



Dear Customer,

**Middleborough Post Office®
9 Middleborough, Colchester, Essex, CO1 1QT**

Branch Temporary Closure

We are writing to inform you that, regrettably, following the resignation of the postmaster, the above branch will be closing temporarily on Friday 15 January 2021 at 17:00.

I would like to assure you that we are working hard to keep any period of closure to a minimum and we are currently investigating the options available which will enable us to reinstate a Post Office service to the local community. In exploring this, it is important that any future service is sustainable for the person operating the service, and for Post Office Limited.

Looking after a nationwide network of Post Office services, we have a responsibility to make sure every service makes the best possible use of resources, while ensuring that customers can still access our products and services. I can assure you that we will continue to work to find a solution that will provide a Post Office service to the Colchester community.

If you have any questions you would like to raise about this matter, please write to me via the National Consultation Team at the address shown at the end of the letter. Please note that your comments will not be kept confidential unless you expressly ask us to do so by clearly marking them "In Confidence".

Any future changes to service provision would be handled in line with our Principles of Community Engagement. A copy is available at the end of this letter.

We will display posters in the branch to inform customers.

If you are a local representative, it would be helpful if you could share this information 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 the Post Office in the local community. If you would like a supply of these posters please let us know.

We would like to apologise for the inconvenience the temporary closure may cause. We hope that our customers will continue to use Post Office services and details of alternative Post Office branches in the area are shown at the end of this letter. Due to the effects of Covid 19 branch opening hours may vary. The latest available branch information can be found on our website, www.postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder

If you are a local representative, we will write to you again once we have any news about our plans for future service provision.

Yours faithfully,

Wendy Hamilton

Wendy Hamilton
Network Provision Lead

How to contact us:

comments@postoffice.co.uk
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

Alternative branches:**Colchester Post Office**

WHSmith
19 Culver Walk
Lion Walk Shopping Centre
Colchester
Essex
CO1 1DF

Services

The same range of services will continue to be available with the addition of Car tax, a comprehensive range of Travel Money, Passport Check & Send and On Demand Travel Insurance.

Access and facilities

This branch has wide automatic doors and level access at the entrance.

Opening times

Monday	09:00 – 17:00
Tuesday	09:00 – 17:00
Wednesday	09:00 – 17:00
Thursday	09:00 – 17:00
Friday	09:00 – 17:00
Saturday	09:00 – 17:00
Sunday	Closed

Transport/parking

Vineyard Pay & Display car park is available within 130 metres of the branch. There is a frequent bus service available between Middleborough branch and this Post Office service. The nearest bus stop is 135 metres away. There are local buses serving the surrounding area.

Distance

This Post Office service is located approximately 750 metres away from Middleborough branch, along level terrain.

Shrub End Post Office

192 Shrub End Road
Colchester
Essex
CO3 4RZ

Services

The same range of services with the addition of National Lottery and Euros Travel Money.

Access and facilities

This branch has a wide door and a ramp at the entrance.

Opening times

Monday	09:00 – 17:30
Tuesday	09:00 – 17:30
Wednesday	09:00 – 17:30
Thursday	09:00 – 17:30
Friday	09:00 – 17:30
Saturday	09:00 – 12:30
Sunday	Closed

Transport/parking

Roadside parking is available nearby. There is a frequent bus service available between Middleborough branch and this Post Office service. The nearest bus stop is 160 metres away. There are local buses serving the surrounding area.

Distance

This Post Office service is located approximately 2 miles away from Middleborough branch, along varied terrain.

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

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 **Notify** - where we are informing customers of changes around:

- Opening hours
- Temporary closure¹/ temporary service interruption
- Re-opening of a temporarily closed branch in the same site
- Opening a new branch unrelated to a previous closure
- Location used by a Mobile Post Office within a community

We will display a poster in branch (or nearby if appropriate) to notify customers of the above changes, providing four weeks' notice. Where four weeks' notice is not possible, we will provide notice as soon as we are able to. For temporary closures we will include details of the nearest alternative Post Offices and our customer helpline/textphone.

We will **Engage** - where we are seeking feedback on a decision that has been made on:

- Re-opening of a temporarily closed branch in a new location (where the branch has been closed for more than three months)
- Franchising of a Directly Managed branch in its existing site

While the decision to proceed will have already been made, we will welcome suggestions about specific aspects of the change such as access arrangements and the internal layout. We will provide four weeks' notice or, where extenuating circumstances prevent this, we will provide as much notice as possible.

During this period we will display a poster in branch and provide information online. We will contact locally elected representatives², the Consumer Advocacy Bodies and selected charities³, providing clear information on any changes to services or access arrangements at the branch. We will ask locally elected representatives to share information with other key community outlets (such as notice boards, local charities, magazines, GP surgeries etc.). We will publish the outcome of the engagement online and in branch, providing a summary of key issues raised with a clear response to each and any changes made to our original plans.

We will **Consult** - where we are seeking feedback on proposals prior to a decision being made on the:

- Permanent closure of a Post Office branch⁴
- 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-week⁵ 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, 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
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¹We will provide an update to locally elected representatives if the status of the temporarily closed branch has not changed after 12 months.

² Locally elected representatives include but are not restricted to the Member of Parliament, Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly, or Northern Ireland Assembly, Local Authority Chief Executive, Ward Councillors, Parish or Community Council.

³ 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 2 and 3 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.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.