



Dear Customer

**Basford Post Office®
515 Etruria Road, Stoke on Trent, ST4 6HT**

Local public consultation decision

I'm writing to confirm that following a period of local public consultation and review we have made the decision to proceed with the move of the above Post Office into the Bargain Booze at 449 – 451 Hartshill Road, Stoke on Trent, ST4 6AB. When the move takes place, the shop name will change to Select Convenience store. The branch will be known as Hartshill Road Post Office and will be operated by a retail partner.

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 taken into account along with all other relevant factors, in making our decision. A summary of the feedback is enclosed along with an information sheet providing further details about the new branch.

After careful consideration of the feedback received, we remain confident that the layout and location of the new branch will continue to meet customer needs and deliver an excellent service, whilst securing the long-term viability of Post Office services in the local community.

The current branch will close at 17:30 on Tuesday 4 May 2021, with the new branch opening, at Select Convenience, 449 – 451 Hartshill Road, at 13:00 on Wednesday 5 May 2021. If there are any unforeseen schedule changes which mean these dates change, posters will be displayed in branch to let customers know.

During transfer of the branch customers requiring Post Office facilities may use any convenient Post Office service. Details of alternative Post Office branches are provided below for your convenience:

- Wolstanton Post Office, 125 High Street, Wolstanton, Newcastle, ST5 0EP
- Hanley Post Office, 255 - 257 The Potteries, Hanley, Stoke-On-Trent, ST1 1PS
- Milehouse Lane Post Office, 69 Milehouse Lane, Newcastle, ST5 9JZ

The latest available branch information can be found on our website,
www.postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder

This information is also available on the Post Office Consultation Hub at: postofficeviews.co.uk

We're carrying out this notification in line with our Principles of Community Engagement. A copy is available at the end of this letter.

Yours faithfully

Sarah Cottrell

**Sarah Cottrell
Network Provision Manager**

postofficeviews.co.uk

comments@postoffice.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 19 February 2020

Consultation ended 1 April 2020

Consultation responses

- 59 responses from customers

Key issues raised

- Distance, Route and Transport
- Location, Premises, Access and Space
- Parking
- Privacy, Staff, Counter, Queues, Products and Services

Response to issues raised

Distance, Route and Transport

The proposed new premises are located approximately 900 metres from the current site along varied terrain. With any relocation it is inevitable that whilst some customers will have an easier journey to the new location, regrettably others will have further to travel. We believe this relocation is most effective way to secure the long-term viability of Post Office services in Basford. Whilst there is no direct bus service from the current branch to the new proposed premises, there are local buses serving the surrounding area. There is a local community transport scheme, Door 2 Door Transport Service – VAST, which operates in the local area and may provide an alternative option for less able customers wishing to access the new branch. Further details, including how to register, are available on the website www.door2doortransport.org.uk, or via email info@door2doortransport.org.uk, and by telephone on 01782 621936. Details of the scheme will be displayed at the new branch.

Location, Premises, Access and Space

We recognise that some customers may have concerns about carrying out their Post Office business in a different type of environment from what they are used to. In making the decision following public consultation we have had to balance the comments and concerns raised against the need to ensure a commercially viable and sustainable service into the future. Like many high street retailers, we've had to develop our ways of working so that we can maintain Post Office services for our customers. The move of the Basford Post Office into a retail environment alongside the introduction of one of our local style branches will help secure the long-term future of Post Office services to the community in Basford.

The proposed premises is located in a small row of shops on Hartshill Road high street. Currently there is a step at the entrance to the proposed premises with a wide door. I'm pleased to confirm that the new operator will be making adjustments to improve access for customers. A portable ramp will be available for any customers who are unable to manage the step. A signage will be installed to let customers know that the portable ramp is available at the entrance and explaining how to request it. When the new Post Office opens a bell will also be installed for customers to ring for assistance and both this and the signage will be accessible to wheelchair users and customers with mobility issues.

Inside, the new branch will be built in line with Post Office specifications, making sure there is sufficient space for the new style local Post Office to operate alongside the retail offer. We will be working closely with the new operator on the internal layout to make sure there is clear access into the premises. Aisles and the queuing area will be kept free from obstructions and adequate room will be provided for customers to move around and access Post Office services without difficulty.

