

Holme Valley Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 18 AUGUST 2008 -

Those present :

Chairman : Cllr Mrs J Roberts

Councillors : Cllr L Bailey, Cllr T Bellamy, Cllr M Bower, Cllr Mrs R Bratt, Cllr T Dearnley, Cllr T W Dixon, Cllr R P Dixon, Cllr D M Firth, Cllr R Oldfield, Cllr Mrs J M Osborn, Cllr A R Otterburn, Cllr P Robinson, Cllr P D Searby, Cllr Mrs B E Smith

Officers : Mrs S S Barber, Mrs MA Bewick

Public Question Time

Six members of the public were present and three of them wished to comment to the Council. All three members of the public wished to support efforts to keep the Post Offices open, as regular users (individual or business) of the two post offices proposed for closure.

The Chairman of the Council, Cllr T Bellamy, having declared a prejudicial interest, exercised his right under Paragraph 12(2) of the Council's Code of Conduct, to address Members particularly regarding the proposed closure of the Post Office in the Upper Holme Valley.

Cllr Mrs B E Smith, having declared a prejudicial interest, exercised her right under Paragraph 12(2) of the Council's Code of Conduct, to address Members particularly regarding the proposed closure of the Post Office in Wooldale.

Cllr Bellamy then left the meeting. Cllr Mrs Roberts took the Chair, in his absence.

Cllr Mrs Smith left at the end of the public session.

To accept apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted from Councillors Christofi, Cropper, Greenwood, Mrs Hall, Kaye and Mrs Walker.

08 29 To receive Members' declarations of interest in items on the agenda

Cllr T Bellamy declared a prejudicial interest and left the meeting after the Public Question Time.

Cllr Mrs B E Smith declared a prejudicial interest and left the meeting after the Public Question Time.

08 30 To consider whether items on the agenda should be discussed in private session

It was agreed that no items required to be taken in private session.

08 31 Request to consult with Parish Council

The Clerk had circulated information collated giving examples of types of responses used in other areas facing post office closures; the local public consultation was due to end on 22 September 2008.

Information had also been supplied by Kirklees Council to assist the Parish Council. It was hoped that the Parish Council equally would share information with Kirklees in this matter. It was emphasised that the Council needed to formulate a reasoned response and would need to gather together hard facts and supporting evidence to accompany the Council's views. Members felt strongly that no justification had been given for selecting the two post offices that were proposed for closure, and that information about this was needed.

It was agreed that a Working Party should be formed, comprising the Vice Chairman of the Council, together with Cllrs Mrs Bower, Mrs Bratt, T Dixon, C M Kaye and A R Otterburn, to put together a possible submission in response to this consultation. In view of the timescales for consultation, and the Council's meeting cycle, work on this document needed to be put in hand as soon as possible, and some initial recommendations placed before the Council at its meeting on 1 September 2008. A local

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businessman should also be invited to contribute to the Working Party in an advisory capacity, attending meetings as appropriate.

It was hoped that it might be possible to liaise and meet with Kirklees Council to assist the Working Party.

It was felt that an opportunity should be provided to all members of the public to express their views and that the Council should therefore organise a public meeting for this purpose. This could also provide extra information towards preparing the Council's formal response.

RESOLVED: (1) That a Working Party be formed to prepare reasoned recommendations and supporting evidence for the Council's submission in response to this consultation, to be presented if possible to full Council on 1 September 2008.

(2) That the Clerk be asked to arrange, if possible, attendance by members of the Working Party at any meeting organised by Kirklees Council to discuss plans and preparation of data and evidence for use in responses.

(3) That the Clerk, with assistance from Members, should organise a public meeting to be held centrally, preferably at Holmfirth Civic Hall, during the second week of September, with advertising as necessary and free press and radio publicity where possible.

(4) That the Clerk should invite a representative from The Post Office Ltd to the public meeting, together with the local MP, Kirklees Ward Councillors and Kirklees Officers.

(5) That Cllr Mrs Roberts should Chair the public meeting, assisted by Cllr Kaye as Past Chairman.

(6) That every Ward Councillor be supplied with posters for distribution, advertising this public meeting.

08 32 Freedom of Information Act 2000 - to agree what information will be made available to the public

RESOLVED: That, under the Council's Publication Scheme, supporting papers for any item within the public session of the meeting be made available, if requested after approval of the minutes.

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Chairman