

Message

From: Alisdair Cameron [GRO]
Sent: 16/05/2023 08:35:20
To: Simon Recaldin [GRO]
CC: Brian Gaunt [GRO] [GRO] Lorna.Gratton [GRO] Benjamin Tidswell
[GRO]
Subject: RE: Question

Apologies, I have obviously come across as accusatory and critical but that isn't my point at all. I am not trying to litigate the past, I completely understand how and why we have made decisions, together, and yes of course I understand our position on wrongful trading and how it is evolving.

My point is solely about what we do next.

My contention is that if we do not now speed up how we manage detriment going forward, the brand damage may be existential.

In that context, our position on wrongful trading has changed in the BAU business. We are delivering NBIT without sufficient funding and without thinking we are wrongful trading because of HMG policy, statement of intent, support letters etc. Personally I cannot distinguish this position from our position on remediation schemes.

I am not saying therefore that we can rush off and do whatever we like, simply that the position is less clear cut than we thought.

But my main point is that the day after getting funding or deciding we cannot wait, we should be ready to progress all 14 workstreams as appropriate with the Postmaster community AND be asking for "any others" at the same time, so it is clear to everyone that we are pursuing justice with all the speed at our disposal. If that's the plan, great. But I don't get the sense that it is and honestly I think we will come a cropper.

That is the point I will make at the Board if I am there or you would be kind to make on my behalf: no criticism and no need to defend. Just speed for the future. And if HMG doesn't like it, we need to have an argument.

Al

Al Cameron
Group Chief Finance Officer

(He/Him Al Kamer-un)
[GRO]

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From: Simon Recaldin <[GRO]>
Sent: 14 May 2023 21:05
To: Alisdair Cameron <[GRO]>

Cc: Brian Gaunt [GRO] [GRO] Lorna.Gratton [GRO] Benjamin Tidswell
[GRO]
Subject: RE: Question

AI

[GRO]

Really just to circle this off and not repeat any of the below but Ben's summary is exactly where we are on this and we do indeed have an update on the paused payments and legal advice coming to HRC, GE and Board.

I get the urgency that we really do need to get on with this as the clock is ticking, the judgement is pushing 4 years and victims of detriment are not getting younger. If it helps we are paying away in Detriment A with some momentum.

Absolutely not defensively at all re Detriment B, we have spelt the plan out repeatedly at GE and Board and part of that has been that we can't seek cases to investigate yet – and therefore pay detriment where identified - as we have been heavily counselled that this, along with the generic comment already in the ARA, will crystallise a potential liability that the balance sheet will not be able to bear.

As a result the instruction has been clear – get funding in place with DBT and then seek cases to investigate via a wide communication plan – as presented to Board – and pay.

The funding request went into DBT many months ago, has been through DBT is with HMT, is due an additional governance layer and expected to emerge now July earliest – more likely September earliest due to the usual nonsense of Summer breaks etc.

If you believe we should start communicating and settling prior to funding being formalised, better people than I can advise, but my understanding is that is a call for POL Board (clearly with government representation) who are obliged to look after the interests of Post Office to consider associated risks including potentially wrongful trading as the Board would have to be comfortable that any liability would be covered by funding/support – but you know this, apologies.

If I'm missing something fundamental (which would not be unusual) please advise. I don't want you to feel obliged to respond given you need to recover so I will re-circle with Ben T and others to ensure we have complete understanding of responses to you concerns.

Regards

Simon

Simon Recaldin
Historical Matters Director
Post Office Ltd | Finsbury Dials | 20 Finsbury Street | London | EC2Y 9AQ
Tel: [GRO]
Email: simon.recaldin [GRO]

The information classification of this email is confidential unless otherwise stated

From: Benjamin Tidswell [GRO]
Sent: 14 May 2023 14:19
To: Alisdair Cameron [GRO]
Cc: Simon Recaldin [GRO]; Brian Gaunt [GRO] [GRO]
Lorna.Gratton [GRO]
Subject: Re: Question

Thanks Al.

GRO

If you aren't able to make the June board, I can make sure any points you want to make are fed in. I can also discuss with Simon J beforehand, if that would be helpful.

