

I find myself deeply disturbed by the plans Royal Mail wish to introduce by the end of September. I understand that they intend to leave mail which is too large to go through a letter box with a neighbour. While this may have been acceptable in times past when neighbours knew and trusted each other, today we live in a world where those very neighbours can be at best distant or completely hostile.

If you decide to support this scheme, can you clarify what your, and Royal Mail's, position will be on the following points:

What will happen to a delivery if no neighbour can be found to take it?

Who bears the cost of mail delivered to a neighbour which is not forwarded to the addressee?

What proof will there be that mail was left with a neighbour who then denies ever having accepted it?

What proof will there be that the recipient neighbour has, in fact, forwarded an item if the addressee decides to claim non delivery or makes an accusation of theft against them?

I know that customers will be able to opt out by placing a sticker in a prominent position but this, in itself, also advertises this decision to unpleasant neighbours, making life even more difficult and, in some cases, putting the householder at risk.

There are many other points which I think may eventually lead to distrust of the Post Office, not least the idea that by buying a stamp and entrusting mail to this service, there should be a reasonable expectation that the item it is attached to will be delivered to the inscribed address and not the next nearest available with a bigger letter box. I am forced to wonder if this is just another deceitful attempt to weaken the business in preparation for privatisation.

I would ask you then to consider carefully, please, the plight of those who do not live in Dibley and have neighbours who are made tolerable only by the shelter of a strong front door and fence.

I hope you can make time to address some of my concerns.