

# TOWN COUNCIL PROTEST AT TEMPORARY POST OFFICE CLOSURE

*Latest news from Malmesbury Town Council*

Malmesbury Town Council's Mayor has called on the Post Office to support its residents by providing a temporary service when it shuts for two months during early 2025.

The Post Office in Malmesbury is well used by residents and is situated in the Co-op in the town's High Street. However the Co-op will soon be undergoing extensive refurbishment, likely to start in late January, and will be closed for about seven weeks. This means the Post Office will close too.

Cllr Exton said: "We've known about this for some time and asked the Post Office what provision it would make to support local residents who use this service regularly. It's taken several weeks to get a response and that response is, for us, totally unacceptable."

The Post Office has said that it will not be providing any temporary Post Office Service and that residents can use alternative premises in Crudwell, Tetbury or Sherston – all several miles away.

Bizarrely, they claim their assessment is that any mobile Post Office in the town would be 'too busy' as the demand would be 'too great'.

"We have considered the use of a Mobile Post Office to provide a service in Malmesbury during the temporary closure period. The Mobile Post Office is designed to provide services for a couple of hours per week from a van in small rural locations with low customer footfall. Unfortunately, a van would not be suitable for use in Malmesbury due to the higher customer footfall in the area that is likely to result in capacity issues on the van," a spokesperson said.

Cllr Exton responded:

"This makes no logical sense. The fact that the Post Office has assessed our town's need and decided we are 'too busy' surely means we **need to be** provided with a temporary Post Office? Does this really mean that a rural area with just a few customers would be supported but a whole town would not?"

Cllr Exton, as leader of Malmesbury Council, has written to the Post Office demanding a temporary 'fix' for residents. He said:

"The Post Office is an essential facility for many vulnerable residents...your suggestion to use alternative Post Office branches in Tetbury, Crudwell or Sherston is not achievable as many of these residents have no access to personal transport and public transport is extremely infrequent. Without access to their local post office, many vulnerable residents will be unable to process the benefits and vouchers they need to survive especially during a mid winter period."

The Post Office has provided temporary services to Malmesbury residents in the past – though it's refused this time. Free transport for residents was provided to alternative branches when the town's branch was closed under similar circumstances in 2013. Also more recently a temporary Post Office was set up when the normal branch was closed in Broadstone, Dorset when the nearest alternative was just over a mile away. For Malmesbury residents they now face travelling at least four miles from the town to be able to use a Post Office when the refurbishment takes place.

The town council is also consulting with the Co-op around this matter.

**ENDS.**

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