



The first customer is served at the new post office in UOE. Photo Mike Coles

Hello, goodbye! Post Office opens in new home

East Finchley's Post Office moved out of Viceroy Parade to become part of the UOE gifts and stationery shop on the opposite side of the High Road on 22 May. It is now the first Post Office franchise in London being run by a privately-owned firm.

On the previous day, campaigners and trade union members gathered outside the Crown Post Office unit they had fought long and hard to keep operational, to say a final farewell.

One Post Office staff member has moved across to work in UOE, joining a team of nine counter staff there. Others from Viceroy Parade are either working in other Post Offices or have been offered voluntary redundancy.

The UOE shop itself has undergone a significant transformation, with the Post Office counters occupying an area at the rear where a storage room used to be. To reach it, customers must walk up three steps or use a ramp for wheelchairs and buggies.

First reactions

THE ARCHER asked customers what they thought on its first day. "It's a long walk through the shop and the service area seems quite small when you

get there," said Mike Edwards, who was posting a parcel. "It's like going halfway to Muswell Hill," said one lady buying stamps. "The staff are very helpful and seem to know what they're doing," said Alison Pitt, renewing a passport. "Not sure yet, I'll wait and see how they do when it gets really busy," said another parcel poster.

Weekend opening

UOE owner Elliot Jacobs acknowledged that not everything would be perfect from day one but hoped the Post Office would settle in quickly and become an asset to the High Road.

"We'll be open for longer, including Saturday afternoons and Sundays, so that will be a reason for people to come to the High Road all through the weekend," he said. "Also, we may attract customers from the busy but small Post Office in Muswell Hill."

Mr Jacobs said he and his

team are being closely audited and monitored by Post Office management. Their franchise is open-ended as long as they meet agreed levels of service and performance.

Customers will no doubt have opinions on the new wheelchair and buggy access ramp, not mentioned in the original public consultation exercise before the move. Mr Jacobs said that disability groups would be invited back over the next few weeks for their feedback.

What do YOU think of the new Post Office? Send us your thoughts by email to the-archer@lineone.net or by post to The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 2DE.



5.30pm, 21st May 2014, the Crown post office in East Finchley closes for the last time. Photo Mike Coles

Dragon delights local mums

Nurturing Mums, the Finchley-based postnatal support group, is celebrating after winning the Small Business Sunday competition on Twitter with former Dragons' Den star Theo Paphitis.

The group was established 18 months ago by experienced mums Elise Mendelle and Gemma Frenchman, and runs unique six-week courses for new mothers in East Finchley and Crouch End. Elise and Gemma have already seen a significant increase in the number of hits on their website since winning the competition, which they hope will give them the momentum to expand their business.

"We currently run courses in two north London locations, with a third planned for the autumn," they said. "We love helping mums have a great postnatal experience and plan to roll our courses out nationwide!"

Business boost via Twitter
The Small Business Sunday

competition was started in 2010 by the businessman and former Dragons' Den investor Theo Paphitis, who owns several businesses including the Rymans stationery chain. It is a weekly competition on Twitter in which a small business can tweet Mr Paphitis with the hashtag #SBS. He retweets his favourite six to his 421,000 followers. The increased publicity and endorsement of a highly successful businessman can be vastly beneficial to small businesses.

Further details about the Small Business Sunday competition can be found on Mr Paphitis's website www.theopaphitissbs.com. For more details about Nurturing Mums, please visit www.nurturingmumsuk.com.

From pupil to headteacher

Bishop Douglass School is to be led by a former pupil. Martin Tissot has taken over from Angela Murphy, who retired after 11 years as headteacher.

Mr Tissot rejoins the school in Hamilton Road from his position as executive head at both St George's Catholic School in Maida Vale and St Thomas More Catholic School in Wood Green. Bishop Douglass was rated Good by Ofsted inspectors in September last year.



New Headteacher Martin Tissot.

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