



Dear Customer,

**Local public consultation - Have your say**

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

We are proposing to move the above Post Office branch to a new location: Wards, 53 High Street, Gillingham, ME7 1BQ.

**Why are we moving?**

The current operator has resigned, and the premises will no longer be available for Post Office use. We have therefore had to identify an alternative location to continue to offer Post Office services to the local community. We are proposing to relocate to a new location which will undergo a refurbishment to incorporate a Post Office and would be operated by a new postmaster. Our priority is to safeguard our services in the locality in the longer term and the relocation of Gillingham Post Office will 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 period of local public consultation and your feedback is important to us as it will help to inform our decision. For more details on the proposed new services and layout, please see the branch information sheet at the end of this letter.

**What exactly are we consulting on?**

We'd welcome your comments on the following areas:

- **How easy is it to get to the proposed new location?**
- **Are the new 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?**

Please note the proposed change of management of the branch is a decision for Post Office Ltd and therefore we are not seeking feedback on this aspect of the change.

Local Public Consultation starts	21 May 2021
Local Public Consultation ends	02 July 2021
Proposed month of change	July/August 2021

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](http://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 **231941**

**How to share your views:  
Consultation Hub ([postofficeviews.co.uk](http://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 will be in a dedicated area of the store with two screened serving positions.
- We'd also add a low-screened, modern Post Office till at the retail counter offering most Post Office products and services over longer opening hours, so customers can access their Post Office when it's convenient. Customer satisfaction with this style of branch is high.
- All staff employed to work in the new 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 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, Citizens Advice 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 what is happening to Gillingham Post Office. If you would like a supply of these 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,

***Jason Collins***

**Jason Collins**  
**Network Provision Manager**  
**Post Office Limited**

## **Gillingham Post Office Information Sheet**

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### **Current Location**

**WHSmith  
124A High Street  
Gillingham  
ME7 1AU**

### **Proposed New Location**

**Wards  
53 High Street  
Gillingham  
ME7 1BQ**

#### **Current opening hours**

Mon, Wed, Thur, Fri & Sat	08:30 - 17:30
Tue	09:00 - 17:30
Sun	Closed

#### **Proposed 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**

A wide range of products and services will still be available.

#### **Serving positions**

There would 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 would be level with a wide door at the entrance to the proposed premises.

#### **Getting there**

The proposed premises would be located approximately 270 metres away from the current branch, along varied terrain.

Time restricted parking and Pay & Display parking is available nearby.

There are local buses serving the surrounding area.

#### **Retail**

Convenience store.

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**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 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 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.