

Ke: 15 August AEGM to be
Minuted

Sent via Certificate of Posting
4 July 2017

The Reverend P A Vennells
Chief Executive
Post Office Limited
Finsbury Dials
20 Finsbury Street
LONDON
EC2Y 9AQ

Dear Mrs Vennells

RE: CROWN POST OFFICE – 46 HIGH STREET, NEWHAVEN, EAST SUSSEX, BN9 9PD.

Further to my letter of 6 June, you kindly asked Miss C Holas, ^a/member of Post Office Limited's National Consultation Team, to respond directly to me on your behalf and Newhaven Residents have been extremely pleased to read the following [at paragraph four] of 8 June 2017 letter [sent to my home address as above]: "The consultation is therefore important and the input we receive during consultation is first carefully considered and is very much a part of determining the final decision. In light of this fact, please be assured it is only at this crucial stage that Post Office Ltd would announce whether or not the relocation of the branch would be proceeding." [Newhaven's consultation period was due to end on 28 June 2017].

On 26 June 2017 I attended Post Office Limited's advertised 'forum' held at The Hillcrest Centre in Newhaven. Unfortunately, the timing was between 3.30pm and 7.00pm and anyone travelling home from work that day was unable to attend [personally I had to miss a scheduled rehearsal that afternoon to attend on behalf of the Residents]. Residents are saying that the Post Office Limited A5 flyer's opening sentence was "cannily" phrased as a *fait accompli*, as this sentence was the only sentence emboldened on the flyer and stated: "We're changing how we offer Post Office services round here.". The emphasis being: "We are".

I have now received another letter from Post Office Limited dated 28 June 2017 from Mr Ricky Jooma of the Consultation & Correspondence Team thanking me for the petition sent in response to Post Office Limited's "proposed" changes for the Newhaven High Street Post Office. Unfortunately, there has been no mention of the ^{three}-page list of Questions [attached to the 'petition'] posed by Newhaven Residents, to which they require written answers before any decision at all is made by Post Office Limited. They say no-one should be expected to make a judgement on a situation on any subject at all without knowing the facts. [There was an analogy given by a Resident saying: imagine having to make a decision as to whether to accept a job offer without knowing what one's duties would be and with the salary figure held back and this is what Post Office Limited is expecting us to do.]

On 26 June 2017, I asked many questions of Miss L Tarling of the Public Affairs Team, but

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some of the most important questions that the Residents of Newhaven required answers to, could not be answered by Miss Tarling and at a Residents' Meeting on 27 June 2017, Residents confirmed they do require written answers to their questions from Post Office Limited. They updated the Qs. I had posed to Miss Tarling and these updated questions were attached to the 'petition' [updated 'question list' attached herewith] and sent to Post Office Limited on 27 June 2017 ['petition' as acknowledged by Mr R Jooma, but no acknowledgement of the updated question list]. On 26 June 2017 I asked Miss Tarling why Post Office Limited had refused to give Newhaven Town Council the numbers of people using our Crown Post Office's important Biometric Enrolment Service and added that as a Town we do require this information, to be able to make informed comments. Miss Tarling confirmed that Post Office Limited would definitely "not" be giving Newhaven Town Council the requested information and that N.T.C. would have to request this information under the 'Freedom of Information Act'.

I also attended a Newhaven Town Council Meeting on 27 June 2017, and our Crown Post Office was on the Agenda and also included a copy of the Miss Holas letter dated 8 June 2017 sent on your behalf. I had already been handed the first page of a N.T.C. Committee Meeting Agenda dated 9 May 2017 [which meeting I had been unable to attend] and Agenda Item 6 – Point 5 read: "Newhaven Post Office will cease to be a "Crown Post Office and will become a "Main Post Office" run by a franchisee. The products and services offered by the Main Post Office will be identical to those currently offered with two exceptions:

- The Biometric Enrolment Service currently provided on behalf of the Home Office will cease. This is a service mainly used by refugees, or foreign students for instance, on entering the country. It is a one-off transaction, rather than something that an individual needs to do repeatedly. It is intended to re-locate this service to Brighton**.
- The cash machine – Post Office Limited hopes to move the cash machine to the new premises, but cannot absolutely guarantee this at this stage, because this is dependent on planning permission being granted and other operational issues outside its control."

At 27 June 2017 N.T.C. Committee Meeting I asked who had prepared the 9 May 2017 Agenda and the Clerk to the Town Council confirmed that she had done so. I started to say that there was something not quite right with the information and a member of the Public interjected and said: "It is wrong." I looked round and said: "Thank you; yes the information is wrong." It has been confirmed that it was Miss L. Tarling who gave this information to the Clerk to the Town Council and to be on the safe side, subsequent to the 27 June 2017 Committee Meeting, the Clerk/again contacted Miss L. Tarling, who reiterated the same 'misinformation'. It is no wonder therefore that Newhaven Residents believe that Post Office Limited is acting in an underhand and undemocratic way.

At 27 June 2017 N.T.C. Committee Meeting I informed the Town Council that Miss L. Tarling had said to me at 26 June 2017 Post Office Limited 'forum' that Post Office Limited would "not" be giving N.T.C. the Biometric Enrolment Service information and that Miss Tarling had also said that the Council would have to apply for this information under a 'Freedom of Information' request and I have asked for this information to be 'minuted' and also asked that the Town Council immediately requested the important Biometric Enrolment Service information. The Chairman of the 27 June 2017 N.T.C. Committee Meeting confirmed to the Public attending this meeting that N.T.C. had simply asked for the numbers of people using the facility; nothing else and no personal details whatsoever were requested; but still the Council's request was refused by Post Office Limited.

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Brighton** [please see above] - Whilst asking Miss L Tarling questions on 26 June 2017, she quoted that people would have to travel to Brighton to use the Biometrics' facility. Mr Steve Leddy of Post Office Limited interjected and said people would not now be sent to Brighton, but to Eastbourne. Miss Tarling immediately told me "not to give anyone" this information. I was quite taken aback that a member of Post Office Limited's staff thought it appropriate to tell a Newhaven Resident what that resident could and could not say. Of course, Residents believe I am free to give them all relevant information as Miss Tarling can have no jurisdiction over a resident at a public 'forum' and just cannot give any orders. Also during the time I spent asking Miss Tarling questions on 26 June 2017, Miss Tarling continuously missed out the word "proposed" when talking of the "proposed move" and repeatedly just said "the move". I had to ask Miss Tarling to please be careful in what she was saying to me pointing out that she was omitting the word "proposed" during our conversation.

In view of the foregoing, please will you be kind enough to confirm in writing to me at the above address, that Newhaven Residents can be assured that no decision whatsoever will be made by Post Office Limited regarding Newhaven Town's treasured Crown Post Office until Newhaven Town Council itself is in receipt of the Biometric Enrolment Service figures under a 'Freedom of Information' request, thus enabling the Council to make a judgement on the impact the loss of such an important facility will have on our Port Town and also, not until all Residents' questions [please see attached list] have been answered to their satisfaction?

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely



J Jones [Miss]

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- cc The Rt Hon Theresa May MP, The Prime Minister.
- cc Maria Caulfield MP, The House of Commons.
- cc Mr Timothy C Parker, Chairman, Post Office Limited.
- cc Mr D Ward, General Secretary, Communication Workers Union.
- ✓cc Newhaven Town Council.