

**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL****KILMARNOCK SOUTH LOCAL COMMITTEE****MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON 22 OCTOBER 2004 AT 1400 HOURS  
IN THE MEETING ROOM, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, LONDON ROAD,  
KILMARNOCK**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Ray Murray, Provost Jane Darnbrough and Councillor John Knapp; Community Representatives John Timpany, Winnie Campbell and Susan Anderson; and Substitute Community Representatives Agnes Gallacher and M Proudfoot.

**ATTENDING:** Julie Armstrong, Assistant Administration Manager; Carol Andrew, Business Advisor, Economic Development and Stuart Nelson, Administrative Officer.

**APOLOGY:** Community Representative Joan Wark.

**CHAIR:** Councillor Ray Murray, Chair.

**PROPOSED POST OFFICE CLOSURES IN KILMARNOCK**

1. There was submitted a letter dated 15 September 2004 from Post Office Ltd and a report dated 18 October 2004 by the Executive Director of Development and Property Services (both circulated) which (i) advised of proposals by Post Office Ltd for the closure of branch post offices at 81 Whatriggs Road, Kilmarnock and 18 Lindsay Drive, New Farm Loch, Kilmarnock and (ii) invited the Committee to make appropriate representations to Post Office Ltd.

It was agreed:-

- (i) to advise Post Office Ltd of this Committee's strong opposition to the proposed closure of the branch post office at 81 Whatriggs Road, Kilmarnock for the following reasons, namely:-
  - the "receiving branches" would not be easily accessible, the nearest of these being located at Central Avenue, Shortlees which (a) would, for many local people, involve a walk of at least one mile and in some cases considerably more, which would present difficulties for those less able; and (b) was not located on a bus route from the Bellfield area and would require those wishing to visit that post office to undertake two bus journeys, with the accompanying additional time commitment and inconvenience involved. The Committee also noted that whilst the concessionary travel scheme operated by SPT would enable qualifying individuals to utilise bus services free of charge, the scheme is supported by East Ayrshire Council through its contributions to SPT;
  - forward projections generally indicate an ageing population, and this together with initiatives such as Care in the Community, support the retention of key facilities and services within local areas in order to accommodate the needs of those who may be less able to access, for whatever reason, such facilities and services outwith their locality;
  - it is important that a clear sense of community is maintained within areas such as Bellfield – the local post office provides a key service,

and in many ways a focus, for people in the local area and, accordingly, contributes significantly to that sense of community, to the wellbeing of the community as a whole and to the quality of life of those living locally. It is important that the local post office should be viewed in terms of the contribution it makes to the wider community benefit rather than in narrow financial/profitability terms;

- it is suggested that the closure of the post office at Whattriggs Road would have a detrimental effect on the business of the adjoining shops, with further potential implications for the local community;
  - the importance of the local post office as a facility to enable local people to withdraw pensions and/or pay rent within their local area should not be underestimated; and
  - the Committee referred to the previous closure of the branch post office at Riccarton and took the view that there was even less of a case to justify closure of the branch at Whattriggs Road, in view of the particular difficulties which would result for local people as outlined above;
- (ii) that it be remitted to the Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support to request an early meeting between appropriate representatives of Post Office Ltd and the Chair, Vice Chair, Provost Darnbrough and three Community Representatives, namely:- John Timpany of Bellfield Community Council, Agnes Gallacher of Kilmarnock South Elderly Forum and Jim Bryan of Kilmarnock Forum on Disability (or his Substitute) to put forward the views of this Committee as set out in (i) above; and
- (iii) to express disappointment that Post Office Ltd had been unable to extend the closing date for the submission of representations on the proposed branch post office closures, in order to facilitate the Council's consultation with the local community.

The meeting terminated at 1435 hours.