

Sub-post office partners claim refusal to use 'faulty' new equipment led to their suspension

Computer blamed in closed PO wrangle



215

STILL SHUT: Disruption as Cleveleys Post Office remains closed

A CLEVELEYS sub-postmistress claims she has been suspended from her job for refusing to use computer equipment which she believes was faulty.

Julie Wolstenholme, who runs the sub-post office in Runnymede Avenue with her business partner Roger Harrison, was forced to shut up shop at the beginning of December

By VICTORIA ROUSE

after being told she was in breach of her contract.

The closure has caused major disruption for customers, with many elderly residents facing lengthy walks to collect their pensions from alternative post offices.

Ms Wolstenholme and Mr Harrison, who have operated the busy sub-post office for just over a year, told The Gazette that problems first came about

10 months ago when new computer equipment was installed to streamline business.

They claimed that the equipment was incapable of carrying out the job and they had decided to revert to doing the work by hand.

Inconvenience

But when they informed the Post Office about their decision, Ms Harrison was immediately suspended without pay until further notice.

Nine members of her

staff were left without a job and Post Offices bosses say the business will remain closed until temporary staff are drafted in.

Mr Harrison apologised for the inconvenience that had been caused to customers.

He claimed: "We had

the system installed 10 months ago and we have had nothing but trouble since.

"It has put us backwards financially and we have had no help from the Post Office so we reverted back to the manual system.

"I think they have made an irrational decision in closing us down.

"If we were given it in writing that the computer system was 100 per cent fully operational we would use it. Until that day we will continue to do it by hand."

A spokesman for the Post Office said they were hoping to install temporary staff as soon as possible.

He said: "The suspension is due to an alleged breach of contract pending further enquiries."