

Postal Diary

7 May 2009 – 17 November 2009

by Joseph Fenech

9 May

On Saturday, 9 May 2009, MaltaPost plc issued the EUROPA stamp set for 2009. This set, designed by Alexei Pace and Gordon Caruana Dingli, commemorates the International Year of Astronomy. The two stamps in the set have face values of €0.37 and €1.19 respectively, and are 44.0mm x 31.0mm in size, with a perforation of 13.9 x 14.00 (comb). The stamps were printed on Maltese Crosses watermarked paper by Printex Limited, and are available in sheets of ten. The €0.37 stamp features a portrait of Galileo Galilei by Francesco Boschi and one of Galileo's sketches of the moon set against a starry background including the constellation Orion. The stamp also commemorates the fortieth anniversary of the first manned lunar landing by featuring the Apollo II lunar module "Eagle". The €1.19 stamp shows the great telescope of William Lassell, set up in Malta between 1861 and 1865, against a background of stars showing Nebula M42, which Lassell himself observed on various occasions from Malta. Stamp booklets containing five €0.37 stamps from this EUROPA set, were also issued on the same occasion. MaltaPost plc issued a special commemorative double-ringed handstamp to cancel the stamps on the first day of issue (on FDC No. 4/2009). The handstamp was inscribed "MALTAPOST - ----- - MALTA" in the outer ring and "EUROPA/ ASTRONOMY//JUM IL-HRUĠ/9.05.09" in the inner ring. The MaltaPost Philatelic Bureau featured these stamps in the stamp bulletin No. 274.



13 May

MaltaPost plc notified that the letterbox in Triq ir-Russett l-Abjad, Luqa, was back in service after having been temporarily put out of use following damage caused by fire.

15 May

A special hand postmark – 375 Sena Parroċċa – Luqa – 15-5-2009 – Malta – was used at the MaltaPost Luqa branch on Friday, 15 May 2009, on the occasion of the 375th



anniversary of the proclamation of the Luqa Parish Church (in 1634) dedicated to the Apostle Saint Andrew.

23 May

On the occasion of the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra's concert "Movie Spectacular", MaltaPost issued a commemorative personalised cover to mark the event. The cover (limited edition of 300) includes a personalised stamp showing the same design as the cover, with the stamp being cancelled with the Valletta metal hand date-stamp dated 23 May 2009, the date of the concert. The cover was put up for sale during the concert itself, and from the MaltaPost branches in Valletta (Castille Place and Old Bakery Street), the Philatelic Bureau and the Head Office in Marsa, and the Victoria branch in Gozo.



28 May

MaltaPost plc announced that for the six months ended 31 March 2009, it had registered a profit before taxation of €1.92 million as compared to a profit of €2.6 million for the same period the previous year (representing a decrease of 26%). The profitability of the previous year had been enhanced by two particular unique events, the increased volumes of post generated during the National General Elections, as well as the issue of philatelic material commemorating the introduction of the euro. Several factors influenced the performance during the period under review. Turnover decreased by 4% over the same period the previous year mainly due to a decrease in local mail volumes and philatelic material, but partly offset by an increase in inbound mail. The increase in operating costs was mainly attributed to an increase in foreign letter mail volumes together with increases in indirect costs such as utilities charges. A one-off credit was registered in 2008 resulting from the release of a provision that was no longer required following the reversion of a number of employees to Government employment. Shareholders' funds increased by 11.3% (up to €10.01 million), during the six-month period. In March 2009, the Company paid a net dividend of €0.04 per share. The competitive environment and outlook for MaltaPost continues to be determined, to a substantial degree, by the effect that e-substitution is having on traditional mail volumes and the impact on its main source of revenue. The future of the traditional mail market is being substituted by increases in international inbound mail as a result of growth in internet

mail-order. MaltaPost has declared its intention to further diversify the business into low cost financial services and back office processes.

