

No. 129/2019

27<sup>th</sup> February 2019

Dear Colleagues

## **POST OFFICE: "SAVE OUR POST OFFICE" CAMPAIGN – PARLIAMENTARY EVENT 11<sup>TH</sup> MARCH**

Further to LTB 017/19 dated 15<sup>th</sup> January.

As Branches are aware, we have been gathering signatures for a national petition against the franchising of Crown Post Offices to WH Smith and with the support of our activists, politicians and the public we are now on our way to gaining our target of c.100,000 signatures. With a final push over the next ten days we can reach this total and we are now asking Branches to make every effort to gather as many signatures as possible. The petition is attached to this LTB or can be signed using our Microsite: [www.saveourpostoffice.co.uk](http://www.saveourpostoffice.co.uk)

Our plan is to deliver these petitions to 10 Downing Street on 11<sup>th</sup> March and we will also be holding an event in Westminster on this date which we are expecting a number of MPs and key stakeholders to attend. The details are as follows:

### **Save Our Post Office Campaign – Event in Parliament**

#### **Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

- 1.30-2.30pm Meeting in Committee Room 6, House of Commons with Dave Ward, General Secretary addressing the rally and with other speakers tbc. Dot Gibson from the National Pensioners Convention is an early confirmed speaker.
- 2.30 – 2.45pm Photo Opportunity on Parliament Green
- 2.45pm – 3pm MPs and a small delegation of 6 including Dave Ward and Andy Furey walk to 10 Downing Street and deliver petitions.

Regional Secretaries, Branch Secretaries, Branch Political Officers, all Branches, and Representatives (employed by Post Office) are encouraged to show their support by attending the rally in Committee Room 6 on 11<sup>th</sup> March, and to be a part of the photo on Parliament Green. Your support in this important campaign to secure the future of the Crown Office network is appreciated.

## **All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Post Offices**

A meeting of the APPG, chaired by Gill Furniss MP, Shadow BEIS Minister was held late yesterday afternoon. Andy Furey, Assistant Secretary and Natasha Burgess, Political Advisor were in attendance. MPs from the three largest parties - Labour, Conservative and SNP – heard evidence from Citizens Advice, the Association of Convenience Stores, the Countryside Alliance and the Federation of Small Businesses, about the impact on high streets and rural areas of losing Post Offices.

Andy Furey questioned Citizens Advice about the toothless code of practice they have with the Post Office with regard to franchising.

MPs left in agreement that their suspicions and concerns about franchising had been confirmed by the evidence they had heard and they are looking forward to questioning the Minister, who has said she will attend a future meeting of the APPG.

Following the APPG, Gill Furniss provided the following statement:

***"The Post Office APPG has developed into an extremely worthwhile and effective activity. The progress made by this forum has been truly amazing and the engagement with parliamentarians from across the various parties together with representatives from the key stakeholders is first class.***

***I was particularly pleased to see the involvement from the Federation of Small Businesses, Association of Convenience Stores, Citizens Advice and the Countryside Alliance at our recent meeting. It was also satisfying to hear how much the Post Office is cherished as an institution that should be protected and developed for the use of everyone in society"***

## **Securing the Future of the Post Office - Post Bank**

As discussed at the National Briefing last year, it is crucial that alongside our campaign against the franchise/closure programme we shift the debate onto a positive vision for the Post Office for the future. As part of this, the Union has commissioned an independent report building on the pledges in Labour's manifesto for a Post Bank and for other elements of a new system of public banking (such as a National Investment Bank).

The report will provide a thorough analysis of the current problems within the UK banking system and set out how a Post Bank has a key role to play in addressing these. It will also set out how the commitment on a Post Bank would fit together with the other proposals Labour made in its manifesto, which is an important piece of work that would be needed for this to be moved forward if we can secure a Labour government. The aim is to publish the report with a launch event prior to or during annual conference and further details will be provided to Branches at the earliest opportunity.

## **Local Campaigning Activities**

Branches are encouraged to email details of any relevant local campaign activities, photos etc. to Natasha Burgess, Political Advisor, GS Dept – [nburgess@cwu.org](mailto:nburgess@cwu.org) who is liaising with our Communications Dept in terms of gaining as much publicity as possible via our website, Microsite and social media. We are planning to update the Save Our Post Office Microsite to include information on all local activities against franchising, press and media coverage etc. If Branches require the assistance of a Postal Executive member at public meetings, please email [lsheridan@cwu.org](mailto:lsheridan@cwu.org)

Thank you for your continued support in this crucial campaign and once again we would urge all Branches to do everything possible to increase the number of signatures to the Save Our Post Office petition prior to 11<sup>th</sup> March.

Yours sincerely

**Andy Furey**  
**Assistant Secretary**

**Terry Pullinger**  
**DGS(P)**

**Dave Ward**  
**General Secretary**