

WITNESS: HUGHIE NOEL THOMAS

STATEMENT NUMBER: WITN0162\_02

EXHIBITS: WITN0162\_02/1,

WITN0162\_02/2, WITN0162\_02/3

DATED: Feb 10, 2022

**POST OFFICE HORIZON IT INQUIRY**

**SECOND WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MR HUGHIE NOEL THOMAS**

THIS STATEMENT IS PROVIDED IN RESPONSE TO THE RULE 9 REQUEST  
OF THE PUBLIC INQUIRY DATED 28/01/2022

I, MR HUGHIE NOEL THOMAS, DATE OF Birth GRO of GRO

GRO will say as follows:-

1. I am providing this statement further to my original statement dated 12 January 2022 and further to the second Rule 9 statement request of the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry on 28 January 2022.
2. I have been asked to provide information in respect of the following:
  - i. My contact with Roch Garrard in 2008;
  - ii. My involvement in the Computer Weekly and BBC Wales reporting in 2009; and
  - iii. My first contact and meeting with Josephine Hamilton.

### **MY CONTACT WITH ROCH GARRARD IN 2008**

3. Roch Garrard first made contact with me over the phone in May 2008. He explained to me that he was previously the Head Probation Officer in North Hampshire, having only recently retired at the time. Mr Garrard advised me that his local sub- postmistress, Mrs Josephine Hamilton, had recently been convicted of an offence in relation to missing monies at her Post Office. She had apparently been experiencing the same issues with the Horizon IT system as I had been at my Post Office.
4. I am unsure how Mr Garrard first became aware of me and my experiences with the Post Office and assume this must have been through the internet.
5. Mr Garrard wrote to me after our telephone conversation. Please see the letter dated 27 May 2008, exhibited '**WITN0162\_02/1**'. Mr Garrard expressed that he was part of a group of villagers who were trying to gather information about similar cases to mine and Mrs Hamilton's. He explained that something didn't seem to be right with the Horizon IT system. Mr Garrard and I spoke over the phone shortly after this correspondence to discuss the issues I had suffered with the Horizon IT system and it quickly became apparent that both Jo and I had both experienced similar problems.
6. Also attached to Mr Garrard's correspondence was a Daily Mail article about Mrs Hamilton's court case and how her community rallied behind her. Please see exhibit '**WITN0162\_02/2**'.
7. I received further correspondence from Mr Garrard dated 12 August 2008, which I believe was following a further conversation with him. A copy of the same is exhibited as '**WITN0162\_02/3**'.

## **MY INVOLVEMENT IN THE COMPUTER WEEKLY AND BBC WALES**

### **REPORTING IN 2009**

8. I first became aware of Computer Weekly after a friend, Sion Tecwyn, found out about them through his employment with the BBC. I have known Sion since I was elected councillor in 1986. Sion interviewed me on behalf of the BBC on the day I was elected and we have remained good friends since. As soon as he heard that Computer Weekly was looking into issues with the Horizon IT system, he thought of me straight away. Sion put me in touch with Computer Weekly and they arranged to interview me over the phone. I recall being interviewed in 2008 by Ms Rebecca Thomson, who asked me about the Horizon IT system and the technical issues I experienced with it. The conversation focused on missing monies and how I could not understand where they could have gone. Also interviewed for the purpose of this article were Mr Lee Castleton, Mrs Josephine Hamilton, and Mr Michael Rudkin.

### **MY FIRST CONTACT AND MEETING WITH JOSEPHINE HAMILTON**

9. I first met Mrs Josephine Hamilton in a café in South Warnborough in 2009. This was for a television program about sub-postmasters who had experienced missing monies at their branches and had been taken to court.
10. I recall my daughter, Sian and I travelled to Basingstoke on the train, and we were collected by Mr Garrard who drove us to the café in South Warnborough where the program was being filmed.
11. Mrs Hamilton told me about what had happened to her with the money disappearing, as it had in my shop. We also discussed trying to get help on the helpline but not getting anywhere with them and that their advice would be

to get on with it. We both recalled getting the knock on the door from the auditors and how awful it made us both feel. This was all recorded for the purpose of the program, which was called 'Taro Naw Programme'.

**Statement Of Truth**

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed:

**GRO**

Position Or

Office Held:

Print Full

Name: HUGHIE NOEL THOMAS

Date of signature: Feb 10, 2022

