

Community bank option as RBS branch closure looms



Juniper Green where the RBS is set to close a branch just behind the bus stop.

Businesses and the public in the Pentland Hills area will this month be asked to back a bid to join a community bank.

The move follows the decision of the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) to close their Juniper Green branch which means there are no bank facilities in Balerno, Currie, Colinton and Juniper Green.

Two meetings are being organised by Juniper Green Community Council to canvas support. On Tuesday 23 May 2017 local businesses and representatives of community groups are invited to attend a meeting at 7.00pm in the function room of Porteous Family Funeral Directors at 589 Lanark Road. Call Mark Porteous on 0131 453 4535 to book a place as catering is being provided and space is limited.

And on Wednesday 31 May 2017 at 8.00pm a public meeting has been arranged in Juniper Green Village Hall.

Audiences will hear about a fully licensed and Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) guaranteed community bank with a fully Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) in place.

Cliff Beevers, chairman of Juniper Green Community Council, said: "RBS closes in Juniper Green soon leaving Currie, Balerno, Colinton and Juniper Green without banking except by taking a bus into town or going to a RBS branch in Corstorphine.

"This is not an option for many of the elderly and vulnerable

in our midst, some of whom are either unable or unwilling to go online.

“Juniper Green Community Council is keen to help local businesses who, from early June, they will be faced with a long trip each week to pick up float or deposit their takings.

“The Scottish Government’s solution to branch closures is either a mobile van service or a combination of credit union and Post Office. RBS has dismissed the request for a mobile van service.”

He added: “We have been talking to a number of community banks to see if there is a fit to retain face-to-face banking in the old fashioned, ethical way and we may now have a solution for businesses and the general public.

“The community bank will be somewhere for people to pay in cheques, bank cash, get cash, take out a loan and find other services too.

“If we don’t act now the moment will be lost. The scheme requires the people to back it, those in business, community groups and the elderly and disabled who were angry when RBS made their decision to close all their branches in the valley communities.”