



## **Herongate Post Office® is changing**

Late Last year we asked your views on some key areas about our plans to change your Post Office to one of our new-look **local** branches. We received **9** submissions about the possible changes and we've now finalised our plans for the change to your branch. While it's not possible to respond to each individual issue raised, a summary of the main comments we received is provided below.

We've now finalised our plans and your new-look Post Office is scheduled to open at the current location on Tuesday 26 June 2018 at 13:00. To make this change happen, the branch will need to close for refurbishment on Thursday 07 June 2018 at 17:30

### **We asked why you use this Post Office and what you like about it.**

**You said..... that you use this Post Office for a wide variety of services. You also said that you use this branch as it is conveniently located.**

You'll be glad to know that most of what you like about your branch won't change. Your new Operator is keen to provide the same high standard of service as is currently received. The new style local format is a simpler operating model than a traditional style Post Office. It is designed to handle products and services that are automated, meaning that customers can be served quickly and efficiently and transactions processed more quickly.

### **We asked for your comments about the changes to the branch.**

**You said.....that you welcome the changes to the branch. However, some of you are concerned about having the Post Office and retail counters together, as this may cause longer queues & increase waiting times. You are also concerned about security when carrying out transactions at an open plan counter. Lastly, some of you are worried that there would be a lack of space within the store.**

We fully recognise people can be wary of change and we are pleased that you took the time to let us know what's concerning you. Although the local style format is a different way of providing a service, security or privacy is not compromised. As with any other branch we have robust security procedures in place and anyone handling Post Office transactions including new staff will be fully trained on all operational and service issues including customer privacy. I would also like to reassure you that when we are talking with the operator we work with them to make sure there is an appropriate level of privacy at the Post Office till point and discuss issues like queue layout and asking customers to stand back from the counter whilst they are waiting for service.

During identified busy periods and to help manage waiting times, the Operator is expected to manage staffing levels at retail and Post Office service points appropriately.

Additionally, your new Post Office counter will be located at the end of the retail till, on the right hand side of the shop as you enter. There will be sufficient space for Post Office customers to move around within the store, including wheelchair users, so they can reach the Post Office area without hindrance.

**We asked for your comments about any changes to the opening hours.**

**You said.....that you welcome the longer opening hours. Some of you would like to know if mail collection times will change.**

We already have over 2000 branches offering Post Office services in this new way. Feedback from customer satisfaction surveys supports that customers particularly like the longer opening hours the local style branch offers. This means that customers can choose to visit their local branch at times that suit their lifestyle better, whether this be first thing in the morning, during the day, or later in the evening, which also helps to spread customer visits throughout the day.

Mail collections are decided by Royal Mail and the Postmaster would be able to tell you what time mail is collected and the latest acceptance time at the counter each day. Any item accepted over the counter will be held securely, until the next mail collection from the branch.

**We asked if you have any comments about the change to the range of Post Office products and services at the branch if the change goes ahead.**

**You said.....that the changes to the products and services are minimal, and will not affect you.**

The new-style local format is a simpler operating model than a traditional style Post Office. It is designed to handle products and services that are automated meaning that customers can be served quickly and efficiently and transactions processed more quickly. You may need to go to an alternative Post Office for a small number of transactions which are more complex or manual, paper based transactions, like Parcelforce Worldwide International Parcels. But the majority of services will still be available, including the acceptance of Royal Mail international letters, parcels up to 2kg and printed papers up to 5kg.

The small number of services that will no longer be available at Herongate Post Office will continue to be offered at Eastham Crescent Post Office and Brentwood Post Office.

**We asked for your comments about the potential closure period during the refurbishment or access to other branches in the area.**

**You said..... that the potential closure period is acceptable providing it is kept to a minimum. Some of you said that you would like the change to take place after the Christmas period. Lastly you would like to know if the retail section of the shop will remain open during the refurbishment period.**




We recognise that even a short term closure will be inconvenient, for which we apologise. However we've been working with the Operator to keep the closure to a minimum and we will ensure that the nearest alternative branches are displayed and publicised. We can confirm that the retail section of the shop will remain open during the refurbishment period.

In line with our Code of Practice, we would always aim to give customer two weeks' notice of the changes to the branch and I would like to offer my sincere apologies that this has not happened on this occasion.

Please look at the poster displayed in branch for more details about the change.

We'd like to thank all those who took the opportunity to let us have their views about the changes.

How to contact us:

-  [postofficeviews.co.uk](http://postofficeviews.co.uk)
-  [comments@postoffice.co.uk](mailto:comments@postoffice.co.uk)
-  FREEPOST Your Comments

**To get this information in a different format, for example, in larger print, audio or braille please contact the Customer Helpline on 03452 66 01 15 or Textphone 03457 22 33 55.**