



Protecting the Strathaven Post Office

I consider the Strathaven Post Office to be a vital service in our town, made even more important by the poor decision taken by RBS management to close the Strathaven Branch. Our local businesses need the Post Office more than ever as more people work from home. Also, until we become a cashless society: our local shops will continue to require the services of a Post Office right here in Strathaven.

However, as a locally elected member: I've struggled to interact with an organisation (The Post Office) who simply don't recognise my office but finally with the support of the current property owner (where the Post Office lives), I've managed to learn the following:

1. Right now, there is an advert and consultation in the public domain for a new Post Master for Strathaven. Applications had to be received by 28th May, when the PO will then start shortlisting and considering business plans going forward;
2. Whatever the Strathaven service becomes thereafter, it is purely based on the individual contract negotiated between the new Post Master and the Post Office itself; so whatever rumours people have heard: they're simply not accurate because until the successful applicant enters contract negotiations, then the service will not be determined;
3. Everyone needs to be aware that this stage of the process could take until the end of the year to complete and I'm not expecting the full rollout of the new service until at least November and:
4. I know everyone wants to know what services will remain and what will be lost? To be frank, this will depend on the new Post Masters contract but please expect to lose the Passport checking service because this is going anyway across nearly all post offices in a bid to move all passport applications online so it would be going anyway. I'm confident that a full business post service will continue and then the only last bit is to what level the Strathaven Post Office will be able to accept large amounts of business cash? Conversations about this are underway and again, I'm confident a solution can be found. As it stands today: I believe there is no limit on cash (within reason) and I've had it confirmed by PO management that they fully appreciate how important this service is to Strathaven.

So that's about all the news I currently have. As I've stated many times: the Post Office is not a government service and certainly not a local government service so the only reason I'm getting involved is because like all in the town: I want to protect what is a vital service. I do however think a new Post Master can bring significant improvements like longer opening hours and in the future (I'm told) restrictions on opening hours should not be a factor! How good would it be to have access to a Post office in Strathaven from early till late? It's therefore all to play for and from the conversations I've had with Post Office officials: I feel confident the Strathaven Post Office is protected.

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