

7th February 2020

Malew Parish Commissioners
Commissioners Offices
Main Road
Ballasalla
Isle of Man
IM9 2RQ

Dear Malew Parish Commissioners

Thank you for your letter dated 22nd January 2020.

The Board is pleased to respond to your letter from 22nd January 2020 and also to specifics relating to Isle of Man Post Office that you have included in your open letter to the Chief Minister dated 3rd February 2020.

Turning first to the biggest concern you have identified on behalf of the community, the delivery of pensions and allowances to c165 recipients, one-third of which we understand do not reside in Ballasalla. You correctly reference monies can be paid into a bank account as an alternative to collecting from a Sub Post Office (SPO). You have not acknowledged the proxy option available to those recipients unwilling or unable to access a bank account and unable to travel to an alternate SPO. I can confirm that the Social Security Division (SSD) of Treasury, responsible for the service, have never had an issue in the past with recipients not being able to access at least one of the three options available, even in locations where SPOs have been discontinued in the past, (the current network is made up of 21 SPOs, having decreased by approximately one-third in the last 20 years).

You highlight concerns regarding a potential gap in receiving SSD payments, should recipients choose to collect directly into their bank account. Bank transfer is by far the most popular collection method for SSD recipients and requires no travel, thus reducing the carbon footprint. SSD will explain the process and potential implications for those interested in this method. For people seeking to access cash in Ballasalla, I can confirm that all three of the convenience shops offer a cash back facility.

The business community has not been overlooked. As part of the consultation, IOMPO wrote directly to over 200 businesses in the area, to seek their feedback on the proposed changes, noting that standard postage services are to be retained in Ballasalla. We took the opportunity to advise those businesses of the range of commercial services, including timed deliveries and collections, corporate accounts and self-administered postage options that may help to improve their productivity.

The Isle of Man Post Office is a Statutory Board of the Isle of Man Government with its Board Members appointed by Tynwald. The Board are obligated under the Post Office Act 1993 to provide financially and socially responsible services with respect to its exclusive privilege, the conveyance of letters.

The Honourable Court of Tynwald approved the Isle of Man Post Office 'demand-driven' retail modernisation strategy and can rightly expect the Isle of Man Post Office Board to honour all the principles approved. The report presented to Tynwald, clearly articulated the case for change. Customer habits are changing, with fewer people choosing to use general counter services, as alternative methods of completing those transactions emerge. For instance, the payment of utility bills can be paid at a SPO counter, using a post office touch screen service, over the counter at the

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ISLE OF MAN	Web	www.iompost.com
IM2 IAA		

service provider's premises, online, over the phone, by post, by account and via direct debit. Several of which do not require travel to an alternative SPO or access to online services to complete.

Your letter and other social media seek to portray IOMPO as the provider of community services. I think this needs to be kept in context. The Isle of Man Government provides a huge range of services directly to the community – health care, community nurses, mental health care, social services – and those services are being delivered direct to the individual. Of course, it is not just Government delivering those services, charities are out delivering those services with numerous community groups who serve not only a sole purpose, but the broader purpose of community engagement and providing routes to escape any social isolation. I reference this to provide a little balance to concerns raised regarding the perceived social impact. However, please do not mistake this as the Board devolving all responsibility for its social value, on the contrary, the Board have listened to the consultation feedback and have acted on the key themes by extending the services it will seek to retain in Ballasalla (Principle 6), to include an innovative face-to-face information and advice service, together with a parcel collection facility (Principle 5).

In the case of Ballasalla, the nearest counter is at Castletown SPO, located within 3 miles (Principle 2) and based on actual transaction volumes processed in the past, it can absorb any additional volume not accommodated by the services the Board will seek to retain in Ballasalla. Castletown has a broad range of amenities, with over 200 public car parking spaces. The Castletown SPO is on a bus route and has disabled parking in close proximity (Principle 3). Travelling by bus to Castletown or as part of another regular journey to access other amenities will not impact the environment. Consolidation, as a result of customers that do migrate to the nearest SPO, such as Castletown, is proven to improve the financial viability and sustainability of counter-based services in the area (Principle 1), thus was a key factor in the Board's decision.

With regard to procurement, the Board have stated that they will, in line with financial directions and good governance practice, complete an open and transparent tender for the services it is seeking to retain in Ballasalla, thus ensuring all interested applicants can offer their services in line with the specified criteria. Subject to willing participants coming forward, the Board aim to avoid a break between the outgoing Sub Postmaster's leaving date, now confirmed as 9th April 2020, and the services being implemented.

And finally, the service changes being implemented now do not preclude or prevent IOMPO from expanding services in the future, if demand is forthcoming.

I trust this helps to clarify the situation more clearly. I thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely



JULIE EDGE MHK
Chairman of Isle of Man Post Office