

From: Elliot Jacobs <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 7:31 pm

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>; [REDACTED]

<[REDACTED]>

Subject: CONFIDENTIAL draft for discussion

Nick,

I have been considering the points raised on our call this afternoon following your unauthorised release of confidential file notes relating to a call between Saf, Henry and myself. Whether intentional or otherwise this was not a good thing to have done.

Having re-read the confidential document that was released I do not see anything it which from my perspective is untrue and it indeed reflects my experience and the feedback from Postmasters who share their concerns and experiences regularly with Saf and I.

But I am also confused as to why Ben Foat would have been sent a copy of this correspondence - the VOP email isn't a legal issue? So how did it end up going to him exactly? What were the covering messages that went with your email to him and [REDACTED] when they received the email?

The points driving my comments in my private call with Henry and Saf were:

The culture that PMs are "guilty" and "on the take" is embedded in this company and whilst we continue to employ 40+ people who ensured innocent people were found guilty and who continue to believe that mantra, this will never change. The [REDACTED] review was on [REDACTED] (who they all report to) and Foat (whose investigation team were supposed to be investigating the matter) - neither did anything of consequence in this regard and it has been months - everyone including the "reds" are still employed, on a nice pension and bubbling their anti-postmaster beliefs around the business. The Board was clear this needed sorting, but nothing of any consequence has been done with regards to getting them out - not one is even suspended!

Meantime the "untouchables" (your words) who work in Investigations (run by Foat) investigate everything and everyone - this is not a normal approach to governance or oversight. My view that I was deemed guilty until proven innocent is something I had previously told Foat directly. My reputation was widely and severely tarnished by the way it was handled (without any confidentiality) and the fact that even until today I have not had a letter confirming the investigation is closed is again on Foat - as legal have not released a letter yet. That is disgraceful.

I have told him before that I felt nothing had changed and the approach towards me was precisely how we treated PMs back in the day. The fact I think that is nothing new to him. The investigations department is out of control. This reporting line needs to change and the way we treat PMs and investigate them needs a thorough and proper review - by a PM run oversight committee.

This business is supposed to be PM centric - it isn't. Now more than ever this is vital. A proper and significant oversight by PMs is required across this business. The current set up doesn't do that. It pays lip-service to the cause whilst we continue to be ignored and seen by many as an annoyance and having us on the Board a necessary but unwanted addition. The fact that Saf's

email has gone unanswered for over a week reflects badly too and suggests we are not taken seriously nor being held in the same regard as other NEDs. He is entitled to a reply.

I have reflected on your suggestion that I should call Foat and [REDACTED] to discuss my comments, I think this will not resolve the matter. You suggested that they might have claims for constructive dismissal - having reviewed my document I am not sure that is the case. What concerns me now is that these 'untouchable' people may prejudice my ability to scale my business and cause me to be unfairly treated in the future. On that matter, I will clearly reserve my position and be watching very closely. Moreover, the information contained in the document now seems to have been shared beyond these 2 people - and so again my reputation will be called into question - potentially by even more people in the business than previously.

Changes need to be made and rapid action taken specifically in these 2 areas:

1. Foat's role in charge of the investigations team needs to be reviewed and the entire investigation process should urgently have proper oversight from a PM-led committee - **no one should be untouchable.**
2. A committee led by PM NEDs needs to be established immediately with clear terms of reference to ensure this business is properly PM centric.

In addition to the above 2 actions, I would also request clarity on my questions in the second paragraph above - you can to add them to the response which Saf is still awaiting. If you can respond to both of us by close of business Friday please as I believe it is very important that we have the opportunity to review your comments ahead of the forthcoming Board meeting.

Sincerely

Elliot Jacobs
Postmaster NED

Diane Blanchard

From: Henry Staunton (1)
Sent: 16 January 2024 19:42
To: Diane Blanchard
Subject: Fwd: Project Pineapple

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Please print out .
Thanks ,
Henry

Henry Staunton
Chairman

100 Wood Street, London, EC2V 7ER

postoffice.co.uk

I work flexibly – so whilst it suits me to email outside of normal working hours, I do not expect a response during that time.

From: Henry Staunton (1) <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2024 10:07:41 PM
To: Henry Staunton (1) <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Re: Project Pineapple

Sent from [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Henry Staunton (1) <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Sunday, January 14, 2024 6:48:46 PM
To: Henry Staunton (1) <[REDACTED]>
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 .

[REDACTED] and certain members of his team were singled out . There has been no feedback on the investigation into [REDACTED] (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 . [REDACTED] 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 [REDACTED] 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 . [REDACTED] 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 [REDACTED] . These people need to go . [REDACTED] was allowed by Foat to go into the long grass . [REDACTED] 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 .

Sent from Outlook for iOS