

Witness Name: Simon John Lewis Jeffreys

Statement No.: WITN11300100

Dated: 9 September 2024

## POST OFFICE HORIZON IT INQUIRY

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### FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF SIMON JOHN LEWIS JEFFREYS

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I, Simon Jeffreys, will say as follows:-

#### **Introduction**

1. I am a Non-Executive Director of the Post Office Limited ("**POL**") Board. I joined the Board in March 2023 and am the Chair of the Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee and a member of the Nominations Committee.
  
2. This witness statement is made to assist the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry (the "**Inquiry**") with the matters set out in the Rule 9 Request dated 8 July 2024 (the "**Request**"). The focus of this statement is to assess what changes have been made within the organisation following;
  - a The findings of Fraser LJ in the Common Issues Judgment of 15 March 2019 and the Horizon Issues Judgment of 16 December 2019, and

- b Resulting from evidence arising out of the Inquiry, which go to the present relationship between POL and its Sub-Postmasters (**SPM's**).

- 3. I have instructed PCB-Byrne LLP to act on my behalf in relation to the Request. I have been assisted by Michael Potts and Ilana Baines, who are lawyers at PCB-Byrne, in responding to the Request.

#### **Professional Background**

- 4. I obtained a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Cape Town in 1973. Following this I obtained a Bachelor of Commerce Honours specialising in accounting from the University of Cape Town in 1974.
- 5. I went on undertake a Certificate in the Theory of Accountancy at the University of Cape Town in South Africa in 1975 and I became a Chartered Accountant in South Africa in 1978.
- 6. Following this, in 1987, I became a Certified Public Accountant in New York and in 1995 I became a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.
- 7. During my career I have held the following positions:

- a. Between 1975 and 2006 was employed by PricewaterhouseCoopers and predecessor firms, this was within the UK, USA and South Africa. My roles included Senior Audit Partner, leader of the firm's Investment Management practice worldwide and the Global Financial Services Leadership Team.
  - b. Between 2006 and 2008 I was the Chief Financial Officer at Fidelity International. This was both in London and Bermuda.
  - c. Between 2009-2014 I was the Chief Financial Officer and Chief Operating Officer at the Wellcome Trust. From 2014 until 2016 I became a Senior Advisor for the Wellcome Trust.
8. In addition to this I have held the following Non-Executive roles:
- a. From 2009 to 2014 I was a Non-Executive director for the Wellcome Trust Investment Companies.
  - b. Between 2010 and 2015 I was a Non-Executive director for Diamond Light Source.
  - c. Between 2011 and 2015 I was the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee for Hilleman Laboratories Limited which is located in India.

- d. From 2009 to 2015 I was a Non-Executive director and from time-to-time Chairman for Genome Research Limited.
- e. I was the Chair of Audit Committee for Aon UK Limited between 2009 and 2015 and then became the Chairman from 2015 to 2023.
- f. I was the Chair of Audit Committee for Henderson International Income Trust plc between 2011 and 2018 and then became the Chairman from 2017 to 2022.
- g. Between 2014 and 2023 I was the Chair of Audit Committee for St James's Place plc.
- h. Between 2021 and 2023 I was the Chairman at St James's Place International plc which is located in Ireland.
- i. From 2011 to 2023 I was the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee for SimCorp A/S which is based in Denmark.
- j. From 2016 I have been the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee at Templeton Emerging Markets Investment Trust plc. I continue to hold this role now.

- k. From 2018 I have been the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee for the Crown Prosecution Service. I continue to hold this role now.
  
  - l. I am the current Chairman for Amlin Underwriting Limited. I have held this role since 2023.
  
  - m. Finally, I am the current Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee for the Post Office Limited. I have held this role since 23 March 2023.
  
