

Post Office Closures: Finally we Hear the Truth

A letter to the Post, June 2008

Sir –

Finally the government has confessed to what we in East Hants already knew from local experience. Post Office minister Pat McFadden has admitted that Post Office Ltd is closing branches that were making a profit.

The whole closure programme has been driven by slavish adherence to the so-called ‘access criteria’ based on how many people live within a certain radius of their nearest branch. This has meant some successful branches closing. And even the access criteria themselves have been criticised for failing to take account of the realities of geography and public transport.

The ‘consultation process’ is the government’s chance to try to make it look like it listens. But nationally so far less than 3% of branches ear-marked for closure have been saved. In Hampshire, there was one token reprieve, but sadly not for the East Hants branches.

For presiding over this shambles and sham, Adam Crozier gets a handsome bonus pay-out. He is, after all, doing the government’s bidding.

Of real concern now is the government’s new rumblings that to make the network truly “right-sized” might need many more closures on top of the current 2,500. The government displays an incredible lack of imagination and ambition for growing the Royal Mail and Post Office businesses.

Of course, the ‘use it or lose it’ message is one we all should respond to, supporting local post offices and stores. But now Mr McFadden has confirmed that for rural post offices, building a successful, profitable business is not always enough.

Yours

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