

## Message

**From:** Henry Staunton [GRO]  
**on behalf of** Henry Staunton [GRO] [GRO]  
**Sent:** 24/09/2023 21:07:41  
**To:** Nick Read [GRO]  
**Subject:** Fwd: Project Venus - Privileged and Confidential - Draft Note of Advice  
**Attachments:** Project Venus - NRF Draft Note (Clean) - Privileged and Confidential - 15.09.23.docx; CEO UOE Update v4.docx; Project Venus Interim Investigation Report (1).pdf; Interim Report 2 (FINAL) (1).pdf

Nick ,

ELLIOT JACOBS

Do you and the GE have anything to add to the note from Ben ?

In view of all the issues with regard to our treatment of Postmasters at the Inquiry I am not sure we are well placed to take this further .

The Established Loss was only £16,977 and this arose ( according to Martin ) over many years . I understand EJ has settled this . The amount does not seem material or anywhere close in terms of the throughput in EJ's branches .

The note says EJ " cooperated " .

Any severe censure ( such as asking for his resignation ) may be regarded as PO breaching its contractual duty to act " reasonably " .

There seems to be a PO complaint that EJ did not always highlight " Conflicts " in that he was a Postmaster . He might reasonably argue that it was well known that he was a Postmaster !

When I spoke to Martin I formed the impression that the matter was closed as far as he was concerned . Clearly not ?

Is it your and the GE's view that this should be taken further ? I worry what the Inquiry would make of that .  
Henry

**Henry Staunton**

Chairman

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Executive Assistant: [GRO]

*I work flexibly – so whilst it suits me to email outside of normal working hours, I do not expect a response during that time.*

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**From:** Ben Foat [GRO]  
**Sent:** Friday, September 22, 2023 6:16:05 PM  
**To:** Henry Staunton [GRO] Benjamin Tidswell  
[GRO] Amanda Burton [GRO] Nick Read  
[GRO] Lorna Gratton [GRO]  
**Cc:** Rachel Scarrabelotti [GRO]  
**Subject:** Project Venus - Privileged and Confidential - Draft Note of Advice

Dear Henry, Ben, Amanda, Lorna and Nick

As you are aware an investigation was raised following concerns over shortfalls in Elliott Jacobs branches. The reports and the legal analysis of these reports have taken some time to finalise.

A legal risk note which I received on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September is attached. External lawyers have reviewed the information provided in the Project Venus interim investigation reports dated 20 November 2022 and 30 June 2023, together with the Central Operations Director Report dated 28 July 2023 (the COD Report), (collectively the Venus Reports). [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

In summary:

Appointment as a Postmaster

[REDACTED]

Venus' appointment as a NED

[REDACTED]

Venus' honesty during the investigation

[REDACTED]

Next steps

Happy to arrange a meeting to discuss once everyone has had an opportunity to review the materials and to formalise decisions and recommendations.

In the meantime, I hope you have a lovely weekend.

Kind regards  
Ben



**Ben Foat (He/Him)**

**Group General Counsel**

100 Wood Street

London

EC2V 7ER

**Email:**

**Personal Assistant:**

**Email:**

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