

Witness Name: James Arbuthnot

Statement No.: WITN00020200

Dated: 17 June 2025

POST OFFICE HORIZON IT INQUIRY

SECOND WITNESS STATEMENT OF JAMES ARBUTHNOT

I, James Norwich Arbuthnot of Edrom, will say as follows...

INTRODUCTION

1. I am the former Member of Parliament for North East Hampshire and currently a Member of the House of Lords and of the Horizon Compensation Advisory Board..
2. This witness statement is made to assist the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry (the "Inquiry") with the matters set out in the Rule 9 Request dated 23rd May 2025.

Correction of Paragraph 23 of my first Witness Statement

3. In paragraph 23 of my first witness statement (WITN00020100) I said, "At some stage during 2011, probably at a defence conference at Ditchley Park of 22nd and 23rd September 2011, I had a conversation with Alice Perkins." As I set out in paragraph 32 of the statement I emailed Alice Perkins on 23rd February 2012 and said, "*You may remember that when we last met at, I think, Ditchley Park I mentioned the issue of the Horizon computer system in use in Sub Post Offices throughout the country, and said I had a real concern about the way some of the sub-Post Masters in and outside my constituency had been treated.*"
4. Nick Wallis has drawn to my attention that if I was right about the meeting having taken place on or around 22nd or 23rd September 2011, that would conflict with Alice Perkins' evidence to the Inquiry that on 27th September 2011 she met Angus Grant, the auditor from EY, who told her that Horizon was a real risk, and she told the Inquiry that she "had never previously heard of Horizon or of the cases of the subpostmasters".
5. I have therefore re-examined my diary for that period. The Defence Conference I referred to in paragraph 23 of my first witness statement was the inaugural Defence Konigswinter Conference. I find I have the list of participants for it, and Alice Perkins was not amongst them.
6. On going through the subsequent weeks, however, I found that on the weekend of 7th to 9th October 2011 there was, also at Ditchley, a Tatlidil (British-Turkish) conference, a forerunner of the similar conference I referred to in paragraph 202 of my first witness statement. The joint organiser of that conference was

Jack Straw, and Alice Perkins, his wife, always went to them. It must have been then that I raised the issue with her.

7. I am sorry for this mistake in my first witness statement and for the extra work it has caused. I believe (though I cannot be sure) that the reason for the mistake was that my attendance at a Ditchley Park conference was a comparatively rare thing, so that when I found the Konigswinter Conference in my diary I thought it unnecessary to look further.

Statement of Truth

I believe the content of this statement to be true.

Signed:

GRO

Dated: 17 June 2025

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