

FOI2024/00100 - POL20140925 Meeting Minutes Extractions

POLB 14(8<sup>th</sup>)  
POLB 14/103-14/117

**POST OFFICE LIMITED**  
(Company no. 2154540)  
(the 'Company')

Minutes of a Board meeting held on 25 September 2014  
at 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ

**Present:**

Alice Perkins	Chairman
Neil McCausland	Non-Executive Director
Tim Franklin	Non-Executive Director
Virginia Holmes	Non-Executive Director (minutes 14/103 – 14/105)
Alasdair Marnoch	Non-Executive Director
Richard Callard	Non-Executive Director
Paula Vennells	Chief Executive
Chris Day	Chief Financial Officer

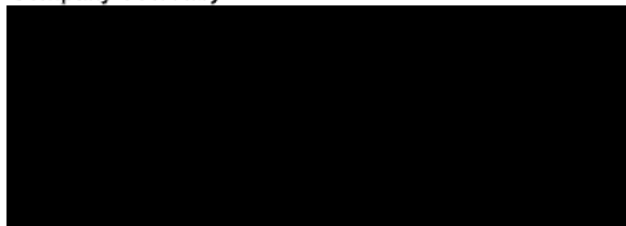
**In Attendance:**

Alwen Lyons



Chris Aujard  
Belinda Crowe

Company Secretary



General Counsel (minute 14/109)  
Programme Director, Project Sparrow (minute 14/109)

**POLB 14/103**

**INTRODUCTION**

- (a) A quorum being present, the Chairman opened the meeting.

POLB 14/109

**SPARROW UPDATE**

- (a) Chris Aujard, General Counsel (the GC), and Belinda Crowe, Programme Director, Project Sparrow, joined the meeting.
- (b) The GC and Belinda Crowe presented an update on progress under the Initial Complaints Review and Mediation Scheme (the 'Scheme').
- (c) The GC reported negotiations with Second Sight to move them onto a much reduced payment arrangement based on a piece rate tied to productivity and quality.
- (d) The Board was encouraged by the recent progress and the fact that all the Post Office investigations should be finished by December. The Board members understood that the next few weeks could be controversial as the Business was about to refuse to put cases involving criminal convictions into mediation.
- (e) The Board asked the Business to work with ShEx to update the Minister on the Post Office position regarding the investigations, the Scheme and Second Sight.
- (f) The Board noted the update on the Scheme.
- (g) The General Counsel and Belinda Crowe left the meeting.

**ACTION:** Belinda Crowe/General Counsel/Richard Callard

POLB 14/114

**ITEMS FOR NOTING**

- (a) The Board noted the update on Digital and asked for clarification on the impact of the Common Digital Platform on the Horizon system and any possible cost savings.

**ACTION:**



FOI2024/00100 – POL20140521 Meeting Minutes Extractions

POLB 14(5<sup>th</sup>)  
POLB 14/64-14/83

**POST OFFICE LIMITED**  
(Company no. 2154540)  
(the 'Company')

Minutes of a Board meeting held on 21 May 2014  
at 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ

**Present:**

Alice Perkins	Chairman
Neil McCausland	Non-Executive Director
Tim Franklin	Non-Executive Director (minutes 14/64-68)
Virginia Holmes	Non-Executive Director
Alasdair Marnoch	Non-Executive Director
Richard Callard	Non-Executive Director
Paula Vennells	Chief Executive (minutes 14/64-71 and 14/76-82)
Chris Day	Chief Financial Officer (minutes 14/64-71 and 14/76-82)

**In Attendance:**

Alwen Lyons	Company Secretary
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Chris Aujard	General Counsel (minutes 14/64-65 and 14/76)
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Lesley Sewell	Chief Information Officer (minutes 14/67-69 and 14/82)
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Belinda Crowe	Programme Director, Project Sparrow (minute 14/76)
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Mark Davies	Communications & Corporate Affairs Director (minutes 14/70)

POLB 14/64

**INTRODUCTION**

- (a) A quorum being present, the Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed [REDACTED] Chris Aujard, General Counsel, and [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

- (f) SPARROW  
Chris Aujard, General Counsel, and Belinda Crowe, Programme Director Project Sparrow, joined the meeting.

**ACTION:  
General Counsel**

The draft executive summary of the Horizon Assurance Review, prepared by Deloitte, had been circulated to the Board. The General Counsel advised that the full Review should be available to the Business on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> May. He would circulate it to the full Board as soon as possible, once he was satisfied with its drafting and the clarity of expression. It was agreed that he would escalate within Deloitte if he had concerns about the quality of the product. The Chairman stressed the importance of this Review and the need for it to give the Board assurance that there were (if that be the case) no issues with the system. She also stressed the need for the Review to be written clearly so that it could be used to give assurance to a wider audience. The Review would be considered at the next Board Sparrow Sub Committee (BSSC).

