



Dear Customer

Local public consultation - Have your say

**Castle Hedingham Post Office
7 St James Street, Castle Hedingham, Halstead, CO9 3EJ**

We are proposing to move the above Post Office branch to a new location - The Village Shop, 5 St James Street, Castle Hedingham, Halstead, CO9 3EJ, where it would continue to be operated by the existing postmaster.

Why are we proposing this move?

The postmaster’s lease at the current premises is due to expire. Subsequently, in order to secure a more sustainable service to our customers in Castle Hedingham, the postmaster has identified an opportunity to move the Post Office service to a new premises on the same road nearby. Subject to consultation, the new premises would incorporate Castle Hedingham Post Office within The Village Shop.

Our postmaster firmly believes that the move would help secure continued access to Post Office services, as well as to continue providing the same products, services and opening hours.

Our priority is to safeguard our services in the locality in the longer term and the relocation of Castle Hedingham Post Office would enable us to maintain a Post Office service to our customers in the village.

We’d like your help

We’re now starting a period of local public consultation and your feedback is important to us as it will help to inform our decision. For more details of the proposed services and accessibility, please see the branch information summary later in this consultation document.

What exactly are we consulting on?

We’d welcome your comments on the following areas:

- **How easy is it to get to the proposed new location?**
- **Are the new premises easy for you to get into and are they easily accessible once inside?**
- **Are there any other local community issues which you believe could be affected by or affect the proposed Post Office move?**
- **If the move were to proceed, is there anything we could do to make it easier for customers?**

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Local Public Consultation starts | 18 April 2023 |
| Local Public Consultation ends | 30 May 2023 |
| Proposed month of change | June/July 2023 |

You can share your views on the proposed change through our easy and convenient online questionnaire via postofficeviews.co.uk. When entering the website, you can use the search function to find the consultation for this branch either by branch name, postcode or the unique branch code **168116**

How to share your views:

Consultation Hub (postofficeviews.co.uk)

comments@postoffice.co.uk

Call: 03452 66 01 15

Textphone: 03457 22 33 55

FREEPOST Your Comments – N.B. This is the full postal address. Items sent by Freepost take 2 working days, please allow enough time for responses to be received.

Want to tell us what you think right here and now? Scan here.

If you don't have a QR code scanner on your phone, you can find one in your app store.



Good to know

- Customers would access Post Office services in a modern, open-plan environment alongside the The Village Shop premises.
- A Post Office serving point would be located in a dedicated area within the new premises.
- Working with the postmaster, we'd adapt the current store layout, fixtures and fittings to accommodate the Post Office.
- The same products and services would be available with the same opening hours so customers can access their Post Office when it's convenient. Customer satisfaction with this style of branch is high.
- All staff employed to work in the proposed new branch would be trained to the highest standards with on-going training on products and services, as well as operational and service-related matters.
- Posters and leaflets will now be displayed in branch to let customers know about the proposal and to ask their views.
- Any information we receive will be carefully considered as we finalise our plans.
- If you are a local representative, we will write to you again at the end of the consultation to respond to the main issues raised and to explain our final plans for the branch.
- This consultation is being carried out in line with our Principles of Community Engagement which have been agreed with Citizens Advice, Citizens Advice Scotland and the General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland - the independent statutory consumer watchdogs. An extract relating to Consultation is available at the end of this letter.

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 the changes we are proposing to Castle Hedingham Post Office. If you would like a supply of posters, please let us know. Our contact details can be found at the top of this page.

Thank you for considering our proposal.

Yours faithfully

Allison Wallace

Allison Wallace
Network Provision Manager
Post Office Limited

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.

Castle Hedingham Post Office Information Summary

| Current Location | Proposed New Location |
|--|---|
| 7 St James Street Castle Hedingham Halstead CO9 3EJ | The Village Shop 5 St James Street Castle Hedingham Halstead CO9 3EJ |

Current opening hours

| | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Monday to Friday | 09:00 – 13:00 |
| Saturday & Sunday | Closed |

Proposed opening hours

| | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Monday to Friday | 09:00 – 13:00 |
| Saturday & Sunday | Closed |

During the Coronavirus pandemic the branch may need to make changes to its opening hours.

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

Products & Services

The same range of Post Office products and services would continue to be available.

Serving positions

There would be a low-level Post Office serving point located in a dedicated area within the proposed premises.

Access

The proposed premises would have a wide door and access would be via a raised threshold at the entrance.

Internally, there would be a hearing loop and space for a wheelchair.

Getting there

The proposed new branch would be located approximately 20 metres away from the current branch, along level terrain.

Roadside parking would be available outside the proposed premises.

Further roadside parking would be available nearby and along St James Street.

Retail

Convenience Store/Cards and Stationery

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, 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
Call: 03452 66 01 15

Comments@postoffice.co.uk
Textphone: 03457 22 33 55

FREEPOST Your Comments

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.