Juniper Green CC January 2017 Newsletter

1. Threatened closure of RBS Branch at Juniper Green

2. Police box charity efforts pre-Christmas

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1. Threatened closure of RBS Branch at Juniper Green

The campaign group formed at the end of 2016 to find ways to mitigate the threatened closure of the Juniper Green Branch of the Royal Bank of Scotland met again on Friday 6 January. The group comprising Joanna Cherry MP, Gordon MacDonald MSP, Gordon Lindhurst MSP, Councillor Ricky Henderson, Richard Henderson (Chairman of Balerno CC), Allister McKillop (Chairman of Currie CC), Vic Stewart (Vice Chairman of Juniper Green CC) and Cliff Beevers (Chairman of Juniper Green CC) confirmed their decision to adopt a twin track approach to the way financial services might be maintained in the valley communities after 5 June 2017.

Contact with RBS would be maintained to see what it would do to minimise the loss of a face to face banking service for its customers in the Water of Leith communities. A mobile van service, deployed in semi-rural towns like Haddington and Lanark by RBS, would be suggested as a partial solution. Consultation in line with the Banking Protocol would also be invoked.

A second approach was being followed to see what alternative financial services might be attracted into the area given the possibility of office space in Juniper Green becoming available on the abandoned toilet site.

At the very least some of the business community are likely to be inconvenienced by the closure of the branch whilst others will be severely affected. Mark Porteous has agreed to act as a focal point for the business community so if you have business interests in any of the Water of Leith communities and will be inconvenienced by the closure of yet another face to face financial service please contact Mark at mark@porteousfunerals.com to make your voice heard.

Our politicians are well aware that it is UK government and Scottish Government who need to play a role in preserving our small, but significant, high streets and will do their best to pressure the appropriate ministers to see if any of the solutions the campaign group are adopting can be given a fair wind. Joanna has won the ballot to ask a PM Question on Wednesday 11 January and is hoping to ask about bank closures on our high streets and what is to be done about it.

Like it or not, a bank does provide a social role in our communities and its loss will affect us all in one way or another. The campaign group are most concerned for the elderly and vulnerable members of our community who are unlikely or unable to take advantage of online banking. If you are in that category or have a relative similarly affected and would like to make your situation known to us, please give Cliff Beevers a call on 0131 453 4517 or email him at chair@junipergreencc.org.uk and you will be kept in touch with the campaign group’s activities.

Juniper Green CC has brought its regular monthly meeting forward this month to discuss what else the CC can do to assist the campaign group in their efforts to retain some semblance of a normal banking service for the majority of the residents of this area.

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2. Police box charity efforts

Ursula reports from her re-purposed police box on Lanark Road that in the run up to Christmas her charity takings amounted to:

Fair Trade: £88; RNLI: £57; St. Columba’s Hospice: £43; Mary’s Meals: £42.

                Total £230.

Ursula thinks that using the box for raising money for charities at Christmas time is a good idea but she also wonders if this could be done in other formats too and at other times of the year. If you want to find out more pop along and ask her one of these weekend mornings.