The CEO reported that she and the General Counsel had met Sir Anthony Hooper to understand his appetite for changing the Scheme. Sir Anthony Hooper stressed that the Post Office had agreed to the mediation scheme and believed they now needed to let it run over the next 12-18 months. With this in mind, the Chairman asked the BSSC

**ACTION:  
Board Sparrow SC**

to decide whether there was an option to change the scheme, before the first case was mediated, which could be as early as the next 4-8 weeks.

The General Counsel explained that ten cases, where the claimant was an existing sub postmaster, had already been resolved outside the scheme at very low cost to the Business. The team were continuing to identify and attempting to resolve cases under the business as usual processes – this included making settlement payments, where doing so was unlikely to set precedents or create problems with either the Working Group or the Network. It was possible that the first case going through the Scheme could also be settled prior to mediation.

**ACTION:  
Belinda Crowe**

The Board asked for a paper to the BSSC explaining the caseload, to include:

- the original number of cases;
- those already resolved outside the Scheme;
- an assessment based on information available (as only 22 have been fully investigated) as to how many cases have so far been identified which could potentially be settled under business as usual without going to mediation;
- identifying the number of criminal cases which Post Office is unlikely to agree to mediate; and
- highlighting how many applications in the Scheme cite issues which relate specifically to the Horizon system.

The CFO explained the cost to the Business of the Sparrow was running at circa £700k a month, excluding payments to claimants. This expenditure was in line with the budget but still a challenge for the Business.

**ACTION:**  
**General Counsel/**  
**Belinda Crowe/**  
**Mark Davies**

The Chairman asked that the next BSSC to consider:

- the options available for the Scheme;
- how cases could be removed from the Scheme into business as usual, based on a narrow definition of Horizon, and how this would be explained to the sub postmasters and other stakeholders;
- the likely response from Sir Anthony Hooper, JFSA and Second Sight to any change; and
- PR scenario planning for all the options being considered.

FOI2024/00100 – POL20140716 Meeting Minutes Extractions

POLB 14(7<sup>th</sup>)  
POLB 14/87-14/102

**POST OFFICE LIMITED**  
(Company no. 2154540)  
(the 'Company')

Minutes of a Board meeting held on 16 July 2014  
at 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ

**Present:**

Alice Perkins	Chairman
Neil McCausland	Non-Executive Director
Tim Franklin	Non-Executive Director
Virginia Holmes	Non-Executive Director
Alasdair Marnoch	Non-Executive Director
Richard Callard	Non-Executive Director
Paula Vennells	Chief Executive
Chris Day	Chief Financial Officer

**In Attendance:**

Alwen Lyons	Company Secretary
Sir Charlie Mayfield	Chairman & CEO John Lewis Partnership (minutes 14/87-88)
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Chris Aujard	General Counsel (minute 14/90)
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

POLB 14/87

**INTRODUCTION**

- (a) A quorum being present, the Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed Sir Charlie Mayfield, Chairman and CEO John Lewis Partnership.
- (c) Sparrow was progressing with two cases now through mediation, one of which had been resolved but the other where no agreement was reached. The Business was taking opportunities to make things clear to the working group, the first being that no consequential loss would

be paid.

POLB 14(6<sup>th</sup>)  
POLB 14/84-14/86

**POST OFFICE LIMITED**  
(Company no. 2154540)  
(the 'Company')

Minutes of a Board meeting held on 10 June 2014  
at Warren House, Warren Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey, KT2 7HY

**Present:**

Alice Perkins	Chairman
Neil McCausland	Non-Executive Director
Tim Franklin	Non-Executive Director
Virginia Holmes	Non-Executive Director
Alasdair Marnoch	Non-Executive Director
Richard Callard	Non-Executive Director
Paula Vennells	Chief Executive
Chris Day	Chief Financial Officer

**In Attendance:**

Alwen Lyons	Company Secretary
Chris Aujard	General Counsel (by conference call)

**POLB 14/84**

**INTRODUCTION**

- (a) A quorum being present, the Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed Chris Aujard, General Counsel.

**POLB 14/85**

**SPARROW**

- (a) The Board received an update on the discussions of the Sparrow Sub-Committee on 6 June 2014.
- (b) The General Counsel explained the three options considered and the specific risks inherent within each.
- (c) The Board agreed that:
- Option 1 (continuing as is) was untenable given the challenges it posed to the best interests of the business and value for money.
  - Option 3 (moving the governance and management of the scheme in house) was discounted because of the risk of a challenge and possible Judicial Review.
  - Option 2 (continuing with the Scheme but seeking to refine its work within the existing Terms of Reference) was the preferred option.

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**ACTION:**  
**General Counsel**

- (d) The Board gave unanimously support to Option 2. They asked the Business to consider the best way to implement Option 2; to take legal advice on the risks inherent with the changes proposed; and to come back to the Board with a paper explaining the recommended next steps.

**ACTION:**  
**General Counsel**

- (e) The Board asked the Business to continue to settle cases outside the Scheme where it made commercial and legal sense to do so.

**POLB 14/86**

**CLOSE**

There being no other business the meeting was closed.

