

**Meeting with MidCounties Coop on Tuesday 24th May**

As a part of our Economic and Sustainability work on the NP, a meeting was arranged with Jason Newitt (Watlington Manager) and Mark Bushell (District Manager) with Gill Bindoff and Peter Richardson attending for the NP

The points emerging were:

* The Co-op place a high value on the Watlington outlet classing it as a convenience store as opposed to a supermarket, despite the fact that turnover has dropped and reported an average transaction of £7 per person over the 6am to 11pm period
* The Co-op have plans to improve the shop in a variety of ways with considerable investment and we have presented media material on the Car Park Survey and other shops’ views which were well received and timely with regard to the strategy to be deployed
* The £8000 annually paid by the Co-op is seen as “bottom line” security but some concern was expressed in respect of securing *full value and a degree of discussion* on local issues
* Future decisions and policies should be channelled through the District manager in accordance with the policy of “Talk Local”
* The store has 22 deliveries per week under strict control
* We made the management well aware of the potential growth for Watlington and our growth and operation as a service centre
* The management are very concerned about the Post Office – they are unable to run it within the existing premises, but we floated the suggestion they might consider acquiring or leasing the existing building as a second outlet. This idea met with a degree of enthusiasm from both a marketing and space release viewpoint, and has a number of plus points
* We did raise the perceived public reaction when the Co-op took over the old paper shop premises and the Management are keen to move on from that
* The Co-op showed interest in supporting promotional ideas for improving the running of the Car Park and some of these are under consideration by the Infrastructure group in the next week
* The Co-op also showed a willingness to engage readily with the Community and indicated a willingness to support local fund raising such as the Paddock play equipment project

Peter Richardson

NP Admin Team

26 May 2016