Parking

Whilst I have considered the comments raised about parking and peak time traffic congestion in the area surrounding the new location, it is fair to say that this is a problem faced generally in many locations nationwide. As I am sure you will understand the availability of parking spaces is outside the direct control of Post Office Limited. However, I have conducted a further review of parking and I can confirm that time restricted roadside parking is available outside the proposed premises and nearby. I am therefore satisfied that parking at the new branch will continue to meet the needs of customers using the Post Office.

Privacy, Staff, Counter, Queues, Products and Services

Although the local branch is a more modern way of offering Post Office services, it in no way compromises the professional service standards that we aim to provide at all of our branches. The staff training approaches used are of the same high standard as those undertaken in all our branches. 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.

Staff will be fully trained with staffing levels aligned to meet customer demand particularly at peak times. We will also be working closely with the new operator to make sure an appropriate level of privacy is provided for Post Office customers. For example, we discuss issues like queue layout and asking customers to stand back from the counter whilst they are waiting for service. Similarly, with security, as with any other branch in our network there would be strict guidelines and measures put in place to safeguard customers, staff and the cash and stock entrusted to the operator's care. Also staffing levels are aligned to meet customer demand particularly at peak times.

We acknowledge the concerns made about anti-social behaviour in the area. Although such matters are outside our direct control and are for the relevant authorities and local police to resolve, Post Office takes security very seriously. While we cannot go into specific details around our security arrangements strict guidelines and measures would be in place and we take every physical precaution, within our branches, to provide a safe and secure environment for both our customers and staff. The new operator will engage with the community police in the event of any anti-social behaviour outside and around the Select Convenience Store.

It is important to explain that we have a number of partnerships with various types of retailers and appreciate that our customers may have certain personal or religious beliefs. However, we are looking for the best way to keep the Post Office within the local area, taking into consideration access for all our customers and also looking for the most viable option. The Select Convenience store is a supporter of The Drinkaware Trust, which is a charity dedicated to campaigning and educating consumers to reduce alcohol harm and also operate a policy of 'Challenge 25', where any customer purchasing alcohol who appears to be younger than 25 will be asked for identity/and proof of age.

The new local style Post Office will operate from a Post Office serving point located at the retail counter, enabling customers to carry out a wide range of Post Office products and services alongside retail transactions. I am also pleased to let you know that we are enhancing the range of products which will be available at the new branch and customers will still be able transact manual banking, Royal Mail and Parcelforce International Services. Additionally, cheques will continue to be accepted as a method of payment. The full range of Post Office products and services are available at Wolstanton Post Office and Hanley Post Office.

The change also means that local residents will benefit from significantly longer opening hours, including Saturday afternoon, Sunday opening and longer opening times throughout the week, allowing customers to spread their visits and access our services seven days a week and at times that suit them better. Full details of the new branch are provided at the end of this letter together with a list of the products and services which will be available.

With regards to the post box, our normal procedure is to inform Royal Mail of our proposal as they are responsible for all matters relating to the delivery and acceptance of mail including the siting of post boxes. The decision on whether to relocate or install a new Post Box is therefore for them to make and as a separate business to Post Office Ltd they will have their own procedures to follow, which may include submission of planning applications and consideration of other utilities in the area.

