

Post Office Ltd

Now that POL have notification of termination they will look to see what provision if any they wish to provide. This could be (I think likely) an “outreach service”. That is when another branch dispatches a person with equipment to provide the service maybe for two hours twice a week in a shop, church, village hall, pub etc. (see, I think, Frittenden, Chart Sutton etc) Headcorn have (and maybe still do) run such services.

POL have agreed criteria with the government for service provision; in rural areas that is based on population within 3 miles (measured linearly) of a branch. Most of Grafty Green is within 3 miles of Lenham, Klingswood or Headcorn.

Current Premises

Rearrangement of current premises to accommodate a new operator suffers from several problems. To solve our domestic arrangements, the need for which has prompted the current situation, and provide for the shop would require investment that would then be wasted should either party need to move on. I cannot envisage a longer term arrangement for premises sharing that would be feasible. Dividing into two premises would involve building & fire regulations (and planning?).

Possible Shop Models

The current model fails in my opinion because there are insufficient people for whom Grafty Green is the nearest shop. Increasing fewer people use a local shop beyond occasional minor purchases. Running the Post Office on volunteers is, I expect, not feasible and I don't know of it being done anywhere.

I see two models as worthy of consideration.

1. Expanding the business to attract more people / more spend, along the lines of Smarden for example. If this were pulled off it would be a model for many places ie a magnificent achievement but in my view unlikely. I don't believe the current premises would work for this.
2. Lowering overheads by using volunteer staff, reduced hours (similar to Chart Sutton). In my view the most achievable. This could be done in combination with an outreach PO service.