Dear Customer

**Middlewich Post Office®**

**24 Lewin Street, Middlewich, CW10 9AS**

**Local Public Consultation Decision**

I’m writing to confirm that we will be proceeding with our proposal to move the above Post Office branch to Chisholm Newsagents, 49 Wheelock Street, Middlewich,

CW10 9AB, where it will operate as one of our new local style Post Office branches.

We have received 281 individual responses from customers and local representatives during the local public consultation period. The feedback commented about a number of issues including parking, location, and availability of space inside the proposed shop and the level of service that will be provided following the change. Some feedback commented that the proposed new branch would be closer and easier to access and welcomed the longer opening times. This feedback helped me to understand customers’ concerns and to make sure that all such information was taken into account before finalising our plans.

The move of this branch is part of our modernisation and investment plans to provide a Post Office network that is sustainable and will better meet customer needs for the future. As part of the programme, our proposal to relocate Middlewich Post Office to Chisholm Newsagents aims to secure Post Office services to the local community for the longer term by providing a more modern and commercially viable service. A number of factors are taken into account when considering an appointment; including access, the size of the premises and the suitability of the operator. Please be assured, the processes we follow are established and robust and the new operator would have satisfied us of their ability to run a viable operation as part of our robust and rigorous recruitment process.

While I have considered the concerns raised about parking in the area surrounding the new location, it is fair to say that this is a problem faced generally in many locations nationwide. As I am sure you will understand the availability of parking spaces is outside the direct control of Post Office Limited. However I have conducted a further review of parking and I can confirm there is time restricted roadside parking available nearby. I am therefore satisfied that parking at the proposed new branch will continue to meet the needs of customers using the Post Office.

We recognise that the Post Office plays an important part in the lives of customers, particularly to older customers and disabled customers and we want to make our services as accessible as possible. Currently there are two internal steps at the entrance, however the new operator will be making adjustments to improve access for customers and a new entrance ramp will be installed before the new Post Office branch opens.

Inside, the new branch will be in line with Post Office specifications, making sure there is sufficient space for the new style local Post Office to operate alongside the retail offer. There will be adequate space to hold large items of mail, including parcels, in a secure area until collected. We will also be working closely with the new operator on the internal layout and some existing fixtures, fittings and retail stock will be re-aligned or removed to make sure there is clear access into the premises. The entrance, aisles and queuing area will be kept free from obstructions ensuring adequate space is available for customers to move around the store and access Post Office services without difficulty.

Although the local style format is a more modern way of offering Post Office services, it in no way compromises the professional service standards that we aim to provide at all of our branches. The new operator will be responsible for employing staff within the new branch and staffing levels will be carefully aligned to meet current and future customer demand. All staff handling Post Office transactions will be fully trained and 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.

The new local style Post Office will operate from two Post Office serving points located at the shop counter, enabling customers to carry out a wide range of Post Office products and services alongside retail transactions. The local style format is designed around following simple processes for handling transactions that are to be straight-forward and quick, helping to minimise queues and provide and efficient and speedy service. The number of serving positions has been based on current and future predicted business levels. We’re confident that two serving positions together with the extended opening hours the new branch will offer, along with the efficient use of staff will give us sufficient capacity both now and for the future to cope with customer demand.

The change also means that local residents will benefit from significantly longer opening hours, including Saturday afternoons and Sunday opening. These new hours will allow customers to spread their visits and access our services seven days a week and at times that suit them better. Full details of the new branch are provided at the end of this letter together with a list of the products and services which will be available.

I have carefully considered our original proposal and the feedback received during the local public consultation period, along with the impact on local residents and the wider community. Having also reviewed pedestrian and vehicular access to the new site, I am confident that the new branch is suitably located and that this new way of offering Post Office services will continue to meet customer needs, whilst helping to provide long term viability and future sustainability for Post Office service provision in the local community.

The current branch will close at 12:30 on Saturday 30 June 2018, with the new branch opening, at Chisholm Newsagents, 49 Wheelock Street, at 13:00 on Monday 2 July 2018. If there are any unforeseen schedule changes which mean these dates change, posters will be displayed in branch to let customers know. During transfer of the branch customers requiring Post Office facilities may use any convenient Post Office service. Details of an alternative Post Office branch is provided below for your convenience:

* Holmes Chapel Post Office, 31 London Road, Holmes Chapel, Crewe, CW4 7AP

This information is also available on the Post Office Consultation Hub at postofficeviews.co.uk.

This change to the Post Office network is being carried out in accordance with the Code of Practice for changes to the network, as agreed with the independent statutory consumer watchdog. A full copy of the Code of Practice is available on our website at www.postofficeviews.co.uk, or by contacting us at the address provided at the end of this letter.

Thank you for considering our proposal.

Yours faithfully

Anette Thomas

Anette Thomas

**Area Network Change Manager**

How to contact us:

 postofficeviews.co.uk

 comments@postoffice.co.uk

 FREEPOST Your Comments

|  |
| --- |
| **Middlewich Post Office information sheet** |
| **Address** | Chisholm Newsagents49 Wheelock StreetMiddlewichCW10 9AB |
| **Post Office** **opening hours** |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Mon | 07:00 - 17:30 |
| Tue | 07:00 - 17:30 |
| Wed | 07:00 - 17:30 |
| Thu | 07:00 - 17:30 |
| Fri | 07:00 - 17:30 |
| Sat | 07:00 - 17:30 |
| Sun | 08:00 - 11:00 |

 |
| **Distance** | 400 metres away from the current branch, along varied terrain. |
| **Products & Services**  | The majority of Post Office products and services will still be available. |
| **Accessibility &****Accessibility works** | **Access and facilities**Access will be via a permanent ramp. Internally, there will be a hearing loop and space for a wheelchair.**Parking**Time restricted roadside parking is available nearby. |
| **Retail** | Confectionery/Tobacco and News retailer |
| **Date of Relocation** | Monday 2 July 2018 at 13:00 |

|  |
| --- |
| **Middlewich Post Office® services available** |
| **Your Postmaster or our Customer Helpline on 03452 66 01 15 will be happy to help you with any queries about product availability or provide you with details of maximum value of transactions. Customers can also shop online at** [**www.postoffice.co.uk**](http://www.postoffice.co.uk) |
|  | **New branch** |
| **Mail** |  |  |
| First & Second Class mail  | **** |
| Stamps, stamp books (1st class 6 & 12 only, 2nd 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. signed for & Airsure) | **** |
| 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**  |  |
| Bill payments (card, barcoded or manual) | **** |
| Key recharging  | **** |
| **Driving** |  |  |
| Car tax  | **** |
| **Licences** |  |
| Rod fishing licences  | **** |
| **Travel** |  |
| Pre-order travel money | **** |
| On demand travel money | **Euro/Dollars** |
| Travel insurance referral | **** |
| On demand travel insurance |  |
| Passport |  |
|  |  |
| Mobile Top-ups & E vouchers | **** |
| National Lottery Terminal | **** |
| **Payment by cheque** | **** |
| Products marked  are available at **Holmes Chapel** Post Office, 31 London Road, Holmes Chapel, Crewe, CW4 7AP | Opening times:Mon – Sat 09:00 -17:30 |