  - n. I expect to join the Board of an insurance company, MSIG UK Ltd, on 1 September 2024, and to become Chairman with effect from 1 January 2025.
9. In respect of my role as Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee for POL, a headhunter approached me. I had previously known Henry Staunton ("HS") whilst at PwC, he was the current Chairman of POL Board when I joined. I had initial conversations with HS and then several interviews with existing Board members. I ultimately decided to join the Board as a Non-Executive director and Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee as I felt that I ought to help to address the challenges facing POL. The main interview and onboarding process took approximately 4 months.

### **Horizon IT System**

10. The Horizon IT System ("Horizon") is software developed by Fujitsu and operated across POL network to account for branch transactions and balances. I have not personally used Horizon but have witnessed demonstrations on at least 5 occasions. Two of these demonstrations took place at Wood Street where I was also shown the new system which is in development and is being rolled out on a limited basis. I also had the opportunity to observe the old system so that it was possible to compare and contrast systems. In addition to this, during my induction to POL I visited 3 Postmasters at their branches and was able to see Horizon live in operation.
  
11. In terms of the actual system, Horizon is an old system which has significant limitations such as the fact that it is written in a code which is now dated. In addition, Fujitsu have indicated that the system is end of life and that they wish to discontinue supporting it. There are ongoing negotiations with Fujitsu in respect of their continued support for Horizon.
  
12. Operating Horizon can be complex for Postmasters and frequently involves multiple processes for a single transaction, and there is no customer self-service facility. However, in my opinion the system has evolved into a reliable system which works well in processing routine transactions.

### **Experience on POL Board**

13. My induction into my role as Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee was relatively straightforward and well organised. There was a formal program put together by the Company Secretary, Rachel Scarrabelotti. I exhibit a copy of my Induction Programme at **SJ-01** [POL00448732], the document title is 'Induction Programme Non-Executive Director and Chair of the Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee, Simon Jeffreys, March 2023'. The program included scheduled discussions with a variety of individuals, these were online virtual calls, telephone calls and face to face meetings and visits.
14. The Induction Programme was an overview plan. Some meetings and or locations changed during the process, and there were some additional people I met with that are not included in this initial document. For example, the external visit to the Cash Centre mentioned on page 5 of **SJ-01** took place in London not Birmingham. Pages 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7 list the main individuals that I met with.
15. I initially had an online meeting with my predecessor, Carla Stent, and received a thorough briefing. Following this she remained available for any follow up questions I had.



16. In addition to this I received briefings from the Chief Executive Officer, Nick Reed ("NR") and the Chairman, Henry Staunton ("HS"). This was online in Teams and lasted over an hour.

17. I also received briefings and or met with other POL representatives including:

- a. Chief Financial Officer,
- b. Group Financial Controller,
- c. Group Chief Commercial Officer,
- d. Group General Counsel,
- e. Group Corporate Affairs and Communications Director,
- f. Group Chief People Officer,
- g. Group Chief Retail Officer,
- h. Group Transformation and Strategy Director,
- i. Director of Internal Audit,
- j. Group Chief Digital and Information Officer,
- k. Director of Strategy,
- l. Chair of PO Insurance Limited Audit and Risk Committee,
- m. Director of Risk and Compliance,
- n. Retail Transformation Project leader,
- o. Company Secretary,



- p. Executive Assistant to the Chairman, Non-Executive Directors and General Counsel,
- q. Legal Director and Head of Criminal Investigations Unit,
- r. Managing Director of Parcels and Mails - Mails, PUDO, Retail and Branch Identity Services,
- s. Strategic Partnerships Director,
- t. Banking Director,
- u. Senior Assistant Company Secretary,
- v. Head of Risk and Internal Audit,
- w. Deputy Head of Risk,
- x. Fleet Support,
- y. Head of Data Management, DPO and DRO,
- z. Historical Matters Director,
- aa. Inquiry Director and
- bb. Other Non-Executive directors ("NEDs") including the:
  - i. Chair of Remuneration Committee,
  - ii. Senior Independent Director,
  - iii. Two Postmaster NEDs
  - iv. UKGI representative,
- cc. Group General Counsel,
- dd. Speak Up Champion,

- ee. Deloitte partner responsible for Internal Audit co-sourcing,
- ff. PricewaterhouseCoopers external audit Senior Partner, Engagement Partner and Senior Manager,
- gg. UKGI team on 23 May 2023 including Lorna Gratton, Roshana Arasaratnam and Carl Creswell.

