

## **High St UK: Meeting about the Post Office**

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### **3 April 2007 Asylum Café**

Present: Tony Freer Minshull, Peter Smith, Simon Smith, Mal Downey, Martin Taylor, Lynn Jones, Tarik Alrasheed, Mark Pharaoh, Pauline Pharaoh, Colin Butler, Roger Sutton, Gill Butler, John Jordan, Chris Jordan, Roger Hall-Jones, Anthony Collis, Penny Douglas, Geoff Douglas, Robin Elt, Ralph Madden, Lynne Jones, Bridget Orr

#### **CURRENT SITUATION**

##### **Royal Mail**

The Post Office building is owned by Royal Mail Properties.

Royal Mail want a fully fitted site.

Royal Mail doesn't want to part with the site.

Attis Real (sp?) is Royal Mail's agent.

Royal Mail has huge pensions deficit

Delivery Office issue is not currently on Royal Mail's agenda.

There must be a hidden agenda, or why sit on such a valuable site?

Royal Mail would not give the Con Club a long term lease

##### **Post Office Counter**

Residents want to retain the Post Office Counter in Great Malvern.

Regional Area Manager of Post Office counters is responsible for deciding if the site is viable; the local Post Office Counter Manager then decides if he can afford site. Nigel (PO manager) is paying over the local rates for the current site.

Sorting is centralised in Gloucester; only delivery based in Malvern.

##### **Use of the building**

Post Office Counter, and deliveries are also run from the building.

Traffic and parking problems exist in the area of the Delivery Office.

Post Office is only using about 5% of the building; basement and top are empty.

The basement area contained the Con Club, a music venue.

Theory that Churches Commission may be freehold owners of site.

Is there a "moral" case to make, over the wasted space on the site?

##### **MHDC**

Council cannot talk directly to Royal Mail, are always redirected to agent.

Council has been in touch with Royal Mail's agents who say that the site doesn't work for them.

Council has no resources to buy the site.

Council has told Royal Mail they have a potential developer.

Council has valued the site, at £150k + income from retail/rental = £300k. Potential developer would need to make £3m.

If Council enforced parking regulations on PO delivery vans in Great Malvern, would it have effect on PO?

##### **Private developer**

A private developer is interested, but has also been directed to Royal Mail's agents.

3 developers have approached the Con Club (and been forwarded to the Council).

Residential or retail are probably only economic options for the site.

Site valued at £150k + rental income (ie. £300k) – ie. would have to take in £3m to make site pay.

Foley is an allocated site for retail development in Great Malvern.

This situation has existed for 10 years.

## OPTIONS

- Need to keep PO counter in town
- Street Market on ground floor?
- Find out if Royal Mail would actually move
- Find out Royal Mails' long term strategy
- How to galvanise some interest in moving from the Royal Mail?
- Meet on site with Royal Mail & their agent (Tony Nicholson – Attis Real)
- Marylebone developer has already approached CEO Royal Mail
- Does Peter Bembridge have RM connections?
- Council would/could work with potential developers on developing proposals
- Must be multi – use, retail/entertainment as well as residential,
- Potential developers could be asked to come up with their own (uninfluenced) plans
- Several developers are interested in the site
- Developer may not be required to provide car parking – dependant on use
- Architectural restrictions (conservation area) may put off some developers
- Need to link any PO development to other proposals for the town
- Application to EU for funding for residents to buy building being compiled – are people interested in becoming stakeholders?
- £2m needed to redevelop site
- Research moral grounds for move (RM's corporate responsibility statement)
- Large proportion of building empty – how can RM justify raising postage costs if they mismanage costs through the inefficient use of property?
- Write to Church Commission
- Find out who owns land
- Utilise Malvern High Street web site
- Involve TV – 2 min news slot – link to High St pilot (Peter has contacts at Midlands Today)
- Involve press – petitions
- Lobby MP
- Lobby AWM (although retail not a target sector for RDA's)
- Are/have other towns had a similar situation?
- Agitation – block entrance from delivery vehicles
- Request that police, parking wardens enforce parking restrictions on RM vans
- Demonstrations
- Ignore PO site & focus all efforts on other developments in town e.g. Edith Walk

## ACTIONS

1. Ralph to contact RM Board (*RMc*)
2. Lobby MP Michael Spicer to also make contact (*volunteer required*)
3. Design & implement a PR/lobbying campaign (*volunteers required*)
4. Council to re - contact RM to ascertain current position (*SS/AC*)
5. Council to complete Land registry search to confirm ownership (*SS*)
6. CT to search other towns facing similar situation (*LJ/BO*)
7. Find out if anyone has other RM contacts (e.g. Peter Bembridge?) (*LJ/BO*)