1 June

On Monday, 1 June 2009, MaltaPost plc issued a set of five stamps to mark the XIII edition of the Games of the Small States of Europe (held in Cyprus). The set, designed by Daniel Mangani, features five different sports disciplines practiced during these Games, namely sailing (€0.10 stamp), judo (€0.19 stamp), shooting (€0.37 stamp), swimming (€0.67 stamp) and athletics (€1.77 stamp). All the stamps include a coloured strip which represents the colours of the continents as represented in the official Olympic logo. The logo of the Cyprus 2009 Games is also included in the design. The stamps are 44.0mm x 31.0mm in size, with a perforation of 13.9 x 14.0 (comb). The stamps were printed on Maltese Crosses watermarked paper by Printex Limited, and are available in sheets of ten. MaltaPost plc issued a special commemorative double-ringed handstamp to cancel the stamps on the first day of issue (on FDC No. 5/2009). The handstamp was inscribed “MALTAPOST ----- MALTA” in the outer ring and “XIIITH GAMES/OF THE SMALL STATES OF EUROPE/JUM IL-HRUG/ 1.06.09” in the inner ring. The MaltaPost Philatelic Bureau featured these stamps in the stamp bulletin No. 275.



2 June

On 2 June 2009, the National Statistics Office issued News Release 097/2009 highlighting the post and telecommunications statistics for the first quarter (January – March) 2009. According to these statistics, in the quarter under review, total postal traffic amounted to around 10.3 million items of which the absolute bulk represented letters and other printed items (down from circa 12.6 million items for the first quarter of 2008). The total number of parcels sent through the national post in the period under review was 17,383 (compared to 16,460 in the first quarter of 2008).

6 June

In conformity with Maltese electoral laws, the following MaltaPost branches did not open for business on Saturday, 6 June 2009, when the European Parliament elections (as well as a number of Local Councils elections) were held:

Hamrun – 18, Triq il-Ferrovija, Hamrun HMR 1900;

Birżebbuġia – 48, Triq Żarenu Dalli, Birżebbuġia BBĠ 1522;

Mellieha – 100, Triq il-Mithna l-Ġdida, Mellieha MLH 1107;

Żebbuġ – Triq Sciortino, Żebbuġ ŻBG 1962;

Għarb – Triq il-Viżitazzjoni, Għarb GRB 1044, Gozo;

Xagħra – 132, Triq it-Tigrija, Xagħra XRA 2013, Gozo;

Għajnsielem – Triq J.F. De Chambrai, Għajnsielem GSM 1051, Gozo;

Nadur – 13, Triq it-Tramuntana, Nadur NDR 1220, Gozo.

Collection and delivery of mail was carried out as usual by MaltaPost on the date in question.

12 June

MaltaPost informed that due to health and safety considerations brought about by construction works, service to the letterbox situated in Triq Elija Zammit, St. Julians, was being suspended for an indefinite period. MaltaPost advised that the nearest letterboxes that could be used as an alternative were found at Triq San Ġorġ, St. Julians, and at Baystreet Complex, St. Julians.

15 June

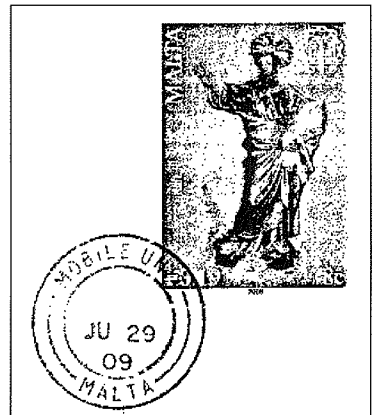
MaltaPost announced that between the 15 June and 30 September 2009, the St. Julians branch situated within the premises of the Lombard Bank plc in Triq Paceville, was to open for business from Monday to Friday between 8.00 am and 1.00 pm.

16 June

MaltaPost informed that between the 16 June and 30 September 2009, the Customs Division situated within MaltaPost plc Head Office, in Triq Hal Qormi, Marsa, was to open for business from Monday to Friday, between 8.00 am and 1.00 pm, and 1.30 pm and 3.30 pm.

29 June

On Monday, 29 June 2009 (a Public Holiday), during the special event to mark the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, as well as the end of the Pauline year, the MaltaPost Mobile Unit was stationed in Misrah il-Helsien, Valletta, between 5.00pm and 9.30pm, to sell Annus Paulinus philatelic items and the St. Paul silver replica stamp.



30 June

MaltaPost plc informed the public that a number of mail items (including letters mailed to addressees in Sliema) were retrieved from a field in Żurriq on Thursday, 25 June 2009. Following internal investigations, the matter was reported to the Police and to the Malta Communications Authority for action to be taken as necessary in terms of law as well as the Postal Services Act. MaltaPost dismissed the employee responsible for the delivery of the mail in question and also initiated civil proceedings accordingly. MaltaPost apologised to the public for this incident.

