

**Witness Name:** Mr David Mellows-Facer  
**Statement No:** WITN0854 0100  
**Dated:** 2 July 2023

## **POST OFFICE HORIZON IT INQUIRY**

### **PHASE 4: ACTION TAKEN BY POST OFFICE Ltd AGAINST SUBPOSTMASTERS**

#### **FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF DAVID MELLOWS-FACER**

I, MR DAVID MELLOWS-FACER, will say as follows:

#### **Background**

This statement responds to the Rule 9 request dated 5th May 2023 from the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry. This statement refers to my early involvement in relation to Marine Drive Post Office.

1. I have been asked by the Inquiry to set out my roles within Post Office, my qualifications, what training I received and my career progression within Post Office. I joined Post Office in November 2001.
2. I was originally employed as Head of Area for the North East of England responsible for all types of offices including Crown, Company Franchise and individually owned.
3. In May 2002 the area was extended to include more of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, but then limited to commercial urban offices. In March 2005 my area was extended again but limited to the responsibility for sales and no contractual issues.
4. As an Area Manager, my role involved managing a team of line managers, ensuring standards were maintained or improved in Crown offices and setting goals for the improvement of sales and standards in sub Post Offices. After March 2005, my role was solely to improve sales in Urban sub Post Officers.
5. I retired from Post Office in July 2008.

#### **Early involvement in relation to Marine Drive Post Office**

6. Due to the passage of time and having retired from Post Office in 2008, I have very sketchy memories of any dealings with Marine Drive Post Office.

#### Initial contact with Catherine Oglesby and Mr Castleton

7. I had no dealings with Marine Drive Post Office prior to Mr Castleton being appointed.
8. I cannot categorically say when I was first made aware of the issue of shortfalls at Marine Drive Post Office.
9. Catherine Oglesby was the Retail Line Manager for Marine Drive Post Office. I cannot say when I was made aware of the shortfalls. Any discussions would have included myself, Catherine Oglesby and Lesley Joyce. Lesley Joyce was the Contract Manager.
10. I have no memory of my first contact with Mr Castleton.

#### Audit of 23 March 2003

11. I would have discussed the audit report at POL00082391\_004 with Catherine Oglesby and Lesley Joyce. Every possible check had been carried out to ascertain possible causes.
12. I have been asked to consider POL00082391\_002. I would have been involved in the decision to suspend Mr Castleton, although I cannot recall the conversation.

#### Appointment of Temporary SPMs

13. I had no involvement in the appointment of the temporary SPM at Marine Drive.
14. I cannot recall any shortfalls reported by Ruth Simpson on her first day as the temporary SPM at Marine Drive. I also cannot recall any further discrepancies reported by Ruth Simpson, Dorothy Day or Greg Booth.
15. I am not aware of any details relating to these shortfalls.

#### Dismissal

16. I have been referred to page 7 of POL00081995. I am not aware of this conversation with Mr Franks, Mr Castleton's father-in-law.
17. I could only surmise what would have been discussed. I have no actual recollection of the discussion between myself and Catherine Oglesby following my conversation with Mr Franks.
18. As above, I have no recollection of any discussions I had with Catherine Oglesby or Lesley Joyce following Mr Castleton's interview.
19. I have been referred to POL00082391\_009. I would have been made aware of the decision that had been made to dismiss Mr Castleton.

20. Again, I cannot categorically say I had any telephone discussions with Mr Castleton following the dismissal decision.
21. My view would have been that a computer fault was highly unlikely. Throughout all my working life performance measures had been based around computer generated information which was trusted.
22. I have been referred to POL00082569. I attempted to have Mr Castleton's appeal heard as soon as possible.
23. I have been referred to letters from Mr Castleton to me dated 24 May 2004 in POL00081995 and 1 June 2004 in POL00082569. Although I cannot remember if any other individuals assisted me in responding to Mr Castleton's letters, the letter would have been written with input from Lesley Joyce.
24. I addressed Mr Castleton's concerns as much as I was able to in my letter of 2 June 2004 in POL00082569.
25. I have been referred to letters from Mr Castleton to me dated 3 June 2004, 8 June 2004 and 18 June 2004 in POL00082569.
26. I have been referred to page 6 of POL00082569. I have no recollection of the letter from Mrs C Train dated 8 June 2004.
27. I had no involvement in Mr Castleton's case after his dismissal but before proceedings were commenced against him by Post Office Limited.
28. I have been referred to WITN03730100. I have no recollection of Mr Castleton's statement that I "would keep pushing and pushing for a sale".
29. Much effort was made to have regard for Mr Castleton's wellbeing during the dismissal process. Catherine Oglesby in particular tried to get to the bottom of these losses. Many suggestions were made to try and help Mr Castleton identify any issues that could have contributed.

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30. I have been referred to POL00070512, LCAS0000609, POL00070841 AND POL00070477. I was not involved in the case against Mr Castleton, or any other cases relating to the Horizon IT system.

**Knowledge of bugs, errors and defects in the Horizon system**

31. I had no reason to doubt the integrity of the Horizon system.

**Other matters**

32. There are no other matters that I wish to bring to the attention of the Chair to the Inquiry, thank you.

**Statement of Truth**

I believe the content of this statement to be true.

Signature of David Mellows-Facer:

**GRO**

Date of signature:

02.07.23

**Index to Witness Statement of David Mellows-Facer**

<b>No.</b>	<b>URN</b>	<b>Document Description</b>
1	POL00082391_004	Marine Drive - audit report
2	POL00082391_002	1. 23.03.04 Letter from Lesley Joyce to Lee Castleton - suspension. 2. 26.04.04 Letter from Cath Oglesby to Lee Castleton - considering termination
3	POL00081995	Agent Case Summary - Appeal against summary termination of contract - Lee Castleton
4	POL00082391_009	Letter from Cath Oglesby to Lee Castleton re summary termination of contract
5	POL00082569	Letter from Lee Castleton to Mr Mellows-Facer
6	WITN03730100	Witness Statement of Lee Castleton Impact WITN03730100
7	POL00070512	Email from Cath Oglesby to David Mellows, Lesley Joyce and John Jones re Lee Castleton case
8	LCAS0000609	First Witness Statement of Catherine Oglesby
9	POL00070841	Email from Stephen Dilley to Mandy Talbot, Tony Utting, John Jones, RE: Post Office Ltd v Mr L Castleton
10	POL00070477	Email from Julian Summerhayes to Stephen Dilley regarding the Post office v Lee Castleton (Marine Drive Post Office, Bridlington)