

PS 15/01-15/

POST OFFICE LTD

SPARROW SUB-COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Project Sparrow Sub-Committee of the Board
held at 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ on 12 January 2014

Present:	Alice Perkins (AP)	Chair
	Alasdair Marnoch (AM)	Non-Executive Director
	Richard Callard (RC)	Non-Executive Director
	Paula Vennells (PV)	CEO
	Chris Aujard (CA)	General Counsel
In Attendance:	Alwen Lyons (AL)	Company Secretary
	Belinda Crowe (BC)	Programme Director, Project Sparrow
	Mark Davies (MD)	Communications Director
	Rodric Williams (RW)	Litigation Lawyer
	Patrick Bourke (PB)	Project Sparrow

PS 15/01

OPENING OF MEETING

A quorum being present, the Chair opened the meeting of the Sparrow Sub-Committee ("the Committee") and welcomed Mark Davies, Belinda Crowe, Rodric Williams and Patrick Bourke.

PS 15/02

INITIAL COMPLAINT REVIEW AND MEDIATION SCHEME

- (a) The Committee received a paper on the current position of the Initial Complaint Review and Mediation Scheme (the "Scheme").
- (b) The Committee discussed the immediate steps being taken by the Business in relation to the Scheme, with Post Office investigations into all cases now complete and 22 cases resolved.
- (c) MD explained that after the recent Westminster Hall debate the Business proposed to offer face to face meeting with each MP involved and, where appropriate, taking them through their constituent's case. The Committee supported this approach and recommended that consideration be given to making a similar offer be made to all MPs who have a case in the scheme.
- (d) CA reported that changes to business processes meant a reduction in litigation cases. Post Office was not currently bringing prosecutions, but in blatant cases of theft where large amounts had been stolen the police continued to prosecute the cases. The Committee were assured that cases were being prosecuted where appropriate.
- (e) The Committee discussed the Judicial Review (JR) advice provided by Tom Weisselberg QC, and asked for a comparison with the Beachcroft advice received in the summer. CA explained that the fact that Post Office has now completed over 100 case reviews since the summer, and the Working Group is clearly considering each individual case on a case by case basis, this is a matter of private law – that is a dispute between

- (f) Post Office and an individual applicant - thus reducing the likelihood of a successful JR.

The Committee discussed Second Sight and their 'Part Two' due to be finalised in April. The Committee agreed that the Business was unlikely to be able to stop this report from being produced..

- (g) The Committee asked the Business to produce an options paper to analyse the most effective ways to bring the Scheme to a conclusion, taking into consideration; time; financial implications; PR and stakeholder management (MPs and the Minister); and JFSA.

- (h) The Committee asked that the steps being taken to the end quickly to mitigate recent activities of JFSA and the media including:

ACTION:
MD

- i. Providing a robust response to allegations in the media including writing to BBC lawyers where appropriate and engaging at a senior level with Programme editors;
- ii. Writing to individual MPs who participated in the Westminster Hall debate to offer a meeting to discuss their constituents case and the Post Office position;
- iii. Compiling a 'dossier' addressing the general accusations made against Post Office in the Westminster Hall debate and liaise with RC about how best to handle that with the Minister.

- (i) The Committee agreed that:

- The Business should continue to take a robust approach at the Working Group focussing on the agreed TOR in an attempt to set the Scheme back on track, but with no presumption regarding the next steps for the Scheme;
- the Business consider the most effective options to draw a line under the Scheme for a future Sparrow Sub-Committee; and
- provide a general update for the January Board

PS15/03

CLOSE

There being no further business the meeting was closed.