



Dear Customer,

**Local public consultation – Decision**

**Gillingham Post Office  
WHSmith, 124A High Street, Gillingham, Kent, ME7 1AU**

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: Wards, 53 High Street, Gillingham, ME7 1BQ.

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 closed on 30 October 2021 and the new branch will be opening at Wards, 53 High Street, Gillingham, ME7 1BQ, at 09:00 on Thursday 02 December 2021. If there are any unforeseen circumstances which mean these dates change, posters will be displayed in branch to let customers know.

During this time period customers requiring Post Office facilities may use any convenient Post Office service. Details of two alternative Post Office branches are provided below for your convenience:

- Sturdee Avenue Post Office, 59 Sturdee Avenue, Gillingham, ME7 2JN
- Watling Street Post Office, 91 Watling Street, Gillingham, ME7 2YX
- Chatham Post Office, 17-19 Military Road, Chatham, ME4 4JG

This information is also available on the Post Office Consultation Hub at: [postofficeviews.co.uk](https://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 sincerely

*Jason Collins*

**Jason Collins  
Network Provision Manager**

[comments@postoffice.co.uk](mailto:comments@postoffice.co.uk)

[postofficeviews.co.uk](https://postofficeviews.co.uk)

FREEPOST Your Comments

Post Office Limited is committed to protecting your privacy. Information about how we do this can be found on our website at [postoffice.co.uk/privacy](https://postoffice.co.uk/privacy)

**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: 21 May 2021**

**Consultation ended: 2 July 2021**

#### **Consultation responses**

- 86 responses from customers and local representatives

#### **Key issues raised**

- Parking
- Access and internal space
- Distance from current branch

### **Response to issues raised**

#### **Parking**

Parking and the availability of parking spaces 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 has confirmed that time restricted roadside parking, designated disabled bays and pay and display parking are available nearby.

#### **Access and Internal Space**

Access at the new location will have a wide door and level access at the entrance. 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.

#### **Distance**

The new premises are located approximately 270 metres from the previous site. 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.

## Appendix B

### Gillingham Post Office Information Sheet

Wards  
53 High Street  
Gillingham  
ME7 1BQ

#### New opening hours

Mon - Sat	09:00 - 17:30
Sun	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](http://www.postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder)**

#### **Products & Services**

The same wide range of products and services will be available.

#### **Serving positions**

There will be three serving positions in total; two screened and a Post Office serving point at the retail counter. The total number of serving positions has been based on current and future predicted business levels

#### **Access**

Access will be level at the entrance to the new premises. Low-level serving counters and hearing loops will be available.

#### **Getting there**

The new branch is located approximately 270 metres away from the current branch, along varied terrain. Time restricted parking and Pay & Display parking is available nearby. Public transport is available to and from the surrounding area.

#### **Retail**

Convenience Store

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## **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](https://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 branch<sup>1</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>2</sup> local public consultation, informing customers, locally elected representatives<sup>3</sup>, Consumer Advocacy Bodies and selected charities<sup>4</sup> 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**

<sup>1</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>2</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.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</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 <sup>3</sup> and <sup>4</sup> 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.