

Post Office Limited – Strictly Confidential

**POLB 13(5<sup>th</sup>)**  
**POLB 13/30-13/46**

**POST OFFICE LIMITED**  
(Company no. 2154540)  
(the 'Company')

Minutes of a Board meeting held on 21 May 2013  
at 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ

**Present:**

Alice Perkins	Chairman
Neil McCausland	Senior Independent Director
Tim Franklin	Non-Executive Director
Virginia Holmes	Non-Executive Director
Alasdair Marnoch	Non-Executive Director
Susannah Storey	Non-Executive Director
Paula Vennells	Chief Executive Officer
Chris Day	Chief Financial Officer

(items 13/30-13/37)  
(items 13/30-13/37)  
(all items excluding 13/36-13/37)  
(all items excluding 13/36-13/37)

**In Attendance:**

Alwen Lyons	Company Secretary
Mark Davies	Communications Director
Sue Barton	Strategy Director
Kevin Gilliland	Network and Sales Director
Martin Moran	Commercial Director
Kevin Seller	Head of Government Services

(item 13/31-13/32)  
(item 13/31-13/35)  
(item 13/33-13/34)  
(item 13/38)  
(item 13/38)

**POLB 13/30**

**INTRODUCTION**

- (a) A quorum being present, the Chairman opened the meeting.
- (b) The CEO updated the Board on the recent challenging NFSP conference at which she and the Minister had spoken and taken questions. She explained that it had been helpful to attend as the specific debate around the network model had challenged the business to produce different solutions for the 'small rural' and 'urban deprived' branches. The reception had also made it clear that the business needs to find a more constructive way to engage individual subpostmasters.

**ACTION: Sue Barton**

**POLB 13/31**

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE FUNDING AND STRATEGY PLAN**

**ACTION: Sue Barton**

- (a) The Board agreed the strategy and funding update and the proposed delegated authorities for the Board's Funding Sub-Committee. It was agreed that delegated authority levels for mutualisation should be added.

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**ACTION: CEO** (b) The Board valued the weekly updates sent by the CEO and asked for them to continue.

**POLB 13/32 GOVERNMENT/STAKEHOLDER INTERACTION PLAN 2013/14**

(a) Mark Davies, Communications Director, presented a paper to the Board setting out the proposed approach for engaging with stakeholders around Post Office Limited's strategy for 2013-2020. The Chairman thanked Mark not only for the excellent media coverage for the new Current Account and the network transformation programme but also for managing the difficult messages around the current industrial action. Mark described it as a team effort and said that he would pass on the Board's thanks.

**ACTION:  
Mark Davies**

(b) The Board asked for a simple crib sheet of 4 or 5 communication points. The Chairman asked Mark Davies to ensure that any statements were checked to ensure that they were future proof.

(c) The Board endorsed the approach to stakeholder engagement.

**POLB 13/33 NFSP & TRADE ASSOCIATION**

(a) The Board received a verbal update from Kevin Gilliland, Network and Sales Director, on the current relationship with the NFSP.

**ACTION: Kevin  
Gilliland**

(b) The Board discussed the advantages of direct engagement with individual subpostmasters and the CEO explained that the business would be introducing a subpostmaster engagement satisfaction measure this year. The Network and Sales Director was asked to present the detail to the Board when it was available with the timeline for introduction included in the mutual ways of working session at the Board awayday.

**ACTION: Sue Barton**

(c) The CEO reported her recent positive experience of trade associations and her view that they could have a positive and challenging effect on the business. It was agreed that the proposal of a trade association would be included in the mutualisation options which would be presented to the Board at their awayday.

**POLB 13/34 UPDATE ON CWU AND INDUSTRIAL ACTION**

(a) Kevin Gilliland, Network and Sales Director, updated the Board on the current situation in respect of the Crown Transformation Programme and the current industrial action.

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- (b) The Board acknowledged the sensitive nature of the current situation and agreed that it was at a finely balanced stage. They endorsed the strategy of maintaining a firm and consistent position with the CWU on the key points regarding consolidated pay, franchising and the need to make any pay deal conditional on co-operation in delivering transformation to the Crown Network.
- (c) The Board supported the view that face to face communication was the most effective way to get the business' messages across and increasing the 'super-briefers' role in the communication.
- (d) The Board also endorsed a controlled and strategic approach to sharing information with the CWU, and not supplying individual office P&L accounts whilst the dispute continues.

The Board endorsed proceeding with the practical next steps outlined in the Crown Network – Transformation Programme and Industrial Relations Paper.

