

Dear Mrs Paulley,

Thank you for the call on behalf of the Parish Council around our plans to restore Post Office services in Piddletrenthide.

Firstly, I should say that we share the council's concern that we haven't so far been able to find a way forward that will see a service restored to the community. We remain totally committed to do so and I would like to take this opportunity to apologise for any inconvenience the absence of the service is causing to local customers. We do understand how much they value their Post Office service and they can be assured that we will continue our work to find a solution.

I'm not sure how much you know of the work done to date, so it may be helpful to share that following the closure of the previous branch we tried to introduce a Post Office local style branch in the village shop, which is the most efficient and expedient way of seeing Post Office services restored when the former branch closed. This would have seen Post Office services match the opening hours of the shop and would have been supported by grant funding to create the new style Post Office. Unfortunately, and despite several conversations and meetings with Carol, her decision was that it wouldn't be financially viable for her to acquire and operate the service. We have confirmed that if any future owners of the store are interested in acquiring a Post Office Local Model then this is something we would welcome. At Carol's request we contacted Andrew Duke, an experienced Postmaster, to see if he would consider operating a service from the store on a temporary basis. Unfortunately, he advised that this is not something he could consider at this time.

Given the above, the only practical solution therefore was to try and secure the services of a local Postmaster to operate a Post Office Outreach service within the store for a number of hours each week. We had secured the services of Andrew Farrow, Postmaster from Cerne Abbas, who has provisionally agreed to provide a service to Piddletrenthide from the shop. However, in the meantime Mr Farrow has sold his business with the branch transferring to new owners in the next few weeks. Once the new owners are in place then we will formally discuss the opportunity of adding Piddletrenthide outreach to the current communities that the branch serves. The new operator will be supplied with a new outreach kit shortly after their appointment.

For the reasons above, whilst we can't be certain on timescales for the introduction of an outreach service, we are making progress towards that objective. Any proposal to reintroduce a service will be supported by a period of public consultation. We may take the opportunity to run the consultation concurrently with the works required to introduce the outreach service so that a service can be restored at the earliest opportunity.

In closing, I hope that the above is helpful in providing an update on the current situation and in reassuring you and the Council that we remain committed to see Post Office service restored to the village as soon as practically possible.

Please come back to me if you have any questions.

Kind regards,

Stuart.



Stuart Taylor

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