

## PO Ltd ignores Parliamentary Select Committee

### Rippingale disappointed by latest meeting with senior managers

It's become clear that PO Ltd are prepared to ignore the findings of a Parliamentary Select Committee, one of the most powerful voices in the Commons, to drive through its branch closure plan.

Villagers from Rippingale met senior PO managers on Friday (Feb 29) at their invitation, to discuss "viable alternative solutions," to closure but came away disappointed.

They met Anthony Jones, PO Regional Development Manager and Mark Partington, Network Development Manager, at the invitation of the Network Change Director Sue Huggins.

The PO team refused to accept that if the branch was based in the last shop in a village it should remain open or that they should reveal any details of the Rippingale branch finances, directly contradicting the Select Committee report of February 9.

Phil Rippingale, for the group, said "This is the third time we've met senior managers and we're grateful for the access, but they refused to discuss anything outside options to their existing Outreach proposals.

We have what both PO Minister Pat McFadden and PO Managing Director Alan Cook specifically welcomed in their evidence to the Select Committee - "imaginative, viable, alternative solutions" - both for the original closure plan and for the Outreach proposals. But both require some idea of the financial commitment we might need to achieve either - no credible business arrangement can operate on this basis and any businessman will tell you that a business plan has to be flexible, open to ideas and ready to encourage enterprise. As the taxpayers who've put £1.7 billion into PO Ltd, we think we deserve better and we're also concerned that sticking rigidly to a narrow plan bodes ill for a viable national PO network."

The PO Ltd team have undertaken to come back to the village group with their response to their suggestion for an alternative to the mobile office proposed for Rippingale. However in the meantime the village group intend to raise the status of the Parliamentary Select Committee with their MP Quentin Davies, the chairman of the Committee Peter Luff MP, the PO Minister Pat McFadden, Royal Mail Chairman Allan Leighton and PO MD, Alan Cook.

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