

# Political row erupts over which post offices are worth saving

CONSERVATIVE candidate Nick Boles has launched a stinging attack on his rival Quentin Davies, saying he has "betrayed" the people of Grantham by failing to defend all threatened Post Offices in the area.

Mr Boles criticised the Labour MP for Grantham and Stamford after he wrote to Post Office objecting to the planned closure of branches in Ripplegate and Ryhall Road, Stamford.

But he failed to mention 11 other threatened branches in Grantham and surrounding villages.

In a separate letter to postal watchdog Postwatch, Mr Davies wrote: "I do not intend to take up the cause of other sub post offices in my constituency since I accept that there must inevitably be closures."

Mr Boles said this is unacceptable. He said: "How does Mr Davies justify his betrayal to the people of Grantham, Castle Bytham, South Witham and Old Somerby? The Member of Parliament is the only person who can make the case for local interests in Whitehall and at Westminster.

"If he concedes defeat at the start, what chance is there Post Office managers will pay any attention to the strong feelings and powerful arguments expressed by local people?"

"It's a bit like going to court and finding your barrister saying he wants to throw in the towel even before the



Joining forces to save Hill Avenue Post Office are, from left Rob Hoarmon, Mike Cook, Vijay Khurana and Conservative candidate Nick Boles. Photo: 6082K22

arguments have been heard by the jury."

Mr Boles has written to Post Office and Postwatch objecting to all the proposed closures. He has demanded any decisions are deferred until detailed financial information relating to each threatened branch is published.

On Wednesday, Mr Boles met with staff at Hill Avenue, Brook Street and Castle Bytham Post Offices to find out whether they think their businesses are viable.

● Hear Nick Boles explain why he thinks Quentin Davies has "betrayed" the people of Grantham on our website [www.granthamjournal.co.uk](http://www.granthamjournal.co.uk) and

download the podcast of his comments.

● Mr Davies was out of the country this week, but his parliamentary assistant Chantelle Davies said he is concentrating on protecting branches he has been asked to defend.

She said: "Playing party politics on this is not going to achieve anything. There is no point saying no branches must be closed as it is unrealistic. We need to direct our firepower where it is going to be used to its best advantage."

Mr Davies has written to all Post Offices earmarked for replacement with outreach services offering his support and has received very little response.