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THE ARCHER



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CARS & COURIERS

December 2013 No. 241 **20p**
 ISSN 1361-3952 where sold

A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Have your say on Post Office changes

By John Lawrence

The Post Office has announced major changes to its service in East Finchley. The company wants to close the existing Crown Office in February and move its service in a franchise arrangement to the UOE office supplies shop on the opposite side of the High Road.

A public consultation on the proposal is under way and you have until 6 January to send in your comments. The Post Office is only asking for comments on location and accessibility, saying the decision to change the way the branch is run is not up for debate.

As we reported earlier in the year, the Post Office needs to make major cost savings in its loss-making Crown Office operation. Finding partners to run branches is seen as one way of doing this.

Roger Gale, Crown Network general manager, said: "We are committed to keeping a Post Office branch in East Finchley and to maintaining the same levels of service for our customers."

Extended hours

UOE has been in business for more than 30 years. Full branch opening hours at the proposed new location would be 9am to 5.30pm Monday to Saturday but Post Office services would also be available over the shop counter until 6pm and from noon until 4pm on Sundays.

The UOE Store would undergo a major refit, doubling the retail floor space, adding automatic door entry, ramped access and low-level serving counters, and five serving positions. These would be a mixture of one screened and three open-plan counters, and a Post Office serving point at the retail counter.

Elliot Jacobs, managing director of UOE, said: "We know that the Post Office is a vital part of the community. We look forward to the outcome of the consultation and the opportunity it gives us to extend opening hours and enhance the already excellent service provided by both UOE and the Post Office on a seven-days-a-week basis."

Seven staff currently work

at the Post Office in the High Road. They have been told that there will be no compulsory redundancies as a result of the proposed move.

However, their union the Communications Workers Union said it was concerned about the adequacy of the new facilities, the potential detrimental impact on the service to the public, and whether there would be a guarantee of long-term service provision by UOE.

The union claimed it was prepared to embrace longer opening hours at the existing office but that this hadn't come up for discussion. It is pledging to continue its campaign of industrial action in defence of Crown Offices, which has included 12 days of strike action at East Finchley this year.

Have your say on the Post Office move through an online questionnaire at postofficeviews.co.uk, by FREEPOST Your Comments to Post Office Ltd, via email to comments@postoffice.co.uk, via the Customer Helpline on 08457 22 33 44 or Textphone 08457 22 33 55. Quote branch code 003004 in all submissions.



Wendy picks up her MBE. Photo by Richard Dawson/Palace Photos

Wendy at the palace

Businesswoman Wendy Hallett received her MBE in an investiture at Buckingham Palace in October. A successful entrepreneur, Wendy has won the award for the innovation of her young fashion concessions (shop-in-shop) concept.

Her company Hallett Retail is based in East Finchley and her Modern Muse initiative aims to engage the next generation of female business leaders.

In 2010 Wendy opened two concessions where 100% of the takings go to Save the Children, raising £30,000 to date. She aims to raise £1 million for the charity.

Wendy is actively involved with Retail Trust, the principal charity of the retail sector, and is vice chair of the Retail Trust London Ball Committee.

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HAPPY FESTIVE SEASON

THE ARCHER team wishes all our readers, distributors and advertisers a happy festive season and a peaceful and prosperous New Year. Thank you for all your contributions and support over the last 12 months and we look forward to continuing to bring local news to everyone in East Finchley in 2014.

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