

To: Tina Davis
Network Trading

Copy:

From: Tim Bentley
Government Markets
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Date: 12th March 2001

Thornton Cleaveleys Sub Post Office - West Lancs Gazette Newspaper
Feature

Tina,

One (potentially) for the Service Review Meeting in April - since Chris Wren's mum uses the above post office that featured prominently in a West Lancashire Gazette newspaper article on 21st February. It would be in our interest to get some background information prior to the meeting just in case we want to provide our "official" version of events.

I have associated a copy of the article for information.

GRO

Tim Bentley
Government Markets
Network Banking

GRO

West Lancashire Gazette
February 2001Sales Aldincham Messenger
22 February 2001

My fears for post office by sacked Julie

By ALEXANDRA
BULLER

THE former Cleveleys sub-postmaster, who claims she was sacked for refusing to use a computer, fears that the post office may ever re-open.

Julie Wolstenholme was suspended last November and finally sacked last month following a post office investigation which found she was in breach of contract when she refused to use a computer system.

The Runnymede Avenue post office has now been closed for three months and Post Office Counters is searching for new premises.

Devastated

But today Mrs Wolstenholme, a mother-of-three of Magdalen Road, Cleveleys, added: "It's been a nightmare - I can't see it re-opening."

Her father Mark Jackson, 60, had run the post office for 10 years until ill health led to his daughter taking over the contract in November 1999. He still lives in the flat above the post office with his wife Margaret and had been assisting his daughter with the business.

He said: "I can't be-



NIGHTMARE: Julie Wolstenholme in the Runnymede Avenue post office in Cleveleys which she fears may never open again

Picture: DAWN CASTLE

lieve what's happened. We had no choice but to stop using the computers because they kept crashing because they couldn't cope with the amount of work.

"We asked for help for 10 months and the Post Office wouldn't listen - I'm disgusted and my daughter is devastated.

"At the end of the day it's the people of Cleveleys who are suffering."

The continued closure of Cleveleys' most central post office has brought inconvenience and disruption to its customers who must walk more than a mile to the nearest office at Rossall Road, North Drive or

Fleetwood Road. A spokeswoman for the Post Office said: "This is an internal matter which means it is something we can't discuss."

"We are now concentrating all our efforts on getting a new sub-postmaster to resume counter services in Cleveleys."

Plans 'won't save subs'

NEW measures to encourage new entrants to the Post Office won't go far enough to help Trafford's threatened sub-offices, campaigners fear.

The Government plans include a £2 million fund to help with the costs of relocating and refurbishing rural post offices.

They would also remove the introductory payment previously required from new subpostmasters.

The measures follow last year's Messenger-backed campaign, calling for action to help sub post offices. A petition containing 15,600 signatures was taken to Downing Street.

And a Timperley postmaster announced his retirement this month, saying he would have lost 60 per cent of his business within two to three years.

There will be a new senior role in the Post Office to look at the options and alternative solutions for avoiding rural closures.

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Plans 'won't save subs'

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In addition to this, the National Federation of Subpostmasters will relaunch "Counters Club" to help promote and strengthen the retail businesses linked to sub post offices.

But Oldfield Post Office subpostmaster John Layton, said: "What is £2 million, a mere drop in the ocean, going to do to rectify a situation which requires massive Government funding?"

"Here in Trafford, the Post Office network is in crisis. With the exception of four or five offices, they are facing a doomed future."

"At least 12 offices are facing bankruptcy or insolvency and they are hoping that a yet to be announced compensation scheme will come to their rescue."



THIS IS THE POST OFFICE
CHRIS WREN'S MOTHER