



Dear Customer

Branch Temporary Closure

**Ashford Road Post Office
126 - 128 Ashford Road, Bearsted, Maidstone, ME14 4LX**

We are writing to inform you that, regrettably, following the resignation of the agent and the withdrawal of the premises for Post Office use, the above branch will be closing temporarily on Wednesday 7 February 2024 at 13:00.

The provision of a Post Office service to our customers in the local community is important to us, and we will continue to work hard to restore services in the area as soon as possible. I would like to assure you that we are currently investigating the options available which will enable us to reinstate a Post Office service to the local community. In exploring this, it is important that any future service is sustainable for the person operating the service, and for Post Office Limited. We have an applicant in progression, and we will update customers.

If you have any questions you would like to raise about this matter, please write to me via the National Consultation Team at the address shown at the end of the letter. Please note that your comments will not be kept confidential unless you expressly ask us to do so by clearly marking them "In Confidence". Any future changes to service provision would be handled in line with our Principles of Community Engagement. An extract relating to Notification is available at the end of this letter.

We will display posters in the branch to inform customers.

If you are a local representative, it would be helpful if you could share this information through your social media channels and with any local groups or organisations that you know within the community, for example on noticeboards, local charities and in GP surgeries, to help our customers and your constituents understand what is happening to the Post Office in the local community. If you would like a supply of posters, please let us know.

We would like to apologise for the inconvenience the temporary closure may cause. We hope that our customers will continue to use Post Office services and details of alternative Post Office branches in the area are shown at the end of this letter. The latest available branch information can be found on our website, www.postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder

If you are a local representative, we will write to you again once we have any news about our plans for future service provision.

Yours faithfully

Noah Rai

**Noah Rai
Network Provision Lead**

How to contact us:

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.

Alternative branches

**Some branches may need to make changes to their opening hours.
The latest available branch information can be found on our website**

www.postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder

Spires Centre Drop + Collect Post Office

Premier Store
2 Spires Centre
Deringwood Drive
Downswood
Maidstone
ME15 8XW

Services

Offers a range of services, however, excluding, a comprehensive range of Travel Money, Vehicle Tax, Passport Check & Send, and On Demand Travel Insurance.

Opening times

Monday – Sunday	07:00 – 21:00
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Access

This branch has a wide door and access via a step at the entrance.

Internally, there is a hearing loop.

Getting there

This Post Office service is located approximately 0.9 miles away from Ashford Road branch, along varied terrain. Parking is available for customers at the rear of the branch. There is a regular bus service available between Ashford Road branch and this Post Office service. The nearest bus stop is approximately 55 metres away.

Grove Green Post Office

6 Minor Centre
Groveswood Drive North
Weaving
Maidstone
ME14 5TQ

Services

Offers, National Lottery, Euros and Dollars On Demand Travel Money, however, excluding, a comprehensive range of Travel Money, Passport Check & Send, Vehicle Tax, On Demand Travel Insurance.

Opening times

Monday – Friday	09:00 – 12:00 13:00 – 17:30
Saturday	09:00 – 12:30
Sunday	Closed

Access

This branch has a wide door and access via a step at the entrance.

Internally, there is a hearing loop.

Getting there

This Post Office service is located approximately 1.9 miles away from Ashford Road branch, along varied terrain. There is a large car park within the shopping outlet with designated disabled parking. There are local buses serving in the surrounding area.

Willington Post Office

431 Willington Street
Maidstone
ME15 8HD

Services

Offers, National Lottery, Euros and Dollars On Demand Travel Money, however, excluding, a comprehensive range of Travel Money, Passport Check & Send, Vehicle Tax, On Demand Travel Insurance.

Opening times

Monday – Friday	06:00 – 17:30
Saturday	06:00 – 12:30
Sunday	Closed

Access

This branch has a wide door and level access at the entrance.

Internally, there is a hearing loop and space for a wheelchair.

Getting there

This Post Office service is located approximately 2 miles away from Ashford Road branch, along varied terrain. There is parking available on the forecourt outside the branch for up to four cars. There are local buses serving in the surrounding area.

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 **Notify** - where we are informing customers of changes around:

- Opening hours
- Temporary closure¹ / temporary service interruption
- Re-opening of a temporarily closed branch in the same site
- Opening a new branch unrelated to a previous closure
- Location used by a Mobile Post Office within a community

We will display a poster in branch (or nearby if appropriate) to notify customers of the above changes, providing four weeks' notice. Where four weeks' notice is not possible, we will provide notice as soon as we are able to. For temporary closures we will include details of the nearest alternative Post Offices and our customer helpline/textphone.

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 We will provide an update to locally elected representatives if the status of the temporarily closed branch has not changed after 12 months.

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.

We notify locally elected representatives including 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, selected charities, local Citizens Advice, Age UK, Northern Ireland's Disability Action and Northern Ireland's Rural Community Network. They are also encouraged to share all information additionally with local groups and organisations who they believe have an active interest in changes to their local Post Office.