



Dear Customer

Local public consultation – Decision

**Newtownhamilton Post Office
50 Dundalk Street, Newtownhamilton, Newry, BT35 0PB**

We have restored the Post Office service in Newtownhamilton, following the temporary closure of the branch. We are pleased to confirm the new Post Office branch opened on Thursday 23 November 2023, at 35 Dundalk Street, Newtownhamilton, Dundalk, Newry, BT35 0PB, where it is operating as one of our local style branches by the existing postmaster. Please accept my apologies for the late notification on this occasion.

I know that the local community will join me in welcoming this good news and hope that you and our customers will continue to use this service.

Full details of the new Post Office service are provided 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 the Post Office in the local community.

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.

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.

Thank you for your patience and support in restoring the Post Office service.

Yours faithfully

Kenny Lamont

**Kenny Lamont
Network Provision Manager
Post Office Limited**

comments@postoffice.co.uk

postofficeviews.co.uk

FREEPOST Your Comments

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 7 February 2023

Consultation ended 21 March 2023

Consultation responses

- 390 responses from customers and local representatives

Meetings

Post Office representatives met with Local MLA, Police Service of Northern Ireland and local representatives on 3 March 2023.

Key issues raised

- Location and Distance
- Parking and Traffic Congestion
- Access and Internal Space

Response to issues raised

Distance and Location

The new premises are located approximately 45 metres away from the previous site. With any relocation it is inevitable that whilst some customers will have an easier journey to the new location, it will regrettably mean a longer or less convenient journey for some customers. However, it's important to stress that in this instance we have had to balance these factors against our over-riding need to retain a service locally. In terms of pedestrian access to the new location, there are well maintained pavements, with dropped kerbs along the route from the current site.

Parking and Traffic Congestion

Parking and peak time traffic congestion are problems faced generally in many locations nationwide. Whilst the availability of parking spaces is outside the direct control of Post Office Limited. A further review of parking has been carried out and has confirmed that roadside parking will be available along Dundalk Street.

Access and Internal Space

Access at the new location currently has a wide door and a step at the entrance, however a bell and signage will be installed at the entrance to the new premises and a portable ramp will be available on request. Additionally for customers who may find using a ramp difficult, the postmaster will also provide a second entrance from the side of the building, which will have wide level access for customers, including wheelchair users. This entrance is adjacent to the main entrance and will be clearly signposted.

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 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.

Appendix B

Newtownhamilton Post Office Information Summary

35 Dundalk Street
Newtownhamilton
Dundalk
Newry
BT35 0PB

New opening hours

Monday to Friday	06:30 – 22:00
Saturday & Sunday	07:00 – 22:00

**Some branches may need to make changes to their opening hours.
The latest available branch information can be found on our website
www.postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder**

Products & Services

The same range of Post Office products and services will be available.

Serving positions

There will a screened Post Office serving position located in a dedicated area within the new branch.

Access

The new premises will have a wide door and a step at the entrance; however, a bell and signage will be installed at the entrance to the new premises and a portable ramp will be available on request.

The postmaster will also provide a second entrance from the side of the building, which will have wide level access for customers, including wheelchair users. This entrance is adjacent to the main entrance and will be clearly signposted.

Internally, there will be a hearing loop and space for a wheelchair.

Getting there

The new Post Office branch will be located on the same road, approximately 45 metres away from the previous branch, along varied terrain.

Roadside parking will be available along Dundalk Street.

Retail

Convenience Store.

Newtownhamilton 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 (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. 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	
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	✓
Travel	
Pre-order travel money	✓
Travel insurance referral	✓
Mobile Top-ups & E vouchers	✓
Payment by cheque	✓
Other Products are available at Cullyhanna Post Office, 4 Skerriff Road, Cullyhanna, Newry, BT35 0JG	Opening times: Mon & Tue 09:00 – 15:00 Wed 09:00 – 12:30 Thu & Fri 09:00 – 17:00
and Belleeks Post Office, 15 Main Street, Belleeks, Newry, BT35 7PH	Opening times: Mon & Thu 10:00 – 15:30 Tue, Wed, & Fri 10:00 – 13:00

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, Consumer 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, Consumer 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
03452 66 01 15

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Textphone: 03457 22 33 55

FREEPOST Your Comments Call:

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.