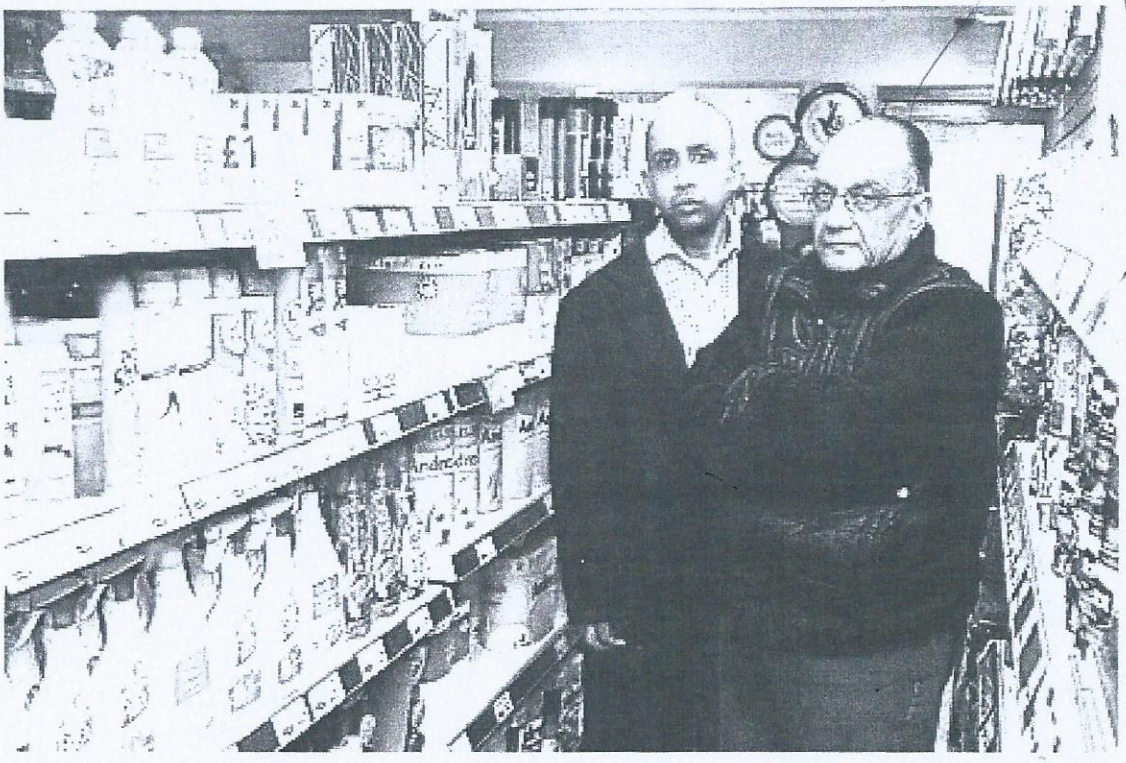

Bhadresh Gohil with his father Nalin Gohil at The Premier Express store which is threatened with closure because a bank wants to take away an overdraft facility from the profitable business.

A PROFITABLE family business is facing closure because a bank is taking away its overdraft facility.

The Premier Express convenience store, in St Thomas' Road, Pear Tree, is run by the Gohil family who say that NatWest's decision will force them out of business.

If the bank does not receive £17,000 by January 1, the Gohils say they will be forced to close as they will not have enough working capital to buy goods to sell or cover costs.

NatWest has offered to swap the overdraft for a but the family says that this will still leave them without cash to keep the store going.

They are angry at the decision because, in just a few months' time, hire purchase agreements on fridges and freezers at the store will come to an end and reduce overheads by some £2,000 per month, making the shop more profitable.

Owner Bhadresh Gohil said: "The bank is saying that on January 1 they will pull the overdraft facility, which will put us out of business.

"Things are critical. We have been to more than 20 banks trying to raise finance but it seems they are all taking away people's overdrafts.

"Like any business we have borrowing costs but we are meeting all of our financial commitments and we are making a profit."

The family took on the store in September 2008, investing about £70,000 on a complete refurbishment.

It became the country's first Premier Express, a brand operated by wholesale giant Booker, which now operates 2,700 outlets. There has been a convenience store on the St Thomas' Road site for generations and the Gohil family have started a petition to demonstrate the community's support.

Mr Gohil said: "NatWest says that it offers helpful banking but when it comes to the crunch it has not been.

"It is very frustrating because the leasing finance expires in October so our costs are due to go down dramatically."

The store's accounts are handled by Leicestershire chartered accountants Alacrity which was authorised by the Gohil family to discuss the firm's financial situation with the Derby Telegraph.

Accountant Imtiaz Sulemanji said: "This is definitely a profitable business and, once the lease agreements come to an end, that will add thousands of pounds to the bottom line each year and profits will start going up.

"NatWest want to remove the £17,000 overdraft facility and have asked for it all to be paid off but the family are struggling to raise that sort of money in time."