7 July

MaltaPost plc notified that due to the live concert to be held in Buġibba on Tuesday, 7 July 2009, the letterbox no. 299 at Misrah il-Bajja, Buġibba, would not be accessible. Therefore, in agreement with the Malta Communications Authority, collection from this letterbox was to be effected at 16.00 hrs instead of at 19.00 hrs.

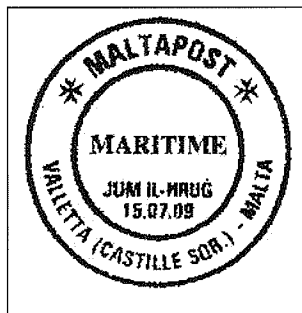
8 July

MaltaPost plc notified that due to the Isle of MTV Concert to be held in Floriana on Wednesday, 8 July 2009, the letterbox no. 252 at Triq San Publiju, Floriana, would not be accessible. Therefore, in agreement with the Malta Communications Authority, collection from this letterbox was to be effected at 16.00 hrs instead of at 19.00 hrs.

15 July

On Wednesday, 15 July 2009, MaltaPost plc issued a set of four stamps (the second in the maritime series), themed “Cruise Liners”, on the occasion of the first visit to Malta of the cruise liner MSC Splendida. Together with the stamps, MaltaPost also issued a Maximum Card depicting the MSC Splendida. This cruise liner had been christened on 12 July 2009 in Barcelona, and was calling at the Grand Harbour for the first time, under the direction of Captain Giuliano Bossi. The stamps in this set are 44.0mm x 31.0mm in size, with a perforation of 13.9 x 14.0 (comb). The stamps were offset printed on Maltese Crosses watermarked paper by Printex Limited, and are available in sheets of ten. The stamps, designed by Fabio Agius of MaltaPost plc, depict the MS Seabourn Pride (€0.37 stamp), the MS Brilliance of the Seas (€0.68 stamp), the Costa Magica and the Costa Atlantica (€0.91 stamp), and the MSC Splendida (€2.00 stamp). All the cruise liners are pictured in the Grand Harbour, except for the MS Seabourn Pride, which is shown anchored off Xlendi Bay in Gozo. MaltaPost plc issued a special commemorative double-ringed handstamp to cancel the stamps on the first day of issue (on FDC No. 6/2009). The handstamp was inscribed

“MALTAPOST - ----- - MALTA” in the outer ring and “MARITIME/JUM IL-HRUĠ/15.07.09” in the inner ring. The MaltaPost Philatelic Bureau featured these stamps in the stamp bulletin No. 276. MaltaPost also issued a Maximum Card (Maximum Card No. 17) depicting the MSC Splendida. This was also available for sale from a temporary MaltaPost outlet sited at the Valletta Waterfront in the vicinity of the MSC Splendida quay. The Maximum Card could then be purchased from the MaltaPost Philatelic Bureau as from 18 July 2009.



15 July

A special hand postmark to commemorate the maiden voyage of the cruise liner MSC Splendida, was used at a temporary branch set up by MaltaPost at the Valletta Waterfront on Wednesday, 15 July 2009 between 8.00 am and 6.00 pm. The postmark (circular handstamp) was inscribed “MS MSC Splendida/Maiden Voyage/Valletta-Malta/15th July 2009”.



31 July

The Sub-Post Office at St. Bees, 12, Wesghat il-Ġublew, Mgarr MĠR 1040, was closed for business between Friday, 31 July and Saturday, 8 August 2009, both days included.

7 August

On Friday, 7 August 2009, the Philatelic Bureau of MaltaPost plc issued a special commemorative cover titled “Once in a lifetime!” This cover commemorated the fact that at twelve hours thirty-four minutes and fifty-six seconds of that day, clocks and calendars gave a combined reading of 12:34:56 07/08/09.



14 August

MaltaPost plc informed that due to the celebrations held in several localities in Malta in connection with the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady, the collection of mail from the following twelve letterboxes was done at 16.00 hrs and not at the customary 19.00 hrs.

