

Post Offices are the lifeblood of our local communities



By **Karen Lumley**
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AS YOU MAY KNOW, the Government is implementing a programme of Post Office closures that will result in the loss of 2,500 post offices around the country.

At the moment we do not know which Post Offices in Redditch will be affected, however I have heard that up to three may be earmarked for closure. In my opinion, this is three too many.

Anxiety and concern

There has been great concern and anxiety about the closure plans because of the implications these will have for so many people. Especially hard hit will be the elderly, the disabled, mothers with young families and local businesses.

Save our Post Offices

For anyone who has been following the post office saga over the last few years, such potential closures will come as no great surprise. The Gov-

ernment has been putting pressure on pensioners to open bank accounts for their State Pension. The Government has also stopped the sale of TV licenses at Post Offices, as well as encouraging car owners to buy their car tax on line.

Last week the Conservative Party arranged a debate and vote in Parliament to suspend the closure programme, on the basis that the consultation process has been flawed; that the access criteria (which are used to decide which ones will close) have been badly drawn up; and that more emphasis should be given to finding new business to keep Post Offices open, rather than simply managing the decline of the network. It will come as no surprise

to you that the motion was defeated – but only narrowly – one of the drawbacks of being in opposition.

For the record the Home Secretary again voted to close post offices in Redditch.

Protecting local services

I recognise the importance of our Post Offices to communities throughout Redditch and I will speak up for those local communities in support of these vital local services.

Rest assured, I will be campaigning to protect our Post Offices, which provide more than just a place to buy stamps, but are the lifeblood of our communities.

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