18. Further to the above, it was arranged for me to have several site visits including to the Cash Centre. This took place in London on 27 November 2023. As stated above, this was instead of visiting the Cash Centre in Birmingham. I attended the Cash Centre with Ben Tidswell ("BT") and Amanda Burton ("AB"). This is where large amounts of cash are stored at a secure location for branches and for the Bank of England. There are very large note counting machines, large vaults and large quantities of bank notes on pallets.

19. I also visited three branches to meet the Postmasters. The Group Chief Retail Officer, Martin Roberts, attended these visits with me and we discussed the challenges, problems and processes the Postmasters were experiencing. We also had the opportunity to gain an understanding of their role and observe their operations including using Horizon with customers. These visits took place within the first three months of the commencement of my role at POL.

20. More recently, in March 2024, I undertook a visit to Chesterfield which is the 'Back Office'. I attended with Lorna Gratton who is the UKGI Representative Non-

Executive Director. Over 370 POL employees are located at Chesterfield including the Retail Support Team, Customer Services and Finance Back Office.

21. Induction was wide ranging and included meeting the appropriate internal and external people relevant for my role. The process was as good (if not better) than similar inductions I have received on other Boards. There is an ongoing learning and development process after induction that continues throughout a director's term of office. My continuing technical training on accounting, financial reporting and corporate governance comes primarily from presentations by accounting and law firms, and from independent self-development and reading. POL specific training is delivered by POL personnel and external specialists, for example, in September 2023 Linklaters briefed the Board on the responsibilities of directors regarding wrongful trading.

22. The induction process was very transparent and fluid. Alongside the Induction Programme and site visits, I had a lot of informal meetings and discussions. I would meet different people in the corridors and strike up a conversation with them about POL and their specific area. You could approach anyone and ask questions, there was very much an open-door policy. I found it useful to approach a wide range of people on site in order to receive a holistic view of POL.

23. As I mentioned above, there was no fixed induction period, it was an ongoing process. A Board meeting may raise an issue which led to me following up with a relevant POL individual to clarify a point. In fact, during my first few months, I

tended to have discussions immediately prior to Board Meetings which took place roughly every month. These discussions varied between online, telephone calls and face to face meetings. They were relatively short and informal and usually related to a specific matter.

24. In addition to my generic induction to POL I also received high level briefings in respect of the issues with the Horizon IT system, the prosecution of SPM's and the Group Litigation Order (GLO). These briefings covered matters at a level appropriate for the Board. I also was provided with access to papers which provided me with further detail.

25. Major topics such as the GLO were vast and could have been discussed for days. The information I received was limited but appropriate for my role, I was informed of the principles and main findings. It was explained to me how shortcomings in systems and controls at the Post Office gave rise to accounting discrepancies in branch accounts leading to investigations and prosecutions of Postmasters. These discrepancies were the result of errors including incorrect changes to accounting records made by remote access. The Post Office had already strengthened systems, and more changes were being made, to prevent these erroneous discrepancies from arising, and to the extent that there were any errors, to prevent any consequential harm, especially to Postmasters.

26. I received a briefing from Simon Recaldin ("SR") who is the director of the unit established to administer the financial redress schemes. He was very

approachable and I had a number of discussions and meetings with him as and when I had any queries or comments. SR also frequently presented papers to the Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee, I usually met with him prior to his attendance to discuss updates. This was primarily about the backlog and risks. We discussed the reasons for the time taken to make payments, and how the efforts of SR's team to encourage all eligible Postmasters to make claims, resulted in a growing backlog of cases to be processed.

27. I also discussed the issues outlined above with General Counsel, Ben Foat ("BF"). I had helpful but relatively brief conversations with him about major risks facing POL, mitigating controls and the difficulties BF's team were facing in trying to enhance controls.

