

file copy

MORNINGSIDE
COMMUNITY COUNCIL

21 Greenbank Row
Edinburgh
EH10 5SY

21 January 2017

Ms Paula Vennells
Chief Executive
Post Office Ltd
Finsbury Dials
20 Finsbury Street
London EC2Y 9AQ

Dear Ms Vennells

Morningside Road Crown Post Office, Edinburgh

I am contacting you on behalf of Morningside Community Council, Edinburgh. As I'm sure you will appreciate, many of the residents in Morningside are extremely concerned by the prospects of our Crown Post Office being franchised out. One of the concerns is uncertainty about what "franchising" actually entails. Your press release from earlier in January refers simply to seeking a partner for the business. I would be grateful if you could provide more information on the process. In particular, residents would like to know:

- Could the franchised business operate on the existing site of the Post Office or does the process mean inevitable closure and moving to another site?
- Will the franchisee be required to provide all the facilities and services of the existing Crown Post Office or could some be lost?

I look forward to your reply

Yours sincerely,



Dr S C Gregory
Secretary
Morningside Community Council



Post Office Limited
Post Office Customer Support Centre
Finsbury Dials
20 Finsbury Street
LONDON
EC2Y 9AQ
ECT 1409/16

Dr S C Gregory
21 Greenback Row
EDINBURGH
EH10 5SY

30 January 2017

Dear Dr Gregory

Thank you for your Letter to our Chief Executive, Paula Vennells about Post Office services in Morningside. Ms Vennells is aware of your concerns and has asked me to respond on her behalf.

As you may know we currently have 284 directly managed Crown branches within a network of over 11,600 branches overall. To secure our branch network for the future, we are making changes to some of our directly managed branches. This part of our network was heavily subsidised as it was losing £46 million four years ago but we have made significant progress over the last few years and today it is making a small profit. But we cannot stand still if we are to avoid slipping back into loss. That is why we will continue to adapt and make changes to further strengthen our network and secure Post Office services. The vast majority of our network is operated on our behalf by our Postmasters, where they combine the Post Office service with their own private business.

The aim in looking for a potential franchise partner in Morningside is to secure continued access to Post Office services in a sustainable way for the future. When reviewing our branches we consider a range of options before we put forward our proposals and the change from a directly managed to a franchise branch has been undertaken previously in many locations across the UK and is a successful way of sustaining services in those locations.

When considering a franchise partner our priority is that customers can continue to conveniently access Post Office services. Typically, a new franchise provides the same services as the Crown branch and usually provides the opportunity to offer longer opening hours and other customer benefits. We would therefore look at the proposed layout of the new branch, particularly to ensure there is sufficient space, as well as ensuring that the proposed layout meets our stringent accessibility standards and all applicable legislation.

When a firm plan for future provision of Post Office services in Morningside is established we will undertake a six-week period of local public consultation in line with our Code of Practice, as agreed with Citizens Advice, the statutory consumer watchdog for the Post Office.

At that time, we will be able to let customers and local representatives know the details of our specific branch proposal and provide an opportunity for them to let us have their views before we finalise our plans. Details will be also available on our website - www.postofficeviews.co.uk - at that time.

I would like to assure you that our proposals are about changing how Post Office services are delivered in Morningside and we remain absolutely committed to maintaining services to the area.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roger Gale', written in a cursive style.

Roger Gale
Sales and Trade Marketing Director
flagcaseadvisor@postoffice.co.uk