

## **Breckland Campaigns against Post Office Closures.**

Breckland Council is continuing its campaign against Post Office closures. At today's Cabinet meeting, 12.2.08, Members said that residents were clearly passionate about local Post Office services and if it were to close it would be a huge loss for Breckland Communities.

Council leader William Nunn said,

*"The Post Office is a life line for many residents particularly in rural areas and for elderly and disabled residents, young families and the many residents who will not be able to access an alternative Post Office. The local Post office is often in a village shop or other local business and so they are also important in terms of the rural economy."*

The Council carried out a petition which asked local residents if they could afford to lose their local Post Office service and asked residents to sign the petition to support the campaign to call on the Government to stop Post Office closures and specifically in Breckland. A total of 616 signatures were received against closures. The results of an online survey of 40 responses from Members and local parish councils found that the loss of a local Post Office would clearly have a detrimental impact of local communities including:

- 93% of people living in Breckland would be unable to access an alternative Post Office if their local one closed.
- 88% of Breckland residents' quality of life would be affected for the worse. 93% of residents would be unable to access an alternative Post Office/banking service if their local Post Office closed.
- In Breckland, 57.5% of Post Offices have more than 300 customers a week – bucking the national trend.
- 73% of Breckland residents walk to access their Post Office service. Poor transport in rural communities would make accessing a Post Office within 3 miles extremely difficult (The 3 mile journey is the government criteria for accessibility.).
- We also found out that in Breckland we seem to be bucking the national trend in terms of customer numbers with 73% of the Post

Offices in Breckland experiencing increasing customer numbers in the last 3 years.

- The full results of the survey can be read on our website at [www.breckland.gov.uk/](http://www.breckland.gov.uk/) currently, there are 56 Post Offices in Breckland and 75% of Post Office services are delivered within another business, such as a village shop.

Today's Cabinet meeting agreed to formally write to the Post Office Ltd as follows;

*"Breckland Council formally invites the Post Office to work with the Council to provide services to our residents in the most viable way for the future and notes the invaluable service provided for the local community by the local Post Office. The Council also notes the strength of public opinion in favour of saving the local Post Office and recognises the needs of the elderly, disabled and most disadvantaged, who rely on their local Post Office".*

The Council is continuing its lobbying campaign by presenting the results of the survey to both Post watch and Post Office Ltd. The Council also met the Post Office Ltd. on January 18<sup>th</sup> and have arranged for a working group to meet this afternoon. On the 26<sup>th</sup> March the public consultation from Post Office Ltd will be open for this area and the Council urges as many residents as possible to voice their concerns.

**END**

**DATE: 12.2.08.**

**NOTES TO EDITORS: for further information please contact Mary Palmer, Head of Marketing and Communications on 01362 656292/813 or. 07748116937**