28. It was clear that a focus within POL was that history should not repeat itself. There was certainly no feeling of defensiveness just a wish to be proactive and work as a team to rectify the problems of the past. I would summarise the main priorities of POL as:

- i) To understand what happened to the Postmasters, what went wrong and why it happened;
- ii) To put in place controls to ensure it cannot happen again; and
- iii) To get money to people who had been disadvantaged by Horizon as quickly as possible.



### Corporate Governance

29. The Board consists of POL representatives, independent Non-Executives and a representative from the Shareholder, in my opinion the structure is sensible. Recently, Grant Thornton undertook a review of Corporate Governance and produced a report which I exhibit at **SJ-02** [POL00446477], the title of this document is 'Post Office Limited Governance Review- Final, 25 June 2024'.

30. I believe that Grant Thornton were initially engaged to carry out a Board Effectiveness Review, and that this had been discussed prior to HS becoming Chairman. It was then decided it would be efficient to have Grant Thornton expand the scope of their work to include a wider Corporate Governance Review. The report identified matters which need to be considered further, some of these are very sensible. The Board has an action plan in place to address these and make further improvements. I exhibit a copy of POL Board Report dated 8 July 2024 at **SJ-03** [POL00448735], the title of the document is 'Grant Thornton Corporate Governance Recommendations, 8 July 2024'. This document summarises the recommendations in the Grant Thornton report and attaches 'Appendix 1' which is a table that sets out the recommendations and includes an initial assessment of actions already in train, and a view of where responsibilities lie. I exhibit draft copy of 'Appendix 1' at **SJ-04** [POL00448734], the title of this document is 'Grant Thornton Governance and Board Effectiveness Reviews: recommendations tracker'. I believe this document is in 'draft' as it is a working document.

31. Section 4(a) on page 5 of **SJ-04** includes the recommendations for Audit and Risk Internal Control. I was pleased to see that there were very few recommendations in respect of the Audit and Risk Compliance Committee (“ARC”). The column on the right notes my initial comments/responses to the recommendations and confirms that the following will be considered at the next ARC meeting which is due to take place on 23 September 2024:

- a. ARC attendance, balance of representation, capability and time for executive contribution.
- b. The steps to better embed the Internal Controls Framework and address the practical adherence to documentation (alongside monitoring the work being done by Group Assurance under the new interim reporting lines for second and third lines of defence).
- c. Preparation for the new UK Code coming into force in 2025 and 2026 – after which discussions will be held at Board on the pace of adoption of emerging best practice.

32. I had previously raised with the Board the question of whether there should be separate Audit and Risk committees. This was after I had been at POL for 3 or 4 months. I said that I thought it was a good idea to split ARC as there was a huge amount of work in audit, risk and internal control. I had also witnessed, in financial services companies particularly, how successful it can be to have separate Risk and Audit committees. The Board reflected on this and ultimately decided that it



did not make sense to split the committee as the same people would be involved on both committees, and there were enough committees already. I was fine with this decision and upon reflection believe it was correct.

33. **SJ-04** is an example of an Action Plan POL produced recording findings or recommendations and the actions that need to be completed. Action plans were produced as a result of the findings of legal judgements and matters identified by the Inquiry. Actions arising from internal and external audits, risk and compliance reviews and similar control functions are also recorded. I believe this approach has a strong positive effect on culture by seeking to identify exactly what needs to be done, and by whom, to change behaviors and processes. The strategic guidance provided is very helpful in bringing about changes in behaviour and culture, even in cases where the actions have not yet been fully completed.

### **POL Culture**

34. The current culture of POL at Board level is positive and employees are strongly motivated to 'do the right thing'. This has certainly been my experience since I joined the Board in March 2023, I cannot comment on the culture at the time of the legal rulings as I was not present at that time. Current members of the leadership team are very able and focus on POL's key priorities. Postmasters are recognised as highest priority stakeholders and their interests are always considered when key judgements are made. The moral compass of the Board is

in the right place. Postmasters are incredibly important to the Board. There is a strong desire to be helpful to the Inquiry and to ensure there is a supportive environment where employees feel comfortable to 'Speak Up'. Staff should feel that any disclosures can be made confidentially, and will be taken seriously and fully investigated

35. The ethos and values of POL employees is incredibly important to POL. There have been a number of changes to POL staff and Board over the years. The steps POL is taking to maintain the positive culture means they are very careful in the recruitment process. It is hugely important for there to be positive and proactive individuals within the company.

