



Dear Customer

Local public consultation - Have your say

**Antrim Post Office
27-28 Castle Centre, Antrim, BT41 4AR**

I am writing to confirm that, after careful consideration of the feedback received and all other relevant factors, we have decided to proceed with our decision to permanently close Antrim Post Office.

As part of our consultation review, we engaged with the Consumer Council Northern Ireland, the independent statutory consumer watchdog, who raised significant concerns on the loss of the Post Office presence in the Antrim town centre. As part of our consultation feedback review process and to address concerns of customers who rely on city centre location, we will now be advertising on our website for the opportunity to run a local branch service in the immediate area of the closing branch. It is important that any future service be fit for purpose, in the right place for customers, and commercially sustainable for the person operating the service, and for Post Office Limited. As detailed in our consultation proposal, we remain confident there will be adequate service provision in the area once Antrim Post Office branch closes, but we also recognise the importance of Post Office services to the local area, particularly for our more vulnerable customers.

We would welcome any applications from potential retail partners interested in running a branch locally on our behalf. The vacancy is currently being advertised on our website www.runapostoffice.co.uk and applications will be carefully considered. If you are aware of any interested parties, please do share the link with them.

Any possible new service would be subject to Post Office receiving an application and completing its application process successfully and it is unlikely that this would be before Antrim branch needs to close. We are working closely with the postmasters of the alternative branches to make sure that they are ready to meet the additional footfall and maintain the high quality of service our customers are used to. We will monitor usage at the alternative branches to ensure customer needs continue to be met.

I would like to thank everyone who took the time to let us have their comments and provide information. All the feedback we received helped us to better understand the views of customers and their representatives and this was considered, along with all other relevant factors, in making our decision. A summary of the key issues raised in the consultation and our response to each of them is enclosed, along with an information sheet providing further details about alternative branches in the area.

The Castle Centre location will not be available for Post Office use from 27 November 2023 and to allow us to fully vacate the premises, Antrim Post Office branch will close at 17:30 on Wednesday 15 November 2023.

You can also find a copy of this letter on our website at postofficeviews.co.uk. When entering the website, you will be asked to enter the code for this branch: **004702**

Posters will now be displayed in branch to let customers know about this decision.

Your sincerely

Pete Marsh

Pete Marsh
Retail Operations Director
Post Office Limited

comments@postoffice.co.uk

postofficeviews.co.uk

FREEPOST Your Comments

**To get this information in a different format, for example, in larger print, audio or braille
call 03452 66 01 15 or Textphone 03457 22 33 55.**

Appendix A – Response to Local Public Consultation

Consultation started 2 August 2023

Consultation ended 13 September 2023

Consultation responses

- 348 responses from customers and local representatives

Key issues raised

- Getting to the alternative branches and access inside
- Parking
- Staffing
- Range of products and services

Response to issues raised

Getting to the alternative branches and access inside

With any closure it's inevitable that whilst some customers will have an easier journey to the alternative locations, regrettably others will have further to travel. All the alternative branches are well served by public transport. For customers using their own transport, we are satisfied that there are parking facilities at each of the alternative branches. There is also a disabled hub situated opposite the Post Office that provides mobility scooters and wheelchairs for older and disabled people, which can be used following registration and assessment.

Access both into and within the alternative branches meet Post Office Ltd.'s own accessibility standards and all applicable legislation. There is level access with automatic doors at the entrance of the alternative branches. There is enough space for Post Office customers, including wheelchair users, to move around all the branches and the entrance areas and route to the Post Office serving point will be kept free of obstructions.

Parking

Parking and the availability of parking spaces are problems faced generally in many locations nationwide. Whilst the availability of parking spaces is outside the direct control of Post Office Limited. A further review of parking has been carried out and has confirmed that parking is available at the alternative branches, Ballymena Road, Greystone Road and Muckamore all offer dedicated disabled parking bays. We will approach the postmasters at Parkhall and Balleymena Road to ask if they would be willing to make any improvements to car park markings and or disabled parking and at Balleymena Road a clearly marked pedestrian walkway.

For customers using their own transport, we are satisfied that the provision of parking at each alternative branch will meet customer demand.

