

In Strictest Confidence

POLB(12)98

POLCAG0512

Post Office Limited  
(company no: 2154540)

Notes of the Post Office Communications Action Group Meeting  
held at 148 Old Street, London  
on 29 May 2012

**Present:**

Paula Vennells	(PV) Chief Executive (Chair)
Alana Renner	(AR) Communications Director
Kevin Gilliland	(KG) Network & Sales Director
Martin Moran	(MM) Commercial Director
Mike Granville	(MG) Head of Stakeholder Relations
Ronan Kelleher	(RK) Head of PR & Media
Richard Walden	(RW) Head of Corporate Communications
Stuart Taylor	(ST) Head of External Relations, Wales

**Apologies:**

Nick Kennett	(NK) Director of Financial Services
Kevin Seller	(KS) Head of Government Services
Sue Huggins	(SH) GM Network Services & Transformation
Shane O'Riordain	(SOR) Communications Director RMG

**Guests:**

Stewart Fox-Mills	(SFM) Head of Marketing
John Willcock	(JW) Head of Financial Services
Nick Beal	(NB) Head of Network Development
David Simpson	(DS) Head of News, RMG

**POLCAG01/05**

**Previous Meeting Notes**

The notes from the previous meeting were agreed.

**Action – PV asked ST** to ensure that the CAG actions are captured and shared in the format used for the Post Office Board Meetings.

**POLCAG02/05**

**Previous Action Points – All Completed**

**Action – the CAG asked AR** to report back on the key Post Office messaging for the RMG Report & Accounts.

**Action – AR** to speak to Ronan Kelleher.

**Completed**

**DS** suggested that outside of the monthly CAG process then both communications teams would benefit from a weekly catch-up.

**Action – AR** to consider this approach and reply to **DS**.

**Completed**

**Action – AR** to bring back to the CAG the PR approach to be used to support the wider marketing effort.

**Completed**

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**Action – MG** to ensure that SPAD contact is assimilated into the wider plan.

Completed

**Action - RW** to check and feed back to **SH**.

Completed

**POLCAG03/05**

**Post Office Integrated Comms Plan**

The CAG noted and reviewed the Integrated Communications Plan (May – Sept 2012). The meeting offered the following observations:

A key event taking place at the end of the month is the ND12 Go On Digital Conference. PV is speaking on Day 1. The event includes a series of Post Office Champions workshops, facilitated by Maggie Philbin. It concludes with the presentation of the Digital Champion of the Year Awards, presented to Llangadog Post Office couple, Win and Richard Morgan.

**1. Action - PV asked AR to ensure that all the activities contained within the plan are given both named owners and detailed completion timescales.**

PV asked that a follow-up communication on the subject of the Scottish Local Authority FOoG session be included on the plan timeline.

The CAG discussed the likely timing of any mutualisation announcement from BIS. **MG** advised that whilst BIS has not confirmed any specific date, it has been suggested that the response to the consultation will be issued before summer recess.

On a wider communication subject, **PV** asked for a progress update on the redesign and development of corporate pages for the website. **AR/MM** responded by confirming that a reskin of the website is underway and that the corporate pages are drafted and awaiting sign-off.

**PV** stated that the images used at the recent Vision Launch event did not represent the current brand identity for the business and these should not be used for other events.

**2. Action – SFM and RW to liaise and prepare new style images and share these with PV.**

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**RMG Comms Update (Verbal Update)**

DS provided a brief update on key Royal Mail communication matters.

RMG Report & Accounts – this is provisionally planned for publication on the 28 June.

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**3. Action - the CAG asked AR to liaise with Chris Day on the Post Office submission to the RMG report.**

**Gold Medal Winners Olympic Stamps** – RM is planning to issue a press release naming the 500 Post Office branches where the Olympic Gold Medal Winner stamps will be available. The provisional release timing is mid June. DS reflected on the good integration between internal and external communication messaging in support of this major initiative.

**RM Modernisation Programme** – the programme continues apace and DS reminded the CAG of the importance of ensuring that RM and PO network change activity is shared to assess the potential impact on external customers and stakeholders.

SFM – suggested that it would be beneficial for RM to benchmark how Australia Post used the Sydney Games to leverage business and brand profile.

