

Message

From: Melanie Corfield [REDACTED] **GRO** [REDACTED]
on behalf of Melanie Corfield [REDACTED] **GRO** [REDACTED]
Sent: 30/10/2014 17:00:59
To: Mark R Davies [REDACTED] **GRO** [REDACTED]; Nina Arnott [REDACTED] **GRO** [REDACTED]
CC: Ruth X Barker [REDACTED] **GRO** [REDACTED]; Jane Hill [REDACTED] **GRO** [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Paula Vennells interview request

I spoke with her earlier and she agrees that confidentiality would be a significant issue if we briefed and we cannot do so effectively without breaching it. It's very frustrating but we feel we must be patient for a bit longer before we can shut this down in a measured way.

Mel

From: Mark R Davies
Sent: 30 October 2014 16:02
To: Nina Arnott
Cc: Ruth X Barker; Melanie Corfield; Jane Hill
Subject: Re: Paula Vennells interview request

Thanks - Mel I think you are right - can you get Belinda view if not already?

Mark Davies
Communications and Corporate Affairs Director
Mobile: [REDACTED] **GRO** [REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

On 30 Oct 2014, at 15:43, "Nina Arnott" <[REDACTED] **GRO** [REDACTED]> wrote:

Shall me, you and Ruth catch up with Jane in a bit and give a recommendation to Mark?

From: Ruth X Barker
Sent: 30 October 2014 15:26
To: Nina Arnott; Melanie Corfield; Mark R Davies
Subject: RE: Paula Vennells interview request

I'd prefer to go back tomorrow at the latest really.

From: Nina Arnott
Sent: 30 October 2014 15:24
To: Melanie Corfield; Ruth X Barker; Mark R Davies
Subject: RE: Paula Vennells interview request

When can we get together? Perhaps later today or a conference call tomorrow?

Ruth – how long can we hold off for?

Nina

From: Melanie Corfield
Sent: 30 October 2014 12:22
To: Ruth X Barker; Mark R Davies
Cc: Nina Arnott
Subject: RE: Paula Vennells interview request

We should definitely have a discussion about this please because my thoughts are:

- There is an orchestrated attempt (probably JFSA) on all of this now – the timing of the JA meeting now agreed with Paula (which he pushed for and which we did not want to do until December), conveniently just before the programme is planned (and there is a Face to Face Working Group on November 14)
- Building accusations (including by Tony Hooper) that PO is being overly legalistic
- Issues such remote access
- The fact that the PO investigations (ie the final cases) will not be finished until December 22 so before then it is known that it is hard for us publicly to completely defend ourselves and in some more detail than we have been able to previously

From Nick's latest email the BBC is clearly being very well briefed. I worry about what we would be able to effectively brief in at this stage because we have taken the moral high ground with the Working Group about breaches of confidentiality.

Mel

From: Ruth X Barker
Sent: 30 October 2014 11:06
To: Mark R Davies; Melanie Corfield
Cc: Nina Arnott
Subject: RE: Paula Vennells interview request

The line agreed with Belinda (below) is that we go back to the confidentiality of the mediation scheme, as we can't actually comment further. I understand where you're coming from but of course the added complication is that of course James Arbuthnot is no doubt involved and he is meeting with Paula just before this.

Mel – anything to add on this/further thoughts?

Thanks for your enquiry and request for an interview with Paula Vennells.

I'm afraid that we will not be able to facilitate an interview.

As you may be aware the initial complain review and mediation scheme is underway and applicants in the scheme were assured confidentiality. Further it would not be appropriate for Post Office to discuss publicly matters which might be the subject of mediation discussions. To do so would undermine the process therefore an interview as you suggest would not be appropriate. However, if you are planning an item about Post Office we would want the opportunity to consider a statement so I'd be grateful if you could keep me updated.

