



Dear Customer

**Ely Post Office®**  
**Central Hall, 52-54 Market Street, Ely, CB7 4LS**

**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 to 7 St Mary's Street, Ely, CB7 4ER.

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. I am very aware of the importance a Post Office branch has in local communities, particularly to our elderly and more vulnerable customers, and also acknowledge that any such change may cause inconvenience to some.

It may be helpful if I explain that this branch is currently operated on our behalf by a temporary agent. Whilst this arrangement has enabled us to maintain Post Office services locally, our priority has always been to find a long-term sustainable solution for our customers in Ely and we are confident that this move, the new premises and postmaster will provide this.

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. A summary of the feedback is enclosed along with an information sheet providing further details about the new branch.

The current branch will close at 17:30 on Thursday 5 November 2020, with the new branch opening, at 7 St Mary's Street, at 13:00 on Friday 6 November 2020. If there are any unforeseen schedule changes which mean these dates change, posters will be displayed in branch to let customers know.

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

*Hayley Brown*

**Hayley Brown**  
**Regional Change Manager**

postofficeviews.co.uk  
comments@postoffice.co.uk  
FREEPOST Your Comments

## **Appendix A**

### **Response to Local Public Consultation**

**Consultation started** 9 April 2020

**Consultation ended** 28 May 2020

#### **Consultation responses**

- 87 responses from customers and local representatives
- One petition with 8 signatures

#### **Key issues raised**

- Consultation conducted during Covid-19 Pandemic
- Distance
- Parking
- Public transport
- Staff

#### **Responses to issues raised**

#### **Consultation conducted during Coronavirus Pandemic**

During the enforced isolation period we adapted our practices to enable our customers to find out about our proposal. When consultation materials arrived late for display in the branch, due to a postal delay, we extended the consultation period by additional week to allow customers sufficient time to access materials and provide their comments. We did recognize that the isolation restrictions may limit opportunities for some customers to access information about the proposed move and we provided information not only in the branch but also, in the local press and on our website [www.postofficeviews.co.uk](http://www.postofficeviews.co.uk). Additionally we wrote to local representatives and organizations at the start of the consultation process and encouraged them to share the information through their own channels to make sure we have reached as many people as possible. Externally, it was evident from customer feedback that the proposed move was also raised via social media channels.

#### **Distance**

We recognise that the new location is approximately 220 metres from the current site and, as with any move, the new location may not be as convenient for some customers and for this I apologise. Equally, as we know from feedback received, there are many customers for whom the new premises are slightly closer than at present and more convenient to get to.

I have reviewed this alongside pedestrian access to the new site and acknowledge the concerns raised about the busy nature of the St Mary's Street and narrow pavement by the new premises. While these matters are outside the direct control of Post Office Ltd, our findings confirmed that a pelican crossing is located approximately 40 metres away from the new premises allowing customers to cross safely. We also compared the footpath outside the current and new premises and found the new to be slightly narrower, but still allowing for customers to access the premises safely. Therefore we remain satisfied that customer access to Post Office services will not be significantly affected after the move.

#### **Parking**

It is fair to say that parking is a problem faced generally in many locations nationwide, including the current site. As I am sure you will understand the availability of parking spaces is outside the direct control of Post Office Limited, however I have reviewed parking provision at the new location which has confirmed that St Mary's Car Park is located approximately 25 metres across the road with four unlimited time parking spaces for disabled and two hour's free parking for other customers. Additionally, time restricted roadside parking is available nearby. I am therefore satisfied there is adequate parking provision in the vicinity of the proposed branch to meet the needs of customers using the Post Office.

## **Public transport**

Although there is a frequent bus service and a bus stop approximately 85 meters from the new branch for customers traveling towards Ely city center, the bus stop for customers travelling in opposite direction is located approximately 260 meters away and we recognize that this may not be a practical option for those with mobility issues. Therefore we will be approaching the local bus company to discuss the move of the branch and whether they are able to facilitate this bus stop nearer to the new site.

Additionally, Ely & Soham Association for Community Transport is operating in the local area and may be able to assist less abled customers to access the new site. Customers are required to become members of this scheme before making a booking. The contact details of this scheme will be also displayed at the new branch. Further details of this scheme and bookings are available by telephone on 01353 661161.

## **Access**

I am pleased to confirm that the new operator has installed a permanent ramp at the entrance providing level access into the premises. We will be working closely with the operator on the design of the new branch to make sure that the internal layout provides adequate space and privacy for Post Office customers and that access into and inside the store, including the aisles and queuing area, are kept clear and free of obstacles.

## **Staff**

The new operator is an experienced postmaster and the current staff will be transferred to the new premises. Any other staff handling Post Office transactions will be fully trained in Post Office transactions and to the same professional high standard as in all our branches. Their training will include areas such as Data Protection, Mail Handling and the need to respect customer privacy and confidentiality. Staffing levels will be carefully aligned to customer demand. We know our customers value excellent customer service at the Post Office and the new operator is looking forward to welcoming Post Office customers.

**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 B

| <b>Ely Post Office information sheet</b> |  |     |               |  |
|--|--|-----|---------------|--|
|  | <b>New Post Office location</b>  |     |               |  |
| <b>Address</b>                           | 7 St Mary's Street<br>Ely<br>CB7 4ER   |     |               |  |
| <b>Post Office opening hours</b>         |  | 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        |  |
| <b>Distance</b>                          | Within 220 metres of the current branch, along varied terrain.   |     |               |  |
| <b>Products &amp; Services</b>           | The same wide range of products and services will still be available.  |     |               |  |
| <b>Serving positions</b>                 | There will be three serving positions, which will be a mixture of two screened positions and a Post Office serving point provided for use at the retail counter and available during shop opening hours. |     |               |  |
| <b>Accessibility</b>                     | <b>Access and facilities</b><br>The new premises will have a wide door and a ramp at the entrance.   |     |               |  |
|  | <b>Parking</b><br>There is a car park within 25 metres of the new premises.  |     |               |  |
| <b>Retail</b>                            | Convenience store  |     |               |  |
| <b>Date of move</b>                      | To be confirmed  |     |               |  |

## **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 closure<sup>1</sup>/ 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 representatives<sup>2</sup>, the Consumer Advocacy Bodies and selected charities<sup>3</sup>, 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 branch<sup>4</sup>
- 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-week<sup>5</sup> 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**  
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<sup>1</sup>We will provide an update to locally elected representatives if the status of the temporarily closed branch has not changed after 12 months.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> 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.