



Dear Customer

Park Post Office®
Unit 3, Whitbourne Avenue, Park, Swindon, SN3 2GD

Local public consultation decision

I'm writing to confirm that following a period of local public consultation and review we have made the decision to proceed with the move of the above Post Office into Premier at Unit 7, Whitbourne Avenue, Park, Swindon, SN3 2GD, where it will be operated by a retail partner.

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.

The current branch will close at 16:30 on Saturday 12 October 2019, with the new branch opening, at Premier, Unit 7, Whitbourne Avenue, at 13:00 on Monday 14 October 2019. 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 two alternative Post Office branches are provided below for your convenience:

- Swindon Post Office, WHSmith, 10-12 Regent Street, Swindon, SN1 1JQ
- Walcot Post Office, MidCounties Co-operative, Unit 1, Sussex Place, Somerville Road, Swindon, SN3 3FS

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. A copy is available at the end of this letter.

Yours faithfully

Antoinette Chitty

Antoinette Chitty
Change Manager

postofficeviews.co.uk

comments@postoffice.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 21 May 2019

Consultation ended 2 July 2019

Consultation responses

- 47 responses from customers and local representatives
- 1 Petition with 1176

Meetings

Post Office representatives met with MP Robert Buckland on 21 June 2019.

Key issues raised

- Location, Access and Space within the store
- Parking
- Safety, Privacy and Staffing
- Queues and Serving Positions

Response to issues raised

Location, Access and Space within the store

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 local branches will help secure the long term future of Post Office services in the local area.

The new premises is located within 50 metres, in the shopping parade around the corner from the previous branch, along level terrain branch. We know that the Post Office plays an important part in the lives of customers and we want to make our services as accessible as possible. There is level access and a wide door at the entrance. Internally, there will be a hearing loop and space for a wheelchair.

Inside, the new branch, it will be built in line with Post Office specifications, making sure there is sufficient space for the local style Post Office to operate alongside the retail offer. We will work closely with the new operator on the internal layout to make sure there is clear access into the new premises. Aisles and the queuing area will be kept free from obstructions and adequate room will be provided for customers to move around and access Post Office services without difficulty.

Parking

Generally parking is a problem faced in many locations nationwide and the availability of parking spaces is outside the direct control of Post Office Limited. I can confirm parking is available at the Cavendish Square Car Park within the shopping parade with designated marked disabled bays. The extended opening times will allow customers to visit at quieter times which may also help ease any potential traffic congestion issues.

Safety, Privacy and Staffing

Although the local branch 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 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.

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. Similarly with security, as with any other branch in our network there would be strict guidelines and measures put in place to safeguard customers, staff and the cash and stock entrusted to the operator's care.

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 would 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 Premier stores.

Queues and Serving Positions

We will work closely with the new agent to plan the interior layout of the Post Office counters area, to ensure optimum use of the space within the store and that access into and inside the store is kept clear and free of obstacles. This will ensure the Post Office counter area is easily accessible and customers including wheelchair users have sufficient space to move around the store.

There will be two Post Office serving points, located at the shop counter, enabling customers to carry out a wide range of Post Office products and services including the collection of undeliverable items of mail, alongside retail transactions. This will also mean that local residents will benefit from significantly longer opening hours, including Saturday afternoon, Sunday opening and longer opening times throughout the week, allowing customers greater flexibility and the option of visiting the Post Office at times that suit them better. It also means that some customers won't have to join the main Post Office queue, helping to reduce waiting times at the main counter. Also staffing levels are aligned to meet customer demand particularly at peak times.

The Post Office transactions through the local style branch are designed to be quick and efficient to operate, allowing for fast and effective customer service making the service easy for customers and operators and helping to alleviate queuing. This does mean that a small number of transactions that are more time consuming, complex or paper based won't be offered at the new branch. However, I can confirm that the majority of Post Office products and services will continue to be available following the change and the small number of services that will not be offered will continue to be available at Swindon Post Office which can be accessed by a direct bus service.

Appendix B

Park Post Office information sheet															
Address	Premier Unit 7 Whitbourne Avenue Park Swindon SN3 2GD														
Opening hours	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Mon</td><td>06:00 – 17:30</td></tr> <tr><td>Tue</td><td>06:00 – 17:30</td></tr> <tr><td>Wed</td><td>06:00 – 17:30</td></tr> <tr><td>Thu</td><td>06:00 – 17:30</td></tr> <tr><td>Fri</td><td>06:00 – 17:30</td></tr> <tr><td>Sat</td><td>06:00 – 17:30</td></tr> <tr><td>Sun</td><td>07:00 – 12:00</td></tr> </table>	Mon	06:00 – 17:30	Tue	06:00 – 17:30	Wed	06:00 – 17:30	Thu	06:00 – 17:30	Fri	06:00 – 17:30	Sat	06:00 – 17:30	Sun	07:00 – 12:00
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Sun	07:00 – 12:00														
Distance	The new premises is located in the shopping parade, within 50 metres around the corner from the current branch, along level terrain.														
Products & Services	A wide range of products and services will be available.														
Serving positions	There will be two Post Office serving points provided for use at the retail counter and available during shop opening hours.														
Accessibility	<p>Access and facilities The new premises has a wide door and level access at the entrance. Internally, there will be a hearing loop and space for a wheelchair.</p> <p>Parking Parking is available at the Cavendish Square Car Park within the shopping parade with designated marked disabled bays.</p>														
Retail	Convenience store														
Date of move	13:00 on Monday 14 October 2019														

Park Post Office® services available

For information about product availability call 03457 223344 or to provide you with details of maximum value of transactions please speak to the operator. Customers can also shop online at www.postoffice.co.uk

	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 (Tracked and 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	
Bill payments (card, barcoded or manual)	✓
Key recharging	✓
Driving	
Car tax	✓
Licences	
Rod fishing licences	✓
Travel	
Pre-order travel money	✓
On demand travel money	Euros
Travel insurance referral	✓
Mobile Top-ups & E vouchers	
Mobile Top-ups & E vouchers	✓
National Lottery Terminal	x
Payment by cheque	
Other products are available at Swindon Post Office, WHSmith, 10-12 Regent Street, Swindon, SN1 1JQ	Opening times: Mon – Sat 09:00 – 17:30 Sun 10:30 – 14:30
and Walcot Post Office, MidCounties Co-operative, Unit 1, Sussex Place, Somerville Road, Swindon, SN3 3FS	Opening times: Mon – Sun 07:00 – 23:00

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
FREEPOST Your Comments
Call: 03452 66 01 15
Textphone: 03457 22 33 55

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.