



### **Petition – Save Staines Hot Meal Service**

1. A petition was submitted to the Council on 11 November 2016 against the closure of the cafe at Staines Community Centre
2. The petition contains 92 signatures and in accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme, the matter is referred to Cabinet for consideration.
3. The Petition reads: "We the undersigned petition the Council to We the undersigned call upon Spelthorne Borough Council to reverse its decision to close the Hot Meals service at Staines Community Centre. This is a necessary asset for the elderly and disabled people of Staines.
4. Background:
  - Cabinet agreed to the proposal to change the cafe at Staines Community Centre from a hot meal service to a volunteer run coffee bar offering pre-prepared snacks. (Cabinet report 28 September 2016)
  - Myers have run the cafe at Staines Community Centre for 10 years, since it was first put out to tender after being a Council run facility.
  - Freshly cooked hot meals are served at around £6 per meal
  - Over the past 4 years the contract has been tendered for on 3 occasions but despite doing this in various ways (including using a specialist catering consultancy), no contractor has achieved the required standard. Myers have been appointed with various amendments to the contract in order to keep the service running.
  - During the last few years of Myers' contract, Spelthorne Borough Council has been taking on a larger and larger financial role in supporting the cafe, from paying all the utilities (originally split 50:50), to paying a subsidy of £500 per month in order to keep it running.
  - During the time of Myers' contract, they have lost a number of other contracts including school meals, care home catering and Runnymede Borough Council café, making their business model very different from when they started to present day.
  - Surrey County Council are looking at withdrawing funding from Older People's Services over the next 3 years. For Centres and Meals on Wheels could potentially be £100k

5. Reasons for the decision:

- Sarah who runs Myers Catering is in agreement that the cafe is not a realistic business option and fully understands the Council's decision not to continue with the hot meals. Sarah is in the process of closing her business and will not be continuing in this line of business.
- Despite the contract being put out to tender 3 times over the last 4 years, the contract has not been awarded due to no suitable bid being received each time.
- The number of hot lunches served at Staines Community Centre averaged at 18 meals per day in comparison with Fordbridge Centre and Greeno Centre which average between 25 and 46 meals per day.
- Of all the transactions in the café, only 17% were for hot lunches, 8% were for kitchen orders (sandwiches, jacket potatoes, salads etc.). Hot drinks accounted for 48% and snacks were 19%. The remaining 8% were for other transactions including desserts and soup
- With the proposed volunteer coffee bar, of the 106 transactions in the café daily (average number), 77 will still be provided for with the same/very similar products. Of the other 29 transactions, sandwiches will be available as an alternative, and also a range of discounts available at other eating establishments (detailed below in 6i).

Item	Daily Average	Continue in proposed café	comments
Drinks	52	Yes	
Snacks	20	Yes	
Kitchen orders	8	No	Sandwiches provided
Hot lunch	18	No	
Soup	3	No	Cup Soups provided
Alcohol	0.2	No	This is no longer provided with Myers
Desserts	5	Yes	Dessert types may vary
Total	106.2	77	

- Staines Town Centre has more than 50 places to eat offering something to suit all tastes and budgets.
- The majority of people using Staines Community Centre are mobile enough to be able to use the facilities in the town centre.
- The activities at the Centre aimed at keeping people physically and mentally active in order to look after their Well-being, are very popular and at capacity. Changes to the cafe means more activities can be offered

6. Further considerations:

- Following the announcement of the changes to the cafe, 4 complaints were received by the Council, all of whom were responded to with the same information. 3 of the original complainants have not signed the petition.
- Of those 92 who have signed the petition, 20 are Centre members, 72 are not members.
- A range of discounts and alternative hot meal options have been agreed:

- i) Debenhams – a free hot drink with any hot lunch (Inc. soup)
  - ii) The George –10% discount off anything from main menu
  - iii) The Methodist Church (opposite) - every Thursday will offer roast dinner, hot pudding + tea/coffee for £5
  - iv) The Thames Lodge - dish of the week for £6.95 – This could be lasagne or Shepherd's pie, beef stew or a chicken dish etc.  
Tea or coffee for £1.50  
A complementary soup of the day with any sandwich.  
10% discount on the normal menu.
  - v) Notcutts - 20% to disabled customers who will be taken by volunteer mini-bus (also being arranged). 10% discount to other members.
  - vi) Cafe One, Church Street - 10% discount off menu
- The petition and the proposals have been discussed with Ward councillors for Staines and they are all in full agreement that the proposed change is the best option in the circumstances.
  - Positive feedback to the proposed changes has been received by a number of Centre members (Appendix 1)

7. Further Information can be found on the attached background cabinet report (28 September 2016) – Appendix 2

### **Recommendation**

To continue with the proposed volunteer run coffee bar at Staines Community Centre

### **Report Author**

Janice Lowin

Joint Independent Living Manager