- Mosta Box No. 376 - Triq il-Kostituzzjoni;
 Box No. 391 - Triq il-Kbira;
 Box No. 392 – Triq Katakombi tal-Bistra c/w Triq Rużar Briffa,
 Zokkrija Hsg. Estate.
- Attard Box No. 409 – Triq il-Kbira;
 Box No. 420 – Triq il-Belt Valletta.
- Qrendi Box No. 32 – Triq Rokku Buhagiar.
- Mqabba Box No. 39 – Triq il-Parroċċa;
 Box No. 40 – Triq il-Konvoj ta’ Santa Marija.
- Ghaxaq Box No. 130 – Triq San Filippu;
 Box No. 131 – Vjal il-Labour.
- Gudja Box No. 115 – Triq Raymond Caruana;
 Box No. 141 – Triq il-Kbira c/w Triq Ġirolmu Cassar.

MaltaPost plc affixed a notice on each of these letterboxes, denoting the new collection cut-off time and the nearest 19.00 hrs collection letterbox.

14 August

The Sub-Post Office at 51, Triq Ġorġ Borġ Olivier, Məllieha MLH 1024, was closed for business between Friday, 14 August and Saturday, 22 August 2009, both days included.

17 August

The Sub-Post Office at Rose Bazaar, 133, Triq Santa Marija, Ghaxaq GXQ 1714, was closed for business between Monday, 17 August and Saturday, 29 August 2009, both days included.

17 August

The Malta Communications Authority (MCA) issued a report on the Consultation Document and Proposed Decision titled “Accounting Separation and publication

of financial information by MaltaPost plc”, which it had published in April 2009. This report on consultation and decision contains a summary of the issues discussed in the consultation document; a summary of the feedback received from the respondents; the MCA’s position in relation to these comments; as well as the MCA’s decision.

19 August

The Malta Communications Authority (MCA) issued a Consultation Paper titled “Postal Sector – Managing Common Operational Issues in a Multi-Operator Environment”. This document consulted on the MCA’s proposal to introduce a set of minimum standards setting out the duties and obligations of licensed postal operators (i.e. postal operators operating services falling within the scope of the universal service) relating to common inter-operator issues that will arise in a multi-operator environment. The objective of the proposed minimum standards is to minimise postal operator and consumer confusion in a multi-operator environment, thereby ensuring prompt handling and delivery of postal articles. The common operational issues discussed in this consultation applied to:

- the identification of mail as carried by a postal operator;
- accessing elements of the postal infrastructure and services;
- the timely and efficient extraction and repatriation of mail which has entered the postal facilities of a postal operator which is not the intended operator; and
- the redirection of misdirected customer enquiries.

24 August

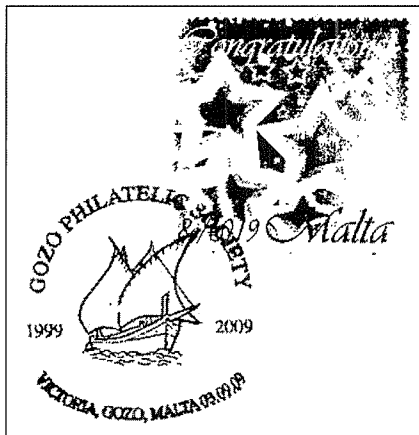
The Sub-Post Office at Welcome Bazaar, Misrah Frenč Abela, Dingli DGL 1081, was closed for business between Monday, 24 August and Friday, 28 August 2009, both days included.

2 September

On 2 September 2009, the National Statistics Office issued News Release 153/2009 highlighting the post and telecommunications statistics for the second quarter (April – June) 2009. According to these statistics, in the quarter under review, total postal traffic amounted to around 10.8 million items of which the absolute bulk represented letters and other printed items (down from 10.97 million items for the same quarter of the previous year, but up from 10.3 million items for the first quarter of 2009). The total number of parcels sent through the national post in the period under review was 20,830 (compared to 17,793 in the same quarter of the previous year, and 17,383 in the first quarter of 2009).

3 September

On the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the setting up of the Gozo Philatelic Society, a special hand postmark – Gozo Philatelic Society – 1999-2009 – Victoria, Gozo, Malta 03.09.2009 – was used at the MaltaPost Victoria Gozo branch on Thursday, 3 September 2009. This special postmark was designed by Gozitan philatelist Anthony Grech, a member of the Gozo Philatelic Society.



