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Our Ref: 195489/RM
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Mr Roger Upton
Chairman of Radcliffe on Trent Parish Council
The Grange
Vicarage lane
Radcliffe on Trent
Nottingham
NG12 2FB

Dear Mr Upton

Thank you for your letter dated 16 December and for taking the time to explain why you are so unhappy the Radcliffe on Trent branch is due to close on the 11 March 2015. Please be assured this was not a decision the bank reached lightly.

I am saddened to learn of the manner in which you found out about the closure and how upset you are. When we make the decision to close a branch we write to all our customers who regularly use the branch, the local media and politicians and advise them of the closure. We ensure there is a three month period between announcing a closure and the actual closure itself so that our local staff can work with local customers to sort out any issues and answer any questions they may have.

Every closure decision is made on a case by case basis in full consultation with local frontline leaders to ensure that local knowledge is applied to the decision on both the closure and access to banking in the local area.

As you point out, we are not continuing with our Last Bank in Town pledge made in 2010. Since we gave that commitment the way our customers are banking with us has changed significantly. Our mobile app and online banking were in their infancy and our customers were not able to do their banking in local Post Offices. Our customers are telling us that they want to do their everyday banking in a variety of different ways, where and when it is convenient for them, and we are having to respond to those demands. Over our whole branch network there has been a 30% drop in branch transactions since 2010 while we have seen an increase in online and mobile transactions of more than 200%.

We know that some of our customers, in particular the elderly find it difficult to travel or do not use the internet and prefer to be served over-the-counter. As you know customers can now pay money in, take money out, check balances and get business coinage at their local Post Office; it is disappointing to learn that you do not feel this is a suitable alternative for day to day banking needs. We have committed a further £2 million investment to further improve the Post Office agreement to enable cash deposits using bank cards during 2015 which should improve this service.

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Elderly customers can also use our telephone banking service, which is a basic rate telephone number. This service enables them to speak to an operator about their account and undertake account enquiries and some transactions without leaving the comfort of their own home. It is particularly popular with partially sighted customers as the telephony staff are able to read statement details out to them over the phone. If customers do not currently have this facility then the staff in the branch will be able to register them for it.

We understand how important the bank is for local businesses. Our business customers are contacted by their relationship manager when we announce the branch is closing to inform them of our decision, and discuss the alternative ways they can bank with us. We have three months between the announcement and the branch closing to help them adjust to any changes. At present over 60% of our SME customers use digital banking.

New houses often mean young families who are less likely to use the branch as they already tend use online, telephone or the mobile phone app to do their banking. These residents will already have bank accounts and are unlikely to move banks when they move house.

We know the value of the High Street branch, and our large UK branch network will remain the cornerstone of our service to customers. However, we have to adapt to what our customers want, which is why we're investing over £1bn over the next few years to give customers greater choice in how they bank with us. This includes improving our online and mobile banking and upgrading over 400 branches across the UK.

Regrettably, the changes in our customers' needs have meant that a difficult decision had to be made regarding the Radcliffe on Trent branch. Whilst I appreciate these changes have not been welcomed in the local community, I hope I have helped to explain the reasons why our decision remains unchanged, and the ways still available to bank with us in the local area.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rebecca Mair', followed by a stylized flourish.

Rebecca Mair
Executive Office