

# Campaigners step up bid to stop bank closure

✘ A PRESSURE group has stepped-up its bid to halt the closure of the Royal Bank of Scotland branch in Juniper Green.

They believe the move is a major concern for local people, particularly as the Bank of Scotland have also closed their Currie branch.

Juniper Green, Currie and Balerno Community Councils have discussed with MPs and MSPs what options may be open to ensure continuation of face-to-face banking services in the Water of Leith valley.

The group have presented bank bosses with a list demands and claim small businesses and the elderly will be badly hit.

A statement from the pressure group said: “With the collapse of the Airdrie Savings Bank and the wholesale closures from other major banks it will be difficult to stem our own personal tide of bank closures which has seen RBS close Balerno, Riccarton and Colinton branches and HBoS close its office in Currie over the last couple of years. However, the campaign group are undaunted and are pursuing lines of action.

“We are applying pressure on RBS to provide a mobile van service for our communities.

“We are also discussing with RBS minimum requirements for banking services as part of the access to banking protocol, investigating with the Scottish Government a suggested solution of a combination of post office and credit union and seeking an alternative provider to come into the space vacated at the abandoned toilet site in Juniper Green.

“We remain concerned for the elderly who are unable to adopt

an online form of banking.

“Our vulnerable citizens require additional support for day-to-day living and our business community will find it inconvenient to deal with daily takings using alternative arrangements.

“Community groups need to take coinage in and out for events in our communities and there are those who do not trust the online version of banking as security remains an issue.”

On 11 January 2017 Joanna Cherry QC MP raised the issue at Prime Minister’s Questions:

“Across the UK many banks are accelerating their closure of local branches with adverse effects on vulnerable and older people and adverse effects on the high street. The Royal Bank of Scotland are closing down branches across Scotland, including Juniper Green and Chesser in my constituency. Local convenience stores are taking the strain, processing bills and often facing exorbitant bank charges for the privilege of doing that. Will the Prime Minister meet with me to discuss what might be done to make banking in the UK work for customers and the real economy?”

Joanna Cherry QC, MP said : “Banks are retreating from the high street, leaving elderly and vulnerable customers without access to financial services.

“Local Post Offices and Convenience Stores are increasingly being left to fill the gap for customers who want to pay bills in cash. Convenience stores themselves are being penalised with excessive business banking charges for depositing the cash that banks are no longer on the high street to process.

“Banks should serve our communities and local businesses. I have secured the Prime Minister’s commitment to look at the issue. The UK Government must act to ensure banks work for the real economy”

The pressure group invite comments by phone to Cliff Beevers on 0131 453 4517 or by email to [c.e.beevers@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:c.e.beevers@blueyonder.co.uk) or [chair@junipergreenc.org.uk](mailto:chair@junipergreenc.org.uk)