



Dear Customer

Walsall Post Office®
Darwall Street, Walsall, WS1 1AA
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 proposal to the nearby premises which was previously the BHS retail store at, 71-75 Park Street, Unit 46, Walsall, WS1 1NW. The building is being redeveloped into a small shopping area with several self-contained internal units, and the Post Office will be run by our new 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 key issues raised in the consultation and our response to each of them 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 new branch will continue to meet customer needs and deliver an excellent service, whilst securing the long-term viability of Post Office services in Walsall.

The current branch will close at 17:30 on Wednesday 9 October 2019, with the new branch opening at 09:00 on Thursday 10 October 2019.

You can also find a copy of this letter on our website at postofficeviews.co.uk. When entering the website you will be asked to enter the code for this branch: **010242**.

Posters will now be displayed in branch to let customers know about this decision.

Yours faithfully

Steve Blampied
Head of Directly Managed Branch Network
Post Office Limited

postofficeviews.co.uk
comments@postoffice.co.uk
FREEPOST Your Comments

Appendix A – Response to Local Public Consultation

Consultation started 26 June 2019

Consultation ended 7 August 2019

Consultation responses

- 55 responses from customers and local representatives

Customer forum event

Held on 25 July 2019 attended by approximately 3 members of the public.

Key issues raised

- **Getting to the new location**
- **Access**
- **Staffing and customer service**
- **Range of products and services**

Response to issues raised

Getting to the new location

The new branch will be located approximately 360 metres from the current branch, along varied terrain. For customers using their own transport there are several car parks in the vicinity of the new branch. There are also six designated disabled bays on Marsh Street, near Gallery Square, approximately 60 metres from the new location. For those using public transport to get to the new branch, Walsall bus station is approximately 190 metres away.

Access

The new branch will operate from a newly built dedicated open plan Post Office area located to the rear left hand side of the new shopping centre. The main entrance to the shopping centre will have level access and automatic doors. Directional signage will be provided from the main entrance to the new Post Office with level access into the Post Office unit and the entrance will be kept open during store opening times.

Customer access both into and within the store will meet Post Office Ltd's own accessibility standards and all applicable legislation. To make sure there is sufficient space for Post Office customers, including wheelchair users, to move around the store and reach the Post Office area without hindrance, the entrance areas and shopping aisles will be kept free of obstructions. The Post Office counter will be built to Post Office specifications and will include lighting to industry standards, low level counters, PIN pads and hearing loops. There will be space for people to wait for service and customer seating will also be provided.

Staffing and customer service

There will be five counter serving positions which has been based on current and forecast future business levels; two open plan positions and two traditional floor to ceiling screened positions which will also provide travel money services and a Post Office serving point at the retail counter. Additionally there will be two self-service kiosks for mails transactions including most home shopping returns, E Top-Ups, and a range of bill payments. We will continue to monitor service demand in the Walsall area, along with customer usage at the new branch following the move and will work with our new retail partner to make sure service standards are maintained.

Any person employed to work in Walsall Post Office will be trained to the highest Post Office standards and, just as with branches we run ourselves, the branch staff will receive on-going training on products and services, as well as general operational and service related matters. Post Office Area Managers will work with our new retail partner and the branch team to provide support, in the same way they already do in existing Post Office branches operated by us or other retail partners.

In respect of the team working at the current branch, we have a strong track record of supporting our people through change. We will do all that we can to find a solution that works for each individual within the options available.

Range of products and services

A wide range of services would still be available at the branch, with the exception of a Post Office cash machine. The nearest alternative external Post Office cash machine can be found approximately 1.1 miles away at Wolverhampton Road Post Office, 164-166 Wolverhampton Road, Walsall, WS2 8RQ which can be accessed by a frequent bus service. All Post Office branches offer free access to cash for the major high street banks and customers will be able to use their debit card to withdraw cash at the counter of the new branch, during all the extended opening hours.

Appendix B

Walsall Post Office information sheet															
Address	71-75 Park Street Unit 46 Walsall WS1 1NW														
Opening hours	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Mon</td><td>09:00 – 17:30</td></tr> <tr><td>Tue</td><td>09:00 – 17:30</td></tr> <tr><td>Wed</td><td>09:00 – 17:30</td></tr> <tr><td>Thu</td><td>09:00 – 17:30</td></tr> <tr><td>Fri</td><td>09:00 – 17:30</td></tr> <tr><td>Sat</td><td>09:00 – 17:30</td></tr> <tr><td>Sun</td><td>Closed</td></tr> </table>	Mon	09:00 – 17:30	Tue	09:00 – 17:30	Wed	09:00 – 17:30	Thu	09:00 – 17:30	Fri	09:00 – 17:30	Sat	09:00 – 17:30	Sun	Closed
Mon	09:00 – 17:30														
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Wed	09:00 – 17:30														
Thu	09:00 – 17:30														
Fri	09:00 – 17:30														
Sat	09:00 – 17:30														
Sun	Closed														
Products & Services	A wide range of services will still be available at the branch, with the exception of a cash machine.														
Serving positions	There will be five serving positions in total; two screened and two open plan and a Post Office serving point at the retail counter. The total number of serving positions has been based on current and future predicted business levels.														
Additional facilities	Two self-service kiosks for mails transactions including home shopping returns, E Top-Ups, and a range of bill payments.														
Access & facilities	<p>Access into the premises from the shopping centre will be level, with the entrance being kept open during store opening times. Low level serving counters, a low level writing desk and hearing loops will be available.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Parking</p> <p>There are several car parks in the vicinity of the new premises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Townend Street, pay and display with 10 spaces approximately 120 metres away. • Green Lane car park, pay and display with 47 spaces and designated disabled bays approximately 160 metres away. • Six designated disabled bays on Marsh Street, approximately 60 metres away. <p style="text-align: center;">Buses</p> <p>Public transport available to and from the surrounding areas. Walsall bus station is approximately 190 metres away from the new premises.</p>														
Route	Approximately 360 metres away from the current branch, along varied terrain.														
Retail	Convenience, stationery and printing solutions														
Date of move	Thursday 10 October 2019														

To get this information in a different format, for example, in larger print, audio or braille please call 03452 66 01 15 or Textphone 03457 22 33 55.

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
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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.