



Dear Customer

Local public consultation – Decision

Dymchurch Post Office
2 Park Parade, Dymchurch, Romney Marsh, TN29 0NT

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 Premier Express - Dymchurch Village Store at 15 - 17 High Street, Dymchurch, Romney Marsh, TN29 0NH, where it 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 17:00 on Wednesday 19 January 2022, with the new branch opening, at Premier Express - Dymchurch Village Store, 15 - 17 High Street, at 13:00 on Thursday 20 January 2022. If there are any unforeseen circumstances 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 an alternative Post Office branch is provided below for your convenience:

- New Romney Post Office, 32 - 34A High Street, New Romney, TN28 8BZ

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. An extract relating to Consultation is available at the end of this letter.

Yours faithfully

Jason Collins

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Network Provision Manager
Post Office Limited

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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 15 October 2021
Consultation ended 26 November 2021

Consultation responses

- 157 responses from customers and local representatives

Key issues raised

- Route and Location
- Parking
- Access, Premises and Space
- Privacy
- Social Distancing

Response to issues raised

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 current Postmaster has resigned, and we have appointed a new operator to continue to operate the Post Office service from the new premises. Our priority is to safeguard Post Office services to the local community in the longer term.

The relocation of Dymchurch Post Office into a retail convenience store alongside the introduction of one of our local style branches will help secure the long-term future of Post Office services to the local community.

Route and Location

The new branch will be located approximately 60 metres from the current branch, along level 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.

Comments were raised during the consultation about the width of the pavement and the narrow footpath along the route from the current branch to the new premises. We are aware that pedestrians shopping in the area are visiting shops on the High Street, including the Premier Store. We acknowledge that this is a concern but isn't something that's within the control of Post Office Ltd, Therefore, we will raise this with the Council responsible for the highways.

Parking

Parking and peak time traffic congestion 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 we can confirm there is time restricted roadside parking available nearby on the High Street.

For customers using their own transport there is a pay and display car park with designated disabled bays, on Orgarswick Avenue, 270 metres from the new premises.

Having also reviewed pedestrian and vehicular access to the new site, we are confident that the new branch is suitably located and that this new way of offering Post Office services will meet customer needs, whilst helping to provide long term viability and future sustainability for Post Office service provision in the local community.

Access, Premises and Space

Currently there is a step and a wide door at the entrance to the new premises. We know that the Post Office plays an important part in the lives of customers and we want to make our services as accessible as possible. We can confirm the new agent will complete works to improve access for customers.

The existing step will be removed to provide better entry and exit for our customers and those using a wheelchair, pushchairs, and customers with mobility issues. Internally there will be a hearing loop and space for a wheelchair.

Internally the new branch will be in line with Post Office specifications, making sure there is sufficient space for the Post Office service to operate alongside the retail offer. We will be working closely with the new operator on the internal layout and some fixtures and fittings will be re-aligned or removed to make sure there is clear access into the premises, ensuring the entrance, aisles and the waiting area are kept free from obstructions and adequate room is provided for customers and a wheelchair to move around without difficulty.

Following the move local residents will benefit from 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.

Privacy

Although the local style format is a different way of offering Post Office services, it does not compromise the professional service standards that we provide at all of our 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. For example, we discuss issues like queue layout and asking customers to stand back from the counter whilst they are waiting for service or handing a receipt that contains any financial information face down. Open plan working also lends itself to more discreet conversations as customers don't have to raise their voice to be heard.

Social Distancing

The UK is currently experiencing a public health emergency as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic and as such, it is critical that we as a business take a range of measures to keep everyone safe. Please be assured that Post Office Ltd has been working hard to follow Government guidelines and we have supplied branches with the Personal Protective Equipment that they require to make branches a safe environment for their customers and staff. Post Office Ltd will continue to work safely during this pandemic, ensuring as many people as possible visiting our branches comply with social distancing guidelines.

Post Offices are designated an essential service, providing a unique service for a range of necessary activities and we are following the governments guidance on social distancing to support the safety of our staff and customers. As the situation changes, we continue to update staff and customers with practical instructions to allow them to stay safe whilst serving the needs of their communities. We remain committed to providing essential services to our communities whilst keeping our colleagues and customers safe.

We're confident that our Postmasters and their staff are acting in accordance with the official advice and we're doing everything we can to keep our branches open and safe.

Appendix B

Dymchurch Post Office Information Sheet

Premier Express
Dymchurch Village Store
15-17 High Street
Dymchurch
Romney Marsh
TN29 0NH

New opening hours

Monday - Friday	09:00 - 17:30
Saturday & Sunday	09:00 - 17:00

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 wide range of products and services will still be available, however excluding Travel Insurance.

Serving positions

There will be a Post Office serving point at the retail counter.

Access

Currently there is a step and a wide door at the entrance to the new premises. The existing step will be removed to provide allow and provide entry and exit for our customers and those using a wheelchair, pushchairs, and customers with mobility issues. Internally there will be a hearing loop and space for a wheelchair.

Getting there

The new branch will be located approximately 60 metres away from the current branch, along level terrain.

Time restricted roadside parking is available nearby on the High Street.

There is also a pay and display car park with designated disabled bays, on Orgarswick Avenue 270 metres from the new premises.

Retail

Convenience store

Date of move

Thursday 20 January 2022 at 13:00

Dymchurch 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	Express 24 & 48
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	✓
Personal & Business Banking cash withdrawals, deposits & balance enquiries using a card. Also enveloped cheque deposits and barcoded deposit slips.	✓
Postal orders	✓
Moneygram	✓
Change giving	✓
Automated bill payments (card or barcoded)	✓
Key recharging	✓
Driving	
Vehicle Tax	✓
Licences	
Rod fishing licences	✓
Travel	
Pre-order travel money	✓
On demand travel money	Euros/Dollars
Travel insurance referral	✓
On demand travel insurance	✗
Mobile Top-ups & E vouchers	
Mobile Top-ups & E vouchers	✓
Payment by cheque	
Payment by cheque	Vehicle Tax only
Products marked ✗ are available at New Romney Post Office, 32 - 34A High Street, New Romney, TN28 8BZ	Opening times: Mon – Sun 07:00 – 23:00

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, 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

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.