



Dear Customer

Local public consultation – Decision

**Great Barr Post Office
32 Newton Road, Great Barr, Birmingham, B43 6BW**

I'm writing to confirm that following a period of local public consultation and review, we have made the decision to proceed with opening the above Post Office at the new location: Cross Lane Convenience Store, at 2 Cross Lane, Great Barr, Birmingham, B43 6LN, where it will be operated by a retail partner, as one of our local style branches.

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.

As you will be aware the previous branch at 32 Newton Road, closed on Monday 20 March 2023. We would like to apologise for any inconvenience caused during the temporary closure period.

We are pleased to confirm the new Post Office branch will open at the new premises, at Cross Lane Convenience Store, Cross Lane, Great Barr, on Thursday 27 April 2023 at 13:00.

If there are any unforeseen circumstances which mean the opening date changes, posters will be displayed in Cross Lane Convenience Store to let customers know.

In the interim customers may continue to use any Post Office branch for everyday Post Office products and services.

Details of two alternative Post Office branches are provided below for your convenience. The latest available branch information can be found on our website www.postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder

- Queslett Road Post Office, 10 Beacon Road, Great Barr, Birmingham, B43 7BP
- Bowstoke Road Post Office, 268 Newton Road, Great Barr, Birmingham, B43 6QT

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

Sarah Cottrell

**Sarah Cottrell
Network Provision Manager
Post Office Limited**

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 22 November 2022

Consultation ended 3 January 2023

Consultation responses

- 116 responses from customers and local representatives

Key issues raised

- Distance, Route, and Location
- Traffic Congestion and Parking
- Access, Queues and Privacy
- Staff and Products and Services
- Security, Antisocial Behaviour and Selling of Alcohol

Response to issues raised

Distance, Route, and Location

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 move of the branch into a retail environment alongside the introduction of one of our new style local models will help secure the long-term future of Post Office services in the local area.

The new premises are located approximately 350 metres from the previous branch, along varied terrain, in a less congested area of the shopping parade on Cross Lane. 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. We believe this relocation is the most effective way to secure the long-term viability of Post Office services in Great Barr. We can only apologise for this, and we remain confident the move will not significantly impede customer access to Post Office services.

Traffic Congestion and Parking

Whilst we have considered the concerns raised about parking and the peak time traffic congestion in the area surrounding the new location, generally, this is a problem faced in many locations nationwide and the availability of parking spaces is outside the direct control of Post Office Limited.

With the branch moving 350 metres away, for customers using their own transport, we can confirm time restricted roadside parking bays are located outside the parade of shops and further time restricted parking is also available in the layby lane nearby. We are therefore satisfied that parking at the new branch will continue to meet the needs of customers using the Post Office.

Access, Queues and Privacy

Access at the new location will be level with a wide door at the entrance. 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.

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.

The change also means that local residents will benefit from longer opening hours, Monday to Saturday, allowing customers to spread their visits and access our services six days a week, as well as giving customers greater flexibility to access the Post Office at times that suit them better.

Staff and Products and Services

The staff training approaches used are of the same high standard as those undertaken in all our branches. This includes respecting customer confidentiality and adhering to the stringent security procedures which will be put in place to protect staff and customers. Additionally, any staff that will handle Post Office transactions will also have completed compliance training for a number of areas, including Data Protection and Mail Handling.

A similar range of products and services will still be available at the new branch. The nearest alternative external Post Office cash machine can be found approximately 1.1 mile away at Hamstead Post Office, 36 Old Walsall Road, Birmingham, B42 1NP, which can be accessed by a direct bus service. All Post Office branches offer free access to cash for the major high street banks and customers will be able to use their debit card to withdraw cash at the counter of the new branch, during all the opening hours.

Security, Antisocial Behaviour and Selling of Alcohol

We acknowledge the concerns made about anti-social behaviour in the area. Although such matters are outside our direct control and are for the relevant authorities and local police to resolve, Post Office takes security very seriously. While we cannot go into specific details around our security arrangements, strict guidelines and measures will be in place and we take every physical precaution within our branches, to provide a safe and secure environment for both our customers and staff. The new operator will engage with the community police in the event of any anti-social behaviour outside and around the Cross Lane Convenience Store.

It is important to explain that we have a number of partnerships with various types of retailers and appreciate that our customers may have certain personal beliefs. However, we are looking for the best way to keep the Post Office within the local area, taking into consideration access for all our customers and also looking for the most viable option. The Cross Lane Convenience Store is a supporter of The Drinkaware Trust, which is a charity dedicated to campaigning and educating consumers to reduce alcohol harm and also operate this policy. We can confirm the new operator will adhere to the Challenge 25 scheme, that encourages anyone who is over 18 but looks under 25 to carry acceptable ID when they want to buy alcohol.

Appendix B

Great Barr Post Office Information Sheet

Cross Lane Convenience Store
2 Cross Lane
Great Barr
Birmingham
B43 6LN

New opening hours

Monday - Saturday	08:00 - 18:00
Sunday	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

Products & Services

A similar range of products and service will continue be available, with Euros and Dollars On Demand Travel Money, Vehicle Tax and National Lottery. However, excluding a comprehensive range of Travel Money, Passport Check & Send and On Demand Travel Insurance.

Additionally, rod fishing licence applications previously available until 15 January 2023, will now be available through the Environmental Agency on the link below:
<https://www.gov.uk/fishing-licences/buy-a-fishing-licence>

Serving positions

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

Access

The new premises will have level access and a wide door at the entrance. Internally, there will be a hearing loop and space for a wheelchair.

Getting there

The new premises will be located approximately 350 metres away from the current branch, along varied terrain.

Time restricted parking bays are located outside the parade of shops. Further time restricted parking is also available in the layby lane nearby.

Retail

Convenience store

Date of opening

Thursday 27 April 2023 at 13:00

Great Barr 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	✓
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	✓
All personal and business banking cash withdrawals, deposits, balance enquiries & enveloped cheque deposits (card, barcoded or manual).	✓
Postal orders	✓
Moneygram	✓
Change giving	✓
Bill payments (card, barcoded or manual)	✓
Key recharging	✓
Driving	
Vehicle tax	✓
Travel	
Pre-order travel money	✓
On demand travel money	Euros/Dollars
Travel insurance referral	✓
On demand travel insurance	✗
Passport Check & Send	✗
Mobile Top-ups & E vouchers	
Mobile Top-ups & E vouchers	✓
National Lottery Terminal	✓
Payment by cheque	
Products marked ✗ are available at Queslett Road Post Office, 10 Beacon Road, Great Barr, Birmingham, B43 7BP	Opening times: Mon, Wed & Fri 08:30 – 17:30 Tues & Thu 09:00 – 17:30 Sat 09:00 – 13:00
Other products are available at Bowstoke Road Post Office, 268 Newton Road, Great Barr, Birmingham, B43 6QT	Opening times: Mon to Fri 09:00 – 16:30 Sat 09:00 – 12:30

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
Call: 03452 66 01 15

Comments@postoffice.co.uk
Textphone: 03457 22 33 55

FREEPOST Your Comments

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.