7 September

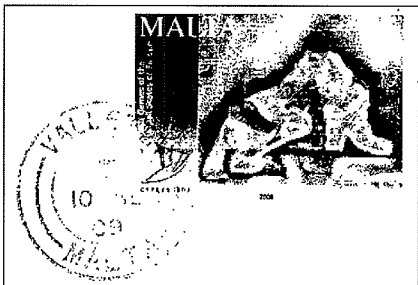
The Sub-Post Office at Aquavel, Triq San Bartilmew, Gharghur GHR 1014, was closed for business between Monday, 7 September and Monday, 14 September 2009, both days included.

9 September

The ninth Philatelic Bureau card (PB09) in the series being issued by MaltaPost on a date when the day, month and year coincide – 09.09.09 – was issued on Wednesday, 9 September 2009. This card, retailing at €3.50, carried a €2.50 stamp from the set 'Vintage Postal Transportation' which was issued in April 2009, cancelled with a handstamp showing the 09.09.09 date.



10 September



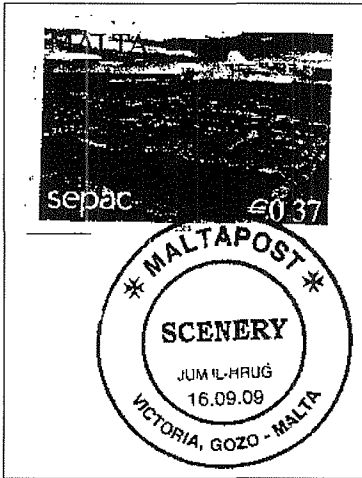
MaltaPost plc notified that the €0.19 stamp of the XIII Edition of the Games of the Small States of Europe set which had been issued in June 2009, was reprinted and made available for sale as from Thursday, 10 September 2009. The stamp is 44.0mm x 31.0mm in size with a perforation of 13.9 x 14.0 (comb). The stamps were printed on Maltese Crosses watermarked paper by Printex Limited, and are available in sheets of ten.

14 September

The Sub-Post Office at Alessio's Old Cottage, 12, Triq il-Parroċca, Mqabba MQB 1511, was closed for business between Monday, 14 September and Saturday, 19 September 2009, both days included.

16 September

On Wednesday, 16 September 2009, MaltaPost plc issued a set of four stamps portraying typical scenes from the Maltese landscape, titled "Scenery". This set is the second issue in the "Scenery" collection, following the first issued in October 2007. The stamps, designed by Stefan Attard, depict the rough seas at Qbajjar - Reqqa Point or Ghar il-Qamh, Gozo (€0.02 stamp), the Ġnejna watchtower (€0.07 stamp), the salt pans at Qbajjar (actually found along the sea coast from Xwejni to Wied il-Ghasri), Gozo (€0.37 stamp), and a view of the Ġgantija Temples in Xaghra, Gozo (€1.02 stamp). The stamps in this set are 44.0mm x 31.0mm in size, with a perforation of 13.9 x 14.0 (comb). The stamps were offset printed on Maltese Crosses watermarked paper by Printex Limited, and are available in sheets of ten. MaltaPost plc issued a special commemorative double-ringed handstamp to cancel the stamps on the first day of issue (on FDC No. 7/2009). The



handstamp was inscribed "MALTAPOST - ----- - MALTA" in the outer ring and "SCENERY/JUM IL-HRUĠ/16.09.09" in the inner ring. The MaltaPost Philatelic Bureau featured these stamps in the stamp bulletin No. 277.

The €0.37 stamp depicting the Qbajjar salt pans was selected to form part of the second joint stamp issue (in a series of 3) in the SEPAC (Small European Postal Administration Cooperation) collection called "Beautiful Corners of Europe 2", with the common theme chosen for this year being "Scenery". The SEPAC collection includes a special folder containing the 12 SEPAC stamps issued this year, one from each member postal administration (namely, Aland Post, Faroe Islands Post, Gibraltar Philatelic Bureau, Post Greenland, Guernsey Post, Iceland Post, Isle of Man Post, Jersey Post, Liechtenstein Post Corporation, Luxembourg Post, MaltaPost and Monaco Post). The SEPAC folder was printed by Davo Publications of Deventer (The Netherlands), with 9,000 copies being put on the market. This folder was available for sale from all MaltaPost branches and from the Mobile Van as from Monday, 19 October 2009.

