

The Post Office systems scandal

It has taken many years, much suffering and plenty of legal bills for the Postmasters to get justice over the Horizon scandal. MPs including myself told past Ministers there was no sudden outbreak of mass criminality by Postmasters, but there was a systems and accounting problem created by new computers. This has at last been admitted by the Post Office and the government.

Yesterday in the House the Minister made a statement about how the Post Office and government intend to proceed following the Court decision to quash past convictions for fraud, false accounting and theft by some of the Postmasters. They plan an Inquiry and a compensation scheme. There was widespread anger in the House about what has happened and how long it has taken the Post Office to accept its errors. I stressed to the Minister that they should as a matter of urgency grant compensation to all those falsely accused and many falsely convicted. The compensation should cover the Horizon losses themselves, but also the extensive legal fees to right the wrongs and the lost earnings and business revenue caused by these false actions. People have lost their livelihoods and seen their reputations savaged. The least the Post Office should do is offer generous compensation along with their belated apology.