



Press Release

15 September 2014

THE POST OFFICE SAYS 'WE'RE CHANGING' AS MODERNISATION PROGRAMME REACHES 3,000TH BRANCH MILESTONE

- **Finchingfield Post Office is 3,000th branch to be modernised**
- **Biggest retail transformation in UK history**
- **Sunday opening in over 1,600 branches**
- **Extended opening adds 82,000 extra opening hours each week – 4.3 million extra hours a year across UK**
- **Quick service tills make transactions easier for customers**
- **Bill payment, banking, benefits and travel money**
- **Postage, home shopping returns, Local Collect**

The Post Office has reached a milestone in its 'We're Changing' modernisation programme as the 3,000th new-style branch opens for business in Finchingfield, near Braintree, Essex.

The Post Office is opening modernised branches at the rate of ten every weekday across the UK, and figures released on the milestone of their 3,000th branch modernisation show that more than 82,000 opening hours a week have been added through the ongoing modernisation process – nearly 4.3 million hours a year – with over 1,600 branches open on Sundays.

Finchingfield Post Office – in the most photographed village in England – will open from 7.30 each morning to benefit commuters on their way to work, and from 9am to 1pm on Sundays, one of many branches that now serve seven days a week.

Now with extended space for convenience retail and locally sourced produce, the service is provided at a combination counter in the store, where the Post Office terminal sits alongside the till.

Kevin Gilliland, Post Office Network and Sales Director, said: “We’ve reached a significant milestone in our ‘We’re Changing’ programme in what is probably the largest retail transformation in UK history. Customers are appreciating the difference now we have added more than 82,000 opening hours a week to the service – nearly 4.3 million hours a year – with over 1,600 branches open on Sundays.

“Post Office services are part of the fabric of our society and we’re investing in vibrant new-style Post Offices, like Finchingfield, to keep them at the heart of the community, and I’d like to congratulate everyone involved from the individual postmasters like Alex and Jane, who own and operate the new-style branches, to the Post Office team who have been the driving force behind the modernisation.”

Nationwide the investment programme will see up to 8,000 branches modernised by 2018, with additional investment in over 3,000 community and outreach branches. The Post Office is opening modernised branches at the rate of ten every weekday.

Modern easily accessible Post Office local branches with longer hours designed to make it easier for customers to do business. It is a plan focused on a post office of the future which is financially sustainable in its own right.

At Finchingfield, joint owners Alex Robinson and Jane Welsh gave up other careers for a new lifestyle.

Alex said: “I took over the Post Office three years ago, leaving London and a job in IT for a new way of life and love the freedom it brings, knowing that the services we provide are really important to our wonderful customers, and above all, working for myself not someone else. Modernising the post office is part of a long term project and we have remodelled the shop and changed the retail to include a wide range of locally sourced produce; and next will be a facelift for the exterior.”

She added: “Being the 3000th branch to be modernised was an unexpected surprise and gave us an extra reason for celebrating with villagers and guest of honour Flo Hardy, 102, who has lived in the village all her life and is a very loyal customer.”

There are two new-style Post Offices which are both proving popular with customers. A Post Office local provides a wide range of services from the retail till and is open when the shop it is housed within is open.

Larger modernised Post Office branches, known as Post Office mains, offer the full range of products and services, during standard hours, with a Post Office serving point providing selected services during extended shop hours.

Finchingfield Post Office will be a Local model branch. Customers will still be able to carry out everyday banking such as everyday banking, depositing cash and cheques

and making withdrawals. There are special arrangements to support business customers.

The branch will continue to offer travel money as well as a wide range of Post Office and mails services, including Special Delivery, Local Collect and home shopping returns. Other services include Post Office Card Account withdrawals, sending funds abroad using Moneygram, bill payment, and top up mobile phones.

Ends

Issued by:

Post Office Press Office
1st Floor, 148 Old Street,
LONDON, EC1V 9HQ