

**Downing Street Epetition response "a disgrace."**  
**Government condemned from its own mouth says Rippingale**

The Government response to a Downing Street E-petition with 818 signatures, attacking the proposed closure of Rippingale sub-Post Office, was today branded "a disgrace," by the village support group.

"This response is a completely standard letter, simply a copy of last year's original DTI document," said Phil Rippingale for Friends of Rippingale Post Office. "It answers none of the questions we raised and demonstrates what a complete sham and waste of time this process has been. The 2320 other communities round the country who'll soon be facing the same disaster as us should take note. In effect it's saying 'Go away, the Government's not interested.'"

However the figures contained in the response raise a crucial and basic question about why Rippingale was included in the first place and indeed the whole closure process.

The document says "800 least used branches have fewer than 16 customers a week.....some 1600 have fewer than 20 customers a day.....1000 sub post offices have at least 6 other competing branches within a mile."

Phil Rippingale said "As has been the case right through the closure process, figures have been used to confuse the public - if these are all different examples they've quoted, then we have 3400 branches with little defence against closure - 900 more than the 2500 required by the Government. Rippingale patently doesn't come into any of those parameters given by Downing Street, so what on earth are we doing in the closure programme in the first place?

Or look at it another way - 1000 with at least 6 competing branches says these are town-based - 1600 with fewer than 20 customers a day tells us that these are different, rural branches - so again we're looking at 2600 with virtually no defence against closure - 100 more than the original Government plan.

This raises a huge question mark over whether the Government knows what it's talking about and over the whole approach to the national closure plan."

You can see the complete Government response on the following URL  
<http://www.pm.gov.uk/output/Page13959.asp>

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05.12.07.