



Dear Customer

Local public consultation – Decision

**Seaside (326) Post Office
326 Seaside, Eastbourne, BN22 7RH**

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 - Seaside Newsmart at 204-206 Seaside, Eastbourne, BN22 7QT, where it is 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.

Due to the temporary postmaster resigning the current branch closed on Wednesday 30 March 2022 at 18:00. We apologise for any inconvenience caused during this temporary closure.

I am pleased to confirm the new branch opened, at Premier - Seaside Newsmart at 204-206 Seaside, at 13:00 on Tuesday 19 April 2022.

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.

Yours faithfully

Jason Collins

Jason Collins
Network Provision Manager
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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 15 March 2022

Consultation ended 26 April 2022

Consultation responses

- 34 responses from customers and local representatives

Key issues raised

- Route, Distance and Location
- Parking and Traffic Congestion
- Premises and Access
- Space, Counters and Queues
- Safety and Security
- Anti-Social Behaviour and Alcohol
- Post Box

Response to issues raised

Route, Distance and Location

The new premises are located approximately 700 metres from the previous branch, along mostly level terrain. With any relocation it is inevitable that whilst some customers will have an easier journey to the new location, regrettably others will have further to travel. In terms of pedestrian access to the new location, there are well maintained pavements, with dropped kerbs along the route from the previous site. We believe this relocation is the most effective way to secure the long-term viability of Post Office services at Seaside (326).

Parking and Traffic Congestion

Whilst we have considered the concerns raised about parking and the peak time traffic congestion in the area surrounding the new location, generally, this is a problem faced in many locations nationwide and the availability of parking spaces is outside the direct control of Post Office Limited. A further review of parking has been carried out and we can confirm roadside parking is available outside the new premises and further roadside parking is available nearby. We are therefore satisfied that parking at the new branch will continue to meet the needs of customers using the Post Office.

Premises and Access

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 and operating as one of our local Post Office models will help secure the long-term future of Post Office services in the local area.

We recognise that the Post Office plays an important part in the lives of customers, particularly to older and disabled customers and we want to make our services as accessible as possible. We can confirm the current step at the entrance to the new premises has been removed. The new postmaster has completed works and installed a permanent ramp with handrails to provide improved access for customers. Internally, there is a hearing loop, a low-level serving counter and space for a wheelchair.

Space, Counters and Queues

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 Premier - Seaside Newsmart retail offer. The local style Post Office is operating from two Post Office serving points, located at the shop counter, enabling customers to carry out a range of Post Office products and services. The change also means that local residents will benefit from longer opening hours and staffing levels will be aligned to meet customer demand particularly at peak times.

We have worked closely with the new postmaster on the internal layout and some fixtures and fittings have been re-aligned or removed to ensure there is clear access into the premises and easy access to the Post Office counters. This will ensure the Post Office counter area is easily accessible. The entrance, aisles and the waiting area will be kept free from obstructions and adequate room will be provided for customers and for a wheelchair to move around the store without difficulty.

Safety and Security

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

Anti-Social Behaviour and Alcohol

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 postmaster will engage with the community police in the event of any anti-social behaviour outside and around the Premier - Seaside Newsmart which is also a supporter of the drink aware Trust.

Post Box

With regards to the post box, our normal procedure is to inform Royal Mail of our proposal as they are responsible for all matters relating to the delivery and acceptance of mail including the siting of post boxes. The decision on whether to relocate or install a new Post Box is therefore for them to make and as a separate business to Post Office Ltd they will have their own procedures to follow, which may include submission of planning applications and consideration of other utilities in the area.

Appendix B

Seaside (326) Post Office Information Sheet

**Premier - Seaside Newsmart
204-206 Seaside
Eastbourne
BN22 7QT**

New opening hours

Monday to Friday	08:00 – 18:00
Saturday	08:00 – 13:00
Sunday	08:00 – 13:00

During the Coronavirus pandemic the branch 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**

Products & Services

A range of range of products and services will continue to be available, with Euros and Dollars Travel Money, however excluding On Demand Travel Money and Passport Check and Send.

Serving positions

There are two serving positions at the retail counter.

Access

Currently, there is a step at the entrance to the new premises.

The new operator has completed works to install a permanent ramp with handrails.

Internally, there is a hearing loop and space for a wheelchair.

Getting there

The new premises are located approximately 700 metres away from the current branch, along mostly level terrain.

Roadside parking is available outside the new premises and nearby.

There is a frequent bus service from the current branch to the new premises.

The nearest bus stop is located on the opposite side of the road of the new premises near Christ Church, 34 metres away.

Retail

Convenience store

Date of move

Tuesday 19 April 2022 at 13:00

Seaside (326) 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 (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 (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	
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 (card, barcoded or manual)	✓
Key recharging	✓
Driving	
Vehicle tax	✓
Licences	
Rod fishing licences	✓
Travel	
Pre-order travel money	✓
On demand travel money	Euros & Dollars
Travel insurance referral	✓
Passport Check & Send	✗
Mobile Top-ups & E vouchers	
	✓
Payment by cheque	
	✓
Products marked ✗ are available at Eastbourne Post Office, WHSmith, 110 Terminus Road, Eastbourne, BN21 3AL	Opening times: Mon – Fri 09:00 – 17:30 Sat 09:00 – 14:00

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, 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
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FREEPOST Your Comments

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.