



The Heath & Hampstead Society

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Est. 1897

Mr. Gareth Thomas MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Services, Small Business and Exports)
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

Mr. Nigel Railton, Chair
Post Office Limited
Finsbury Dials
20 Finsbury Street
London EC2Y 9AQ

27 February 2025

Dear Mr. Thomas and Mr. Railton,

Hampstead Post Office

I am writing on behalf of the coalition of Hampstead community and business organisations listed below, representing thousands of residents, to express our grave concern regarding the potential closure of the Hampstead Post Office branch and to urge that the essential services provided by the branch be maintained in our community.

The Hampstead Post Office serves as a vital hub for our diverse community, providing irreplaceable services that support the social and economic fabric of our neighbourhood and the larger north London area. Its potential closure would have far-reaching consequences for several key stakeholder groups:

Our Elderly and Vulnerable Residents: The Post Office provides essential banking services in a trusted, accessible environment. Many of our older residents rely heavily on these services, preferring face-to-face transactions over digital alternatives. Hampstead's age demographic is one of the oldest in Camden, with nearly 20% of our residents aged 65 years or older. In addition, Hampstead's steep terrain at the top of a prominent hill would make it very difficult for our elderly, disabled and other vulnerable residents to access any post office located elsewhere. The continuation of current services in Hampstead therefore would be consistent with the Post Office's stated goal to provide "access for the digitally excluded and most vulnerable in our society" and in line with its public sector equality duty.

Local Businesses: Our local businesses depend on the post office for daily operations, including mail services, banking, and cash management. The post office's central location on Hampstead High Street is crucial for maintaining efficient business operations and supporting our local economy. Its loss would create significant operational challenges for numerous small and medium-sized enterprises in our area.

Home-Based Professionals: With the growing number of home-based professionals in Hampstead, the Post Office serves as an essential support service to them. These individuals rely on the Post Office for sending important documents, packages, and maintaining their business communications.

The Broader Community: The Post Office provides vital services that cannot be easily replicated elsewhere, including:

- Passport check and send services
- Identity verification for various official purposes
- International shipping and currency exchange

- Vehicle tax payments and DVLA photocard renewals
- Bill payments and top-up services

Furthermore, the Post Office contributes significantly to the vitality of Hampstead High Street, generating footfall that benefits surrounding businesses and maintaining the area's character as a thriving town centre. Hampstead is one of only six town centres in the borough of Camden.

We understand that the branch in Swiss Cottage is closing in April. This closure likely will put more pressure on the services in Hampstead. It will affect not only those living and working in Hampstead, but also many Belsize residents who would be required to use Hampstead as an alternative.

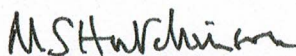
We also note that our community has lost many banking providers over the past several years. Until recently, there were five banks and building societies in Hampstead; today there is only one (Barclays Bank) as the others have shut. Additionally, our post office operates with significantly longer business hours than our sole remaining bank, providing important access to cash and financial services for all of the working day. There is no guarantee that Barclays will maintain our lone bank branch; if the bank branch were to close, our neighbourhood would be in dire need of a banking hub that could be fulfilled only by our current Post Office.

We understand the challenges facing the Post Office network, but we firmly believe that maintaining the above services – whether through direct Post Office management or a suitable franchise arrangement – is essential for our community's wellbeing. We request your urgent consideration of the following:

1. A detailed review of options for maintaining full Post Office services in Hampstead.
2. If a franchise arrangement is being considered, ensuring that all current services are preserved.
3. A commitment to consulting with local stakeholders before any final decisions are made.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further and to work constructively towards a solution that serves the interests of all parties.

Yours sincerely,



Marc Hutchinson
Chair
The Heath & Hampstead Society

JOINING AS CO-SIGNATORIES TO THE ABOVE LETTER:

Tulip Siddiq MP
Cllr Linda Chung, Camden Council, Hampstead Town Ward
Cllr Stephen Stark, Camden Council, Hampstead Town Ward
Cllr Steve Adams, Camden Council, Frognal Ward
Cllr Andrew Parkinson, Camden Council, Frognal Ward
Cllr Judy Dixey, Camden Council, Belsize Ward
Cllr Matthew Kirk, Camden Council, Belsize Ward
Cllr Tom Simon, Camden Council, Belsize Ward
Cllr Marcus Boyland, Camden Council, Gospel Oak Ward
Cllr Jenny Mulholland, Camden Council, Gospel Oak Ward
Cllr Lorraine Revah, Camden Council, Gospel Oak Ward
Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum (by Alexander Nicoll, Chair)

Redington Frogna! Neighbourhood Forum (by Steve Adams, Chair)
NW3 Business Association (by Victoria Nurtman, Chair)
Hampstead Community Action Ltd (by Guy Wingate, Trustee)
The Belsize Society (by Prabhat Vaze, Chair)
Arkwright Road Residents Association (by Siobhan Ezra, Chair)
Cannon Place Residents Association (by Elaine Wright, Chair)
Church Row Residents Association (by David Milne, Chair)
Downshire Hill Residents Association (by Andrew Neale, Chair)
Flask Walk Neighbourhood Association (by Dr. Roger Hayward, Chair)
Frogna! Way Residents Association (by Douglas Maxwell, Honorary Secretary)
Gayton Residents Association (by Robin Woolfson, Chair)
Hampstead Hill Gardens Residents Association (by Audrey Mandela, Chair)
Holly Hill Conservation Volunteers (by Kristen Lippincott, Chair)
Keats Grove Residents Association (by Diana Gore, Chair)
Lakis Close Residents Association (by Roger Britton, Treasurer)
Lindfield & Langland Neighbourhood Association (by Janet Gompertz, Chair)
Netherhall Neighbourhood Association (by Jenny White, Chair)
Pilgrims to Willoughby Residents Association (by Janine Griffis, Chair)
Pond Street Residents Association (by Peter Davey and Jeffrey Gold, Co-Chairs)
Redington & Frogna! Residents Association (by Kurt Van den Eynden, Chair)]
Rudall Crescent Residents Association (by Jenny Stevens, Chair)
South End Green Association (by Roger Gulhane, Chair)
Vale of Health Society (by Zlatina Loudjeva, Chair)