Staffing

Staff at the alternative branches are fully trained in Post Office transactions and staffing levels will be reviewed and carefully aligned to meet customer demand. Staff will receive on-going training on products and services, as well as general operational and service-related matters. Postmasters who operate branches on our behalf must ensure adequate staff availability as part of their agreement with Post office Limited. This includes respecting customer confidentiality and adhering to the stringent security procedures which will be put in place to protect staff and customers. Additionally, any staff that will handle Post Office transactions will also have completed compliance training for a number of areas, including Data Protection and Mail Handling.

Range of products and services

We are confident that the alternative branches have the capacity to meet customer demand and cater for additional customers, offering a wide range of Post Office products and services. The nearest post office branch to offer all products and services available at Antrim town centre is Randalstown which is approximately 5.3 miles away. Post Office understands that some customers will need to travel further for some travel or identity services. Muckamore branch offers many of these services with only the need to travel to Randalstown for passport check & send; on demand travel insurance and on demand currency other than Euros/Dollars.

The alternative branches offer extended opening hours providing access to services at convenient times to better suit customer demand and we are satisfied that the branches have sufficient capacity to absorb additional business and meet the needs of local businesses and personal customers. The counter coverage amongst the alternative branches has been reviewed, based on the regular customer numbers at Antrim Post Office and we believe these will meet the demands of customers. To ensure customer needs continue to be met, we will monitor waiting times and usage at the alternative branches and continue to review service provision in the area.

All Post Office branches offer free access to cash for the major high street banks and customers will be able to use their debit card to withdraw cash at the counter.

Alternative branches

The latest available branch information, including additional alternatives Post Office services in the area, can be found on our website www.postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder

Ballymena Road Post Office

Spar Store
15 Ballymena Road
Antrim
BT41 4JG

Services

A range of products and services will be available, please see service list for further details.

Access

This branch has wide automatic doors and level access at the entrance. Low level pin pad and hearing loop will be available.

Opening times

Mon - Thu	09:00 - 17:00
Fri	09:00 - 17:30
Sat & Sun	Closed

Getting there

Approximately 650 meters from Antrim Post Office branch, along varied terrain. Parking is available outside the branch with a dedicated disabled bay. Public transport is available to and from the surrounding area.

Parkhall Post Office

Spar Store
1 Parkhall Shopping Centre
Queens Road
BT41 1AJ

Services

A range of products and services will be available, please see service list for further details.

Access

This branch has wide automatic doors and level access at the entrance. A low-level pin pad and hearing loop will be available.

Opening times

Monday	09:00 – 18:00
Tue - Fri	08:00 – 18:00
Saturday	08:00 – 14:00
Sunday	Closed

Getting there

Approximately 1.3 miles from Antrim Post Office branch, along varied terrain. Parking is available at the branch. Public transport is available to and from the surrounding areas.

Greystone Road Post Office

Spar Store
8 Greystone Shopping Centre
Antrim
BT41 1JW

Services

A range of products and services will be available, please see service list for further details.

Access

This branch has wide automatic doors and level access at the entrance. Low level pin pads and hearing loops will be available.

Opening times

Mon – Sun	08:00 – 20:00
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Getting there

Approximately 1.4 miles from Antrim Post Office branch, along varied terrain. Parking is available at the branch with dedicated disabled parking. Public transport is available to and from the surrounding areas.

Muckamore Post Office

Centra Store
126 Belfast Road
Antrim
BT41 2BA

Services

A range of products and services will be available, please see service list for further details.

Access

This branch has a wide automatic door and level access at the entrance. Low level pin pads will be available.

Opening times

Mon - Sat	06:00 – 23:00
Sun	08:00 – 22:00

Getting there

Approximately 2.1 miles from Antrim Post Office branch, along varied terrain. Parking is available to the side to the branch with two disabled bays. Public transport is available to and from the surrounding areas.

