

West End News

February 2012 Update

from West End Ward councillor

Fraser Macpherson

www.dundeewestend.com

Hawkhill by-pass : Two years ago when the Tesco Express opened at Hawkhill, at its east end, residents expressed concern about parking right outside the store on the busy by-pass. The police were also been in touch with me about the concerns.

The police's suggestion was for an extension to the barriers across the store entrance - a very sensible suggestion in my view.



So I asked the council for this and - through the Road Construction Consent process - the developer of the adjacent site (including the Tesco store and the Casino) was asked to provide the necessary safety barrier. Protracted negotiations over what I would consider a minor improvement have dragged on and, in short, the developer has been uncooperative in terms of providing the necessary barrier.

So full credit to the City Council's Head of Transportation who has broken the stalemate and advised me :

"To bring this matter to a conclusion I have agreed that Dundee City Council will complete these works as we do not wish to allow the unwelcome parking situation at Tesco to continue and will implement the barrier works in the coming weeks (before the end of March 2012)."

Windsor Street pavements : The Roads Maintenance Partnership has agreed to my request, made following representations from residents, to repair the damaged pavement on the east side of Windsor Street at its north end. I have also asked that the poor conditioned pavement further down the street is also repaired.

Another bank branch closes : Last month, I wrote to the Royal Bank of Scotland following concerns about possible closure of the student branch at Balfour Street and I have now expressed disappointment at a response I have received from the bank to reject calls to think again over the proposed closure of its branch at the university's student union.



The response I have received from Jeffrey Hartley, RBS's Head of Group Customer Relations, confirms the branch is indeed earmarked for closure and it appears the Royal Bank is adamant that it will not renege the well-used branch.

In his letter Mr Hartley says : **"I acknowledge that any news about a branch closure will be unwelcome, but I can assure you that this is not a decision which we take lightly. As we look to rebuild a sustainable bank, we must ensure that our branches are open where and when our customers want to use them. Regrettably, the Dundee University branch is not used to the same extent as the other branches in the area, and the branch has seen a substantial decline in usage over the last few years.**

RBS will maintain a presence in the local area, with our nearby branches on Dundee High Street and Perth Road continuing to offer a full banking service. Each of these branches is within one mile of the University. Additionally, customers can use our online, telephone and Smartphone banking services 24 hours a day.

Over the course of 2011, we came to an agreement with the Post Office which allows our customers to use their systems. Both personal and business customers can now use their debit cards to carry out balance enquiries and cash withdrawals at their local Post Office branch."

There's a certain sense of irony in that response from the bank as they suggest using local Post Offices. The Nethergate Post Office, very close to the university campus, was closed by Post Office Limited in 2008.

The decision to close the bank branch at the Student Union is really detrimental to the University of Dundee's students and staff. It's been a hugely busy branch over the years and it comes on top of the decision to close the Ninewells Hospital branch and the Lochee branch last year.

Despite being largely in public ownership, the bank doesn't seem much bothered about the public, the customers who rely on local branches. Coming in the wake of the furore over bankers' bonuses, I don't half feel the Royal Bank of Scotland, despite being over 80% in public ownership, is totally out of touch with public opinion. I have written back to Royal Bank of Scotland criticising the decision but have obtained an assurance that the bank will at least keep the much-used RBS ATM at the Student Union.