Appendix B

| Hartshill Road Post Office information sheet | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|-----|---------------|-----|---------------|-----|---------------|-----|---------------|-----|---------------|-----|---------------|-----|---------------|
| Address | Select Convenience Store 449-451 Hartshill Road Stoke on Trent ST4 6AB | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Post Office Opening hours | <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Mon</td> <td>09:00 – 21:00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tue</td> <td>09:00 – 21:00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wed</td> <td>09:00 – 21:00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Thu</td> <td>09:00 – 21:00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fri</td> <td>09:00 – 21:00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sat</td> <td>09:00 – 21:00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sun</td> <td>10:00 – 21:00</td> </tr> </table> | Mon | 09:00 – 21:00 | Tue | 09:00 – 21:00 | Wed | 09:00 – 21:00 | Thu | 09:00 – 21:00 | Fri | 09:00 – 21:00 | Sat | 09:00 – 21:00 | Sun | 10:00 – 21:00 |
| Mon | 09:00 – 21:00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tue | 09:00 – 21:00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Wed | 09:00 – 21:00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Thu | 09:00 – 21:00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Fri | 09:00 – 21:00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sat | 09:00 – 21:00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sun | 10:00 – 21:00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Distance | 900 metres away from the current branch, along varied terrain. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Products & Services | A wide range of products and services will still be available. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Serving positions | There will be a Post Office serving point provided for use at the retail counter and available during shop opening hours. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Accessibility | <p>Access and facilities Currently there is a step at the entrance to the proposed premises with a wide door.</p> <p>A bell and signage will be installed at the entrance to the proposed premises and a portable ramp will be available on request.</p> <p>Internally, there will be a hearing loop and space for a wheelchair.</p> <p>Parking Time restricted roadside parking is available outside the proposed premises.</p> <p>Buses There is no direct bus service between Basford branch and the proposed premises. However, there are local buses serving the surrounding area.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Retail | Convenience store | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Date of move | 13:00 on Wednesday 5 May 2021 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Hartshill Road Post Office® services available

For information about product availability call 03457 223344. For details of maximum value of transactions, please speak to the operator.

| | New branch |
|---|--|
| 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 | ✓ |
| Express & contract parcels | ✓ |
| British Forces Mail (BFPO) | ✓ |
| International letters & postcards (inc. 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 | |
| Post Office Card Account | ✓ |
| All personal and business banking cash withdrawals, deposits, balance enquiries & enveloped cheque deposits (card, barcoded or manual). | ✓ |
| Postal orders | ✓ |
| Moneygram | ✓ |
| Change giving | |
| Bill payments (card, barcoded or manual) | ✓ |
| Key recharging | ✓ |
| Licences | |
| Rod fishing licences | ✓ |
| Travel | |
| Pre-order travel money | ✓ |
| On demand travel money | Euros |
| Travel insurance referral | ✓ |
| Payment by cheque | |
| Mobile Top-ups & E vouchers | ✓ |
| Products marked ✖ are available at Wolstanton Post Office, 125 High Street, Wolstanton, Newcastle, ST5 0EP | Opening times: Mon, Tue, Thu & Fri 08:00 - 18:00 Wed 08:00 - 17:30 Sat 08:00 - 16:00 |
| Products marked ✖ are available at Hanley Post Office, 255 - 257 The Potteries, Hanley, Stoke-On-Trent, ST1 1PS | Opening times: Mon - Fri 09:00 - 17:30 Sat 09:00 - 12:30 |

Principles of Community Engagement on changes to the Post Office network

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.

We will **Engage** - where we are seeking feedback on a decision that has been made on:

- Re-opening of a temporarily closed branch in a new location (where the branch has been closed for more than three months)
- Franchising of a Directly Managed branch in its existing site

While the decision to proceed will have already been made, we will welcome suggestions about specific aspects of the change such as access arrangements and the internal layout. We will provide four weeks' notice or, where extenuating circumstances prevent this, we will provide as much notice as possible.

During this period, we will display a poster in branch and provide information online. We will contact locally elected representatives², the Consumer Advocacy Bodies and selected charities³, providing clear information on any changes to services or access arrangements at the branch. We will ask locally elected representatives to share information with other key community outlets (such as notice boards, local charities, magazines, GP surgeries etc.). We will publish the outcome of the engagement online and in branch, providing a summary of key issues raised with a clear response to each and any changes made to our original plans.

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

- Permanent closure of a Post Office branch⁴
- 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-week⁵ local public consultation, informing customers, locally elected representatives, Consumer Advocacy Bodies and selected charities 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, Citizens Advice 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, Citizens Advice 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

¹We will provide an update to locally elected representatives if the status of the temporarily closed branch has not changed after 12 months.

² Locally elected representatives include but are not restricted to the Member of Parliament, Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly, or Northern Ireland Assembly, Local Authority Chief Executive, Ward Councillors, Parish or Community Council.

³ 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 2 and 3 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.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.