



THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF ABERTILLERY & LLANHILLETH
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7 February 2019

Dear Sirs

Ref: Closure of Barclays branch in Abertillery

The Community Council at its meeting on 30 January 2019 discussed Barclays' recent announcement that it will be closing the Abertillery branch on 10 May 2019. The Community Council has received Barclays' "reasons for closure" document and remains extremely concerned at the planned closure of the branch and its massive and damaging effect on local people as well as businesses. Abertillery is not a well-connected city, it is a South Wales valleys town, which is already suffering from closures of banks, businesses, Post Offices, public transport, public toilets and other local facilities and where many people do not bank online and need to go into a local bank, on the high street.

Barclays is the last bank in Abertillery. Other banks have closed and moved out over the last few years. People have switched to Barclays, from other banks, because it is the only bank left in Abertillery. The closure of Barclays will leave many people, especially elderly people, people who cannot bank online as they do not have access to a computer or who are afraid of being scammed and people who do not have any transport, unable to do their banking or get

cash. Many local shops and other businesses trade in cash; many do not take electronic payments, so with people unable to get cash, this will also have a dramatic effect on the shops and the wider local economy of the area.

It has been suggested that people can go to the Post Office to do their banking. This is completely untenable, as the queues in the Post Office are already at breaking point and there is no privacy to discuss one's private financial issues, as there would be in a bank. It has been suggested that there are other Barclays branches in nearby towns such as Ebbw Vale or Blackwood, but this is of no help to people who do not have the ability to get there.


The Council has also heard that there had been a 3% reduction in counter transactions in the Abertillery branch. Councillors were very surprised that the bank could close, after such a small reduction in transactions over the counter. Others were surprised that there had been a reduction at all, with comments that there were queues of at least 12 people every time they visited the bank. Yet more raised the fact that a reduction in counter transactions was not surprising, given that the staff always encourage people to use machines located around the bank, e.g. to count coins or pay in cheques electronically, rather than going to the counter to speak to a member of staff. It must be asked, is a 3% reduction in counter transactions justification to close the branch and bring devastating consequences for the town, the wider area, its people and its businesses? Has total footfall (not simply counter transactions) been measured? Does Barclays have a sense of social responsibility?

Local councillors are elected to represent local people, as you know, and local councillors' concerns reflect those of many thousands of local residents, some of whom are currently, and others of whom are potential future customers of Barclays.

The Council therefore sincerely asks Barclays to reconsider and reverse their decision to close the Abertillery branch, as a matter of urgency.

I look forward to receiving your response and will forward it to all Community Councillors and others copied in.

Yours sincerely



Richard Gwinnell
Town Clerk
Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Council

cc: all Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Councillors

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