All the best in the meantime.

Ben

Sent from my iPad

On 13 May 2023, at 18:04, Alisdair Cameron <GRO> wrote:

Thanks Ben <GRO>. I will have a better sense then if I am going to make 6 June Board.

The reality as you know is that we are spending money we do not have, and which is not specifically funded, in our BAU business as per the recent letter to DBT and the debate on wrongful trading. We are spending that money on the basis of policy expectations and intentions – I am not sure how different this is.

Nonetheless I am not suggesting we ignore the shareholder, simply that it has to become clear to them now that we cannot keep delaying and doing things slowly and in chunks. Postmasters who are not getting justice after 4 years are getting older and we have to change the dynamic on detriment.

Much appreciated Al

Al Cameron
Group Chief Finance Officer

(He/Him Al Kamer-un)

GRO

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From: Benjamin Tidswell <GRO>
Sent: 13 May 2023 13:51
To: Alisdair Cameron <GRO>
Cc: Simon Recaldin <GRO> Brian Gaunt <GRO>
<brian.gaunt@postoffice.co.uk> <GRO> <Lorna.Gratto@postoffice.co.uk> <GRO>
Subject: Re: Question

Thanks Al.

I have no knowledge of what happened between 2019 and mid 2021, when I joined the board. It may be that the reason for the delay is simply that the focus was on other, more pressing items. I don't know. I do share your frustration about aspects of the funding process, but I am not sure I fully understand your position. Are you (wearing your CFO hat) saying we could expose ourselves to potentially significant

liabilities without confirmation of funding for those? I had understood throughout this whole story that we couldn't do that, which is the very reason why we have to go through the process to get funding confirmed before inviting claims which might have any materiality.

If that is your view, then it seems to me to be very much a board discussion and not an HRC one, given the potential solvency implications. I don't think there is any hesitation at HRC about getting on with things (and it seems from your email you broadly agree with the process, if not necessarily the timing and sequencing), but we clearly don't have the authority to expose POL to material unfunded liabilities. It might be helpful to involve Simon Jeffreys in the discussion prior to the board meeting, if that is a point you think we should be debating.

Best wishes

Ben

Sent from my iPad

On 13 May 2023, at 13:12, Alisdair Cameron <[redacted]@GRO> wrote:

Thanks Ben.

I guess I have a few concerns.

The current approach to funding takes too long. We pre-triage, asking for what HMT expects rather than what provides the right outcome. We are four years from the CIJ. We should now be telling DBT what we *should* do, then confirming their general support rather than waiting for specific funding requests when we have excess funding already granted. POL is already relying on statements of support rather than funding.

So, the phased process for detriment doesn't really work: how long has it already taken and why is further delay acceptable?

I find the argument that HSS plus the specific detriment categories will cover any injustice in previous payments difficult and slightly tendentious. It assumes that Postmasters had and have a sophisticated understanding of their finances and we know that is not always true. I think your argument that we should ask for any other detriment is exactly right but I see no reason to wait. We should outline all the detriments for people, set up the processes and ask for anything else. If people come forward within known causes, we can get on with it, if not we have another category. We should get on with it.

I do distinguish between the more recent cases where Postmasters have been paying and earlier ones. I appreciate that legally there may be no difference but from a brand/public opinion point of view, we are absolutely hoist by the fact that it took us so long to stop taking the payments. I cannot find an argument that I would be prepared to make in public or private that says we can hold on to the monies paid since 2019, unless we have done the same checks as we did for the small population still paying. And of course HSS does not apply for this period.

