



Dear Customer

Cowes Post Office®
Temporary Post Office Unit, Cowes Yacht Haven,
Vectis Yard, High Street, Marina Walk, Cowes, PO31 7BD

Decision - move to new premises & branch modernisation

I'm writing to confirm our final plans for the relocation of the above branch to The Southern Co-operative, 155 Mill Hill Road, Cowes, PO31 7EL, where it will operate as one of our new main style Post Office branches. As you will recall from our previous letter, the current site is no longer available for Post Office use and the branch closed on Tuesday 25 April 2017. In order to maintain a Post Office service and minimise any disruption to our customers, the new branch will open at The Southern Co-operative, 155 Mill Hill Road on Friday 19 May 2017 at 13:00.

Since the branch temporarily relocated to the Yacht Haven in November 2015, obtaining a new Post Office location with a permanent Postmaster in Cowes has been of paramount importance to us. We believe the best way forward is to integrate the Post Office into a strong retail business, which can offer Post Office services over the same opening hours as the retail operation, helping to create a successful business for the future.

We advertised the vacancy on our business website and visited local retailers and all expressions of interest were fully explored. Southern Co-operative, were the only party to progress their application to the final stages of the recruitment process and were subsequently successfully appointed to the position. To avoid a prolonged break in service to our customers in Cowes we had to make the decision to relocate the branch, and we were seeking views on the service offer at the new location before finalising our plans for the new branch.

During the local public consultation period we received 61 individual responses from customers and local representatives. The main feedback centered on the distance and route to the new location, as well as the availability of parking and space within the new store. It was also commented that there is not a direct bus service between the current location and the proposed new store. As part of the consultation process, Post Office Ltd also meets with the independent statutory consumer watchdog, which in Great Britain is Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland, and in Northern Ireland, the Consumer Council to review all the consultation responses. All the feedback received enabled me to improve my understanding of customers' concerns and views and to ensure that all such information was taken into account before finalising our plans for the new branch.

I appreciate that the proposed premises are located approximately 0.7 miles from the current site and this will inevitably mean a longer or less convenient journey for some customers. I have reviewed this alongside pedestrian access to the new site, however it's important to stress that in this instance we have had to balance these factors against our over-riding need to retain a service in Cowes.

Following the feedback about the lack of a direct bus service between the two locations, we contacted the local bus company to enquire whether the bus route could be adjusted. The bus company have considered this suggestion and whilst they have no plans to adjust the route at this time, they have confirmed that their bus service does visit the Cooperative store on Mill Hill Road, albeit on a circular route and limited time table. Local community transport scheme Community Action Isle of Wight, may provide an alternative option for customers wishing to access the new branch. Further details, including how to register, are available by telephone on 01986 522 226. Details of the scheme will be displayed on the notice board at the new branch.

I have considered the concerns raised about parking 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 there is a customer car park at the new location including designated disabled bays, as well as roadside parking in the surrounding area. I am therefore satisfied that parking at the proposed new branch will continue to meet the needs of customers using the Post Office.

Internally, the new main style branch will be built in line with Post Office specifications with a dedicated Post Office area, incorporating two security screened serving positions, with low level facilities and separate queuing area for Post Office customers. We have been working closely with the new operator to plan the interior layout, to ensure optimum use of the space within the store and that access into and inside is kept clear and free of obstacles. Aisles and the queuing area will be kept free from obstructions and adequate room will be provided for customers and a wheelchair to move around without difficulty. Customers will be able to transact the same wide range of products and services as currently. Customers can also access the full range of Post Office products and services at East Cowes and Newport Post Office branches.

We will also be working closely with the new operator to make sure an appropriate level of privacy is provided for Post Office customers and that staff are fully aware of the need to respect customer confidentiality. For example, we will 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 will be strict guidelines and measures put in place to safeguard customers, staff and the cash and stock entrusted to the operator's care.

