

Dear Customer

Local public consultation - Have your say

**Freefield Post Office
North Road, Shetland, ZE1 0DE**

As you will be aware we are currently consulting on our proposal to move the above Post Office to new premises located at Home Furnishing, 27 Commercial Road, Shetland, ZE1 0NJ.

Regrettably, the move to the proposed new premises has been delayed and in view of this unexpected delay they have decided to look for an alternative premises to operate Freefield Post Office. We are pleased to advise they have now secured a unit in the same shopping centre where the branch is currently located. Consequently, the current consultation, which was due to end on the Thursday 18 April 2024, has ceased with immediate effect.

We are now entering into a new 6-week period of local public consultation on the new proposed premises, Unit 5R, (currently The i'i Shop) Toll Clock Shopping Centre, North Road, Shetland, ZE1 0DE. Where it would continue to operate as one of our main style branches, subject to consultation.

Why are we proposing this move?

The postmaster's lease for the current premise is due to expire and he has taken the opportunity to review the retail offer and to develop this in conjunction with the Post Office service. The postmaster has therefore identified a new premise which would continue to offer Post Office services to the local community. The proposed premises will undergo a refurbishment to incorporate Freefield branch and a retail store.

Our priority is to safeguard Post Office services to the local community in the longer term and the relocation of Freefield branch would enable us to maintain a Post Office service to our customers in the local community.

We'd like your help

We're now starting a new 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 location?**
- **Are the proposed 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	Tuesday 26 March 2024
Local Public Consultation ends	Tuesday 7 May 2024
Proposed month of change	July 2024

An information sheet is enclosed that provides more details about your proposed new branch. 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 **112849**

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 operator's retail.
- Working with the postmaster, we'd adapt the current store layout, fixtures and fittings to accommodate the Post Office. It would be in a dedicated area of the store with one screened and two open-plan positions.
- The Post Office would offer the same range of products and services with the same opening hours. Customer satisfaction with this style of branch is high.
- All staff employed to work in the proposed 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 and in the proposed new premises, The i'i Shop, 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, Consumer 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 Freefield Post Office. If you would like a supply of posters, please let us know. Our contact details can be found at the bottom of the first page.

Thank you for considering our proposal.

Yours faithfully

Kenny Lamont

**Kenny Lamont
Network Provision Manager
Post Office Limited**

Freefield Post Office Information Summary

Current Location	Proposed New Location
North Road Shetland ZE1 0DE	Unit 5R Toll Clock Shopping Centre North Road Shetland ZE1 0DE

Current opening hours

Mon - Sat	09:00 – 17:30
Sun	Closed

Proposed opening hours

Mon - Sat	09:00 - 17:30
Sun	Closed

**There are times our branches 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 products and services would still be available.

Serving positions

There would be three serving positions in total: one screened and two open plan.

Access

The shopping centre entrance has a wide automatic door and level access. The premises within the shopping centre has a wide door and level access at the entrance.

Internally, there would be a hearing loop, a low-level writing desk, a low-level serving counter and space for a wheelchair.

Getting there

The proposed branch would be located within the same Toll Clock shopping centre on moving from the first floor to the ground floor approximately 60 metres away from the current branch, along varied terrain.

There would be a customer car park available in front of the proposed premises with designated disabled bays.

Retail

Household goods, cards, art supplies and stationery.

**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.**

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 branch⁵
- 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-week⁶ 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, Consumer 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, Consumer 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

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⁵ 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.

⁶ 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.