Al

Al Cameron
Group Chief Finance Officer

(He/Him Al Kamer-un)

GRO

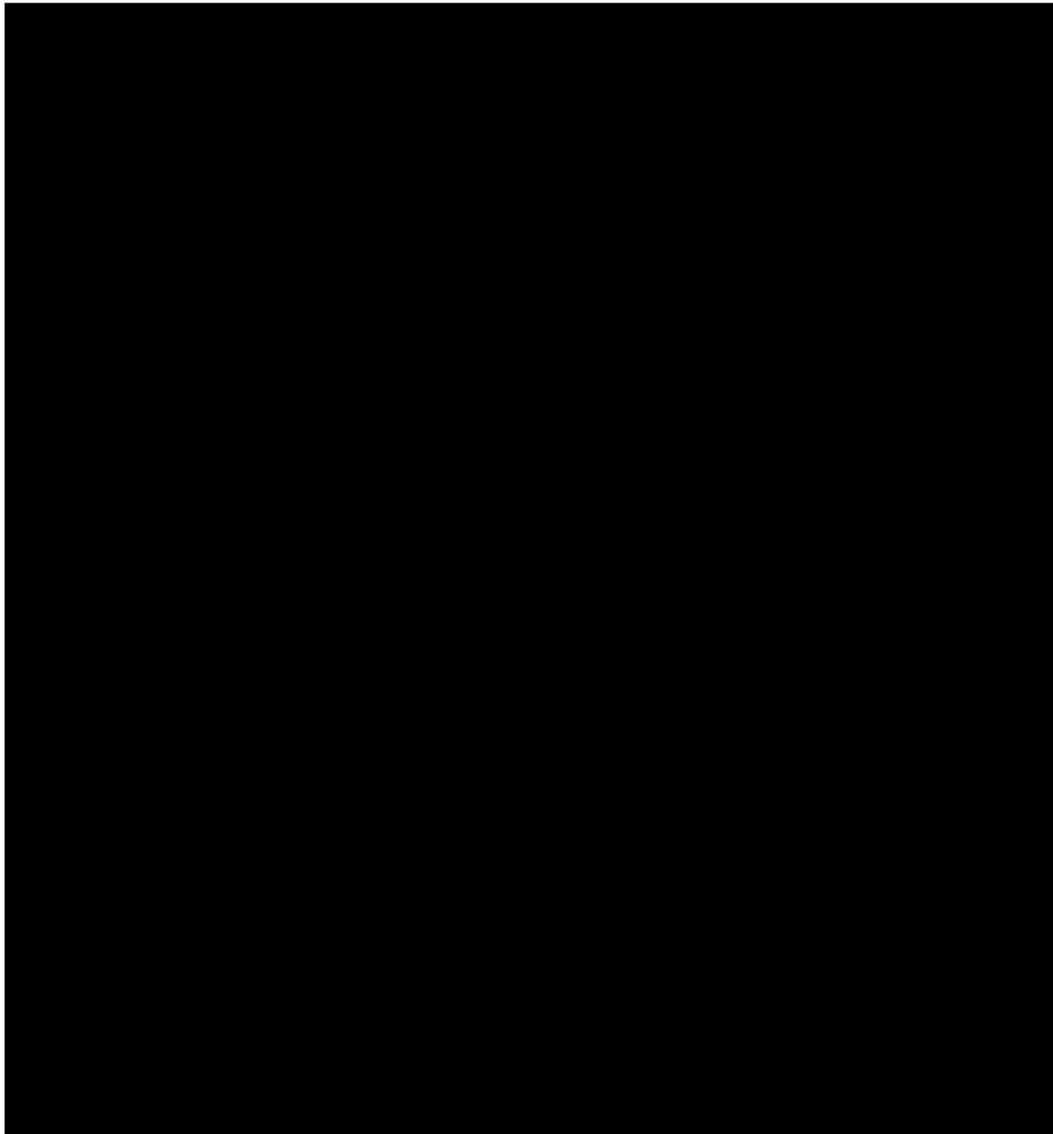
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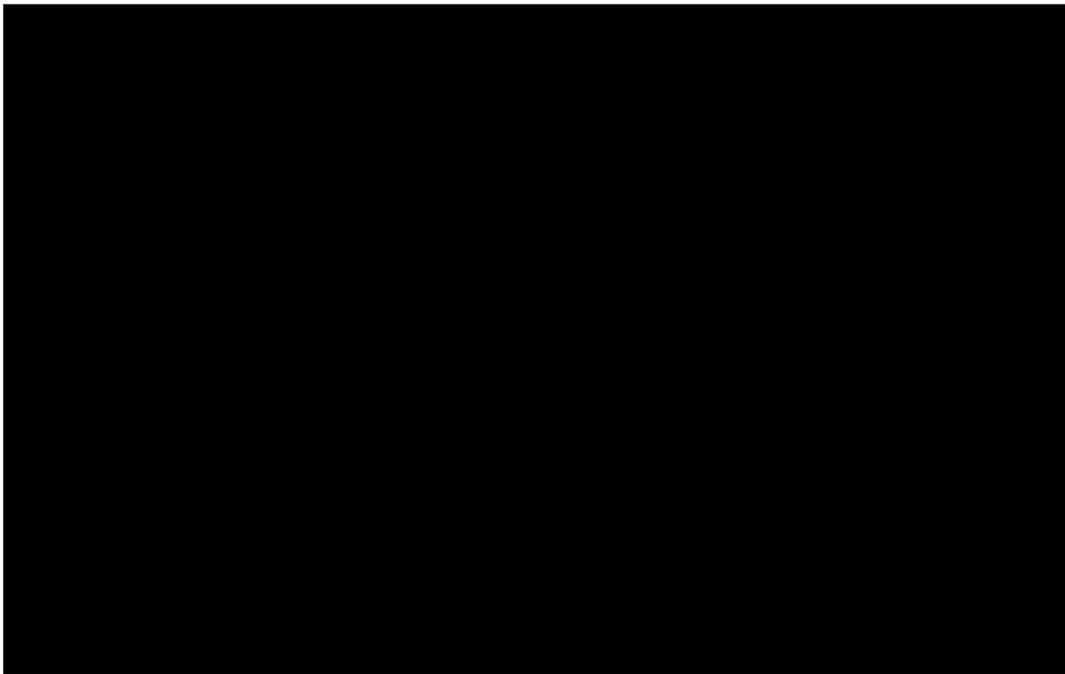
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From: Benjamin Tidswell **GRO**
Sent: 13 May 2023 11:03
To: Alisdair Cameron **GRO**
Cc: Simon Recaldin <simon.recaldin@**GRO**>; Brian Gaunt **GRO**
<brian.gaunt@**GRO**>; Lorna.Gratton@**GRO**
Subject: Re: Question

