

Witness Name: Mr Lawrence Bailey
Statement No.: WITN0317_01
Exhibits: None
Dated: 11th Feb. 2022

IN THE POST OFFICE HORIZON IT INQUIRY

FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF MR LAWRENCE BAILEY

I, MR LAWRENCE BAILEY will say as follows:

1. I am the husband of Mrs Joan Bailey, who is also a core participant in this Inquiry.
2. Joan Bailey has provided a statement which gives an account of the shared experiences of our family.
3. I confirm that I have read the statement of Mrs Joan Bailey and that its contents are true and accurate reflection of our experiences.
4. However, I would like to say something further on the human impact.

HUMAN IMPACT

5. When I bought the post office at Howey, I thought that I would really enjoy the work. I loved chatting to and helping people and I thought that meeting people every day and building up a relationship with customers would be a good way for customers to get to know my wife and I.
6. I began to be perturbed when we purchased the post office and took possession and there was no one to train my wife and I, and it was three months before we started to have the training we were promised when we took on the Howey Post Office.

7. I was not told by the Post Office that there was a small office payment made for electricity used by the post office's 24/7 computers, printers, etcetera; there were two of each as the outreach post offices had their own computers.
8. The previous postmaster did not inform me of this and kept the payment from me for three months, the Post Office should have made arrangements to pay me directly £250 each month. So, apart from not receiving a salary of over £1000 per month, I was out of pocket over £750 over the three months due to making these payments.
9. When we did get training, it was very inadequate. My wife has gone into more detail about this in her statement.
10. When I travelled to the outreach post offices, I was travelling over eighty miles each day on a Tuesday and Thursday. I asked the Post Office if I could have petrol money as the mileage was considerable, however, they said no I could not as I had not negotiated for it when I took on the post office.
11. I had to put money in to the village hall heaters as it was very cold whilst I was sitting there on the stage waiting for outreach post office customers to arrive. Sometimes I would do circuit training around the hall to keep warm in the winter.
12. I constantly asked the Post Office for the security to be upgraded at the Howey branch; the key fob on the safe had to be held up with piece of wood and the alarm would go off in the middle of the night. In the end, the alarm was turned off, our two Doberman dogs were still alive at the time so we considered if anyone got in, they would not get out very easily. A new alarm was fitted four years later in 2009.
13. The foot alarm was not connected and my son, who is an electrician, could not find any wires.

14. The post office counter draws were plastic and brittle and fell off every time you opened them, the Post Office would not replace them so we had wooden draws made, the one drawer that housed money and value stock could be locked.
15. The door leading to the storeroom, where the safe was kept, would not shut so we had a new door made that could be locked on both sides, so when we were counting the money from the post office, we were safe and no one could walk in.
16. The Post Office would not spend any money improving the post office or replacing faults with the post office, they said that it was our responsibility.
17. The treatment of the Post Office has and does still cause me great distress, it brought me to the lowest part of my life, and I had gone through some dreadful times but I always came out on top.
18. However, the Post Office's actions caused me to question my own sanity and I was in great despair and considered taking my own life. My wife and son took me to the GP and I was given immediate access to a mental health professional and was classed as having suffered a mental breakdown and was considered to be at serious risk of self-harm.
19. I was under the care of the mental health team for a long time at The Hollies in Llandrindod Wells and I am still taking antidepressants.
20. I suffer from anxiety and I am apprehensive of going anywhere on my own. My wife goes with me into town, and if she is away visiting her sister or the grandchildren, I stay with my daughter Louise as I cannot stay in the house on my own.
21. I had never known fear, I considered myself to be capable of looking after myself with my knowledge of martial arts and having always been an active and strong person in body and mind.

- 22. I have never had any mental health problems before working for the Post Office, their duty of care was non-existent.

- 23. Post Office Limited spoke to people with total disregard of the wellbeing of the subpostmasters and subpostmistresses, the Post Office just continued with their mantra of nothing is wrong with Horizon and you are the only one having losses.

- 24. I would not have recovered from the cancer so successfully if I had not had the support of my family and wife. My mental health will hopefully recover to some semblance of who I was before the post office

STATEMENT OF TRUTH

I believe the contents of this statement to be true

Signed... **GRO**Dated... *11th Feb. 2022*

Lawrence Bailey