

BBAG – Bradford & Bingley Action Group

PRESS RELEASE

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B&B Action Group appeals to the Parliamentary Ombudsman

In November 2014 BBAG appealed to the Ombudsman in respect of administrative failures by the Cabinet Office, the Treasury and the Financial Services Authority (FSA), now the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), relating to the B&B nationalisation. David Blundell the chairman of BBAG has had further discussions with the Ombudsman's office and based on the advice given formal complaints have been sent, recorded delivery, to the Cabinet Office and Treasury as described below:

In 2008 the Cabinet Office responded to a Freedom of Information (FOIA) request in respect of the B&B nationalisation stating "We have no files whatsoever", BBAG doubted this statement at the time and its suspicions were proved correct. In his book "Beyond the Crash" published in 2010, Gordon Brown described his decision to nationalise B&B in the ante room of the Oval Office, the White House, Washington DC in a transatlantic telephone call with Alistair Darling in the UK. However, it was only in 2011 after further FOIA requests that the Cabinet Office finally admitted that it did have files. BBAG has written to Sir Jeremy Heywood, Cabinet Secretary, making a formal complaint in respect of the untrue statement made in 2008 which destroyed any momentum the BBAG campaign may have achieved in the months prior to the General Election in 2010, particularly in respect of a judicial review. It also asked the question "which officials were responsible for issuing the statement and what disciplinary action, if any, was taken against them."

Based on the same advice from the Ombudsman BBAG has also made a formal complaint to Sir Nicholas Macpherson, Permanent Secretary at the Treasury, in respect of BBAG's FOIA request for details of all communications between Mr Robert Peston a well known BBC and Telegraph journalist and Mr John Kingman, the Second Permanent Secretary at the Treasury at the time of the B&B nationalisation. It was Mr Peston's well informed reporting that caused a run on B&B shares and which suggests he had access to internal sources at the Treasury. Mr Michael Fallon, the current Secretary of State for Defence, certainly thought so in the Treasury Select Committee meeting in November 2008. The Treasury response was "We have no such records and when Mr Kingman left the Treasury in December 2008 information on his laptop, smart phone and other network resources were cleared. There is no record of 'On the Record' briefings by policy officials with journalists." The question that the Treasury has to answer is – why were the records of Mr Kingman, a senior official heavily involved in the banking crisis, not digitally recorded and which officials sanctioned their destruction.

BBAG believes these government departments have been guilty of gross misfeasance, it is also examining the Financial Conduct Authority's file in respect of its responses to FOIA requests with the intention of making a formal complaint to its chairman Mr John Griffith-Jones.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

BBAG is a company limited by guarantee and a voluntary organisation whose sole objective is to secure justice for B&B shareholders, the former owners of the company. The committee members do not draw emoluments or any form of personal expenses.

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