**POLB 13/35**

#### **ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS/RESULTS OF EXTERNAL AUDIT**

- (a) The Board received the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the 2012-13 financial year and ancillary documents. Alasdair Marnoch, Chairman of the Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee, reported very positive feedback from the auditors who were complimentary about the controls in place and management capability.
- (b) With due regard to their individual duties and liabilities, the Board:
  - Approved the approach to Going Concern and agreed the Going Concern status for Post Office Limited at the full year;
  - Agreed that it was appropriate for the Directors of Post Office Limited to make the undertakings and statements in the financial statements;
  - Confirmed that, as individual directors, so far as they were aware, there was no relevant audit information of which the auditor was unaware and that each director had taken all reasonable steps to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor was aware of that information;
  - Approved the financial statements;
  - Delegated authority for reviewing final amendments and completing the Annual Report and Financial Statements on behalf of Post Office Limited to a Sub-Committee, the quorum for which to comprise any three of Alice Perkins,

**ACTION: Mark Davies**

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Paula Vennells, Chris Day and Alasdair Marnoch. The Board asked that a final paper copy of the full report be circulated to the Board before completion, the Board agreed to review within 24 hours;

- Authorised Alwen Lyons to sign the Directors' Report and Chris Day and Paula Vennells (or, in either's absence, Alice Perkins) to sign the balance sheet, each acting on behalf of the Board; and
- Approved the Letter of Representation to the auditor and authorise Paula Vennells or Chris Day to sign and issue it on behalf of the Board.

The Board agreed the process and timeline for production of the Report & Accounts as set out in the papers:

(c)

- A copy would be sent to BIS on the 21<sup>st</sup> May
- A copy to the designers on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May
- Sign off by sub-committee and the Chairman by 24<sup>th</sup> May
- Revised version circulated to the Board approx. 10<sup>th</sup> June (paper copy)
- Response by 11<sup>th</sup> June
- Report published 3<sup>rd</sup> July

The CEO and CFO left the Meeting

POLB 13/36

**BONUS PAYMENTS FOR THE YEAR 2012/13  
(RECOMMENDATION FROM REMUNERATION COMMITTEE)**

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

**ACTION: Company  
Secretary**

**Irrelevant**

POLB 13/37

(a)

**Irrelevant**

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(b)

(c)

(d)

(e)

# Irrelevant

POLB 13/38

(a)

(b)

(c)

**ACTION: Kevin  
Seller**

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(d)

**Irrelevant**

**POLB 13/39**

**MINUTES OF PREVIOUS BOARD MEETINGS**

- (a) The minutes of the Board meeting held on 20 March 2013 were approved for signature by the Chairman.
- (b) The minutes of the Board meeting held on 9 April 2013 were approved for signature by the Chairman.

**POLB 13/40**

**COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES FOR NOTING**

- (a) The Board noted the minutes of the Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee meeting held on 13 February 2013.
- (b) The Board also noted the minutes of the Nominations Committee meeting held on 5 February 2013.
- (c) The Board noted the minutes of the Pensions Committee meetings held on 4 March and 8 April 2013.
- (d) The Board also noted the minutes of the Remuneration Committee meeting held on 13 March 2013.
- (e) It was noted that the minutes of each of the above Committee meetings, provided for information, had been formally approved by the relevant Committee.

**POLB 13/41**

**MATTERS ARISING STATUS REPORT**

- (a) The Status Report, showing matters outstanding from previous Board meetings, was noted.

**POLB 13/42**

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

- (a) The Board noted the Chief Executive's report and discussed the following specific items:

(b)

**Irrelevant**

- (c) Current Account

The CEO reported a successful first week with the number of accounts opened ahead of target.

The Board asked for a note explaining the success criteria on which the pilot will be evaluated. They also asked if they could have the opportunity to open their own accounts.

**ACTION: Nick  
Kennett**

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**ACTION: Susan Crichton**

**(d) Horizon**

The Board asked for a note to update on the Horizon position with the Second Sight review

**POLB 13/43**

**ITEMS FOR NOTING**

- (a) The Board noted the update on various Financial Services matters, including Bank of Ireland (UK) plc capital & liquidity.
- (b) The Board noted the Health and Safety report.
- (c) The Board noted the Significant Litigation report.
- (d) The Board noted the Report on Sealings and resolved that the affixing of the Common Seal of the Company to the documents set out against items numbered 865 to 1039 inclusive in the seal register was hereby confirmed.

**POLB 13/44**

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Financial Update**

- (a) The CFO reported that period 1 reports showed a positive EBIT variance after adjustments mainly driven by lower staff and agent costs. The one off project costs were 25% above target and he assured the Board that he would monitor these closely over the following period.
- (b) The next full financial update would be available at the July Board with PIR and benefits realisation work reporting to the ARC on the 5<sup>th</sup> June 2013

**POLB 13/45**

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Board away day would take place on the 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> June 2013.

The next full Board would take place on the 16<sup>th</sup> July 2013.

**POLB13/46**

**CLOSE**

There being no further business the meeting was declared closed

**GRO**