



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Sir Philip Green,
Chairman
Arcadia Group
70 Berners Street,
London W1T 3NL

Ref: BS/FARR01006
28/08/2012

Dear Sir Philip

Re: Closure of Burton and Evans' stores, Newcastle-under-Lyme

I am writing to you having just learned of the impending closure of both your Burton and Evans fashion stores in my constituency of Newcastle-under-Lyme in North Staffordshire.

Both these stores are flagship businesses that have operated within yards of each other in the Ironmarket in Newcastle for many years and their closure next month will be a serious blow to shopping facilities in the town.

Burton, in particular, has been an iconic names in menswear for generations and its closure will be felt with sadness and some nostalgia by many people locally, I am sure. The shop, Burton the Tailors, as it then was, certainly holds poignant memories for me: it was where my grandfather bought me my first suit in the late 1970s, for my university interview, before I became the first of my family to go on to higher education.

I understand that the immediate cause of the closure of both shops is the expiry of their leases, both of which are held by the same landlord. I recognise, too, that in very tough trading conditions the terms of a lease can very often make the critical difference between survival and closure.

Clearly, the negotiation of such contracts is a matter for your property people, although I am more than happy to try and help if you think it might keep these important shops open.

The state of the economy has already had tangible adverse on Newcastle's town centre, like many up and down the land. I have just this bank holiday weekend visited smaller town centres, including Ross-on-Wye and Tewksbury, where Burton and Arcadia Group stores are still trading and I would certainly be grateful to know from your people about the particular circumstances in Newcastle that have led to the decision to close.

Closures clearly have a human cost, too. I understand that in your negotiations with the staff affected, you have been able to redeploy as many of them as possible but I would be grateful, nevertheless, if you could let me know the total number of employees who will lose their jobs.

I would be grateful, too, to know whether you have considered contacting Newcastle Borough Council during your negotiations and to ascertain whether alternative premises can be found within the town centre, with the possible assistance of Council officers.

Many thanks and yours sincerely

Paul Farrelly
Member of Parliament for Newcastle-under-Lyme