

Area Board Project/Councillor Initiative

1. What is the project?

To work alongside the community in Dilton Marsh, in conjunction with the Fairfield Farm College to reintroduce post office facilities in the village

2. Where is the project taking place?

At the Fairfield Farm College's shop, High Street, Dilton Marsh.

3. When will the project take place?

Project should be completed by March 2016 at latest.

4. Please outline:

- **Community benefits**
- **Evidence of need**
- **Links to Community Plan**
- **Community Issue**

Dilton Marsh is one of the largest villages in Wiltshire. For some considerable time it benefitted from a village shop and post office. This facility abruptly closed in Feb this year, leaving the nearest facilities in Westbury and beyond. Many elderly and socially deprived residents rely on these services nearby for pension and electricity/gas top ups.

A group of residents have been galvanised into re-introducing these facilities in the premises of the Fairfield Farm College, which is a dedicated college for older teenagers with special needs. The college already has a shop and the aim is to introduce the post office would complement this. Equally, there will be direct benefit afforded to students, who would work in the post office environment under supervision and learn skills.

Whilst the college has charitable status, discussion with the Post Office have shown that to introduce the facilities would not directly affect this status and would run in tandem with the benefits offsetting any costs incurred by the college.

As a consequence, this project has considerable community benefits, as described.

Equally, whilst the former post office closed suddenly, this was not as a consequence of a lack of need and linked to private matters affecting that individual. Consequently, there is evidence of a need in the community.

This scheme also directly links to the Wiltshire Council business plan of empowering communities.

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Finally, based on the issue being foremost in the minds of many residents of Dilton Marsh demonstrates that this is a community issue that needs resolving.

5. What is the desired outcome/s of this project?

The outcome will be a fully functioning post office within the existing shop at Fairfield Farm College enabling local residents and passing traffic to use the new facilities. In doing so this would reduce the impact that elderly and socially deprived residents have in order to obtain services in Westbury and beyond, which in some cases involves very long walks, convoluted and sporadic bus journeys or lifts.

6. Who will Project Manage this project?

The project will be directly managed by Janet Kenward, the CEO of Fairfield Farm College in conjunction with a working group from the village. Cllr Jerry Wickham will be involved in this.

7. Please confirm costs and provide quotes

- Total project costs up to and including £5,000 - 1 quote
- Total project costs over £5,000 - 3 quotes

The cost of the project is likely to be £10,000. This is for the provision of the counter and equipment for the post office which also safes, computer system and general security. This is a non-negotiable cost and the only provider is the Post Office.

This grant will cover 50% of the costs and the remainder is likely to be found by the Trustees of Fairfield Farm College. Other funding providers are also being approached. Correspondingly, the grant of these funds, through this Councillor led initiative, is dependent on the other funds being found elsewhere.

8. Additional information in support of the project

Representatives of the Post Office have surveyed the premises and this is how the sum of £10k has been obtained. The next stage, beyond obtaining the funding, is to complete a business plan, for the nominated 'post master' to be identified, for them to undertake and pass an interview and then a 14 week consultation period with the community. Based on this, it is likely that the new facility could be functioning by Dec 2015.