the store would be the Post Office. Given the correct energy with drive and a passion to offer local customers a chance to reconnect to an atmosphere that will take them back to let's say an old school sense of a country stores but obviously with the modern drive and with a sense of well being for the community and a touch of humour and banter there would definitely be a happy customer that would want to return to the store and come back in to use your local amenities. With the correct energy delivered for the customer the business would thrive'

'I already work at a shop in the community and don't think that there is any need for another when the majority of the village won't support the shops that they have. I also won't put my name as I feel uncomfortable at the nasty response that both those supporting the shop and especially for those against it'

'I have "bent" our MPs ear about the possible closure of the post office via email. It does seem ludicrous to me that with the increased population of the village, and its remoteness, and the age demographic that the post office faces closure, due to an arbitrary post office regulation that does not take remote rural locations into account'

'I'd assume that the Council have already exhausted the "embed" possibility. If not, this should be looked at first - there can't be that many suitable businesses in the village, and I believe two of those have already turned it down'

'I must point out that any proposal to replace the current post office MUST permit access for the severely disabled, or if not then this would be discrimination. I personally am not able to walk at all and cannot access the current post office, though the current staff are agreeable to serving me outside on the pavement. Therefore any new arrangement would need to have suitable access for my mobility scooter, or more practically you might consider a small service side window. If you can't manage a solution then a severely disabled person might well be unable to use your new office, and that could be viewed as discrimination. May I also point out that asking someone else to visit the post office on my account is not only a nuisance as they can't use my bank card, but also means they have to take time off work. And I think you also need to inform the post office that a disabled person may not be able to access a post office van, also discrimination, unless it has a side access window. Regarding cash, you will already be aware that many Lizard establishments present a problem to the disabled by either still not having a pay/swipe facility for a bank card, or a minimum spend on a card. The only alternative is cash and that convenient cash access needs to be seriously considered as part of the new office and won't compromise a bank card's security. However, I will say that as a disabled person I can access on line

postage/stamp labels, and also arrange collection by a courier, but until the post office ceases to penalise its customers for sending things one mm over size, or one microgram over weight, then using on line stamping is NOT going to be reliable. By the way I don't think current couriers can accept foreign destined parcels/letters, or if so it will likely be very expensive'

'By embedding a PO in an existing business in the village would surely provide the best outcome re continuity and stability of the existing very good Post Office services'

'It is not only businesses that use the banking facilities individuals will also find it inconvenient to say the least not being able to post cheques and transfer monies'

'We are not permanent residents in the Lizard and so whilst my husband and I would ideally like to see a community shop being set up we would not be able to help set up or run the shop and so do not feel it would be fair to ask for it to be done'

'It is difficult since the Butchers and Jeremy do not want it. How about the Top House Inn. A community shop risks treading on the toes of other existing businesses'

'We both commend the Council's desire to keep a Post Office in the village. I am sure that sentiment is shared by all the residents and locals. If any of the positive options you identify do come to fruition then you can count on us to help on a voluntary basis. The issue that we have is that your note does not identify the PO Ltd perspective e.g.

- Do they want our PO to stay open? If so, in what guise?...large, small, part of an existing premise, free standing etc

-What is their view on asset/liability transfer or sale and costs?

-Do they require experienced(practised staffing? ...at what level of security?

What are the hours of business required. What guarantees/contracts are to be levied?

Without guidance on the above matters the options of embedded and/or community shop cannot rationally be assessed.

Nevertheless if we do succeed in holding onto our PO please be assured we will do all we can to help'

'We would hate to lose the Post Office services, the loss would directly affect residents who do not drive or unable to get a bus elsewhere and then wait 2 hours for the return trip. A van visiting twice a week is also not satisfactory for short periods. The Witchball is the only facility that is open all year. I fail to see why Post Office Ltd would insist on long opening hours, surely being available for a few hours daily during the week would suffice. That could be sorted with discussion with the owner and suit all'

'In other parts of the country general stores and post offices have been merged with public houses. Is this an idea?'

The results of the survey are to be reported to the Parish Council on Thursday 9th March 2017. Collated figures will be published via the Parish Council's website and village notice boards, Lizard Lives magazine & website and will be available at the Post Office