36. Whilst the culture and atmosphere at POL is proactive and positive, there are some challenges within the company which can limit progress. Frustrations have arisen as a result of the uncertainty over the vision for POL, for example, the definition of social purpose, the appropriate number of branches and the role and authority of the Shareholder. There has recently been a big debate around the extension of the Fujitsu contract for Horizon, whether the system should be brought in house, a new system developed internally, or if a new IT system should be purchased and configured. A large amount of money has been spent trying to develop a product to replace Horizon but progress on this is very slow and I question the cost/benefit of continuing with this.

37. Other frustrations include;

- a. Not knowing the sources and amount of funding and the timing of when it will be received,
- b. Authority of the Board and executive to make some 'business as usual' decisions without reference to the shareholder,
- c. The appropriate reward structure to compensate and incentivise employees,
- d. Complex unhelpful procurement rules, and
- e. The ability to attract suitably qualified and experienced staff in appropriate numbers given headcount restrictions, current levels of compensation, and that the current public perception of the POL brand is an ongoing issue. This is coupled with the practical difficulties of moving underperforming or otherwise unsuitable people into less challenging or unconflicted roles.

#### **Relationship with SPM, Managers and Assistants**

38. In my opinion, the culture at POL supports the building and maintaining of trust between POL and SPMs, managers and assistants. This is something which is clear and constantly reinforced. The intent of the culture at POL is to build and maintain trust with everyone in the POL network. I have listed at paragraphs 36 and 37 above some of the challenges arising in the execution of this strategy and the hurdles to be overcome in order to achieve and embed this ambition fully.

39. The willingness to build and maintain trust with all in the POL network is a known priority and people do try to ensure the best relationships exist across the company. Some managers and directors go to Postmaster conferences to ensure SPM voices are heard and understood. Decisions are made with SPMs in mind. The Board always think about SPMs' reactions, and about important matters that will impact them such as whether a certain change could generate more revenue, or make their lives easier. We regularly engage with the SPM representatives on the Board and make sure they give us their views. The current SPM representatives' terms of office are being extended to provide continuity during a period of significant change.

40. In terms of the Board's relationship with SPMs, every effort is made to ensure this is positive. Board members take proactive steps to nurture the relationship. We have two Postmasters as Non-Executive directors on the Board. They are an integral and valid part of the Board.

41. Board members make personal visits to Postmasters to ensure their needs and wants are understood. Board members have attended Postmaster conferences and also meet with POL personnel who are responsible for and engage with Postmasters. I was unable to attend the last annual conference due to a prior engagement but intend to attend the next conference.

42. The Board meetings are open and transparent. The Board and its members are challenged by Postmasters, including the Non-Executives, and the Board actively

seeks ways to understand better the needs of Postmasters, and how management can effect changes to improve relationships, and outcomes for Postmasters. Key issues discussed are remuneration, products, systems, cash, stock levels (including cash and stamps), management team members, and equipment to be provided to Postmasters (for example, self-service screens, note counters, printers and single point of sale terminals).

### **Key Relevant External Stakeholders**

43. The Board do not have direct contact with all key external stakeholders, such as the National Federation of Sub-Postmaster (NFSP), Communications and Workers Union (CWU), Fujitsu or representatives from the Department for Business and Trade (DBT).
44. The only contact that I have is with UKGI. My experience with UKGI representatives is that they seek to make communication with other government departments as easy as possible but that they lack the authority to make certain important decisions. The UKGI representatives are clear and reliable which creates a strong base for their relationships.