Additionally, there will be a Post Office serving point located at the retail counter where customers can access the majority of Post Office products and services alongside retail transactions. This serving point will be open outside of main counter opening times, allowing customers to transact the majority of Post Office products and services alongside retail transactions across seven days a week and at times that are more convenient for them. Full details of the new branch are at the end of this letter.

I have carefully considered our original proposal, the feedback received during the local public consultation period alongside the impact the current loss of service is likely to have on our customers. The opening of the branch in the Southern Co-op store in Mill Hill Road will enable us to restore sustainable access to Post Office services to our customers for the future.

During the temporary closure 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:

- East Cowes Post Office, 9 Wells Road, East Cowes, PO32 6SP
- Pallance Road Post Office, 1 Pallance Road, Cowes, PO31 8LN
- Newport Post Office, Co-operative Group Food Ltd, 43-51 Pyle Street, Newport, PO30 1XB

I am pleased to inform you that Pallance Road Post Office is offering longer opening hours during the temporary closure period of Cowes Post Office: Monday to Friday 09:00 – 13:00 from Tuesday 25 April 2017 to Friday 19 May 2017.

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: 195925.

This change to the Post Office network is being carried out in accordance with the Code of Practice for changes to the network, as agreed with the independent statutory consumer watchdog. A full copy of the Code of Practice is available on our website at www.postofficeviews.co.uk, or by contacting us at the address provided at the end of this letter.

Thank you for considering our proposal. We hope that you and our customers will continue to support your new main Post Office branch.

Yours sincerely



Suzanne Richardson
Regional Network Manager

How to contact us:

-  postofficeviews.co.uk
-  comments@postoffice.co.uk
-  Customer Helpline: 03457 22 33 44
Textphone: 03457 22 33 55
-  FREEPOST Your Comments
Please note this is the full address to use and no further address details are required.

This document is also available to view online, to see it – scan here.

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



To get this information in a different format, for example, in larger print, audio or braille please contact the Customer Helpline on 03457 22 33 44 or Textphone 03457 22 33 55.

Details of the new service:

Cowes Post Office information sheet															
Address	The Southern Co-operative 155 Mill Hill Road Cowes PO31 7EL														
Post Office Opening hours	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Mon</td><td>09:00 - 17:30</td></tr> <tr><td>Tue</td><td>09:00 - 17:30</td></tr> <tr><td>Wed</td><td>09:00 - 17:30</td></tr> <tr><td>Thu</td><td>09:00 - 17:30</td></tr> <tr><td>Fri</td><td>09:00 - 17:30</td></tr> <tr><td>Sat</td><td>09:00 - 17:30</td></tr> <tr><td>Sun</td><td>Closed</td></tr> </table>	Mon	09:00 - 17:30	Tue	09:00 - 17:30	Wed	09:00 - 17:30	Thu	09:00 - 17:30	Fri	09:00 - 17:30	Sat	09:00 - 17:30	Sun	Closed
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Sun	Closed														
New Opening times of Post Office service at retail counter	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Mon - Sat</td><td>06:00 - 09:00 17:30 - 23:00</td></tr> <tr><td>Sun</td><td>06:00 - 23:00</td></tr> </table>	Mon - Sat	06:00 - 09:00 17:30 - 23:00	Sun	06:00 - 23:00										
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Sun	06:00 - 23:00														
Distance	0.7 miles away from the current branch, along varied terrain.														
Products & Services	The same wide range of products and services will still be available.														
Serving positions	There will be three serving positions. These will be a mixture of two screened and a Post Office serving point for use at the retail counter, which is available during shop opening hours offering selected services.														
Accessibility & Accessibility works	<p>Access and facilities Access is level with wide automatic double doors. Internally, there will be a low level serving counter, a hearing loop and space for a wheelchair.</p> <p>Parking/Buses There is a customer car park at the rear of the premises. There is no direct bus service between the current branch and the new premises, however there are local buses serving the surrounding area.</p>														
Retail	Convenience store														
Date of relocation	13:00 on Friday 19 May 2017														