



# MOLESEY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

*Newsletter Update*

*July 2004*

Dear Resident

## **PROPOSALS TO CLOSE CENTRAL AVENUE POST OFFICE**

### **Background**

Shortly after we published our recent Newsletter we were shocked to learn of the Post Office's announcement, out of the blue, to close Central Avenue Post Office in West Molesey, along with a number of other branches. The case put forward by Post Office Ltd is that they made a loss of £194 million last year, get no financial help from the government and must cut their costs by closing offices. They say that they cannot consider any resulting inconvenience to users.

### **What are our views?**

Molesey Residents Association (MRA) is campaigning against the closure. Central Avenue is a popular branch which provides an essential service to many people who are unable to get to other branches easily. We have written to the Post Office with our objections, and have contacted local MP Ian Taylor, and the local papers, to publicise our campaign.

MRA Councillors (and Councillors representing other areas threatened by Post Office closures) subsequently attended a meeting with Post Office officials on 5 July. At this meeting they outlined firm plans to close one third of the entire network of urban Post Offices. They made it very clear that plans were well advanced, and that although a consultation exercise was underway, it would be very difficult to persuade them to change their minds about closing the Central Avenue office, or indeed any of the other branches earmarked for closure.

We believe that there are nevertheless good arguments against closing the Central Avenue branch and that, whatever the odds, we should continue our campaign to keep it open. We are unhappy about the way the Post Office have announced these plans. Our purpose in contacting you is to ensure that you know what is going on, and how to put forward your views to the consultation.

We would like as many people as possible to write in protest at these proposals – the more who write the greater the chance of making the Post Office back down. Please see overleaf for possible points to make and where to write to.

Yours sincerely

Councillors Mike Axton, Ian Donaldson and Vic Eldridge (Molesey South)  
and Councillors Mick Burgess, Alan Hopkins and Peter Parker (Molesey North)

**Molesey Residents Association**

**P.T.O.**

## How to make your views known

The consultation period ends on 5 August, and the Post Office have asked people to write with views to:

Paul Simmonds  
Head of Area Post Office Ltd  
C/O National Consultation Team  
PO Box 2060  
WATFORD  
WD18 8ZW

## Points to consider

It is clear that only strong arguments will have any chance of persuading the Post Office to change its mind. You may wish to consider the following points in your response:

- The Post Office say there are suitable alternative sites at Walton Road, and in the Hurst Park Precinct. *And yet, as we have pointed out, the Precinct branch has closed pending redevelopment, and there can be no guarantee when a new branch will open there.* Molesey will then be left with **just one** already overcrowded branch over the Christmas period and beyond.
- How far do you live from the nearest alternative branch? It is worth saying how far this is, especially if it will be over a mile, since the Post Office planned that 95% of households would have a Post Office within approximately one mile of their home.
- Do you have good public transport links to the nearest alternative branch? You may wish to highlight any difficulties such as frequency, reliability and cost.
- An independent consumer watchdog organisation called Postwatch will examine every proposed closure and, if at the end of the consultation they are not convinced about the case for closure, they may ask the Post Office to withdraw the proposal. Postwatch has said it will oppose closure of any offices in what they call an “urban deprived area” where there is no other branch within half a mile. If you think this might apply you may wish to consider saying so.

So that Postwatch is aware of the level of objection it would be helpful if you could also send a copy of your response to the following short address:

**Freepost,  
Postwatch.**

No stamp is required.

You can also contact Postwatch by e-mail at [info@postwatch.co.uk](mailto:info@postwatch.co.uk)  
or by telephone on 08456-013265