



Dear Customer

Smarden Post Office®
The Street, Ashford, TN27 8NA

We are delighted to let you know that following the temporary closure of Smarden Post Office we will be re-opening the branch on Thursday 26 March 2020. This will be in a new location – Smarden Village Hall, Chessenden Lane, Smarden, Ashford, TN27 8NF.

The current temporary Outreach Service will cease on Tuesday 24 March 2020 at 14:30. We are pleased to let you know that a new agent has been appointed who will manage the new branch. If there are any unforeseen changes to the opening date, posters will be displayed in the Village Hall to let customers know.

Our priority is to safeguard Post Office services to the local communities in the longer term. The establishment of Hosted Outreach Post Office service will enable us to maintain Post Office services to our customers in the local community.

We will display posters in the new location to tell customers the news. If you are a local representative, it would be helpful if you could share this information 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. If you would like a supply of these posters please let us know.

We are keen to maintain Post Office service in the local area, so we have decided to go ahead with our plans. However we would welcome suggestions about specific aspects of the change particularly on the following areas:

- Do you have any comments about access into the new premises?
- Do you have any comments about access inside the new premises?

We will be accepting comments until Wednesday 15 January 2020. We won't be responding to you individually, but any comments received will be taken into consideration as we finalise our plans.

An information sheet is enclosed that provides more details about your new service. For further information or to share your views, please visit our Consultation Hub via the link below, then use the search function to find the engagement for this service either by service name, postcode or the unique code 156925.

postofficeviews.co.uk

Once the plans have been finalised, we'll display a poster in the Village Hall and information will be provided on our Consultation Hub outlining the main comments received and our response.

We're carrying out this engagement in line with our Principles of Community Engagement. A copy is available at the end of this letter.

Thank you for your support in maintaining a Post Office service.

Yours faithfully

Samantha Coe

Samantha Coe
Change Manager

How to contact us:

postofficeviews.co.uk

comments@postoffice.co.uk

Call: 03457 22 33 44

Textphone: 03457 22 33 55

FREEPOST Your Comments

Please note this is the full address to use and no further address details are required.

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.



Post Office Limited is committed to protecting your privacy. Information about how we do this can be found on our website at postoffice.co.uk/privacy

Items sent by Freepost take two working days to arrive, so responses by Freepost should be sent in sufficient time to arrive before the end of the engagement period. Working days do not include Saturdays or Sundays. Responses received after the deadline will not be considered.

To get this information in a different format, for example, in larger print, audio or braille call 03457 22 33 44 or Textphone 03457 22 33 55.

Smarden Post Office information sheet																	
Address	Smarden Village Hall Chessenden Lane Smarden Ashford TN27 8NF																
Post Office opening hours	<table><tr><td>Mon</td><td>08:00 – 18:00</td></tr><tr><td>Tue</td><td>08:00 – 18:00</td></tr><tr><td>Wed</td><td>08:00 – 18:00</td></tr><tr><td>Thu</td><td>08:00 – 18:00</td></tr><tr><td>Fri</td><td>08:00 – 18:00</td></tr><tr><td>Sat</td><td>09:00 – 17:00</td></tr><tr><td>Sun</td><td>09:00 – 13:00</td></tr></table>			Mon	08:00 – 18:00	Tue	08:00 – 18:00	Wed	08:00 – 18:00	Thu	08:00 – 18:00	Fri	08:00 – 18:00	Sat	09:00 – 17:00	Sun	09:00 – 13:00
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Thu	08:00 – 18:00																
Fri	08:00 – 18:00																
Sat	09:00 – 17:00																
Sun	09:00 – 13:00																
Distance	500 metres away from the previous branch, along varied terrain.																
Accessibility	Access and facilities The new premises would have a wide door and a level access at the entrance. Parking There is a car park directly outside the new premises.																
Retail	Convenience store																
Proposed date of Change	26 March 2020																

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Smarden Post Office® services available

For information about product availability call 03457 223344. For 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	Express 24 & 48
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	✓
Personal & Business Banking cash withdrawals, deposits & balance enquiries using a card. Also enveloped cheque deposits and barcoded deposit slips.	✓
Postal orders	✓
Moneygram	✓
Change giving	✗
Bill payments	
Automated bill payments (card or barcoded)	✓
Key recharging	✓
Licences	
Rod fishing licences	✓
Travel	
Pre-order travel money	✓
On demand travel money	Euros/Dollars
Travel insurance referral	✓
Mobile Top-ups & E vouchers	✓
Payment by cheque	✗
Products marked ✗ are available at Headcorn Post Office, 28 High Street, Headcorn, Ashford, TN27 9NE Opening times: Mon – Sat 09:00 – 17:30	

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
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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.