

THE POSTCODE ADDRESS FILE ADVISORY BOARD (PAB)

Minutes of meeting held at 13:00 on 21 April 2022

At: The Postal Museum, 15-20 Phoenix Place, London, WC1X 0DA

And by video conference (to item 5)

Present

Ian Beesley	Chairman
Paul Brough	Mail Users' Association
Nick Chapallaz	GeoPlace
Ron Wilkinson	Improvement Service, Scotland
Ian Paterson	Mail Competition Forum
Simon Biltcliffe	Webmart
Paul Cresswell	Experian
Paul Roberts	Board Secretary

Attended by Video Conference (items 1-5)

Charles Neilson	Mail Competition Forum
Neil Haydock	Metapack
Dan Cooper	Allies Computing
Rob Parker	CACI

In attendance

Ian Evans	AMU (items 1-4, 6-10)
Kim Winter	AMU (items 1-4, 6-10)

Apologies

David Green	GB Group
Steve Goodsell	Royal Mail Group
Tim Drye	Direct Marketing Association

## 1 Welcome

The Chairman welcomed Ron Wilkinson from Improvement Service Scotland (replacing Iain McKay) and Simon Biltcliffe from Webmart as new members of the PAB

## 2 Webmart

Simon Biltcliffe gave a brief introduction to Webmart. The company was established in 1996 and has grown to a £20m turnover business employing 41 people at present.

The company is a marketing agency providing solutions across all media channels (digital and traditional) and has noticed a small recent renaissance in printed mail, but with cross-digital being the current dominant preferred marketing channels across its customer base (most of whom are aged 40 and under).

## 3 Matters Arising

3.1 New returns labelling: A follow-up meeting was scheduled between the AMU and the RM Door to Door Team, with a further update being provided before the July PAB meeting.

3.2 Reasons for Licence Termination: Main reasons were highlighted as a) where Service Providers (SPs) have a single client and loses the client business, typically the SP then chooses not to be a SP any longer, and b) where the SP goes out of business or is subsumed into another business.

3.3 RM PDA updates: The AMU would circulate their requirements for the next phase of the RM PDAs to the PAB within the following two weeks.

Separately, the PAB agreed a change to the process of reporting progress against actions and scheduled updates, to be in place before the July 2022 PAB meeting

**ACTION:** The Secretary to agree and implement the new update process with the Chairman and the AMU.

## 4 Chairman's Update

The Chairman reported on two items:

4.1 The **PAB website** domain had expired, and the PAB representatives had not been informed, so the website was not currently visible for users to access. The Secretary was in contact with the relevant suppliers, and it was expected the website would be back up and running soon. A previous recent website 'fix' had resulted in multiple enquiries now being received with all being successfully resolved, in partnership with the AMU Customer Service Team in Doxford.

4.2 The PAB & AMU **Business Names working group** had met on two occasions in the previous 2 months, with tangible actions being delivered by the AMU to enable PAF business name accuracy to be improved. This included the first pilot mailing to 7,500 customers where businesses appeared to be located at residential addresses in 6 Postcode areas, requesting clarification of business name and address details (on an opt-in basis and outlining the benefits of having accurate name and address details). 36 online responses had been received so far, with postal responses being expected from 22 April onwards.

The Board warmly welcomed progress in this area and requested regular updates from the working group to assess onward activities and their impacts.

**ACTION:** The Secretary to share all business name working group updates with the PAB.

## **5 PAB Priorities for 2022 and Beyond (The AMU representatives withdrew for discussion of this item)**

Further to the discussion at the January 2022 PAB meeting. The Chairman and Secretary had done significant work in turning the discussion points into an initial list of activities for the PAB, with prioritization based on ease of completion, likely timescales and likely workload involved.

The Board agreed the tasks identified were appropriate and recommended further work on the benefits to be delivered by each activity.

PAB members commented that the likely workload to deliver some of the 'simpler' tasks could be high. It was also suggested that close working between GeoPlace, National Improvement Service Teams and Royal Mail would maximise Royal Mail's gathering, analysis and use of available data and intelligence. Members also suggested it would be better to ensure delivery on 2/3 key actions and stretch the overall list out over extra years to ensure activities could be given the proper focus.

