

Friends of Rippingale Post Office

The Rt. Hon. David Cameron MP, Leader of the Opposition

Dear Mr Cameron,

Your new PPC for Grantham and Stamford, Nick Boles, visited our village on Saturday where Post Office Ltd., are planning to close the local sub Post Office.

He told us that he knew something about such closures through a similar disaster in his parents' village in Devon and that closure would tear the heart out of Rippingale. He's right. We have just lost our village school and closure of the Post Office means the shop which houses the PO counter cannot survive.

Once-a-week bus services mean that a high proportion of the elderly, those without personal transport and the disabled will be isolated in their homes. For them, the nearest alternative Post Office is a more than three mile walk down the dangerous A15 - narrow, no footpaths, busy with cars, heavy goods vehicles and farm traffic.

Our point to you is that our story is being replicated two and a half thousand times in the UK - it's a NATIONAL disaster. We know and can prove that Post Office Ltd. -

- Lied to the public about the ongoing consultation exercise - they had already appointed "Outreach" partners for Rippingale a month before the public closure announcement and had told our sub Postmaster he would close no matter what.
- I ignored and manipulated their own Government-set access criteria.
- Have shown little or no business or enterprise sense in this programme - they say our PO is a loss-maker, but their information is out of date and ignores recent complete refurbishment of the store which has increased business by 20%.
- I ignored or failed to realise that Rippingale is one of a small number of Lincolnshire villages earmarked by the County Council for major housing expansion.

Nick made no apologies for believing in market-led policies, but said that even Margaret Thatcher realised there had to be exceptions over essential services and would never have dreamt of privatising the Post Office.

You might like to know that he's almost certainly going to join our protest march down the A15 next Wednesday morning, as we draw attention to the future to which Post Office Ltd is condemning many of our villagers.

There is one area to which we would draw your attention and ask for your help. Post Office Ltd. is refusing point-blank to divulge any of the financial or other criteria they used to come to their decision about Rippingale.

We believe we know why. Any pressure you could bring to bear to make them open their books would be highly appreciated. And should you think the above is worthy of a PMQ - even better.

Many thanks.

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