Thanks Al.





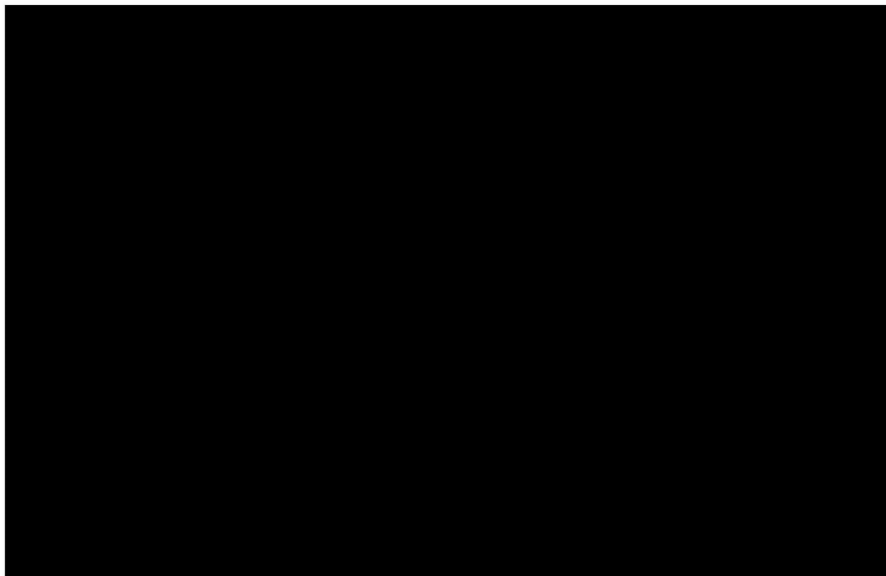
Best wishes
Ben

Sent from my iPad

On 12 May 2023, at 15:04, Alisdair Cameron

GRO wrote:

Ben, I am not currently at work but as so often this has left time for me to reflect on things.





Thanks Al

Al Cameron
Group Chief Finance Officer

(He/Him Al Kamer-un)

GRO

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