

Post Office protest groups launch national organisation
Focal point for fight against closure plans

A group of communities fighting plans to close their post office branches has launched a national organisation.

CAPOC – Communities Against Post Office Closures - hope their experiences of dealing with the nationwide plan to shut 2500 branches will help other communities who may not yet know they're being targeted.

The launch group is:

- Rippingale in Lincolnshire
- Castle Bytham in Lincolnshire
- Langworth in Lincolnshire
- Somerby in Leicestershire
- Carrington in Nottinghamshire
- Passfield in Hampshire
- Burton Fleming in East Yorkshire

Their website – www.postofficeclosures.org.uk – contains a wealth of hard-learned lessons, advice on how to fight PO Ltd proposals, contacts in the worlds of media, politics, community affairs and other protest groups, briefings, copies of reports, documents and links to other useful websites, a forum in which to share views and opinions and much more.

John Warman from the Rippingale group, who's set up the website, said "We were all in the first wave of closures and quickly realised we were on our own, with very little time given for us to prepare a case against PO Ltd plans.

The PO plan is less than half way through and hundreds more communities round the UK still won't realise they're on the closure list and the impact it will have on their lives.

We realise there are some places where the closure case is justified or there will be no appetite to fight the plans – CAPOC's designed to help those who want to keep their branch and are ready for a fight.

The ultimate aim of the campaign must be to put enough pressure on PO Ltd and the Government to stop the closure of well used viable Post Offices."

CAPOC believes local announcements will come as a shock to many communities and their new website will become the first stop for those looking for help and advice.

Examples of the material available are: a detailed DIY guide on how to fight back against the PO Ltd plan, access to crucial documents such as the original DTI closure criteria, the recent report from the BERR Select Committee on PO closures and the newly introduced Sustainable Communities Act which contradicts many of the PO closure criteria.

Communities facing the same problems are invited to join CAPOC, as are those who also have been down the same road and would like to help the campaign – you can register via the website.

Simon Hart, Chief Executive of the Countryside Alliance welcomed the new group. "Rural Britain is now at a crossroads and faces two choices: go along with the Government's proposals to close 2,500 sub-Post Offices and watch community life as we know it disappear, perhaps forever. Or fight these proposals and act now to maintain a network that has immeasurable social value. The Countryside Alliance is proud to support CAPOC as they opt for the latter, and most difficult, choice. Our rural communities are worth fighting for and we are with CAPOC every step of the way."

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