## **Whistleblowing Reports**

45. My impression is that POL does encourage whistleblowing. I have limited experience of this area within POL. AB who is a Non-Executive director and POL Whistleblowing Champion has reported that this function works well. I have had conversations with others within the organisation who have agreed with this including individuals in Finance and Human Resources. There is a Whistleblowing Policy which is called the 'Speak Up Policy' this is included within the Code of Conduct. I exhibit a copy of Code of Conduct which is available on POL website at **SJ-05** [POL00447907], the title of the document is 'Our Code of Business Conduct'.

46. The Whistleblowing Champion updates the Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee as appropriate. I exhibit a copy of Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee meeting document from a meeting that took place on 21 May 2024 at **SJ-06** [POL00448733], the title of the document is 'POL ARC Meeting 21/05/2024 09:00AM – 12:00PM'. On pages 175 to 178 there is an example of a 'Speak Up Update' for Quarter 1 in 2024 (1 January to 31 March 2024). This document shows how whistleblowing information cascades down to other employees.

47. It was reported that there were almost double the amount of Speak Up Reports since the last quarter and, at the time of the update, there were 15 active Speak Up matters open. 75% of the reports this year have been by POL staff. I took this

all as positive as employees clearly felt comfortable speaking up and this is something that is encouraged throughout the company and particularly at Board level.

48. The 'Speak Up Update' provides an overview of the report/allegations which in Q1 2024 ranged from allegations of ethics breaches, discrimination and or bullying to relocation of a branch, and a compensation request following an accident at work. The 'Speak Up Update' also comments on the outcome of actions following the reports. There is a helpful table summarising this in Appendix 1 which is located on page 178 of **SJ-06**. Appendix 1 also includes a bar chart for the past year showing the number of reports received. Finally, themes and challenges are identified within the 'Speak Up Update', for Q1 2024 they can be found on pages 176 and 177 of **SJ-06**. These help with forward planning and identifying areas where more support or investigation are required.

49. I understand that a lot of matters are settled quickly, however every now and then there is a high-profile case, for example there was a complaint against NR. In a case like that, the matter was discussed by the Board and an external lawyer was instructed to conduct an investigation.

50. I am surprised by how few cases there are. However, this could be a sign that the management processes are working well and people do not feel the need to resort to Whistleblowing.



51. I believe that POL Whistleblowing arrangements are adequate and effective based on the information I receive, but again, the Whistleblowing Champion, AB, would be able to give a more complete answer on this point. When I have asked people such as individuals in Finance and Human Resources I have been informed that employees feel open to speak up if they wish.

52. In my opinion Whistleblowing within POL does result in action, which is sometimes very public like the investigation into NR.

53. I do not have the full details of the Whistleblowing reports, these are kept confidential to preserve the anonymity of Whistleblowers.

54. I am aware of Whistleblowing reports having been made within POL since the findings of Fraser LJ but I am not sure whether they are in respect of matters relevant to the issues being explored by the Inquiry. AB, the Whistleblowing Champion would be the best person to provide details in respect of this.

#### **Legal Professional Privilege**

55. I am not an expert on legal professional privilege ("LPP") but my experience in the past has been that it is extremely difficult to preserve LLP as the technical requirements are very specific.

56. I appreciate that all Board members will not be privy to all legal documents, I would be guided by the General Counsel as to whether something is appropriate for me to see or not. I would also expect to receive a suitable briefing on all important matters including an overview of the legal issues to be considered to enable the Board to discharge our duties. Based on my experience to date I do not have any concerns.

### **Key Events**

57. I have considered a Times article dated 19 February 2024 [RLIT0000201]. I was not part of the discussions involving HS, the Postmaster NEDs and the then Secretary of State ("SOS") and so I cannot comment on what was said at that time.

58. In February 2024 I was aware that the Postmaster NEDs were frustrated and this was discussed openly at Board meetings. The Board listened carefully to the points made by the Postmaster NEDs. For example, the ongoing employment of investigators that were involved in the prosecution of SPM linked to the Horizon scandal has been discussed by the Board on a number of occasions. The matter was investigated and the importance of observing employment law and being fair to potentially completely innocent people who may be the victims of inaccurate reporting was considered. The relevant individuals were grouped according to

their prior roles and the appropriate treatment of each group was considered and agreed by the Board, including the Postmaster NEDs.

