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**From:** Nick Read [GRO]  
**Sent:** 25/09/2023 07:01:42  
**To:** Martin Roberts [GRO]  
**Subject:** RE: Project Venus - Privileged and Confidential - Draft Note of Advice

Understood. Thanks.

**Nick Read**  
Group CEO

**EA:** [GRO]

100 Wood Street  
London EC2V 7AN

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**From:** Martin Roberts [GRO]  
**Sent:** 25 September 2023 08:00  
**To:** Nick Read [GRO]  
**Subject:** RE: Project Venus - Privileged and Confidential - Draft Note of Advice

Nick,

Just for clarity Elliot has not paid anything back to date following the review and we were waiting for the Norton Rose feedback and Henry and your agreement to close this matter and Elliot would then agree to pay back the £16,977 in the normal way.

Best

Martin

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**From:** Nick Read [GRO]  
**Sent:** 25 September 2023 07:37  
**To:** Henry Staunton [GRO]  
**Subject:** RE: Project Venus - Privileged and Confidential - Draft Note of Advice

No, Henry. Its not my view nor Martin's that this should be taken further. I think we need to bring this to a conclusion, quickly.

It is clearly unsatisfactory. 'Grey' in many areas but on the balance of reasonableness, you should speak to him about the process, the findings and our desire to learn lessons and move on.

Nick

**Nick Read**  
Group CEO

**EA:** [GRO]

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**From:** Henry Staunton [GRO]  
**Sent:** 24 September 2023 22:08  
**To:** Nick Read <[GRO]>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Project Venus - Privileged and Confidential - Draft Note of Advice

Nick,  
ELLIOT JACOBS

Do you and the GE have anything to add to the note from Ben ?

In view of all the issues with regard to our treatment of Postmasters at the Inquiry I am not sure we are well placed to take this further .

The Established Loss was only £16,977 and this arose ( according to Martin ) over many years . I understand EJ has settled this . The amount does not seem material or anywhere close in terms of the throughput in EJ's branches .

The note says EJ " cooperated " .

Any severe censure ( such as asking for his resignation ) may be regarded as PO breaching its contractual duty to act " reasonably " .

There seems to be a PO complaint that EJ did not always highlight " Conflicts " in that he was a Postmaster . He might reasonably argue that it was well known that he was a Postmaster !

When I spoke to Martin I formed the impression that the matter was closed as far as he was concerned . Clearly not ? Is it your and the GE's view that this should be taken further ? I worry what the Inquiry would make of that .

Henry

**Henry Staunton**  
Chairman

100 Wood Street, London, EC2V 7ER

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Executive Assistant: [GRO]

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

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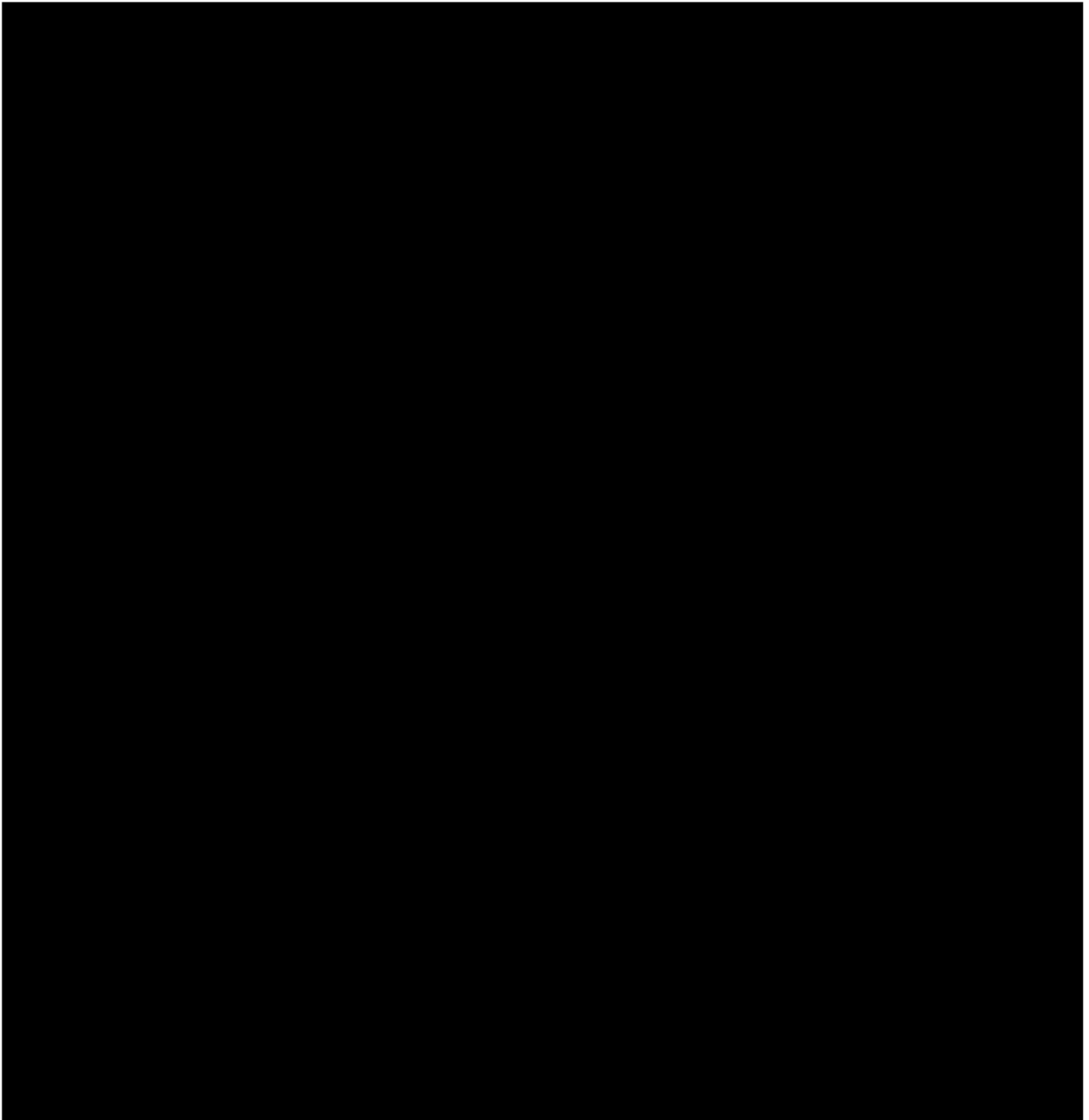
**From:** Ben Foat <[GRO]>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 22, 2023 6:16:05 PM  
**To:** Henry Staunton [GRO]; Benjamin Tidswell  
<[GRO]>; Amanda Burton [GRO]; Nick Read  
<[GRO]>; Lorna Gratton [GRO]  
**Cc:** Rachel Scarrabelotti [GRO]  
**Subject:** Project Venus - Privileged and Confidential - Draft Note of Advice

