

Immediate Release

31st January 2008

**Nicholas Soames, Member of Parliament for Mid Sussex,
asked the Prime Minister the following Parliamentary
Question at Prime Minister's Questions
on Wednesday 30th January 2008**

Mr. Nicholas Soames (Mid-Sussex) (Con): *The Prime Minister may be aware that the Post Office earmarked four post offices for closure in the Mid-Sussex constituency. It invited a detailed consultation for six weeks, to which there were more than 6,500 replies—all unreservedly in favour of retaining those post offices. On Tuesday, however, the Post Office announced that they are all to be closed. Why does the Prime Minister allow his Government to be party to such a rotten deceit of the public in respect of that consultation?*

The Prime Minister: *We have made £1.7 billion to help post offices in this country and we will continue to make money available for Post Office services. There is a process of consultation and an appeals system, although I do not know whether it was taken up. I urge the hon. Gentleman to meet the Minister in charge of the Post Office. We are listening to what people say, but the fact of the matter is that many post offices are not used in any great detail. We will continue to put the money in to help the Post Office service.*

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Commenting Mr Soames said; "The Post Office consultation was a disgraceful sham. They should be thoroughly ashamed of themselves and I intend to pursue in Parliament the whole basis on which Governments conduct consultations.

“I achieved some valuable changes in the NHS consultation system after the *Best Care, Best Place* consultation. It is noticeable that the Primary Care Trust are closely listening to local opinion and the Post Office should take a lead from them. They have behaved in a shabby and dishonourable manner.

“These branches are really well used local assets and the community is much the poorer without them. Lets all get together to find a way to keep them open. I look for local leadership from the Town Councils, the District Council and the County Council.”

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