

Village Store/ shop Church St West Chiltington DC/25/2017

Planning Received

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Name:

Peter Davey who act as 'architectural advisers' to the current owners have produced a table of reasons why the continued use of the building as a shop is no longer viable. Unfortunately they make many assertions which don't stand up to examination and unless challenged are grossly misleading and in part **simply untrue**.

They assume that because the current business model is not successful ,then any future enterprise is destined for failure.

This would be a consideration if the current owners could demonstrate ways in which they have tried to diversify but without success, but instead they have presided over a slow decline using the same business model.

In the Peter Davey document paras 3.15 and 3.16 they state '*some alternative use ideas such as coffee shop, pharmacy etc, will all suffer the same main issue, lack of footfall*'.

But this statement chooses to ignore the flood of school traffic that descends on the village both in the morning and then again in the late afternoon. A coffee stand at the front of the shop offering drinks plus takeaway snacks and sandwiches would cater for these busy parents and hungry children. Currently there is no takeaway food/sandwich service. Successful service stations offer a 'meal deal' package the Village shop should copy this

Peter Davey states - '*Although serving a very small hub, it is estimated that less than 30% of the nearby residents use the store/post office*'. They offer no evidence for this figure- and is meaningless as there is no context- 30% per day, per week or per month- just a low number to suit their narrative and should not be allowed to influence the councils decision.

Davey states-3.17. *The store/post office currently has Class E use, which would cover all of the previously suggested uses, and yet no interest came forward in years of active marketing. Yet contradicts himself- 3.5. There were viewings, but unfortunately none led to a sale.*

Peter Davey states

4.2. *Due to the reduction in turnover, there are no meaningful opportunities for local employment at the post office store and the business is mostly run by the applicants Mr & Mrs Fryer. Therefore, the closure of the store will have no significant impact upon local employment.*

This statement shows the complete lack of local knowledge from a detached adviser.

Before the recent slow down in preparation for retirement the shop has been a valuable source of part time employment for many local people including- [REDACTED] others. This does not include paper delivery people. It can be a source of employment again under a new business model **which does not include current restrictions such as closing everyday for an hour at lunchtime and only open half days Saturday and Sunday.**

Nowhere in his assessment does Davey mention the existing local businesses who rely on the local shop as an outlet- businesses like Helen Budgen greetings cards and Clarkes Farm blueberries. These are not remote enterprises but are located **in the same street as the shop.**

Davey doc ref-5.2. *An almost identical service is provided by Nisa Local, Haglands Lane, West Chiltington, RH20 2QR, less than 1 mile away and nestled centrally within West Chiltington.*

5.3. *It is therefore reasonable to predict that Nisa Local would be an ideal alternative facility, suitable to pick up any business lost through the closure of the Post Office Stores without detriment to the local community.*

This is simply untrue the distance between the Village shop and the Nisa is **not less than 1 mile, google maps reckon on 1.1 miles uphill.**

Not convenient for families living in

Steele Close, the Juggs, East Street, Pond Rise, Holly Close, Curbey Close, Orchard Dell, Church Grove, Bradford bridge Road who would indeed consider the closing of the Village Store 'detrimental' to the community.

Indeed Davey contradicts himself . He states **ref 5.2** *there will be no detriment to local residents in accessing Nisa located at the new village-* yet when describing the reverse- access to the old village shop from the new village he states **ref-3.15** *The store is remote from the main West Chiltington village centre and safe pedestrian access is incomplete.*

Davey document 3.23- *Despite the loss of a community hub, there is plenty of local support for the applicants. This statement appears to be untrue.* The parish council who represent the residents had a **unanimous** vote **in favour of retaining the shop.**

One only has to look at neighbouring villages to see a successful business model. Meadow Cafe and Store Thakeham was built as a requirement to permit local development. It caters for a smaller community (no school) and it thrives.

One option for the Village Shop would be to open up the rear as a tea garden and allow parents buggy access from the existing drive on East Street. Currently parents sit for hours in their cars waiting for pick up time from the local school.

The store has survived and thrived for over 150 years, with a few adjustments and a new enthusiasm, it should be allowed to serve the community again, even if it has to be under new owners.

As has been said by other residents- in recent years we have lost the Elephant and Castle Pub we have lost our golf course, we have lost our youth club and we have lost our hairdresser. It will be a hammer blow to our community to lose the shop.