From: Mark R Davies
Sent: 30 October 2014 11:00
To: Ruth X Barker; Melanie Corfield
Cc: Nina Arnott
Subject: RE: Paula Vennells interview request

What is our plan? Why don't we get the guy in, off the record, and sit him down with Belinda?

|

Mark Davies I Communications and Corporate Affairs Director

<image001.png>
1st Floor, Banner Wing, 148 Old Street, London, EC1V 9HQ
GRO 2 Postline **GRO**
Mobex **GRO**
mark.r.davies@**GRO**
<image002.jpg>

From: Ruth X Barker
Sent: 30 October 2014 10:49
To: Melanie Corfield
Cc: Mark R Davies; Nina Arnott
Subject: FW: Paula Vennells interview request

Hi

Nick has now followed up. I did of course acknowledge both his emails. I think we should aim to send our agreed response across today as long we are still happy with it.

From: Nick Wallis **GRO**
Sent: 30 October 2014 10:43
To: Ruth X Barker
Cc: Tim Robinson-Solent; Clare Hoban; Jane French
Subject: RE: Paula Vennells interview request

Hi Ruth

I haven't heard from you for 10 days, so I'm emailing to ask how far our interview bid for Paula Vennells has progressed.

As stated below, we would like to discuss potential miscarriages of justice brought about through what some Sub-postmasters are alleging is a combination of Horizon errors, bad training, inadequate auditing, aggressive investigations and unnecessary prosecutions, as well as the SPMR contract, which makes SPMRs liable for any loss at their branch, howsoever it occurs.

We would also like to discuss the Post Office's attitude to the independent investigation it commissioned by Second Sight and the subsequent mediation scheme as a means of resolving Sub-postmasters grievances.

As I said in my initial email below, there are people who believe the Post Office is responsible for a number of serious miscarriages of justice, which has potentially seen innocent people given criminal records. Given the seriousness of these allegations I find it curious that the Post Office has so far refused to give any broadcast interview on the subject in order to defend its record.

I recently watched 2013's Taro Naw S4C Welsh language investigation into the Post Office and noted from the broadcast that the Post Office refused to put forward anyone for interview until the last minute, by which time there was no opportunity to get that interview into the programme. At least, however, it provided welcome news that the Post Office was willing to discuss this serious matter on camera.

Ten days have elapsed since I told you our deadline was Friday 21st November. In order to ensure we are not put in the same position as Taro Naw, I would be most grateful if you could acknowledge this email and let me know how our bid for Ms Vennells is progressing.

If you or Ms Vennells would like to lay down terms under which any interview can go ahead, I would certainly be prepared to look at them.

Many thanks

Nick

 GRO

From: Nick Wallis
Sent: 20 October 2014 11:36
To: Ruth X Barker
Cc: Tim Robinson-Solent
Subject: RE: Paula Vennells interview request

Hi Ruth

Thanks for your response. I think we would need to have something filmed by Fri 21st November. If you could take that as the deadline, I would be most grateful.

I would also be grateful if you could **reply to all on our future correspondence**. My colleague Tim Robinson (cc'd) is working on this story alongside me.

Many thanks

Nick

From: Ruth X Barker  GRO
Sent: 20 October 2014 10:25
To: Nick Wallis
Subject: RE: Paula Vennells interview request

Hi Nick

Thanks for the email and sorry for the delay getting back.

We will get back asap but just wanted to check your deadline on this.

Thanks

Ruth

 GRO

From: Nick Wallis  GRO
Sent: 16 October 2014 12:46
To: Pressoffice
Subject: Paula Vennells interview request

Hi

I just spoke to someone in your office who suggested I put my request to you in an email.

I work for BBC Inside Out South and presented a report into the Horizon computer system at the Post Office on 7 Feb 2011.

I think it would be a good time to revisit where the subsequent Second Sight investigation and mediation scheme has got to.

Unfortunately no one from the Post Office was available for interview when we made our report in 2011.

I would very much like the opportunity to discuss Horizon, the Sub-postmaster contract and the Post Office's investigations function with Paula Vennells in a formal interview on camera. There are those who believe the Post Office is responsible for a number of miscarriages of justice, which has seen innocent people given criminal records.

Given the seriousness of these allegations, I am sure Ms Vennells would be very keen to defend the Post Office's record in these cases.

With a little warning we can get a crew to wherever Ms Vennells would like to be interviewed, on a date of her convenience.

Please do not hesitate to give me a call if you would like to discuss this further.

With thanks

Nick Wallis
BBC Inside Out South

GRO

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