

From: Elliot Jacobs <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 7:31 pm
To: henrystaunton; [REDACTED]; saf; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Subject: CONFIDENTIAL draft for discussion

Nick,

I have been considering the points raised on our call this afternoon following your unauthorised release of confidential file notes relating to a call between Saf, Henry and myself. Whether intentional or otherwise this was not a good thing to have done.

Having re-read the confidential document that was released I do not see anything it which from my perspective is untrue and it indeed reflects my experience and the feedback from Postmasters who share their concerns and experiences regularly with Saf and I.

But I am also confused as to why Ben Foat would have been sent a copy of this correspondence - the VOP email isn't a legal issue? So how did it end up going to him exactly? What were the covering messages that went with your email to him and Martin Roberts when they received the email?

The points driving my comments in my private call with Henry and Saf were:

The culture that PMs are "guilty" and "on the take" is embedded in this company and whilst we continue to employ 40+ people who ensured innocent people were found guilty and who continue to believe that mantra, this will never change. The Phoenix review was on Roberts (who they all report to) and Foat (whose investigation team were supposed to be investigating the matter) - neither did anything of consequence in this regard and it has been months - everyone including the "reds" are still employed, on a nice pension and bubbling their anti-postmaster beliefs around the business. The Board was clear this needed sorting, but nothing of any consequence has been done with regards to getting them out - not one is even suspended!

Meantime the "untouchables" (your words) who work in Investigations (run by Foat) investigate everything and everyone - this is not a normal approach to governance or oversight. My view that I was deemed guilty until proven innocent is something I had previously told Foat directly. My reputation was widely and severely tarnished by the way it was handled (without any confidentiality) and the fact that even until today I have not had a letter confirming the investigation is closed is again on Foat - as legal have not released a letter yet. That is disgraceful.

I have told him before that I felt nothing had changed and the approach towards me was precisely how we treated PMs back in the day. The fact I think that is nothing new to him. The investigations department is out of control. This reporting line needs to change and the way we treat PMs and investigate them needs a thorough and proper review - by a PM run oversight committee.

This business is supposed to be PM centric - it isn't. Now more than ever this is vital. A proper and significant oversight by PMs is required across this business. The current set up doesn't do that. It pays lip-service to the cause whilst we continue to be ignored and seen by many as an annoyance and having us on the Board a necessary but unwanted addition. The fact that Saf's

email has gone unanswered for over a week reflects badly too and suggests we are not taken seriously nor being held in the same regard as other NEDs. He is entitled to a reply.

I have reflected on your suggestion that I should call Foat and Roberts to discuss my comments, I think this will not resolve the matter. You suggested that they might have claims for constructive dismissal - having reviewed my document I am not sure that is the case. What concerns me now is that these 'untouchable' people may prejudice my ability to scale my business and cause me to be unfairly treated in the future. On that matter, I will clearly reserve my position and be watching very closely. Moreover, the information contained in the document now seems to have been shared beyond these 2 people - and so again my reputation will be called into question - potentially by even more people in the business than previously.

Changes need to be made and rapid action taken specifically in these 2 areas:

1. Foat's role in charge of the investigations team needs to be reviewed and the entire investigation process should urgently have proper oversight from a PM-led committee - **no one should be untouchable.**
2. A committee led by PM NEDs needs to be established immediately with clear terms of reference to ensure this business is properly PM centric.

In addition to the above 2 actions, I would also request clarity on my questions in the second paragraph above - you can to add them to the response which Saf is still awaiting. If you can respond to both of us by close of business Friday please as I believe it is very important that we have the opportunity to review your comments ahead of the forthcoming Board meeting.

Sincerely

Elliot Jacobs
Postmaster NED