# Several UK high street retailers to close stores permanently by May



Several prominent UK high street retailers are preparing to close a number of stores permanently by May, signalling a continued shift in the retail landscape amid economic pressures. This wave of closures is influenced by increased operational costs, including a rise in employer National Insurance contributions introduced in the recent Budget, alongside escalating energy and rent expenses. Dwindling foot traffic has added to the challenges faced by retailers throughout 2023.

Among the affected businesses, Trade Me In, a gadget trade-in shop located in St John's Shopping Centre, Leeds, will close its doors on 31 May. The company cited pressure from large corporations dominating high streets as a key factor behind its decision. Their official statement emphasised the importance of supporting small businesses, highlighting concerns that high streets risk becoming dominated solely by major companies.

In Birmingham, The Meat Shack, a popular fast food venue on Thorp Street, will close after eight years of operation. The establishment's lease was terminated, and the current site is scheduled for demolition or redevelopment, prompting the owners to seek a new location. The closure date is set for 10 May.

Beales, one of the UK's oldest department stores, will also cease operations with its final store in Poole's Dolphin Centre closing on 14 May. Having first opened in Bournemouth in 1881, Beales fell into administration in January 2020, leading to the closure of 22 of its 23 stores. Chief executive Tony Brown told The Telegraph that recent tax and wage increases rendered the business unviable. "This, coupled with the risks and uncertainty of further tax increases in the coming years, have left us no other option," Brown said. Efforts are underway to coordinate a smooth transition alongside the Dolphin Centre and investors.

Smiggle, the stationery retailer, will close its Inverness Eastgate Shopping Centre location on 21 May. The outlet has launched a substantial 50% clearance sale, with staff suggesting the store could close earlier if stock sells out quickly. The closure follows the expiration of the lease and the decision not to renew it. Smiggle maintains 107 stores across the UK.

Wetherspoons will close The Spon Gate pub in Coventry on 25 May, reducing its presence in the city to two remaining establishments. The company described the closure as a commercial decision and extended thanks to staff and customers for their support.

Next is downsizing by closing its Darlington Retail Park store, which opened in 2021. This move aligns with previous warnings from Next about the possibility of further store closures.

Shoe Zone has encountered significant challenges, reporting a 40% drop in pre-tax profits for 2023 amid rising business rates, wage hikes, and adverse weather conditions. These factors have rendered some outlets unviable, including the Devonshire Road store in Bexhill, which will close on 13 May.

Lastly, the Pepco-owned discount chain Poundland is also preparing for closures, with its Belle Vale Shopping Centre store in Liverpool set to shut on 6 May.

These closures reflect ongoing strategic realignments in the retail sector, driven by a variety of factors such as rising costs, changing consumer behaviour, market opportunities, and lease terminations. The retail industry continues to adapt to the evolving economic and commercial environment affecting high streets across the UK. The Express is reporting these developments.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/business/beales-closing-poole-dolphin-centre-b2696846.html> - This article reports that Beales, one of the UK's oldest department stores, is closing its last remaining shop in Poole's Dolphin Centre at the end of May 2025, citing increased operational costs and tax and wage increases as contributing factors.
2. <https://www.reuters.com/business/retail-consumer/rate-uk-shop-closures-accelerate-after-budget-tax-changes-says-report-2025-03-20/> - This report indicates that the rate of shop closures on Britain's high streets is expected to accelerate in 2025 due to increased business costs imposed by the government's latest budget, including higher National Living Wage, employer National Insurance contributions, and business rates.
3. <https://www.gbnews.com/money/store-closure-april-2024-marks-and-spencer-whs-smith> - This article lists several UK retailers, including Marks and Spencer and WHSmith, closing stores in May 2024, highlighting the ongoing trend of high street closures amid economic pressures.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2025/jan/02/uk-lost-37-shops-a-day-in-2024-data-suggests> - This article reports that during the 2024 calendar year, 13,479 shops in high streets, main shopping destinations, towns and villages, as well as small shopping parades, closed for good, up 28.4% on the 10,494 shops that closed in the previous year.
5. <https://www.ibtimes.co.uk/which-uk-high-street-shops-will-close-2024-1722961> - This article discusses the planned closures of various UK high street shops in 2024, including Boots, Wetherspoons, Argos, and Flannels, attributing the closures to factors such as increased operational costs and changing consumer behavior.
6. <https://www.chad.co.uk/business/consumer/shops-restaurants-lost-from-high-streets-2024-homebase-tgi-fridays-body-shop-4926416> - This article lists several UK retailers and restaurant chains that closed in 2024, including Papa Johns, Ted Baker, and TGI Fridays, highlighting the challenges faced by businesses in the retail and hospitality sectors.
7. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2048287/major-uk-retail-closures> - Please view link - unable to able to access data