



Dear Customer

Wellingborough Post Office®
5 Midland Road, Wellingborough, NN8 1HE

Local Public Consultation Decision

I'm writing to confirm that following a period of local public consultation and review the decision has been made to proceed with the proposal to move Wellingborough Post Office to the nearby vacant retail unit at 9-10 Sheep Street, Wellingborough, NN8 1BL where it would be run by our new retail partner. This change is being made as part of the continuing modernisation of our network, to achieve commercial sustainability and will help us to provide services that will meet customer needs and safeguard future service provision in Wellingborough, now and for the long-term.

Local Public consultation

During the public consultation period we received 54 individual representations from customers and local representatives. We also held a customer forum to talk about our plans and answer questions. In the main the feedback commented on customer access to the proposed new branch, parking in the surrounding area, the level of service that would be available at the new branch, staffing, and the future of the current building. There were also comments welcoming the move of the branch to the proposed new location. Regarding the future use of the current building, following the move, we plan to exit the property and return it to the landlord who would then decide its future.

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, before making our decision.

Getting to the new location

With any relocation it is inevitable that whilst some customers will have an easier journey to the new location, regrettably others will have slightly further to travel. We carefully considered factors such as the local terrain, parking and transport links when developing our proposal. We also took account of whether there were any particular local road traffic issues that may negatively impact accessibility.

The new site is located approximately 225 metres away from the current branch, along varied terrain. Post Office Limited will engage with the Local authority to determine what improvements can be put in place to help mitigate the impact on older and disabled customers with regards to pedestrianised access at the new branch. We will also work with the local transport department to review the crossing points along the stretch of road where the new branch will be located.

For customers using their own transport to access the new branch, there is a free multi-storey car park at the Swangate Shopping Centre with 1000 spaces and designated disabled bays approximately 155 metres away. For those using public transport, the nearest bus stop is approximately 10 metres from the branch. In conclusion, I remain satisfied that customers in Wellingborough will continue to have good access to Post Office services.

The new Wellingborough Post Office

We know that the Post Office plays an important part in the lives of customers, including our older and disabled customers. Our new retail partner regards the Post Office network as a vital part of community services and we'll be working together to provide a new, modern Post Office with sufficient room for both Post Office and shop customers.

The new premises will undergo a complete internal refurbishment to provide a bright, modern open-plan branch with the introduction of their retail offer of a convenience store alongside the Post Office service. The branch will operate from a newly built dedicated open plan Post Office area to the left of the store and customer access both into and within the store will meet Post Office Ltd's own accessibility standards and all applicable legislation. Access into the store will be level with an automated door installed at the entrance to the premises. Externally the store front will include Post Office signage and an opening hours board.

There will be directional signage from the entrance door through to the new Post Office area. 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 area 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.

There will be five counter serving positions which has been based on current and forecast future business levels; three open plan positions, one traditional floor to ceiling screened position which will also provide travel money services, and an open plan service point at the retail counter. Open plan serving positions are successfully used across our Post Office network as an alternative to the more traditional positions. There is still a partitioned screen but this is lower, helping to provide a more personal service and discreet conversations when needed. The open plan service point at the retail counter also means that people don't always have to join the main Post Office queue, helping to reduce waiting times at the main counter.

I'm therefore satisfied that customer needs will continue to be met. We will continue to monitor service demand in the Wellingborough area, along with customer usage at the new branch following the move and will work with our retail partner to make sure service standards are maintained.

Access to Post Office services and products

A wide range of services would be available at the new Wellingborough branch, with the exception of Biometric Enrolment for the Home Office. The nearest branch providing the Biometric Enrolment Service is Kettering Post Office, 17 Lower Street, Kettering, NN16 8AA, approximately 9.2 miles away. DVLA Photocard Driving Licence renewal and Security Industry Authority (SIA) licence application services will still be available at Wellingborough Post Office.

Customer service training and existing staff

Post Office runs a robust recruitment process and appointments are only made when we are entirely satisfied that the applicant has met all of our criteria. We are satisfied they have demonstrated to us that they are an appropriate franchise partner to operate the service in Wellingborough and are committed to delivering excellent customer service.

Any person employed to work in Wellingborough 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 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.

Staff, who will work exclusively in the Post Office, will be trained to provide information on financial products, including savings and insurances. Product information will also be available for customers to take away with them and our website and specialist customer helplines also provide information on what's available and how to make a purchase. Further details of the new branch, including opening hours, are provided in the enclosed information sheet.

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.

Conclusion

After careful consideration of the feedback received, I am confident that the new branch will continue to meet customer needs and deliver an excellent service, whilst helping to provide future sustainability for the branch and maintaining a Post Office presence in Wellingborough. The current branch will close at 17:30 on 14 November 2018, with the new branch opening at 09:00 on 15 November 2018.

This information is also available on the Post Office Consultation Hub at postofficeviews.co.uk

Yours faithfully



Roger Gale
Sales & Trade Marketing Director
Post Office Limited

How to contact us:

postofficeviews.co.uk

comments@postoffice.co.uk

FREEPOST Your Comments

Wellingborough Post Office information sheet															
Address	9-10 Sheep Street Wellingborough NN8 1BL														
Post Office 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
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New Opening times of Post Office service at retail counter	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Mon - Sat</td><td>09:00 – 17:30</td></tr> </table>	Mon - Sat	09:00 – 17:30												
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Products & Services	The same wide range of products and services will still be available, with the exception of the Biometric Enrolment Service for the Home Office, but DVLA Photocard Driving Licence renewal and Security Industry Authority (SIA) licence application services will still be available.														
Serving positions	There will be five serving positions in total; one screened, three 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.														
Accessibility	<p style="text-align: center;">Access and Facilities</p> <p>Access will be level with automatic doors at the entrance to the proposed premises. 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 is a free multi-storey car park at the Swangate Shopping Centre with 1000 spaces and designated disabled bays are available. The distance between the car park and new premises is approximately 155 metres.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Buses</p> <p>Buses are available to and from the surrounding area. There is a bus stop approximately 10 metres away.</p>														
How far away is it?	Approximately 225 metres away from the current branch, along varied terrain.														
Retail	Convenience store														
Date of change	15 November 2018														

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.

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
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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.