**ACTION:** The Chairman to discuss the PAB priorities with the AMU to compare them with AMU priorities and agree jointly prioritized areas for action. A further update to be given at the July PAB meeting.

## **6 AMU Annual Audit Activity**

The AMU presented a summary of annual audit activity. Audits were down from 106 in 2020/21 to 82 in 2021/22. However, overall workload on conducting audits was at the same level due to the fact that 7 of the top 10 SPs were audited in 2021/22 vs. zero in 2020/21, with those audits carrying much greater workload activity.

The AMU had started doing joint National Change of Address (NCOA) audits alongside regular audit work, a new activity for 2021/22.

Feedback from audits indicated that compliance levels had increased, and instances of non-compliance were reducing in seriousness. The most common non-compliance issues remained:

- SPs not fully passing on end user obligations
- SPs declaring transactions in arrears rather than in advance
- SPs occasionally missing End-Users from their monthly Returns or even occasionally over-declaring usage

Missed declarations were attributable to system failures within organisations, rather than any malicious activity. The AMU confirmed that non-compliance issues arose from different SPs over time and there was nothing to suggest any SPs were habitually non-compliant.

For 2023, the PAB confirmed that the annual audit report should be delivered at the July meeting,

## **7 Relationship between PAF and other Addressing Datasets**

The Board and AMU discussed the alignment, overlap and relationship between PAF and emerging addressing datasets.

The AMU view was that the core responsibility of PAF was to be an up-to-date, accurate list of postal addresses that could be made available as a reference tool which confirms postcodes against addresses. PAF was not designed to provide Geo-location information of individual delivery points. RMG uses other systems (that reference PAF) to map delivery locations and plan delivery walks.

The Board concurred that the emerging datasets were not competing addressing datasets to PAF. They should probably be considered as providing complementary information for alternative purposes. An example was the current what3words (w3w) advertising campaign that refers to the w3w as additional 'delivery notes' rather than as a standalone address.

During the discussion, some limitations of existing emerging datasets were identified, including:

- Lack of geographical clustering of multiple single-point references
- Adding steps to completion in online purchasing formats

The Board agreed it was important for it and AMU to maintain an awareness of developments in the wider marketplace and so of potential opportunities for or threats to the use of PAF.

## **8 Updates**

8.1 NYB to PAF: measuring improvements. The AMU had identified some draft measurements for measuring improvements.

**ACTION:** The Board invited the AMU to discuss possible measures with GeoPlace and Improvement Service Scotland and report back on likely measures and targets to be used.

8.2 AMU & RM Ops SLA. The AMU reported that, given the significant organisational changes involved in the revised RM Operations structure, the existing SLA with Ops had been extended for one year, to March 2023. Discussions, on the new SLA were expected to re-commence in June. The SLA working group (PAB & AMU) had restarted, with a first meeting held in March.

**ACTION:** The Board invited the SLA working group to update on progress prior to each subsequent PAB meeting, for onward discussion as required. The Secretary to share the notes from the first SLA working group meeting with the PAB members.

8.3 Data Quality: Presentation and Analysis of Data. Following discussions between the AMU, DQM and Tim Drye, the AMU were due to meet again with the quality survey company (DQM) in the coming weeks to identify ways to improve sampling methodology, to increase the consistency and reliability of results, without losing the ability to identify long-term trends. Latest quarterly results showed a decline in both main metrics, but this was an example of where the sample weighting methodology was affecting the overall results.

**ACTION:** The Board invited the AMU to provide a further update in advance of the next PAB meeting

## **9 Price Changes - Licensing**

The Chairman asked when the outcome of this year's price review was to be announced by the AMU. The AMU advised that the changes would be announced on 30 June, giving the requisite three months' notice before they come into effect on 1 October.

The AMU advised they would share details on any price changes with the PAB and Ofcom in advance of publication.

## **10 Next Meeting**

21 July 2022, 13:00 – 15:30, by video conference.