

NEWS RELEASE
from The Letter Box Study Group

the acknowledged authority on the British roadside letter box

www.lbsg.org

For immediate release

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LBSG backs new British letter box plan

The leading authority on British letter boxes welcomes Royal Mail's new commitment to maintain and increase the number of postal collection points.

The Letter Box Study Group (LBSG) today gave qualified approval of Royal Mail's decision to change its operating procedures in a way that should assure the future of hundreds - perhaps thousands - of UK letter boxes. The new plan also gives new security to post boxes considered uneconomic.

Some questions about signage procedures remain to be fully answered. There may be unforeseen practical ramifications too. But as the leading authority on the history and development of the British roadside letter box, the LBSG believes that Royal Mail's decision will help ensure the long-term future of these well-loved items of British street furniture. They occupy an invaluable position in Britain's urban, suburban and rural landscape, and its communication heritage, it says.

"There are letter boxes all over the UK that have been in daily use for as long as 150 years, and the LBSG supports the steps that Royal Mail is taking to modify its collection arrangements to ensure the continued viability of the whole of its letter box estate."

LBSG Chairman Andrew R Young said: “Royal Mail’s decision to add a further 2,000 new postboxes in areas of under-provision is a positive step in an era of declining letter volumes, as is the installation of new boxes in busier areas like shopping centres and railway stations.”

“We are looking forward to updating our uniquely detailed database of Britain’s 115,000 plus letter boxes. We may also have to add to our Register of box types that currently lists around 800 varieties of these red breasted beauties. It will be good to see more of the brand new - but frankly not vastly different - box varieties on the streets.”



(Further pictures attached)

“My guess is that there will be more new lamp style versions than pillars, and wall mounted examples could be very few and far between. We shall see.”

“All this will create some work for the group. But that is what we exist to do!”

Under the new RM plan the LBSG notes that the indicator tablets on postboxes will be used to show if the box has been emptied or not. Says Andrew Young:

“In our experience the correct use of these nowadays by the collecting postman or woman is very hit and miss. There are also many letter boxes where the facility for displaying tablets has been removed altogether or is covered over by the time plate. We would like to see this system being operated properly in future. It is vital that members of the public can know with absolute confidence whether the collection has already been made from their local box and where their nearest late posting box is located.”

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*For further information, photography, and interview requests please phone or text **Robert Cole**, LBSG Media Officer, on **020 7183 0535**; or contact robert.cole@lbsg.org*

Notes to editors

The Letter Box Study Group is the acknowledged authority on the British roadside letter box, and is recognised as such by Royal Mail, English Heritage and the British Postal Museum & Archive. The LBSG is an independent, self funding, volunteer-led research group dedicated to keeping accurate and detailed records of the UK's 115,300 letter boxes. It has about 500 members.

The LBSG Register and Directory lists boxes from the six monarchs to reign since Anthony Trollope, who worked for the post office in Jersey before finding fame as a novelist, introduced standalone boxes to the UK in 1852. About half the nation's boxes carry the cipher – or signature initials – of the present Queen. About 20 percent were erected in the reign of George V. A very small number mark the short reign of Edward VIII with the rest more or less evenly divided between George VI, Edward VII and, in the oldest vintage, Queen Victoria.

There are three broad categories of letter box: free-standing pillar boxes; wall-mounted boxes, and smaller lamp boxes that were, as the name implies, originally attached to lamp posts.

Website: www.lbsg.org