

# Nayland Community Store Ltd

## “Save Our Post Office” Campaign

update 12th July 2018



**“It may be possible to save the post office but we will fail if we do not find the team to run it”**

A full village Hall on July 12<sup>th</sup> was updated on progress:

- We have established Nayland Community Store Limited as the trading company
- We have won the contract to provide Post Office services
- We have won the contract to continue the mailroom and sorting office
- We have won a major grant from Suffolk County Council to help with the refurbishment cost
- We have achieved all regulatory and building consents
- We have a schedule of works agreed with the Post Office for the premises upgrade
- We have received more than 250 pledges and donations totalling £58,491
- We will have newspaper and sample retail sales from the village hall when the Post Office is closed for refit
- We have developed ideas for the retail shop
- We have some volunteers to work in the shop, but we need more

The meeting then considered the **three major challenges that must be overcome** if we are to achieve our goal and save our village post office:

First, we must conclude all the legal matters. We are still awaiting the final lease agreement and the asset sale agreement from the current postmistress. If we cannot agree these terms, then we cannot proceed.

Second, we must raise the money. In order to be financially viable for a proper business launch, we estimate we will need to raise £75,000 from the share sale. We currently have pledges at £58,491 so there is a potential funding shortfall. If we cannot raise the total sum we need, then we cannot proceed.

Finally, and critically, we must have the right people in place. This is a community venture. The current team have spent two years trying to make it possible to save the post office; now we need the team that will go forward and make it work. We need volunteers from the community to come forward and get involved in running the company, managing the retail business, helping to serve in the post office and shop and provide holiday cover for the post office, shop and newspaper deliveries. Sylvie Bond will continue as our lead Post Office employee and so far we have four fantastic volunteers to help out on a part time basis, but we need more. We also need people with good retail shop and retail management experience. If we cannot find these people soon, we cannot proceed.

Our ideas for what we might sell in the shop include: Lottery; sweets, ice creams and cold drinks; newspapers and some magazines; stationery; batteries, bulbs and chargers; cards, gift wrap and calendars; gifts; a pharmacy shelf; wines and garden consumables. We need to obtain all the appropriate licenses for that range.

### **Can you help?**

Specifically we need:

1. Firstly, we need a new board and executive team to make the business a success. Ideally a Chair and three other directors to make up the NCSL board of directors with retail, finance or business background. This team supported by other executive members and some staff will steer the business and build it successfully.
2. A retail manager to run the shop. Probably the equivalent of two and a half days per week. Some time will need to be spent in the shop to build displays, pricing and understanding what customers want and some time away buying and dealing with suppliers. This means building the stock profile the village wants to buy; managing suppliers and contracts. Stock management, stock ordering and taking deliveries. Giving direction to the volunteer staff and building the retail business alongside the Post Office business. This will be a paid role (minimum wage) funded for the first eighteen months from the initial sale of shares.
3. Volunteer shop staff. We need a pool of people to work in a rota to cover each day we are open. You would be greeting customers, helping them make choices and serving them. You will also help keep the stock properly displayed and priced as well as managing cash transactions and the till. Some volunteers will also need to be trained on Post Office systems in order to provide cover on that side of the business as well.
4. We intend to continue with the morning newspaper deliveries but must have a volunteer to learn the round and cover for holiday times.

If you think you can help in any way please contact Simon Carter on 07860 415532 or email [simon@simon-carter.com](mailto:simon@simon-carter.com) by 21<sup>st</sup> August. Your Village Post Office needs you!

### **Our time-line to completion now looks like:**

- 31st August complete all legal matters and exchange provisional contracts with Patsie Ford
- **11<sup>th</sup> September Village meeting to launch the share prospectus and sale of shares**
- 27<sup>th</sup> September to confirm we have achieved our funding target or if not then abandon the project
- 12<sup>th</sup> October the current Post Office will close for refurbishment
- **14<sup>th</sup> November the new Post office and shop will open for business**

**These dates are provisional on the assumption we solve the three challenges. We will communicate through the Post Office, village notices and social media if these dates are to be changed.**

**Simon Carter, Chair NCSL**