PV thanked DS for his contribution to the meeting and wished to place on record her personal thanks and that of Post Office Ltd for David's advice and support over many years. David leaves RMG in June. The CAG wished DS well for the future.

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**Projects Eagle and Polo (Verbal Update)**

**JW** provided a verbal update on the key FS-related projects. **Eagle** – it is hoped that the discussions around the Eagle changes are close to completion. A firm date has yet to be agreed for communicating the changes.

**Polo** - a proof of concept pilot is scheduled to start in selected Post Office branches in East Anglia on the 22 October. Work continues with BOI on the IT build aspects. It is likely to be September until a final go / no go decision is made on the project.

**POLCAG06/05**

**Annual Report and Accounts**

**AR** shared with the CAG the key elements of the approach to be taken in respect of the preparation and communication of the full year RMG Report & Accounts. This will be the final combined set of financial results, and as such, RM will inevitably dominate the coverage. A press release and press briefings are being prepared. The Post Office Communications team is contributing to both the statement and the supportive Q&A brief. The tactic is for Post Office to take a low-key approach to the R&A. **KG** suggested a challenge to that stance and said that Post Office should be more proactive and bold in telling our story. **AR** responded by reminding the meeting of the complicated external agenda which is unravelling over the next few months. This includes the publication of reports of major significance to the company. Specifically, these include the R&As; the BIS

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Select Committee report; the Post Office Network Report; and the report on Mutualisation. The key is deciding whether the Post Office's best interests are served by adopting a proactive or reactive approach to each topic.

**4. Action – PV asked AR to compile a more detailed timeline of the key ticket issues for circulation in advance of the June meeting.**

**POLCAG07/05**

**Handled with Care - PR & IC Plan**

**RW and RK** took the meeting through the PR and IC plan that supports the 'Handled with Care' brand marketing strategy. **The CAG noted and endorsed the approach.**

In line with the new brand values of Care, Challenge and Commit, then a company-wide 'first line fix' communications campaign is to be rolled out. This includes wider business messages to be inserted into sessions with Subpostmasters, e.g. Step Branch briefings and Rural Branch Network forums.

**5. Action – MM to liaise with Harry Clarke about this campaign, with the CAG asking MM to join the Customer Complaints Group.**

**6. Action – MM shared that it has been identified that an elevator style Post Office story speech would be really useful for FOoG colleagues when they meet external clients and stakeholders. AR to provide please.**

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**June Meeting Agenda**

A presentation on the feedback from the Vision Launch and the workplan moving forward will be presented at the June meeting.

**7. Action – RW to prepare and share a presentation at the June meeting**

At the June CAG, the further elements of the overall engagement strategy with stakeholders will be shared, covering; BIS, Other Government Departments, Devolved Administrations and Special Interest Groups.

**8. Action – MG to prepare a paper and deliver a presentation at the June meeting.**

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**Agenda Standing Items**

The CAG agreed that the following should be standing items on future meeting agendas:

- Integrated Communication Plan Update (Alana Renner)
- FS Update on Financial Services Projects (Nick Kennett)
- RMG Communications Update (Shane O'Riordain)

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POLCAG10/05      AOB

**Vision Launch Review**

**PV** recognised the fantastic job that the Communications team had done in executing the Vision event. In advance of formal structured feedback, then all of the anecdotal feedback so far has been overwhelmingly positive. Well done and thank you to all those concerned.

**Action** – the CAG asked for a digest of the Vision event feedback and the wider workplan of how the key messages are being cascaded throughout the company to be shared at the June meeting. **Action** – **RW**

**Justice for Spmrs - engagement with MPs**

**PV** shared with the CAG her recent experience of meeting with two prominent MPs on their concerns over the accuracy and validity of the Horizon system, following lobbying from Subpostmasters at branches where financial discrepancies have been discovered. **PV** praised the work of Angela Van Den Bogerd, Head of Network Services, in meticulously unpicking the MPs claims step by step and turning an openly initial hostile stance into one of understanding and acknowledgement of our position on the cases concerned.

**PV** stated that the MPs concerned have now asked Post Office colleagues to meet a larger group of MPs who have similar complaints from constituents to demonstrate the robustness of the Horizon system.

POLCAG11/05      **DONM:** The next meeting will be held at 9.30am on Thursday, 21 June in Room 107.