Dear _____________________________________________________

FRANCHISING OF _____________________________________________________ CROWN POST OFFICE

I am writing as one of your constituents to ask that you act to stop the ‘franchising’ of 74 Crown post offices to WHSmith. If these go ahead, 60% of the Crown Network that existed in 2013 will be gone, following years of incremental privatisations.

Research shows that franchising our Crown post offices to WHSmith results in longer queuing time, substandard service, reduced services, inferior advice given on products, and poor disabled access. In addition to this, local economies and lives are hit by quality jobs being replaced with low pay insecure work, and high streets are often decimated by the closing of Crown offices in prime sites that once provided custom in the area.

There is no public consultation on whether the privatisation should go ahead, but only on what the resulting franchised service might look like. Invariably, the public has been vehemently opposed to these franchises, and yet the privatisation is bankrolled using public money. In 2014/15, £13 million was paid in compensation agreements alone to get rid of experienced Post Office staff. The Communications Workers Unions (CWU), which represents many of the workers but was not engaged by the Post Office at all prior to the announcement, says around 800 staff will be affected by this round of franchising and it will cost at least £30 million in compensation payments.

Giving our profit-making Crown offices to a failing retailer, whose business model is based on low wage part-time employment, and future is reported to be in jeopardy, can only be seen as sacrificing our post office network to prop up WHSmith.

I would be grateful if you would write on my behalf to the Minister for the Post Office, Kelly Tolhurst MP, urging a halt to this privatisation, and asking what oversight and power the Government maintains over our public money given to Post Office Ltd, and how much of our money is earmarked to pay staff to leave, so that WHSmith can replace them with minimum wage roles. I would also like to know why the decision about whether these assets should be privatised, has been denied to us, the public, as the rightful owners of these post offices.

Please let me know if you support the work to save our crown post office network, and if you will table questions in Parliament to encourage the retention of our Crown offices. You can also show your support on social media, using #SaveOurPostOffice to promote the petition that is based at www.saveourpostoffice.co.uk.

I look forward to hearing from you, and seeing the response from the Minister.

Yours sincerely,