19 September

The Sub-Post Office at 51, Triq Ġorġ Borg Olivier, Mellieħa MLH 1024, was closed for business on Saturday, 19 September 2009.

1 October

MaltaPost plc informed that between the 1 October 2009 and 14 June 2010, the St. Julians branch situated within the premises of the Lombard Bank plc in Triq Paceville, was to open for business from Monday to Friday between 8.30 am and 2.30 pm.

7 October

MaltaPost plc informed the public that a number of postal articles were stolen by unknown person/s during the course of delivery in St. Paul's Bay the previous week. These postal articles were intended for addresses in: Triq il-Lampuka, Triq iċ-Ċagħaq, Triq Patri Feliċ Sammut, Triq il-Kahli, Triq l-Arznell, Triq l-Għabex, Triq iż-Żernieq, Triq Ċensu Tanti, Triq il-Mistrieh, Triq il-Ġifen, Triq l-Ibhra, Triq Paderborn, Triq il-Hatab, Triq il-Ġwiebi, Triq il-Hgejjeg, Triq Damasku, Misrah il-Bajja and Triq il-Pijunieri. This incident was reported to the Police and the Malta Communications Authority for their necessary action according to law. MaltaPost plc apologised for the incident. The mail in question was in a post-person's private car which was stolen from Paderborn Street, while the 30-year-old post-woman was delivering mail in the locality.

9 October

A Temporary Branch Post Office was set up at the Green Lounge of the Hotel Phoenicia, Floriana, between Friday, 9 October and Sunday, 11 October 2009, during the opening hours of the tenth edition of the MALTEX Philatelic Exhibition organised by the Malta Philatelic Society. The Temporary Branch was open between 9.00am and 6.00pm on Friday and Saturday, and between 9.00am and 12.00 noon on Sunday. Services on offer at this Temporary Branch included the sale of stamps, philatelic products and other postal services. All mail posted at this Branch was cancelled with a special cancellation hand postmark which was inscribed "Maltex 2009 - 9-11 October - Hotel Phoenicia - Floriana - Malta" and included the logo of the exhibition.



For this special event, MaltaPost issued an Occasion Card and a Postal Card. The Occasion Card, No. 22 in the series, features the imprinted €2.00 stamp issued in April 2009 to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the euro. The stamp reproduces the replica image of the new €2.00 coin issued in January 2009 to celebrate the ten years since the foundation of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). The Postal Card, No. 31 in the series, carries the imprinted €1.19 stamp issued earlier in 2009 as part of the EUROPA 2009 stamp set (marking the International Year of Astronomy). A personalised stamp with the Maltex logo to commemorate Maltex's 10th anniversary was also issued for this exhibition.

9 October

The Malta Communications Authority (MCA) published an overview of the MCA's Household Market Research on Postal Services. The key purpose of this research was to assess the extent of consumer satisfaction with the services provided by MaltaPost plc (the Universal Service Provider). The target population for this survey consisted of private households from localities in Malta and Gozo. The 2009 research contained in this report was based on a survey carried out by EMCS of 553 households – the survey was conducted by telephone during June 2009. Where applicable, the report provides trends with a similar survey conducted in 2006 by the National Statistics Office. The research report concluded that households are sending and receiving less mail when compared to 2006. The majority of households (55.5%) claimed that the main reason for the decrease in addressed letters sent is due to on-line e-commerce and internet services. The majority of people (64.9%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with MaltaPost's website. 78.7% of the households interviewed stated that they had never used MaltaPost's website. MaltaPost's shutdown did not seem to be an issue among customers. In fact, only 0.9% commented that they were not satisfied with these shutdowns.

More people were satisfied with MaltaPost's registered mail and parcel post service. The majority of people (72%) were still not aware of MaltaPost's complaint handling procedures. The main source of complaint related to misdelivery (34.7%), followed by loss or substantial delay (16.3%). Though the majority of the people (53%) highlighted that the service provided by MaltaPost had remained the same over the previous 12 months, there was a significant increase in the number of people who said that the service had improved over the same period (44% when compared to 25% in 2006). The majority of the people confirmed that the service was either fairly good (62%) or very good (23%).