

# GODALMING TOWN COUNCIL



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Email: [Sebastian.james@wba.com](mailto:Sebastian.james@wba.com)

Mr Sebastian James  
President and Managing Director of Boots UK & ROI  
Boots UK Ltd  
Nottingham  
NG2 3AA

Dear Mr James

I am writing to you on behalf of Godalming Town Council, which represents the residents of Godalming, which includes the communities of Farncombe and surrounding areas who are served by the Boots community pharmacy at 2-3 Station Place, Farncombe Street, Farncombe, GU7 3AZ.

Located within the administrative areas of Waverley Borough and Godalming Town, this branch of Boots the Chemist serves the Farncombe population of 13,251 people, of which 38% (and rising) are aged 50+. Farncombe has a population density rate of 2,932 people per km<sup>2</sup>, which is the highest within Godalming and the second highest within the wider Waverley area.

Although a well-established and stable community, within Farncombe lies the area 37<sup>th</sup> highest of the 186 Lower-layer Super Output Areas within Surrey on the Index of Multiple Deprivation. This makes it the second most deprived area within Waverley, including also being the second most deprived area for health deprivation and disability. This means there are several specific challenges for the area in terms of the need and ability to access services, including pharmacy services.

Whilst across Waverley the average for households without access to a vehicle is 11.2% and 11.85% in the rest of Godalming, within Farncombe the average is 18.1%, rising to 30.9% in some parts of Farncombe. The lack of independent travel afforded by car ownership, coupled with the existing health and disability deprivation and an inadequate, 2-hourly bus service to the nearest alternative retail centre, highlights the importance of the Farncombe local retail area, from which the Boots pharmacy provides a vital service to the local community.

It is within the context of the area's characteristics and Boots' recent announcement for plans to close 300 stores that Godalming Town Council wishes to express, not only its own concerns regarding the possibility that the Farncombe branch of Boots the Chemist might be selected for closure, but also the very real and deep concern expressed by the local community. Alongside the residents of Farncombe, the Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP, and many others from the neighbouring communities and villages that are served by the Farncombe retail centre, Godalming Town Council not only wishes to highlight the importance of the Farncombe branch of Boots the Chemist to the community, but also its position as a critical anchor to the Farncombe retail and village centre. As such, Godalming Town Council sincerely requests that Boots UK and WBA recognise the value of the Farncombe branch of Boots the Chemist to the Farncombe community and are able to confirm that it forms no part of the company's considerations regarding store closures.

I would like to thank you for your time in considering this letter and look forward to hearing of a positive outcome for the residents and community of Farncombe.

Yours sincerely

*Andy Jeffery*

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Town Clerk