

Make Good

Already the subject of a successful TV drama, the story of the Post Office Scandal is seen as one of the greatest miscarriages of justice in British history. A production of the story is now being brought to theatres

Click
Here for an
Easy Read
version of
this article

In a sleepy English village, the local post office was more than just a place to send letters and parcels; it was the heart of the community. It was where grandmothers got their pensions, grandfathers picked up their newspapers, and children posted their letters to Santa.

But for many sub-postmasters across the country, the dream of running such a cherished local institution turned into a nightmare that highlighted one of the most disgraceful miscarriages of justice in recent British history—one that the public must not forget.

The scandal revolved around the Post Office's Horizon computer system, which was introduced in the late 1990s to modernize the country's post offices. What was meant to streamline operations instead resulted in turmoil. Almost from the start, Horizon experienced software glitches that showed false shortfalls in accounts. Alarming, these discrepancies, which sub-postmasters could not explain, were automatically assumed by the Post Office to be due to theft or fraud by the sub-postmasters themselves.

For years, sub-postmasters lived in dread. Their word against a seemingly infallible computer system, their pleas of innocence fell on deaf ears as the Post Office prosecuted them aggressively and relentlessly. Livelihoods were destroyed, families torn apart, and innocent individuals were sent to prison—all because of a faulty software system that lacked transparency and accountability.

Despite an ongoing inquiry into how the whole debacle was handled, very few of those innocent of any wrongdoing have been compensated. The enquiry goes on. Hot on the heels of investigative reporter Nick Wallis's *Panorama* programmes and his tour of theatres bringing local people onto the stage to talk about their experiences, a new play by Pentabus and New Perspectives Theatre is bringing the story to audiences in theatres.

Make Good: The Post Office Scandal is a new musical by Jeanie O'Hare and Jim Fortune that has been three years in the making. It tells the story of how over twenty years a silent tragedy has unfolded in the heart of our communities. It highlights how entirely innocent sub-postmasters had their lives torn apart and faced bankruptcy, isolation, and jail



Charlotte Delima in rehearsal for her part as Indira in Make Good The Post Office Scandal

for crimes that were never committed, for debts that never existed.

Jeanie O'Hare first recalled hearing about the issue in an interview on the *Today* programme with John Humphreys in 2013. Her first thought was it was so obvious the person interviewed was innocent that it would 'get sorted'. She left to continue working on a project abroad and returning four years later was horrified to hear it hadn't been resolved.

Jeanie suggested the play idea to Pentabus Theatre company in 2020 because she knew of their ability to tell stories 'of the community in the community' better than anyone else.

Directly informed by conversations with affected sub-postmasters, *Make Good* dives into this most local of stories, capturing the raw emotions, the bewilderment and the unbreakable bond of faith and family that were put to the test. The play helps to portray the astonishing resilience of entire communities as lives were destroyed in a scandal that isn't over yet.

The production comes to Stockland Village Hall (EX14 9EF) Courtesy of the Devon Arts Charity 'Villages in Action'. Sat 16th November at 7.30pm. Doors and Bar open 7pm. Tickets are £15 or free for Under 25yrs. Suitable 11+yrs. Audio Described. <https://villagesinaction.co.uk/>