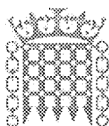


From: The Rt. Hon. James Arbuthnot, M.P.

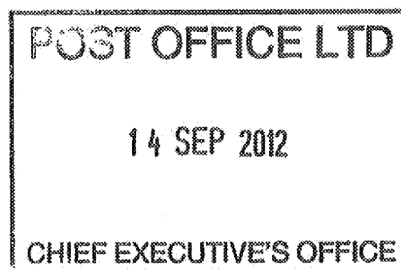


HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

13 September 2012

Paula Vennells  
Chief Executive  
Post Office Ltd  
148 Old Street  
London EC1V 9HQ



*Dear Paula,*

I know that my office has been in touch with both the Post Office and 2<sup>nd</sup> Sight over summer, passing on individual cases and securing a draft form of words from you that has been passed to the Justice for SubPostmasters Alliance for its perusal.

I have now had a letter back from Mr Alan Bates of the Alliance, and enclose a copy here. I wonder if you might address his points about both offering full immunity to those who come forward, and the possibility of mentioning the investigation in the Post office's Subspace magazine, clearly to encourage those who would like their cases investigated to submit their details? I have written to him letting him know that I would be writing to you, and attach a copy of my letter and his here.

I shall also write to 2<sup>nd</sup> Sight, asking for their comments on the points he raises that are relevant to them.

I should mention that I have already written to him stating that I do not want to interfere with the investigations, especially by dictating terms to the investigators who know their job far better than either he or I.

Many thanks for your help with this.

*Yours ever  
James*

# Justice For Subpostmasters Alliance

Mr James Arbuthnot MP  
House of Commons  
LONDON  
SW1A 0AA

Alan Bates

**GRO**

Tel: **GRO**

Email: **GRO**

6<sup>th</sup> September 2012

Dear Mr Arbuthnot,

Thank you for your letter dated 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2012 and as you state, we all want the right result from this undertaking. A fair and independent examination of a number of cases will, I have no doubt, highlight the faults with Horizon, but I had understood that these cases were to comprise of both historic and current issues.

In my letter to you dated 13<sup>th</sup> July 2012, the day after our meeting, I noted the following had been discussed:-

## **Current Errors**

*There would be a Post Office supported undertaking by 2ndSight to obtain current errors occurring in Horizon from serving subpostmasters, which 2ndSight would then investigate and track through the various processes. In order to have errors brought to the attention of 2ndSight, Post Office, at the highest level, would state that all those who submitted items for consideration could do so with impunity. Post Office would make all subpostmasters aware of this through their Subspace magazine.*

*Though not specifically discussed at the meeting, presumably this immunity with the addition of anonymity would be extended to all Post Office personnel involved with Horizon e.g. H.Q., Chesterfield and Crown Office personnel, etc.*

In your response letter to me dated 18<sup>th</sup> July 2012 on this very point you stated:-

*Your point about obtaining cases where current errors are occurring was and is a very good one. I shall write to the Post Office and suggest this, asking firstly that individuals might be prompted to come forward via the Post Office's Subspace magazine, and secondly, for some assurances with regard to immunity. I take your point that this immunity ought to be extended to all personnel involved. Thank you for making it.*

If the Post Office form of words you refer to in your last letter to me were meant to address this issue, then it is either not very clear or it has been ignored. True, the form of words does cover some of the points, but the key issue of the current errors does not yet seem to have

been included, that is unless I have missed it. Certainly with regard to our independent expert beginning to get involved, they have made it clear that this point is crucial to the investigation.

I believe I have addressed most of the issues you have asked for my thoughts on. Although with regard to your remarks of it not being wise or feasible to dictate to 2<sup>nd</sup>Sight on how they conduct their investigation, this has never been my intention. Whilst I recognise the skill and expertise that both 2<sup>nd</sup>Sight and our expert can bring to the investigation, they do not have the many years of knowledge and experience of working with Horizon and Post Office from the perspective of a user/subpostmaster, and which we would be delighted to assist them with, if they would find that of use.

As you have rightly stated, 2<sup>nd</sup>Sight outlined how they would conduct their investigation at the meeting, although part of that outline was for the investigation of current cases to go hand in hand with the investigation of the historic cases. I can even recall them commenting on how important current error cases were, as they were easier to track down. To that end we have been compiling information on current errors ever since the meeting, but as things stand at present we are unable to forward these details as they are from serving subpostmasters who we have to protect.

Whilst I do appreciate that this is certainly the best chance the Alliance has been offered so far to help our membership get the justice they deserve. I am sure you will appreciate that it would be pointless to lend our support to any investigation that was not open to considering all the facts that could be made available, if the right conditions prevailed.

Yours Sincerely

**GRO**

Alan Bates  
Chairman, Justice For Subpostmasters Alliance