



Kiosk and Tithe Barn

Before the kiosk was installed, public calls had to be made from the Lower Village Post office and early photographs (predating the kiosk) show a sign advertising this. These early photographs also show an absence of the pillar box, as the Victorian letter box was built into the wall, until it was stolen some years ago. The first public telephone facility in Heswall was situated in the front room of the Lydiate Farm, in the background of the photo but the Lower Village Post Office had a telephone connection by 1911.

As soon as the Heswall Society became aware of the threat to the kiosk, it started a vigorous campaign to save it. BT has a scheme whereby charities can purchase a disused kiosk for a nominal consideration, provided certain conditions are met. The Society's Committee decided that taking ownership would be the best way to preserve it. We did not realise the number of formalities needed. We soon found that, rather unusually, the kiosk is not located on public land. This meant a lease was required to protect the interests of both the Society and the landowner. Fortunately the landlord was extremely helpful and reasonable, and a local solicitor very kindly offered his services pro bono to cover the legal aspects. The lease then had to be registered with the Land Registry which required a detailed location plan to be drawn up, facilitated by a local architect. Finally all the paperwork was completed and we received confirmation from BT that all is in order and that they will confirm Society ownership of the kiosk once the equipment has been removed, although we have been warned that this will take some time.

Meanwhile Mark Gorton from the Heswall Today website has been campaigning strongly to save the kiosk. He set up a crowdfunding initiative to help pay for the repair of the kiosk. The teak door frame has rotted at the bottom and needs to be replaced. The exterior needs painting – the classic red colour has faded badly, and the kiosk looks a very poor relative to the adjacent pillar box which has just been repainted by Royal Mail in true pillar box red. In this funding drive Mark was strongly supported by Caroline Cartwright from the Lower Village shop and newsagents. A total of £425 was raised, which will be an enormous help towards the refurbishment.

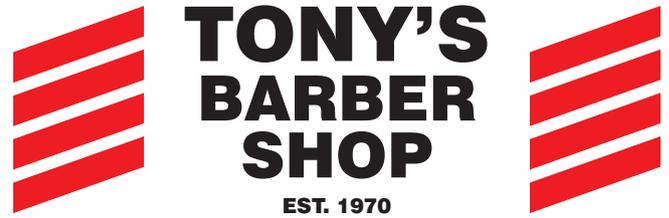
The Society's primary concern now is to repair and restore the kiosk. A new door frame, glazing bars and paint has been ordered. It is an indication of the value and interest placed on preserving the heritage of these kiosks that all spare parts are still available. A local painter has been contracted to repaint the kiosk once the door has been repaired. A grand opening event is being planned.

There has been much interest in possible future uses for the kiosk, and a quick search on the internet by the interested reader will demonstrate the ingenious ways community groups around the UK have found to repurpose the kiosk into a community asset. In the short term the Society will focus on restoring the kiosk to its former glory, and its enduring objective is to preserve it as an important and iconic part of the street scene.

Any ideas for future uses will be considered, but these will need to be consistent with preserving the heritage and security of the kiosk and also to meet the approval of the landlord.

The authors and the Heswall society would like to thank Mark Gorton, Caroline Cartwright, Richard Wynne Davies and Nick Ellis for all their help in securing the future of the kiosk.

Submitted by Roger Lane and Jenny McRonald (roger.m.lane@btinternet.com or 0151 342 9269) on behalf of the Heswall Society, which was established in 1953 "for the public benefit to conserve the heritage of the Ward of Heswall". For more details of membership and activities please call Roger Lane or visit theheswallsociety.org.uk



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