

From: The Rt. Hon. James Arbuthnot, M.P.



**HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA**

MPs lose faith in Post Office mediation scheme

Today a group of MPs campaigning for justice for SubPostmasters announced that they have lost faith in the mediation scheme run by Post Office Ltd. James Arbuthnot, leader of the group of over 140 MPs, said:

"The scheme was set up to help our constituents seek redress and to maintain the Post Office's good reputation. It is doing neither. It has ended up mired in legal wrangling, with the Post Office objecting to most of the cases even going into the mediation that the scheme was designed to provide. I can no longer give it my support. I shall now be pursuing justice for SubPostmasters in other ways."

Following a meeting between the Chief Executive of Post Office Ltd, Paula Vennells, and a small group of MPs to discuss the MPs' concerns, the Chief Executive wrote a letter setting out the Post Office's position. That letter and James Arbuthnot's reply are attached hereto.

Andrew Bridgen MP said: "MPs have been working with the Post Office for two years now in the belief that they would work towards a solution to this issue. It would appear that this belief is increasingly looking misplaced."

Mike Wood MP said: "Either the Post Office is awash with criminals who open Sub Post Offices for personal gain or something has gone terribly wrong. MPs are inclined to believe the latter and we are all shocked that the Post Office seems not to want to get to the bottom of all this."

Kevan Jones MP said: "My constituent has lost everything – his livelihood, his house, his good name, and he is not the only person who faced ruin."

Huw Irranca-Davies MP said: "The mediation process has failed even those sub-postmasters who were originally included. But there are also many who fell outside the scheme, and have had no chance to be heard. They all deserve fair play, they all deserve justice, so the fight goes on."

Background:

Following complaints brought to over 140 MPs by SubPostmasters in their constituencies, the group of MPs persuaded the Post Office to review cases where individual SubPostmasters had been accused of false accounting and sometimes prosecuted for fraud.

The Post Office appointed independent forensic accountants, Second Sight, to conduct investigations within the boundaries of a mediation scheme administered by a Working Group, chaired by retired Court of Appeal Judge Sir Anthony Hooper and comprising Second Sight, Alan Bates who set up and runs the Justice for SubPostmasters Alliance, and representatives of the Post Office.

All enquiries: Susanne Charlett

T: GRO

E: Susanne.charlett@GRO