

One small step for man*, one quite big step for Monmouthshire...

Or

"How a local authority stepped in and opened a Post Office to support a local community."

**did not sound as good with a gender neutral term*



Richard Drinkwater (A.K.A. Me)

- Who would have thought bouncing on a bed would lead to this career?
- Started in Local Gov. May/June 1989 (Torfaen)
- College... Uni... (well C.I.H.E.)
- Cardiff... Newport
- Escaped to the country
- Back to God's County and Monmouthshire
- Not the first man on the moon, but the 1st L.A. Sub Post Master!!!



A quick point of clarification...

This is Postman Pat



This is Mrs Goggins



Pat works for the Royal Mail, he delivers the letters.

Mrs Goggins works for Post Office Counters Limited, she sells the services that allows Pat to deliver his letters.

There is a misconception that if you work or have anything to do with a Post Office you have a red van and a cat called Jess and it is funny to call you Postman Pat... he works for someone else!



POP QUIZ...

As you know Post Offices are a cornucopia of products and services...

E.G. Stamps, Travel Insurance, Foreign Currency, Mobile Phones, Broadband, etc, etc, etc...

However out of everything that is 'sold' by your humble Post Office, there is only 1 product that is discreetly their own... What is it???

Answer at the end of the workshop (and possibly a prize!!!)



A Post Office, A Local Authority... odd combination – or is it?

Before I take you back to where our journey began, I would just like to pose a question for you to ponder...

Why has this not been done before?



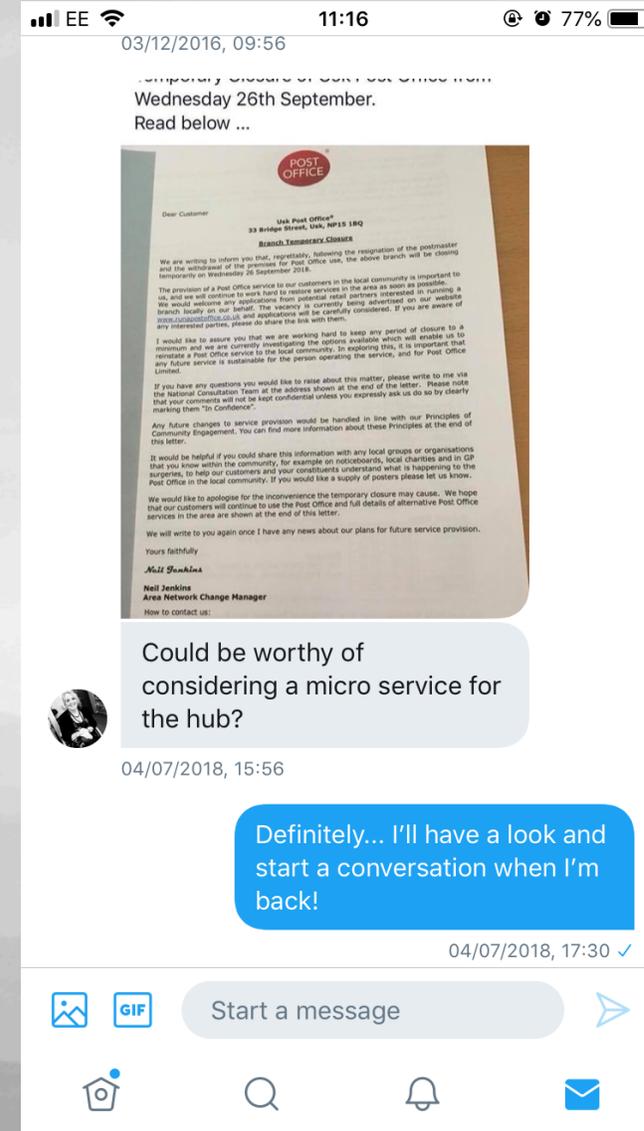
Background...

- Monmouthshire County Council adopted a Community Hub model for delivering certain frontline services in 2015.
- We amalgamated our One-Stop-Shop service and Libraries in to single points of contact for our residents in each of our main population centres (Abergavenny*, Caldicot, Chepstow, Monmouth & Usk)
- Community Education was brought within the Hubs mid 2016
- Ironically as we did our best to move away from One Stop Shops, our Hubs are more of a One Stop Shop now than ever for front line customer service!



It started with a Tweet!

- 4th July 2018, I was first made aware that the current PO in Usk was planned to close in September, a colleague dropped me a message via Twitter... whilst I was on holidays!
- Followed 24 hours later with an email from the deputy leader of the council... to which I replied, with words to the effect of...
- No thanks!!!



- On my return to work news broke about Barclays, which signalled its closure for October 2018 and certainly changed my thinking.
- Over the previous 18 month period two other banks closed.
- Post Office became the centre for all personal and business banking, as well as a vital service for all residents in receipt of a pension who had opted not for it to be paid in to a bank account. As well as obviously servicing the postage needs (and other associated products) of the community.
- Post September 2018, there would be two accessible ATMs and that's it!
- It was time to make a phone call...



- Initial conversations started in late August 2018
- The big problem – current provision wished to close late September, last bank closing early October... What about Usk??? – contingency plans???
- Time to canvass... back stop agreement!
- O.M.G. Serious conversations and crunching numbers... TC & LA support agreed
- Due diligence
- Application process... not tough, not hard, just arduous! Suited to the private sector – not our corner of the word e.g. accounts information, proof of ownership of building, vetting and clearance, formal interview, etc...
- OMG Part 2...



We're opening a

**POST OFFICE
SWYDDDFAR POST**



- Quite a roller coaster ride from January...
- A whole new way of working for both parties.
- Installation – clockwork!
- OMG Part 3
- Current Post Office moved closing forwards... which moved our opening forwards!
- Wednesday 1st May 2019... we break new ground...



Sub Post Master!!!
(1st local authority managed and operated PO in the UK)



Lessons Learned???

....Back to the pop quiz - any ideas???

Questions???

Be nice, be kind, simple questions...
It has been a tough couple of months!

Thank you for your time!

