

# The Future of Saltford Post Office and Saltford Library

As many will know, the Post Office is due to close on December 23rd 2017 and there are no plans to reopen it at its present location or at any of the adjoining shops in Saltford. Furthermore, the cutbacks in B&NES Library Services mean that the Saltford Library is also likely to be closed in a year or so.

Both the Post Office and the Library are important local community assets and the Saltford Community Association (SCA) has been looking at ways in which both might be kept open. The SCA has been working hard over the last few weeks, since McColls pulled out, to find a way to stop the Post Office closing this week. Regrettably this has not proved possible but an option for the future has emerged.

The most promising future option is for both the Post Office and Library to be located in the present library building and discussions with Post Offices Ltd, B&NES Library Services and the Parish Council in this respect have been positive.

A viable option appears to be the following:

- the Post Office to be open every day, including Saturday mornings, for a total of 26 hours a week, with the library also being open for these increased times;
- the Post Office would be manned by a properly trained part-time post master/mistress;
- the Library would be staffed by volunteers, possibly with help from the post master/mistress;
- the building would be leased from B&NES at a nominal rent;
- income to cover the post master/mistress salary would come from the transactional fees of the Post Office, with additional contributions from sundry sales (e.g. greetings cards etc);
- income for running costs would come from donations from the local community and businesses, together with rent from the Parish Council for Parish Office space;
- running costs include building maintenance, insurance, and electricity and water costs;
- the initial set-up costs would be covered by Post Offices Ltd and by B&NES
- that this could be set up by April 2018

The operation of the joint Post Office/Library would need to be as a Community Interest Organisation or as a subsidiary charity to the SCA. There would need to be a management committee, again formed from volunteers, who were responsible for the Post Office business, the library and for the building.

The need for financial support from the local community is a key feature, as is the need for a volunteer force to form the management committee and to staff the library. Note that in this proposal, the future of the Post Office and the Library (the source of available space) are closely linked.

The proposal has been discussed at meetings between trustees of the SCA, Post Offices Ltd, B&NES Library services and representatives of the Parish Council. It was discussed further at a meeting of the management committee of the SCA on December 13th, when it was resolved to try to carry it forward. However, it was made clear that the new management team for the joint Post Office/ Library would have to be formed from individuals other than the current SCA trustees and members of the SCA management committee, who are already fully committed to maintaining the present activities of the Association and whose contribution would be limited to coordinating the initial setting up of the scheme.

The purpose of this email is therefore to ascertain whether there is sufficient interest in the local community and businesses for the required volunteers for the proposed management committee and for library staffing to come forward, and on a continuing basis. If this is not the case, it is the view of the SCA that there would cease to be a Post Office and a local library branch in Saltford.

**If you feel strongly about this issue and wish to indicate your willingness to help and in what capacity, please would you get in touch with the SCA by January 15th via email on [chair@saltfordhall.co.uk](mailto:chair@saltfordhall.co.uk) or phone the SCA Office on 01225 874081.** We will then arrange a meeting in the New Year of all those prepared to help.

**John Davies (Hon Chair SCA) and Chris Essex (Hon treasurer, SCA)**

PS Please feel free to forward this email on to others who may be interested in helping.