
From: Mark R Davies [GRO]
Sent: Mon 30/10/2017 3:32:23 PM (UTC)
To: Linda Bonar [GRO]; Ruth X Barker [GRO]; Alice Cookson [GRO]
Cc: Patrick Bourke [GRO]
Subject: RE: Save Rutherglen Post Office

Fantastic note Linda, albeit very worrying. Your approach is spot on.

From: Linda Bonar
Sent: 30 October 2017 15:11
To: Mark R Davies [GRO]; Ruth X Barker [GRO]; Alice Cookson [GRO]
Cc: Patrick Bourke [GRO]
Subject: RE: Save Rutherglen Post Office

Hi Mark,

This is a very complex case, the branch originally closed earlier this year after an audit uncovered losses of approx £120k, the operators contract was terminated, however, we appointed a temporary postmaster who is the operator of nearby Netherlee branch, service was restored and he has been running the PO service in the Rutherglen premises since.

The temporary pmr was audited a couple of weeks ago and suspended when the further losses of £123k were uncovered. As the temp postmaster runs Netherlee PO, his own branch has also closed. The temp had agreed to raise the money to pay back the losses by Wed last week (it has been implied that the previous operator has stolen the funds without the temps knowledge but it is looking more likely that the temp has been involved) but hasn't so far, and at one point he was suggesting that Horizon was to blame. Both branches remain closed meantime.

The situation is compounded by events at another nearby branch - Clarkston. The postmaster here was sacked after staging a robbery at his PO and embezzling approx £100k. He is currently awaiting sentencing and this branch also remains closed.

There are two MP's involved, both branches are in close proximity but fall within different constituencies.

I've spoken to all MP's and MSP's concerned, I do go into a bit more detail in confidence with them which helps to quieten the stakeholder noise, however, this doesn't help from a public perspective.

I'm not sure how we can communicate the reasons differently to the public or media without risking legal implications. In some cases we will agree a solution and the operators may be reinstated.

Linda

Sent from my Windows Phone

From: Mark R Davies
Sent: 30/10/2017 13:51
To: Ruth X Barker; Linda Bonar; Alice Cookson
Cc: Patrick Bourke
Subject: FW: Save Rutherglen Post Office

All

To see – couple of things.

Rutherglen: Linda, can we have a brief update on this?

All: views on the lines we use. I've got a worry about getting into long conversations about why a branch might have closed etc...and I don't like Al's line. But would welcome your comments and thoughts.

To my mind Al's note below would prompt local headlines of 'PO closure could be 'legal issues''

But maybe I am just too nice ☺

From: Alisdair Cameron

Sent: 30 October 2017 13:24

To: Mark Ellis <[GRO]>; Paula Vennells <[GRO]>; Mark R Davies

[GRO]
Cc: Kevin Gilliland <[GRO]>; Thomas P Moran <[GRO]> Jane MacLeod <[GRO]>

Subject: RE: Save Rutherglen Post Office

I agree on the messaging, it's the classic example of POL behaving nicely and everyone else being able to say what they want.

I wonder if we could say a version of

"We undertook an audit of the branch because we were seeing an unusual pattern in its operations. The audit raised some questions. While these issues are being investigated, we have closed the Post Office to ensure we fulfil our requirement to protect taxpayers' money. Once the situation is clear, we will explore the right solution to opening again. Sometimes, these questions can become legal processes which take time to unfold. Anyone wishing to have a conversation should call XXXXX."

I imagine that our lawyers would rather we said nothing (I am just guessing, cc Jane) and there is a court of public opinion issue...but we aren't getting it quite right at the moment?

Mark D, could you see what can be done?

Thanks Al



Alisdair Cameron

Chief Finance & Operating Officer

2017 Winner of the
Global Postal Award
for
Customer Experience

20 Finsbury Street
London EC2Y 9AQ

[GRO]

From: Mark Ellis

Sent: 28 October 2017 12:32

To: Paula Vennells <[GRO]>

Cc: Alisdair Cameron <[GRO]>; Kevin Gilliland <[GRO]>

Thomas P Moran <[REDACTED]>

Subject: RE: Save Rutherglen Post Office

Hi Paula,

The background to this is that the office was identified as holding excess cash which triggered an audit on 12th October. The outcome of the audit was a loss of £123,089.69 and the postmaster was immediately suspended. There have been a number of complaints from local residents regarding the closure which the ECT have been dealing with. We are looking for an operational solution, but for the moment we are advising residents that there are three alternative Post Offices within a mile.

Tom highlighted that in this and other similar cases our message is that we have closed the office 'due to operational reasons' which is wholly unsatisfactory and in some way raises emotions in the local community. We need to find a better way to message this.

I hope this helps. If it is OK I will pass your email onto the ECT for them to respond on Monday.

Thanks,

Mark



Mark Ellis

Network Operations Director

Finsbury Dials
20 Finsbury Street
London EC2Y 9AQ

T:
E:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: Paula Vennells

Sent: 27 October 2017 20:57

To: Thomas P Moran

Cc: Alisdair Cameron

Subject: Fwd: Save Rutherglen Post Office

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

; Mark Ellis

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

; Kevin Gilliland

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear both,

Could i have the background please - this is a shared email format and it will be helpful if I/Avene have a standard response. But I would like to understand the details first. It's the 'without warning or explanation' we need to apologise for, whatever the reason.

Many thanks,

Paula

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Andrew Doctor

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, October 27, 2017 19:15

Subject: Save Rutherglen Post Office

To: Paula Vennells

GRO

Dear Ms Vennells,

Rutherglen Post Office closed on the 16th of October without warning or explanation.

Our local Post Office is a crucial resource for the community in Rutherglen. It is the only place many people can access their bank account, pay their bills and complete vital application forms.

Its sudden closure, without consultation, without warning, and without an alternative being organised, has put many of the most vulnerable people in Rutherglen at a loss as to how they can access basic services.

Please ensure that Rutherglen Post Office is reopened or an alternative Post Office is provided as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

--

Mr Andrew Doctor

GRO

Vicars walk

Glasgow G72 8JS