

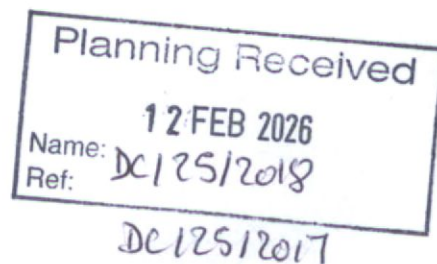
Objection to planning applications

Ref: DC/25/2018 Ref: DC/25/2017

Post office Stores

Church Street

West Chiltington



I write to formally object to the proposed closure of the above post office and associated retail shop on planning and community impact grounds.

The premises operate as a combined post office and local shop and therefore constitute a vital community facility providing essential services and day-to-day goods in a rural area. The loss of both functions would cause significant harm to accessibility, social inclusion, and the sustainability of the local area, contrary to local and national planning policy objectives.

Impact on Vulnerable and Digitally Excluded Residents

The post office and shop are relied upon by elderly residents, people with disabilities, and those without private transport. They provide access not only to postal and banking services but also to everyday essentials. Closure would disproportionately affect these groups, for whom online alternatives or travel to distant facilities are not reasonable or realistic options.

Accessibility and Transport Considerations

The premises are located within walking distance for many residents. The nearest alternative post office and convenience shop are at least 30 minutes walking distance away and are not easily reached without transport as there are not any pavements to get there and would require unless travelling cross country walking on roads with heavy traffic which would be extremely dangerous and not possible for people with poor mobility. Requiring residents to travel further for basic services places an unreasonable burden on those with limited mobility or financial means and conflicts with planning objectives promoting walkable, sustainable communities.

Loss of Essential Community Facilities

As a combined post office and shop, the premises serve a dual and irreplaceable community function. Local development plan policies generally seek to resist the loss of shops, post offices, and other essential services unless suitable and accessible alternatives are available. In this case, no equivalent provision exists within the local area.

Economic and Social Impact

The shop and post office support local economic activity by generating footfall and serving local households. Their closure would weaken the vitality of the area, reduce informal social interaction, and increase the risk of further service decline.

Environmental Impact

The loss of local access to both postal services and everyday shopping would increase reliance on car journeys to more distant centres, leading to higher carbon emissions and conflicting with sustainability and climate change objectives.

Lack of Like-for-Like Replacement

Any proposed alternative provision, such as a mobile post office or a reduced in-store facility elsewhere, would not provide a like-for-like replacement. Reduced services, limited opening hours, lack of privacy, and separation from a local shop would significantly diminish accessibility and community benefit.

For these reasons, the proposed closure represents the loss of an essential community asset and is contrary to the principles of sustainable development. I respectfully request that the planning authority refuses consent for this application.

Yours sincerely

Resident

Church Street

West Chittington