



Dear Customer,

## **Local public consultation - Have your say**

**Rochester Post Office  
Paydens, 130 High Street, Rochester, ME1 1JT**

We are proposing to move the above Post Office branch to a new location: S & J News, 190-192 High Street, Rochester, ME1 1EY, where it would operate as one of our local style branches.

### **Why are we proposing this move?**

The current postmaster has resigned and withdrawn the premises for Post Office use, consequently Rochester Post Office will close on Thursday 30 November 2023 at 13:00.

We are however pleased to advise that a new operator has been appointed, who has identified an alternative location to operate Rochester Post Office. In the interim, to maintain Post Office services to the local community, the new operator will set up a temporary service operating from the proposed new location from Monday 04 December 2023 at 13:00. The temporary service opening hours will be Monday – Friday 09:00 – 16:30, Saturday 09:00 – 13:30 and Sunday Closed.

During the transfer of the branch, customers requiring Post Office facilities may use any convenient Post Office service. Details of an alternative Post Office branches are provided below for your convenience:

- Strood Post Office, 13-17 North Street, Strood, Rochester, ME2 4SL

The proposed premises would undergo a full refurbishment early next year to incorporate a Convenience Store with Rochester Post Office, where it would become a permanent branch, subject to a satisfactory public consultation. The new agent firmly believes that the move would help to secure continued access to Post Office services locally, as well as supporting the viability of their business.

### **We'd like your help**

We're now starting a period of local public consultation and your feedback is important to us as it will help to inform our decision. For more details of the proposed services and accessibility, please see the branch information summary later in this consultation document.

### **What exactly are we consulting on?**

We'd welcome your comments on the following areas:

- **How easy is it to get to the proposed new location?**
- **Are the new premises easy for you to get into and are they easily accessible once inside?**
- **Are there any other local community issues which you believe could be affected by or affect the proposed change?**
- **If the move were to proceed, is there anything we could do to make it easier for customers?**

Please note the proposed change of management of the branch is a decision for Post Office Ltd and therefore we are not seeking feedback on this aspect of the change.

|                                  |                                   |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Local Public Consultation starts | <b>Wednesday 15 November 2023</b> |
| Local Public Consultation ends   | <b>Wednesday 27 December 2023</b> |

You can share your views on the proposed change through our easy and convenient online questionnaire via [postofficeviews.co.uk](https://postofficeviews.co.uk). When entering the website, you can use the search function to find the consultation for this branch either by branch name, postcode or the unique branch code **226941**

#### How to share your views:

##### Consultation Hub ([postofficeviews.co.uk](https://postofficeviews.co.uk))

comments@postoffice.co.uk

Call: 03452 66 01 15

Textphone: 03457 22 33 55

FREEPOST Your Comments – N.B. This is the full postal address. Items sent by Freepost take 2 working days, please allow enough time for responses to be received.

**Want to tell us what you think right here and now?  
Scan here.**

If you don't have a QR code scanner on your phone, you can find one in your app store.



#### Good to know

- Customers would access Post Office services in a modern, open-plan environment alongside the operator's retail.
- Working with the postmaster, we'd adapt the current store layout, fixtures and fittings to accommodate the Post Office. It would be in a dedicated area of the store with two open-plan serving positions.
- The branch would offer a similar range of Post Office products and services over longer opening hours, so customers can access their Post Office when it's convenient. Customer satisfaction with local style branches is high, and many customers visit outside traditional opening hours.
- All staff employed to work in the new branch would be trained to the highest standards with on-going training on products and services, as well as operational and service related matters.
- Posters and leaflets will now be displayed in branch to let customers know about the proposal and to ask their views.
- Any information we receive will be carefully considered as we finalise our plans.
- If you are a local representative, we will write to you again at the end of the consultation to respond to the main issues raised and to explain our final plans for the branch.
- This consultation is being carried out in line with our Principles of Community Engagement which have been agreed with Citizens Advice, Consumer Scotland and the General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland - the independent statutory consumer watchdogs. An extract relating to consultation is available 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 the changes we are proposing to Rochester Post Office. If you would like a supply of posters, please let us know. Our contact details can be found at the top of this page.

Thank you for considering our proposal.

