

GOOD EVENING EVERYONE, MR MAYOR, COUNCILLORS

MY NAME IS MADELINE TAYLOR AND I AM POST MISTRESS OF HATHERLEIGH POST OFFICE

MY HUSBAND I MOVED INTO HATHERLEIGH 13 YEARS AGO, WE JUST FELL IN LOVE WITH THIS UNIQUE HISTORIC MARKET TOWN.

I WONT BE SAYING ANYTHING THIS EVENING THAT THE MAJORITY OF YOU WILL NOT HAVE BEEN THINKING SINCE THE PROPOSED PLANS FOR THE MARKET SIGHT WERE PUT ON DISPLAY IN THE COMMUNITY CENTRE. I WOULD LIKE TO ADD HERE THAT I THOUGHT THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION INFORMATION WAS VERY POORLY DISPLAYED

THERE IS A REAL FEAR IN HATHERLEIGH THAT IF THE MARKET CLOSES LOCAL BUSINESSES WILL FAIL AS TUESDAY, THE MAIN MARKET DAY, IS NOW THE ONLY BUSY DAY IN HATHERLEIGH. THE WHOLE TOWN COMES TO LIFE ON TUESDAYS. TUESDAY TRADE SUBSIDISES BUSINESSES FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE WEEK. MORE HOUSES DO NOT BRING MORE TRADE INTO THE TOWN, THIS HAS BEEN PROVEN BY THE NUMBER OF NEW RESIDENTS TO HATHERLEIGH THAT DO NOT USE LOCAL SHOPS.

THE MARKET NOT ONLY BRINGS IN TRADE FROM SURROUNDING AREAS BUT BUYERS AND SELLERS TRAVEL IN FROM NEIGHBOURING COUNTIES, SOMERSET BEING ONE IN PARTICULAR. I HAVE RELATIVES IN SOMERSET WHERE FARMERS AND RARE POULTRY BREEDERS ALL KNOW AND VISIT HATHERLEIGH MARKET ON A REGULAR BASIS. ALSO A GREAT NUMBER OF TOURISTS VISIT HATHERLEIGH MARKET. I ENCOUNTER THEM IN THE POST OFFICE EVERY WEEK. I WAS UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT PROMOTING TOURISM IN WEST DEVON WAS HIGH ON THE PRIORITY LIST OF THE COUNCIL BUT HERE WE ARE DISCUSSING THE LOSS OF A TOURIST ATTRACTION.

WE HAVE A WONDERFUL VARIETY OF SHOPS IN HATHERLEIGH, INCLUDING A POST OFFICE, GALLERY AND POTTERY. WE ALSO HAVE SEVERAL TEA ROOMS AND PUBS AND ALL HOUSED IN CHARMING BUILDINGS.

ALL THESE BUSINESSES SURVIVED THE DEVESTATING OUTBREAK OF FOOT AND MOUTH IN 2001, SHOWING GREAT STRENGTH OF CHARACTER BY THE OWNERS. LOCAL BUSINESSES IN THE TOWN AND TOURISM BUSINESSES IN THE AREA DEPEND ON THE MARKET AND IT HAS A REAL VALUE TO THE WHOLE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMUNITY OF WEST DEVON.

THERE ARE THE MANY STALL HOLDERS THAT NEED TO BE CONSIDERED HERE ALSO. THE STALL HOLDERS MARKET HAS BEEN INCREASING IN SIZE STEADILY. TALKING TO STALL HOLDERS THEY COME TO HATHERLEIGH BECAUSE IT IS THE ONLY MARKET OF ITS SIZE AND KIND IN WEST DEVON. I DO HAVE PHOTOGRAPHS OF TODAY'S MARKET THAT THE ARCHITECTS CAN TAKE AWAY WITH THEM AS I UNDERSTAND THAT SOME OF THE PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT HAVE NOT VISITED HATHERLEIGH MARKET ON A TUESDAY AND NOT EXPERIENCED FIRST HAND HOW BUSY THE MARKET IS.

HATHERLEIGH MARKET IS A TRADING CENTRE FOR THE WHOLE OF THE AREA AND A MAJOR TOURIST ATTRACTION. IT IS VITAL TO THE CONTINUATION OF THE RURAL ECONOMY, IT IS A FREE TRADING AREA, A PLACE WHERE REAL MARKET VALUES CAN BE DETERMINED AND A LOCAL MARKET WHERE PEOPLE CAN BUY REALLY FRESH AND LOCALLY PRODUCED FRUIT, VEGETABLES, FISH, MEATS CHEESES WITHOUT HAVING TO DRIVE FOR MILES. WITHOUT CRITICAL MASS, MANY STALLHOLDERS WOULD NOT CONTINUE TO COME AND WITHOUT ADEQUATE (FREE) PARKING MANY CURRENT CUSTOMERS WOULD NOT BOTHER TO COME.

THERE IS A PETITION IN TOWN AND ONLINE REGARDING THIS PROJECT, AT THE MOMENT WE HAVE CLOSE ON 1000, YES ONE THOUSAND SIGNATURES. THIS PETITION WILL BE ONGOING AND BOUGHT TO THE NEXT PUBLIC CONSULTATION, WHICH I HOPE WILL BE HELD ON A MORE SUITABLE DAY AND IN A MORE SUITABLE LOCATION.

THE NEXT CONSULTATION NEEDS TO BE HELD ON A TUESDAY AND SITUATED CLOSE TO THE MARKET. THERE ARE MANY SUITABLE AREAS WHERE THIS COULD BE ACHIEVED. THIS WOULD ALLOW STALL HOLDERS, FARMERS ETC TO HAVE ACCESS TO THE PROPOSED PLANS AS THEY WILL BE GREATLY AFFECTED TOO.

LOSING THE MARKET WOULD BE THE BEGINNING OF THE END FOR HATHERLEIGH AS WE KNOW IT AND LOVE IT.