Post Office services available					
For information about product availability call 03457 223344. For details of maximum value of transactions, please speak to the operator.					
	Antrim	Ballymena Road	Parkhall	Greystone Road	Muckamore
Mail					
First & Second Class mail	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Stamps, stamp books (1 st class 6 & 12 only, 2 nd class 12 only)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Special stamps (Christmas issue only) & postage labels	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Signed For	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Special Delivery	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Home shopping returns	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Inland small, medium & large parcels	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Parcelforce Express Service	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
British Forces Mail (BFPO)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
International letters (incl. Tracked & Signed)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
International parcels up to 2kg & printed papers up to 5kg	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Parcelforce Worldwide International parcels	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Articles for the blind (inland & international)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Royal Mail redirection service	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Local Collect	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Drop & Go	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Withdrawals, deposits and payments					
All personal and business banking cash withdrawals, deposits, balance enquiries & enveloped cheque deposits (card, barcoded or manual) up to a maximum value.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Postal orders	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
MoneyGram	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Change giving	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bill payments (card, barcoded or manual)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Key recharging	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Driving					
Vehicle Tax	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓
International Driving Permits	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓
Licences					
Document Certification Service	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓
Travel					
Pre-order travel money	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
On demand travel money	✓	✗	✗	Euros	Euro/Dollar
Travel insurance referral	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
On demand travel insurance	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Passport Check & Send	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Other					
Mobile Top-ups & E vouchers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
National Lottery Terminal	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓
Payment by cheque	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Products marked ✗ are available at Randalstown Post Office , 44 New Street, Randalstown, Antrim, BT41 3AF					
Opening times: Mon – Sun 08:00 -20:00					

Principles of Community Engagement on changes to the Post Office network (extract)

A full version of this document is available on our Consultation Hub - postofficeviews.co.uk

We are committed to engaging and supporting our customers and their representatives as we make changes to the Post Office network. The following principles will be adopted when communicating about changes to your local Post Office branch.

We will **Consult** where we are seeking feedback on proposals prior to a decision being made on the:

- Permanent closure of a Post Office branch¹
- Permanent relocation of a Post Office branch (including the franchising of a Directly Managed branch to a new site)

We will carry out a six-week² local public consultation, informing customers, locally elected representatives³, Consumer Advocacy Bodies and selected charities⁴ of the proposal. This information will also be made available online and for a Directly Managed branch a press release will be issued to local media. We will ask locally elected representatives to share information with other key community outlets (such as notice boards, local charities, magazines, GP surgeries etc.).

The consultation will ask specific questions on areas where we would like feedback on access to Post Office services and will confirm when the change will happen if the decision is made to proceed. We will provide clear information on any changes to services as well as access to and into the new branch.

We welcome all feedback with the following factors being taken into account in making our decision, which we expect to make within four weeks of the close of consultation:

- Customer access to, into and inside the new or alternative branch/branches with particular regard to vulnerable consumers
- Any local community issues which could be affected by or affect the proposal

At the end of the consultation process we will write to locally elected representatives, Consumer Advocacy Bodies and respondents to the consultation (where practical) to confirm our decision and provide a summary of key issues raised with a clear response to each. This information will be made available online and in branch (where possible).

These Principles have been agreed with Citizens Advice, Consumer Scotland and the General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland; the independent statutory consumer watchdogs.

What to do if you feel these Principles haven't been followed:

Please get in touch so we can investigate your complaint. We'll explain in our reply whether we believe we have followed our Principles of Community Engagement and will provide you with the contact details for the relevant consumer watchdog (Citizens Advice, Consumer Scotland or the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland) if you're not satisfied with our response. The watchdog will independently assess whether we have followed the Principles of Community Engagement process (rather than the decision itself) and recommend any actions with respect to the complaint.

Postofficeviews.co.uk Comments@postoffice.co.uk

FREEPOST Your Comments

Call: 03452 66 01 15 Textphone: 03457 22 33 55

¹ There may be a small number of cases where due to circumstances outside our control we have no option other than to permanently close a branch in a particular location. In these cases, the consultation will seek feedback on alternative Post Office service provision in the area.

² If the consultation includes more than four weeks in July in Scotland and Northern Ireland or more than four weeks in August in England and Wales, we will extend the period by one calendar week. We will not start any local public consultation during the two-week period which includes the Christmas and New Year bank holidays.

³ Locally elected representatives include but are not restricted to the Member of Parliament, Scottish Parliament, Welsh Parliament, or Northern Ireland Assembly, Local Authority Chief Executive, Ward Councillors, Parish or Community Council.

⁴ Selected charities are local Citizens Advice, Age UK, Northern Ireland's Disability Action and Northern Ireland's Rural Community Network. All parties referred to in ³ and ⁴ above are encouraged to share all information with local groups and organisations who they believe have an active interest in changes to their local Post Office.