# Former Post Office Boss Testifies in Horizon IT Inquiry



**Former Post Office Boss Testifies in Horizon IT Inquiry**

On June 27, 2023, Paula Vennells, the former CEO of the Post Office, delivered her second day of testimony at the Horizon IT Inquiry, held at Aldwych House, London. The inquiry investigates the wrongful prosecution of over 700 subpostmasters due to faults in the Fujitsu Horizon IT system.

Vennells admitted that she "possibly" hoped a mediation scheme would minimize compensation for affected subpostmasters. This acknowledgment followed an email she sent in August 2013, in which she expressed that the hope of mediation was to "avoid or minimize compensation." During questioning by inquiry counsel Jason Beer KC, Vennells conceded the email sounded as if subpostmasters were expected to accept nominal payments.

Vennells, who appeared emotional, claimed the scheme was not intended for substantial compensation payouts but for token gestures. She also addressed advice from communications director Mark Davies, who suggested not reviewing all past prosecutions would help avoid negative media exposure. Vennells admitted this advice might have prevented earlier detection of miscarriages of justice but said she did not recall consciously deciding against a comprehensive review.

Despite her testimony, hundreds of subpostmasters are still awaiting compensation, although the government has announced £600,000 for those with quashed convictions. The inquiry has not scheduled sessions for July 4 and 5 due to a general election call by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak.