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## Newcastle Building Society announces plan for innovative new branch in North Yorkshire town abandoned by banks

**Newcastle Building Society has revealed plans for a new branch in a North Yorkshire town, bucking the national trend of branch closures and restoring essential banking services in a town abandoned by high street banks.**

Despite banks closing more than 6,000 branches across the UK in recent years, Newcastle Building Society is choosing to open a new full-service branch in Pickering, including a team of financial advisers and will provide customers with a facility to both pay money in and withdraw from their current accounts.

The branch will include a OneBanx kiosk which enables small businesses and personal customers of any bank that offers open banking to deposit and withdraw cash from their accounts – a lifeline for residents, visitors, and businesses in the town who continue to use cash and rely on convenient access to their account.

The Society was the first UK financial services provider to work with OneBanx, piloting its multi-bank kiosk in 2023 in two branches in Knaresborough, North Yorkshire, and Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne.

The announcement comes just months after news of the closure of the last bank branch in Pickering, with Barclays citing falling customer usage and increased preference for digital banking behind its decision to close in January 2025.

Andrew Haigh, chief executive officer at Newcastle Building Society, said: “We’re pleased to announce plans to open a new branch in Pickering, continuing our significant investment into high street branches throughout the North East, North Yorkshire and Cumbria.

“Banks continue to close branches across the UK at an alarming rate, turning their back on our high streets. Our approach is very different, with customers at the centre of everything we do, we believe it is our responsibility to find new ways to keep face to face financial services in our communities.

“Branches help knit their communities together. We want to be there for our customers week in, week out, providing access, support and advice where and when it is needed. The role of

a branch extends beyond its physical presence, our colleagues frequently play an active role in supporting local charities, assisting with financial education in schools or helping with initiatives promoting employability.

“This all contributes to a vibrant high street and thriving local economy, and we’re seeing customer numbers increase as more and more people recognise the value of being a member of our building society.”

Across the UK, more than 6,000 bank branches have closed since January 2015, at a rate of around 54 each month, according to Which?, forcing customers to travel miles to get to their nearest branch and making it harder for some people to manage their money.

Despite this trend, Newcastle Building Society has continued a multi-year, multi-million-pound investment in its branch network by improving and increasing its number of branches across the region. Over recent years, the Society has opened branches in several new locations by sharing space with community organisations and helping to restore access to financial services in places where banks have left town.

Other industry alternatives to branch closures include the creation of Banking Hubs, community and mobile banking, as well as a reliance on Post Office counters, each providing to a varying degree, a limited service. Newcastle Building Society’s commitment to branches means members can speak to a friendly face six days a week, for face-to-face service and advice, and benefit from the unique positive impact a branch has with its community.

Pickering resident Vanessa Buckle has recently been appointed manager of the new branch. Vanessa is an experienced financial services professional and board member of Pickering Town CIC, helping to promote the town for the benefit of residents.

Vanessa said: “The positive impact the Society has on the communities it serves was a huge pull for me wanting to be a part of the new Pickering branch.

“There’s something special about the way a member-owned organisation engages with the community and I know how passionate local people are about our town. So I’m sure the new branch will make a difference in Pickering with things like fundraising, grant giving, and colleague volunteering and I can’t wait to get started.”

The Society’s Pickering branch, which is set to open to customers later this year, will also become the spacious new home of the Society’s team of financial advisers in the town, who will move from their current advice-only office on Champley’s Mews.

Once open, the Pickering branch will become the Society’s 32<sup>nd</sup> branch, in a network covering the North East, North Yorkshire and Cumbria. Newcastle Building Society’s ongoing

programme of branch investment includes unique community partnership branches located in North Shields, Knaresborough, Hawes, Yarm, and Wooler. Each of these community branches share space with other charities or vital local services such as libraries, tourist information, and community policing.

Earlier this month, Newcastle Building Society opened the doors to its new community branch in North Shields in partnership with YMCA North Tyneside. By moving into the charity's community building, the Society is providing branch services alongside a busy café and popular gym. Future branch plans include the creation of a new flagship community branch in Newcastle city centre, and a 33rd branch in Tynemouth library to be delivered in partnership with North Tyneside Council.

**-ENDS-**

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### **About Newcastle Building Society**

Newcastle Building Society is the biggest building society in the North East, with a network of 31 branches and assets of more than £6.2bn. We've been here for our members for over 160 years.

As a leading local employer, we're committed to growing our region's talent and being a great place to work where people can realise their potential. We hold Platinum IIP and won the Excellence and Positive Impact Award at the 2022 CIPD North East of England HR&D Awards. We have been named Regional Building Society of the Year for seven consecutive years from 2017 – 2023 by What Mortgage? and also won Best Overall Personal Finance Brand at the Personal Finance Awards 2023/24. In 2024 Newcastle Building Society became the first UK business to receive international accreditation for mutual value measurement, recognising our ongoing commitment to creating value for its members and communities.

We help people to own their home, to save and to plan their finances through our range of products and services. We believe in the role of the high street at the heart of our communities and, as our branch network grows, we are increasingly proactive in making financial information and financial advice accessible across our regions.

Financial Advice is provided through our Newcastle Financial Advisers Limited subsidiary. Face-to-face financial advice is available at each of the Society's 31 branches plus a financial advice-only location in Pickering, North Yorkshire. For the third year running, Newcastle Financial Advisers has been awarded Top Rated Firm status by VouchedFor - the UK's leading review site for Financial Advisers.

We're dedicated to helping our communities make positive changes; since 1995 the financial support through grants and donations from the Newcastle Building Society Community Fund at the Community Foundation to benefit local causes has surpassed £1.7m. Our total community contributions in 2022, made up of grants, match funding, and our ongoing partnership donations, was more than £544,000.

Newcastle Building Society is committed to creating a culture of belonging, where people can bring their whole self to work and be respected and valued for who they are. Our colleague-run networks include the Race Network, LGBTQ+ Network the Disability and Awareness Network, Women in Leadership Network, Menopause Network and Parent and Carers Network, all of which help steer Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy within the organisation.

[www.newcastle.co.uk](http://www.newcastle.co.uk)

Newcastle Building Society Principal Office: 1 Cobalt Park Way, Cobalt Business Park, NE28 9EJ.

Newcastle Building Society is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority. Newcastle Building Society is entered in the Financial Services Register under number 156058. You can check this on the Financial Services Register or by contacting the Financial Conduct Authority on 0800 111 6768.