Your faithfully,

*Jason Collins*

**Jason Collins**  
**Network Provision Manager**  
**Post Office Limited**

## Rochester Post Office Information Summary

| Current Location   |                                | Proposed New Location   |               |
|--|--------------------------------|---|---------------|
| <b>Paydens</b><br><b>130 High Street</b><br><b>Rochester</b><br><b>ME1 1JT</b> |                                | <b>S &amp; J News</b><br><b>190 – 192 High Street</b><br><b>Rochester</b><br><b>ME1 1EY</b> |               |
| <b>Current opening hours</b>   |                                | <b>Proposed opening hours</b>   |               |
| Mon  | 09:00 – 13:00<br>14:00 – 17:00 | Mon - Fri   | 09:00 - 17:30 |
| Tue  | 09:00 – 13:00<br>14:00 – 17:00 | Sat   | 07:00 - 19:00 |
| Wed  | Closed                         | Sun   | 09:00 - 14:00 |
| Thu  | 09:00 – 13:00<br>14:00 – 17:00 | <b>Temporary Service</b><br><b>opening hours</b>  |               |
| Fri  | 09:00 – 13:00<br>14:00 – 17:00 | Mon - Fri   | 09:00 - 16:30 |
| Sat  | 09:00 – 12:00                  | Sat   | 09:00 - 13:30 |
| Sun  | Closed                         | Sun   | Closed        |

There are times our branches may need to make changes to its opening hours. The latest available branch information can be found on our website [www.postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder](http://www.postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder)

### **Products & Services**

A similar range of products and services would still be available, however excluding Passport Check & Send and On demand travel insurance.

### **Serving positions**

There would be two open plan serving positions.

### **Access**

The proposed premises would have a wide door and level access at the entrance.

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

### **Getting there**

The proposed premises would be located approximately 220 metres away from the current branch, along mostly level terrain.

Parking would be available at Almon Place pay and display car park which is located within 100 metres of the proposed premises, with dedicated disabled parking bays.

### **Retail**

Convenience store.

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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.

| Rochester Post Office services available  |                |                 |
|---|----------------|-----------------|
| For information about product availability call 03457 223344.   |                |                 |
| For details of maximum value of transactions, please speak to the operator.   |                |                 |
|   | Current branch | Proposed branch |
| <b>Mail</b>   |                |                 |
| First & Second Class mail   | ✓              | ✓               |
| Stamps, stamp books (1 <sup>st</sup> class 6 & 12 only, 2 <sup>nd</sup> class 12 only)  | ✓              | ✓               |
| Special stamps (Christmas issue only) & postage labels  | ✓              | ✓               |
| Signed For  | ✓              | ✓               |
| Special Delivery  | ✓              | ✓               |
| Home shopping returns   | ✓              | ✓               |
| Inland small, medium & large parcels  | ✓              | ✓               |
| Parcelforce Express Service   | ✓              | ✓               |
| 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   | ✓              | ✓               |
| <b>Withdrawals, deposits and payments</b>   |                |                 |
| 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  | ✓              | ✓               |
| <b>Driving</b>  |                |                 |
| Vehicle tax   | ✓              | ✓               |
| <b>Travel</b>   |                |                 |
| Pre-order travel money  | ✓              | ✓               |
| On demand travel money  | ✓              | ✓               |
| Travel insurance referral   | ✓              | ✓               |
| On demand travel insurance  | ✓              | ✗               |
| Passport Check & Send   | ✓              | ✗               |
|   |                |                 |
| Mobile Top-ups & E vouchers   | ✓              | ✓               |
| <b>Payment by cheque</b>  | ✓              | ✓               |
| Products marked ✗ are available at <b>Strood</b> Post Office,<br>13-17 North Street, Strood, Rochester, ME2 4SL                         |                |                 |

## **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](https://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 branch<sup>1</sup>
- 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-week<sup>2</sup> local public consultation, informing customers, locally elected representatives<sup>3</sup>, Consumer Advocacy Bodies and selected charities<sup>4</sup> 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](https://postofficeviews.co.uk)  
03452 66 01 15

Comments@postoffice.co.uk  
Textphone: 03457 22 33 55

**FREEPOST Your Comments Call:**

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

