

Walton Village Hall has a post office based there two mornings per week. It provides banking services, as well as postal services, for residents of a village with no other facilities. It reduces the need for them to travel into the nearest town of Brampton, or in some cases, Carlisle.

The post office has also developed into a hub for the community and is offering computer and internet access too.

Background

Walton is a village of around 100 houses in Carlisle district. It has no school or shop and the pub closed in 2010. There's a church and a village hall which has become a focal point in the community since the closure of the pub. The nearest towns are Brampton, which is two miles away, and Carlisle, which is ten miles away.

The Project

Previously the post office was located in the village pub in Walton but the pub's opening hours were reduced in 2009 and the location wasn't as central as the village hall.

Once the pub closed, the post office needed to move. Jenn Blair, the Sub Post Mistress of Walton Post Office, approached the village hall management committee and Post Office Ltd to see if it could be moved into the village hall and this was agreed. Post Office Ltd paid for a phone line and additional electric points to be installed which were needed for the equipment.

The post office runs on Monday and Wednesday mornings from 9.30am to 12.00 noon and provides the following services: banking; bill payments; purchase of 'on demand' Euros; purchase of other currencies on order; and postal services.

There are two rooms in the village hall; the kitchen and the main hall. The post office is run from the kitchen as it's a smaller space to heat and it leaves the main hall available while the post office is open.



Walton Village Hall Post Office

What has been achieved?

Besides providing banking and post office services for residents who would otherwise have had to travel to Brampton or Carlisle, the post office has become a hub for local residents.

This is particularly true for older residents, who come in to use the post office but often stay to have a chat and cup of tea with Jenn or other customers. The customers ask after each other and if a regular hasn't been in the other customers will often call on them to check they're alright.

After the post office opened in the village hall, it became apparent that some customers without internet access would benefit from being able to do online banking.



Walton Post Office Sub Post Mistress, Jenn Blair



Walton Village Hall © Bob Embleton

What has been achieved? (cont.)

Jenn successfully applied to a grant fund being run by Post Office Ltd which allowed the Hall to purchase laptops, a data projector, printer and to pay for a tutor to run courses for residents who were new to computing.

The computers are available alongside the post office and the courses have been popular. The Village Hall has recently received Adult Education funding to repeat the training as the original grant had been spent.

Working in partnership has brought benefits for both the Village Hall and the post office. The benefit to Walton Village Hall is that they receive income from the hire of the hall two mornings per week and they also have new IT equipment.

The Village Hall committee wouldn't have been able to apply to the grant fund which provided funding for the IT equipment as it was only available to post offices.

The Learning

The Sub Post Mistress has learnt that it was worthwhile asking Post Office Ltd to re-locate Walton Post Office when the pub shut, and being persistent about it, rather than just accepting its closure.

Taking a chance with submitting the grant application for the IT equipment has also brought benefits and their advice for other community groups with ideas for projects would be to apply for funding and try and get their project underway.

Contact Details

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