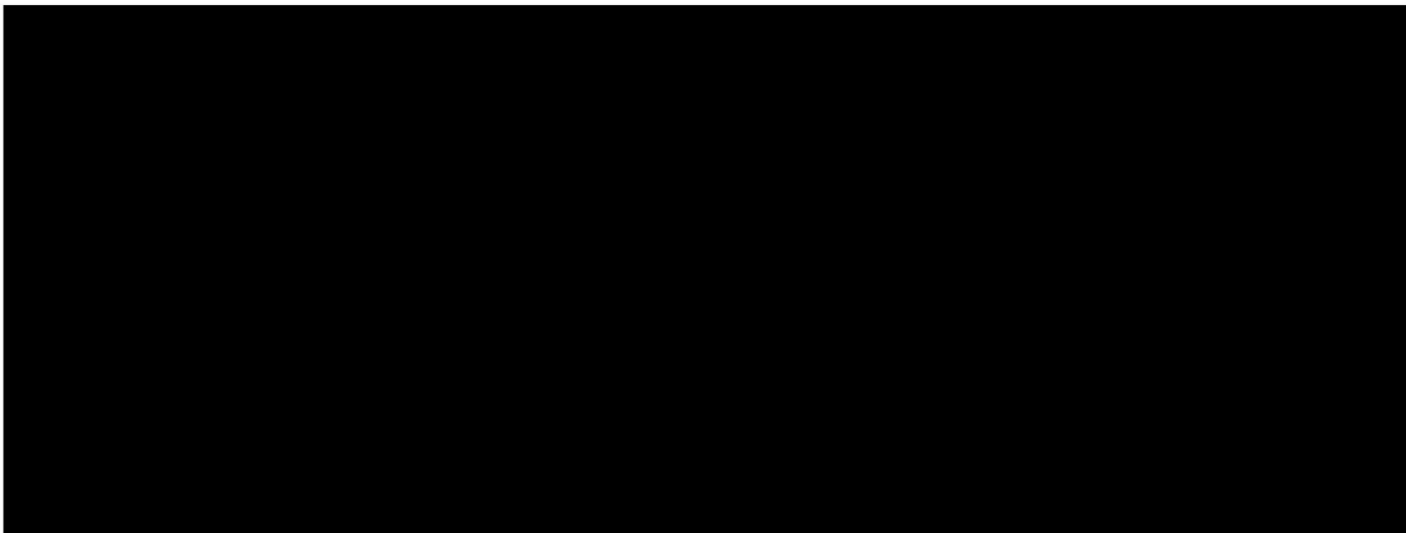
Dear Henry, Ben, Amanda, Lorna and Nick

As you are aware an investigation was raised following concerns over shortfalls in Elliott Jacobs branches. The reports and the legal analysis of these reports have taken some time to finalise.

A legal risk note which I received on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September is attached. External lawyers have reviewed the information provided in the Project Venus interim investigation reports dated 20 November 2022 and 30 June 2023, together with the Central Operations Director Report dated 28 July 2023 (the COD Report), (collectively the Venus Reports). We have summarised the key considerations we believe the decision makers should be mindful of in determining the appropriate course of action towards Venus / the Corporate Postmaster with respect to their appointments as NED and Postmaster.

In summary:





In the meantime, I hope you have a lovely weekend.

Kind regards  
Ben



**Ben Foat (He/Him)**

**Group General Counsel**

100 Wood Street

London

EC2V 7ER

**Email:** GRO

**Personal Assistant:** GRO

**Email:** GRO

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