59. I note that the article quotes a statement of Mr Jacobs saying that he and Mr Ismail felt "*ignored and seen [...] as an annoyance*" by other members of POL Board. That certainly is not my experience of the relationship. I never witnessed any inappropriate behaviour towards Mr Jacobs and Mr Ismail and personally I never found them annoying.

60. I do not recall if I have seen the leaked draft email/memo mentioned in the article. However I do recall the contents being discussed during a Board meeting although I do not recall this discussion in detail.

#### **Henry Staunton's Dismissal**

61. I have very little knowledge of the circumstances of the dismissal of HS in January 2024. The only information I have is that which was reported in the press at the time. I recall that his dismissal happened over a weekend of 27/28 January 2024. The first I heard about his dismissal was in an email from NR at 18:24 on Saturday 27 January 2024 advising the Board that HS had been dismissed by the SOS. There was no additional information. I exhibit a copy of this email at **SJ-07** [POL00448737].

62. Following this, I recall seeing a Guardian article with the title 'Post Office Chair dismissed as business reels from Horizon IT scandal'. This was at 18:40 on Saturday 27 January 2024. I exhibit a copy of this article at **SJ-08** [RLIT0000340]. We did not receive any further communication or explanation from HS.

63. I received an email on Saturday 27 January from the SID, BT, to arrange a Teams call for the following day. I exhibit a copy of this email at **SJ-09** [POL00448736]. During the call I recall a discussion about us all being surprised by HS's departure but there was no information about the specific circumstances of his leaving. We were much more focused on BT taking over as acting Chair and how we would operate without HS.

64. We had prearranged Board meetings in the diary for the following Monday and Tuesday and these meetings went ahead as planned, without HS, again the reason for his departure was not discussed.

**Alisdair Cameron**

65. Alisdair Cameron ("AC") was the CFO at the time I joined the Post Office, and I spoke with him as part of my induction. However, he went on sick leave in May 2023 shortly after I joined. He did not speak to me about his departure before he left, and I had no contact with him while he was away. My understanding is that he provided a number of doctors' notes during his illness.

66. I also understand that negotiations with him about his departure concluded during June 2023. He left with 'good leaver' status and received a settlement for leaving early.

67. The Board agreed the broad terms, but not the detail, of AC's settlement.

**STATEMENT OF TRUTH**

I believe the content of this statement to be true.

Signed: 

Dated: 9 September 2024

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<b>No</b>	<b>URN</b>	<b>Document Description</b>	<b>Control Number</b>
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2	POL00446477	Post Office Limited Governance Review, 25 June 2024	POL-BSFF-099-0000003
3	POL00448735	Grant Thornton Corporate Governance Recommendations, 8 July 2024	POL-BSFF-WITN-010-0000041
4	POL00448734	Grant Thornton Governance and Board Effectiveness Reviews: recommendations tracker	POL-BSFF-WITN-010-0000037
5	POL00447907	POL Code of Business Conduct	POL-BSFF-WITN-106-0000147
6	POL00448733	POL ARC Meeting Notes from meeting on 21/05/2024	POL-BSFF-WITN-010-0000033
7	RLIT0000201	News article from The Times titled 'Postmasters on Post Office board 'ignored and unwanted''	RLIT0000201
8	POL00448736	Email from Nick Reed on 27 January 2024 advising the POL Board that Henry Staunton had been dismissed by the Secretary of State	POL-BSFF-WITN-033-0000001
9	RLIT0000340	The Observer - newspaper article - 'Post Office chair dismissed as business reels from Horizon IT scandal'	RLIT0000340
10	POL00448737	Email chain from Simon Jeffreys to Laura Ferguson and Rawa Hussain re: A message from Nick: Post Office Chairman'	POL-BSFF-WITN-033-0000002