



Dear Customer

Wick Post Office®
33 Bridge Street, Wick, Caithness, KW1 4AJ

Branch Temporary Closure

We are writing to update you regarding the Post Office service in Wick. Due to the resignation of the Postmaster and the withdrawal of the premises for Post Office use, the above branch will be closing temporarily on Friday 30 October 2020 at 13:00.

However, we are pleased to be able to introduce a temporary Mobile Post Office service while we continue to seek a permanent solution. We are therefore pleased to inform you that the Operator who operates the nearby Mobile service is willing to provide this service in Wick, this currently presents the best possible temporary solution to maintain Post Office services to the community.

We've been working hard to identify a solution to restore services locally and a Mobile service, which is a travelling Post Office aboard a specifically designed vehicle that brings Post Office services and retail products to communities without relying on fixed premises, is a tried and tested way of maintaining service to communities.

The new temporary Mobile Post Office service is scheduled to commence from Tuesday 3 November 2020 at 14:45. The service at Wick will be opening on reduced hours. Further details of the temporary service are provided below.

We will display posters in the branch, the Mobile Van and locally to inform customers.

We would like to apologise for the inconvenience the temporary closure may cause. In the interim, we hope that our customers will continue to use Post Office services. Details of possible alternative Post Office branches in the area are provided below for your convenience:

- Watten Post Office, Thurso Road, Watten, Wick, Caithness, KW1 5XG
- Lybster Post Office, Main Street, Lybster, Caithness, KW3 6AE
- Thurso Post Office, Co-operative Group Ltd, Meadow Lane, Thurso, Caithness, KW14 8ER

The latest available branch information can be found on our website,
www.postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder

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.

If you have any questions about the new service, please contact the National Consultation Team, as detailed below. Please note that your comments will not be kept confidential unless you expressly ask us to do so by clearly marking them "In Confidence".

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

Thank you for your support and we hope that you will continue using the new Post Office.

Yours faithfully

David Duff

David Duff
Change Manager

How to contact us:

comments@postoffice.co.uk
postofficeviews.co.uk
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.

Details of the temporary Mobile Post Office service:

Wick Mobile Post Office

Riverside Car Park
MacLeay Lane
Wick
Caithness
KW1 4EA

Services

A wide range of services will continue to be available. Customers can still collect benefits in cash using our everyday banking services or Post Office card account.

Access and facilities

There is a step into the Mobile vehicle, however an electronic tailgate is available to facilitate easy access for wheelchair users and those with disabilities.

New Opening times

Monday	Closed
Tuesday	14:45 – 15:45
Wednesday	09:00 – 15:00
Thursday	09:00 – 13:00
Friday	13:30 – 15:30
Saturday	Closed
Sunday	Closed

Parking

Parking is available within the large Riverside Car Park, which has designated marked disabled bays.

Distance

This Mobile Post Office service is located approximately 250 metres away from the current Post Office branch, along varied terrain.

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.