
From: Henry Staunton [GRO]
Sent: 15 January 2024 21:05
To: Elliot Jacobs [GRO]; Saf ismail [GRO]
Subject: Re: Project Pineapple

Dear Both ,
Would you like me to copy the Independent NEDs with my file note and Elliot's clarification ?
Accordingly , it would not go to Nick but may help elicit a joint view from the NEDs .
Nick has his hands full and is under ENORMOUS STRESS with the Select Committee and defending himself in yet another Investigation . I will brief him after the conversation with the NEDs .
Lorna is not an Independent NED and she will be brought in after our private meeting of the Independent NEDs .
Best , Henry

Sent from [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Elliot Jacobs [GRO]
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2024 8:25:59 PM
To: Saf ismail [GRO]; Henry Staunton [GRO]
Subject: Re: Project Pineapple

Thank you Henry,

Yes, this is fair reflection of our discussion - the point on ATM discrepancies and fake notes being clawed back should also include the claw back on rejected foreign currency as a result of out of dated documentation - all of these matters (and others) were highlighted as detriment matters over 2 years ago - but no one has gone back to PMs to say - "we got this wrong, we owe you X..."

One final thing to add: 'Pathclearing' risks looking like a witch hunt - if we start going into branches saying "you've got losses to make good" this will have echoes of the past - we have to seriously consider how this is being approached - it falls to Roberts' team again - a man who comes to Board and only tells us about extreme cases of theft by 1 or 2 which constantly reinforces the mantra of "all PMs are on the take"... Roberts had two jobs to deliver - exit the DMBs and improve the PM experience - both have failed and yet he and his team get bonuses...a nice gig if you can get it! And that in a nutshell, is precisely the issue that PMs see and feel..

Since we spoke I see the VoC have issued a press release - it backs-up everything Saf and I said when we spoke to you. Whilst they have gone further than we did in terms of the CEO - which I would not support - I find their points well made, well presented and hard to argue.. I think we should strongly consider involving them in our next steps and perhaps provide some of the oversight elements - they hold more influence and more respect with PMs than the NFSP for sure! If we have to involved NFSP I understand, but it would say a lot if we engaged with VoC too.

Elliot

From: Saf ismail [GRO]
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2024 10:41 AM
To: Henry Staunton [GRO]; Elliot Jacobs [GRO]
Subject: RE: Project Pineapple

Hi Henry

This seems fine.

Regards

Saf Ismail

Non-Executive Director

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Finsbury Dials

20 Finsbury Street

London EC2Y 9AQ

From: Henry Staunton [GRO]
Sent: 14 January 2024 18:54
To: Saf ismail [GRO]; Elliot Jacobs [GRO]
Subject: Fwd: Project Pineapple

Dear Both ,

Thank you for your time today .

I have done a file note of our conversation . Is this a fair reflection of your views. How do you feel about me sending it to NEDs before the next meeting ? The English does not need to be perfect . The key points are important . Are there any points I have missed ?

Seeing the issues in writing makes it more difficult to avoid !

BW.

Henry

Sent from [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Henry Staunton [GRO]
Sent: Sunday, January 14, 2024 6:48:46 PM
To: Henry Staunton [GRO]
Subject: Project Pineapple

Note of conversation with Saf and Elliot on Sunday 10 January

Saf said the views expressed by Richard Taylor , and previously by management and even members of the Board , still persisted - that those PMs who had not come forward to be exonerated were "guilty as charged " . It is a view deep in the culture of the organisation (inc at Board level) including that Post Masters are not to be trusted . SOMETHING NEEDS TO BE DONE .

Martin Roberts and certain members of his team were singled out . There has been no feedback on the investigation into Roberts (inc for inappropriate behaviour and lack of integrity). He was responsible for the postage stamps debacle where changes were made to accounts by his team just like Fujitsu . If Elliot had not been on ARC the controls would not have been strengthened . Roberts and his team do not want any extension to their terms of office as they believe new PMs would not have the experience to challenge them .

Equally Saf and Elliot are FED UP WITH THE AMOUNT OF POWER WIELDED BY FOAT . He and other members of the senior team act as if PMs ARE GUILTY UNTIL PROVED INNOCENT (" as per my experience " they both said) . " No one believes us " is a constant refrain from PMs . . WHILST FOAT IS AT THE HELM NOTHING WILL CHANGE . We must also part company with all those investigators who behaved so terribly with PMs. What on earth is happening if Steve Bradshaw is still with us - his performance at the Inquiry was a disgrace and reflected terribly on Post Office . Foat uses his leadership of the Inquiry team as an instrument of his power - it all has to stop . The PM " is not the enemy . " " Only PMs can solve this " and tell us how to change . JB is an ex police man . His behaviour has been unacceptable and he needs to move on to prove we have changed .

The payment to one of PM of £16 as compensation said it all .

There are some 48 people involved in Investigations . There are over 40 just like Bradshaw . These people need to go . Project Phoenix was allowed by Foat to go into the long grass . Bradshaw went into one of Saf's stores some years ago and immediately said " we are closing you down " . PMs tell him not much has changed since . There is a complete lack of respect for PMs and that has to change .

As a Board we need to send a signal to the Executive providing guidance and improving the culture significantly. The current culture was described as " toxic " (references to our reaction to fake notes , ATM differences etc etc) . We discussed a suggestion that we set up a BOARD Committee on Culture with both PMs on it with one or two others . It would need to have teeth . It would be outside Saf and Elliot's NED responsibilities and would require additional rem . It would have the benefit of making us more PM centric . We need as a Board to be seen to grip the situation .

Both thought there ought to be PM NED membership on all committees inc RemCo . It may be another PM Director would be needed - but that may be difficult . Wrt rem it was noted that the December bonuses went down badly with PMs . There were no similar bonuses for PMs . Our generous Sick Leave was highlighted - there are no similar benefits to PMs . How are we accepting so many people drawing sick leave payments esp in HR .

A lot in this note to consider and take forward with the Board .

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