



Post Office closed in strike action

By John Lawrence

East Finchley's Post Office was closed on Easter Saturday after the Communications Workers' Union called a strike to protest at plans to sell it off to a private operator.

Throughout the morning, customers were seen turning up to a locked door where a small notice had been placed, explaining the reasons for the one-day closure. A further half day strike followed on Friday 19 April.

Union position

The union's Huw Davies, who represents Post Office counter staff in the Greater London area, said: "The potential loss, through franchising, of an impressive number of years of expertise, loyalty and dedication amongst highly skilled and experienced staff will have a significantly detrimental impact on the Post Office counters' service provided to our local community."

"In the event that the Post Office does gain a partner, there is no guarantee that this franchise partner will continue to offer, in the long-term, Post Office services, as this will be its secondary consideration behind its primary business."

Transformation plan

East Finchley is one of 70 Crown Post Offices under

review because they are said to be losing money. The Post Office aims to find a local retailer who could operate its services from existing premises or a partner who would be willing to run them from the current building.

The Post Office said it was disappointed at the strike action, saying it was essential that the transformation plans were delivered because public money is subsidising the £40 million annual losses of the Crown branches.

Kevin Gilliland, network and sales director, said: "We are committed to keeping a Post Office branch on high streets such as East Finchley and to maintaining the same levels of service for our customers."

"The best way for us to do this is to partner with a retailer, using an approach which has met with high customer satisfaction levels across the UK. This is not a closure plan; our aim is to find a suitable retailer from which the branch can operate. Any new branch would offer the same range of Post Office services."



An electric 40 years in business

Local traders face tough conditions these days and have to adapt quickly to survive. No one knows this better than Dino Loizou, owner and director of East Finchley Electrical, which is celebrating 40 years in business. It started out in 1973 as a small electrical shop on the High Road, employing two people. Today, the company has 14 employees and two premises serving hundreds of local homes and some of London's most high profile organisations.

Many customers who used the services of East Finchley Electrical back in 1973 are still customers to this day and Dino thanks them and the local community for their custom

and support over the years. Through the decades Dino and his father, who originally set up the business, have witnessed many changes. He says: "It's interesting to look back on what used to be our best sellers in the shop decades ago. Things like record players, analogue radios and video players had people flocking back then. Now it's all about audio visual integration, home automation and intelligent lighting."

Role of recommendations

Building long-term relationships is crucial for Dino and

his team as recommendations make up 80% of the company's business. Adapting to change is also crucial.

Dino says: "Back in the 1990s when I first got involved in the business, the Yellow Pages and leaflet drops just about summed up our marketing. Now it's our website that drives our promotions and we've embraced social media and email marketing too. But the best marketing we can do is a good job so we can boost our recommendations. They are free."

How secure is your parked car?

By Janet Maitland

Thieves stole items from the boot of a car parked on Summerlee Avenue some time between 7pm on 5 April and 8.20am on 6 April.

To prevent this kind of theft happening to you, the Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) advises you not to leave anything of any value on display or in the glove compartment as even a coat can be a temptation for someone to smash and grab.

They also advise you not to hide anything in the glove compartment, but to leave it

open to show there's nothing inside. If you shut it, thieves may break into the car to look inside and won't find out that there's nothing of value in there until they've damaged your car.

Always close and secure all doors and windows and activate the alarm when you leave your car unattended, even if only for a short while. Take your Sat Nav

with you or lock it in the boot, after removing the sucker marks from the windscreen.

The SNT recommends that you register your possessions with Immobilise as this will not only help you get them back if they're stolen but also capture thieves and speed up insurance claims. The service is free at www.immobilise.com

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