

P-04-618 Protection of Banking Services in Vulnerable Communities – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 21.05.2015

Please accept the considered points of members of the community in Llangollen as listed below for your consideration. Thank you.

1. It is detrimental to small businesses when local branch managers are stripped down to being little more than clerks because local knowledge of circumstances and, indeed, of long-term relationship within the community – ie trust – has been factored out and dehumanised, even though one of the key components of programmes such as Dragons' Den and The Apprentice are founded on evaluating the business people above the business ideas.
2. It's a UK-wide strategic vulnerability to abandon both personal and business finance to supermarkets who would undoubtedly identify a gap in the market in providing personal service in favour of their own financial services. My nightmare is towns with homes and a supermarket – and nothing else. We're heading that way.
3. On the issue of paying in. Years ago my bank had a paying in box for when the bank was closed. Basically you put the cash or cheque in a special envelope, filled in the details on the outside and posted it. Stan's post office counter uses the same principle you give them an envelope and they forward it to right bank, and give you a receipt.
4. The difficulty for small communities is making sure we are not disadvantaged by the decisions taken by money men who rarely set foot outside a major city unless it is to play golf or hunt something, and in either case they will have people to care to the boring things like actually paying cash to peasants.
5. Speaking as a member of the public, it really wouldn't bother me if all banks shut all their branches, provided that there are plenty of ATMs and there is a facility to pay in cash/cheques. The post office does this well, in fact with Stan's longer opening hours it is more convenient.
6. However, there is another issue that affects small towns that the minister and the bankers with their city-based lives haven't considered Small businesses.
7. For some reason the post office will not accept payments into business accounts, doesn't bother me my business is so small I use a personal account for it, but closing HSBC has caused some local businesses real problems. They have a choice, take the day's takings to Chirk, or change banks.
8. Maybe some have changed, but that's a nuisance and what guarantee have they that the bank they choose will not close in the near future. Pledges

about 'the last bank standing' don't guarantee it will be your bank, and actually put pressure on banks to close their branch before it is the last one.

9. Some businesses that are part of a group have a bigger problem, their banking arrangements are determined at head office level. North Wales Tourism for example (the group that runs the Tourist Info Centre) banks with HSBC and isn't going to change. Previously the TIC manager could nip across the road to HSBC with their takings, now she has to send a member of staff in a car to Chirk. This means staff out of the office for much longer, the need to have a car available and for the company to pay expenses. Some staff are unhappy about parking in Chirk and walking to the bank with a sackful of cash and will only go in pairs. But it is also not good practice these days to leave an office with only one member of staff on duty.