

Post Office move to the Co-op in Capel St. Mary

Update from District Councillors Sue Carpendale and Kathy Pollard

Message from Sue and Kathy

We wanted to update you and give you a chance to respond to the consultation on the move of the **Post Office to the Co-op in Capel**. This consultation closes on December 4th. Due to the timing of the original letter informing us of the consultation (October 23rd) there was no opportunity to put a piece in November Capel Capers. Also the December edition may not be delivered in time. So we are circulating this flyer to spread the word. Here are our thoughts and some background information.



- **First of all we are supportive of the move.** The parish council are also in favour. Our very able sub-postmaster David Willis and his wife Sandra have made the decision to give up the running of the Post Office. This is due to changes in funding for Post Offices services which will result in a substantial drop in income for sub-postmasters over the next two years. **These funding changes will make it very difficult for Post Offices to remain as standalone businesses.** A special case is made when the Post Office is the only retail outlet in a village. In that case it is designated as a "Community" branch and is given additional funding. Clearly our local Post Office does not fall within that classification.
- **The Co-op group already have experience of running Post Offices in their stores.** However we do understand your concerns about **security, queuing and privacy**. Having met with representatives of the Co-op and Post Office Ltd to seek assurances we are satisfied that they are addressing these issues (more details overleaf). Post Offices already run successfully in supermarkets in nearby villages e.g. Brantham and East Bergholt.
- The **sorting office** will also move to the Co-op.

What is being proposed

- The Post Office services would move to the Co-op store in Capel St. Mary in Spring 2015.
- There will still be two counters and they will be integrated within an extended till area.
- Opening hours will match those of the supermarket i.e. 7am to 9pm Monday to Saturday and 10am to 4pm on Sundays.

Post Office consultation contacts:

Website: postofficeviews.co.uk

email: comments@postoffice.co.uk

customer helpline 08457 22 33 44 or tel: 08457 22 33 55

FREEPOST Your Comments (yes that's all you need to put on the envelope!) Please allow two working days for your letter to arrive i.e. post by 2nd December at the latest.

There is a strict deadline for comments of December 4th

Background to the proposals

- People don't have to go into their local Post Offices now as all services – except postal orders – are offered by other providers. As a result the number of people using Post Offices each week in this country has **dropped from 28 million 10 years ago to 17 million now**. Benefits are paid directly into bank accounts and from October this year there has been no more issuing of tax discs. Many services already require online applications or will do so in the future.
- Many of us don't know about the range of services offered by Post Offices e.g. the fact they can carry out all the transactions for all the High Street banks. They are also the largest provider of foreign currency in the UK.
- The Government subsidy to the Post Office network will be halved by 2020 as they want Post Office Ltd. to become more commercial.
- Crown Post Offices (like the one in Tower Ramparts in Ipswich) have been losing money hand over fist. Moves have been made to reduce these losses. Even so last year the Crown network lost **£29m** which was down from a loss of **£46m** three years ago.
- The Government are backing a programme of modernisation and Post Office Limited are offering sub-postmasters 3 options:
 1. Move to an open plan model – paid for by the Post Office
 2. Remain as they are
 3. Leave the network and look for an alternative.

As we've mentioned above this is against a background of decreasing income for Post Offices.

- **Security – we have been told that modern security is very high-tech** and that even though the new model is open plan there are far fewer robberies now than there have been in the past. This is partly because Post Offices don't actually carry as much cash as they used to due to fewer transactions. Most current screens are not even armoured glass, so can be easily broken. Also privacy is not enhanced when you have to speak loudly through a screen. As we know the screens did not stop the two robberies at Capel Post Office some years ago. Neither did they give any protection to customers who happened to be there at the time. The Co-op also have sophisticated CCTV surveillance. The criminal fraternity are well aware of this!
- **Queuing** - reflecting your concerns we have asked for further information and for more space to **allow a proper queuing system which will also ensure better privacy for transactions**. We have been promised that this will be taken seriously.
- **Training** - we have been assured that all Co-op staff will be trained.

Please contact us if you need more information:

Cllr Sue Carpendale

53 Thorney Road

Capel St Mary

Ipswich

IP9 2XH

Tel: 311513

Email: sue.carpendale@babergh.gov.uk and/or kathy.pollard@babergh.gov.uk

Blog: <http://kathypollard.mycouncillor.org.uk/>

Cllr Kathy Pollard

19 The Street

Capel St Mary

Ipswich

IP9 2EE

Tel: 311384

Explanatory letters with further details about the consultation are also available in the Post Office.