

# Justice For Subpostmasters Alliance

Mr Edward Davey MP  
Minister for Postal Affairs  
Department for Business, Innovation & Skills  
1 Victoria Street  
LONDON  
SW1H 0ET

8<sup>th</sup> July 2010

Alan Bates

GRO

Tel: GRO

Dear Mr Davey

I have to say your response to me dated 31<sup>st</sup> May 2010 regarding the very serious issues I had raised was not only disappointing but I actually found your comments offensive. It seems that though there are new politicians in post, the Government has not changed. The letter you sent is little different to the one I received seven years ago from the minister responsible for post offices at that time, and so many more lives have been ruined in the interim because of that same attitude.

It's not that you can't get involved or cannot investigate the matter, after all you do own 100% of the shares and normally shareholders are concerned about the morality of the business they own. It is because you have adopted an arm's length relationship that you have allowed a once great institution to be asset stripped by little more than thugs in suits, and you have enabled them to carry on with impunity regardless of the human misery and suffering they inflict.

You can listen to your civil servants telling you these issues are really an operational matter for POL to deal with. You can even listen to POL telling you Horizon is wonderful, that there has never ever been a problem, it is inherently robust and these are just a few malcontents trying to cause trouble. Or you can meet with us and hear the real truth behind Horizon and what the Post Office is actually up to.

Your civil servants and POL will not tell you about POL staff harassing sick ex-subpostmasters demanding written promises of money or they'll send the police around. They won't tell you that POL watches post offices heading into trouble, fails to provide any help, and then waits until the problem shows a loss of £20,000+ so that the postmaster then falls foul of the Proceeds of Crime Act. They won't tell you that when someone wants to sell their post office and has a suitable buyer POL will turn down the applicant to drive that business into the ground. You won't hear about subpostmasters endlessly requesting audits of their offices and having to wait for up to five years for someone to turn up, in offices turning over £5m a year. Neither will they tell you of the cases where POL have run an audit, closed a post office bankrupting the owner who loses his business, house and family, holds a pending court case over him for 18 months, then drops the charges and walks away. Nor will they tell all about how they are stopping subpostmasters selling on the post office side of their business in order

to recover their original investment. They won't even tell you that the Horizon system is designed to entrap subpostmasters so that they can easily finish up in prison, just by trying to open up the day after a trading period balance.

This is just a taste of some of the practices your company is carrying out in your name, day after day. They brandish a big legal stick, fail to provide evidence in court and rely on the clause in the 1994 contract, about a subpostmaster being liable for any loss from their office however it occurs, yet it is their shoddy Horizon system that is the root cause of all this. POL themselves lose thousands of pounds from each of the Crown offices that they run using Horizon, though their staff are not treated as guilty until proven innocent, but a subpostmaster is!

The whole of this scandal is teetering on the edge of a precipice at this point in time, but it is still not too late for you to reconsider convening a meeting to discuss the issues involved, if you are prepared to keep an open mind.

Yours sincerely

**GRO**

Alan Bates  
Chairman  
Justice For Subpostmasters Alliance

**GRO**