

To Whom It May Concern:

The Felpham History Group appreciates this opportunity to add our voices to the many in and beyond the village who are keen to support the initiative to “Save Felpham Post Office”. As a group we have been informally involved in the campaign since its start: and why would we not take an active interest in a facility that is so much involved with Felpham’s written and unwritten history and which belongs in the village’s continuing story?

We have made some investigations into the significance of the Post Office, tracing its contribution to the everyday life of people on this part of the south coast. These enquiries started earlier than the time it came to occupy its current premises, and fortuitously so, for they revealed that the village was once the place of residence of Sir Rowland Hill. As the person who is said to have devised the pre-paid postage stamp (issued in 1840) and who is more certainly credited with establishing the world’s first postal service, Hill merits “blue-plaque” commemoration. The Felpham Post Office had moved into its present building by the turn of the nineteenth century. Edwardian times saw a dame school in close proximity. If, as we think, the school was under the proprietorship of the post-mistress we are reminded of the literacy standards required of postal employees. More recently oral history has put us in touch with people who warmly recall collecting over the Post Office counter their own or relatives’ old age pensions and family allowances. In 1947 the latter were newly afforded to mothers and families.

Times change, as historians are well aware. The group’s reason for taking an interest in the Post Office’s history are not arcane, nor are our reasons for extending support to this initiative limited to the recording of milestones. Historical study has impressed us of the Post Office’s “more-than-institutional” importance. The snap-shots of its history above betoken a social, economic and cultural contribution to events that join past and present at local, national and international level. We are concerned to see our local Post Office’s re-invention for the twenty-first century and are confident that the community-based initiative envisaged by the preservation campaign is the path to the future.

Yours sincerely,

Lorraine Stevens  
Chairperson,  
Felpham History Group.