

My lord mayor & Fellow Councillors... CAPOC Speech

Councillors, I am addressing you today on behalf of Communities Against Post Office Closures (CAPOC). We are a community campaign that has opposed the closure of twenty-two Post Office branches across Leeds. Beeston has been particularly badly hit by the closures, with the loss of three Post Office branches. However, Essex Council has reopened 15 out of 31 Post Office branches that were closed. Therefore, we would like Leeds City Council to negotiate with Royal Mail to reopen our closed Post Office branches and we present you with a petition from your constituents.

Post Office branches serve some of the most vulnerable people in our city. The elderly depend on their local Post Office branch; so too those with disabilities and those living on benefits. Not only are Post Office branches where these people access vital services. They are places where local residents meet and engage one another in conversation. As such they play a vital role in helping some overcome their isolation. They are the glue that bind our communities together and are essential for the maintenance of social cohesion.

Those Post Office branches that have been left over after the latest cull are struggling to cope with increased numbers of customers. The people of Leeds are forced to endure a decline in the quality of the service. Not only do people have to travel further to their local Post Office branch, they have to queue for longer. ~~Those who are least able to queue for any length of time are forced to queue for too long.~~

The closure of the Post Office branches has not only affected their former customers, Small businesses nearby depend on the trade generated by local Post Office branches. Many combine a visit to their local Post Office branch with a visit to their local newsagent, butcher or hairdresser. The closure programme can only have a detrimental impact on the trade of these small businesses. It will spell the end for many high streets and shopping parades.

Our Post Office network is first and foremost a public service. Deregulation and privatisation have allowed companies to cherry pick the most profitable parts of the service. Our Post Office branches should not have been axed, ~~to allow Royal Mail to recover some of its losses.~~ They should not be lost to the pensioner, the person without a job, the single parent, the person in a wheelchair. The people of Leeds are looking to their elected representatives to help them in their hour of need. Reopen our closed Post Office branches. Do not let us down.

* 1st
The bail out of the banks with public money has highlighted whose interest this government serves.

Not the interest of the W/class that's for sure.

It also shows that if the government has the money to bail out the banks it has money to maintain public services