

BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

PRESS NOTICE

MAKING REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION: UPDATE 1

The Commission of Inquiry (“the Commission”) was announced on 18 January 2021 to look into whether corruption, abuse of office or other serious dishonesty may have taken place amongst public, elected and statutory officials in recent years. Sir Gary Hickinbottom is the sole Commissioner.

Following on from the Commissioner’s visit to the BVI in January/February and the information submitted to the Commission to date, the Commissioner and his team have started the second stage of the Inquiry. This involves obtaining further information and documentation predominantly from public officials, including elected and statutory officials.

The Commissioner has the powers of a High Court Judge to require production of information and documents by way of summons. However, given that the BVI Government has indicated that it will fully and promptly cooperate with any requests for information/documents, the Commissioner is initially making requests for voluntary disclosure. The Commission will continue to make these requests over the coming weeks to enable it to fulfil its Terms of Reference.

It is the Commissioner’s intention next week to set out in a statement how he expects requests for information and documentation to be met. It will also outline how the Commissioner intends to enforce the production of documents and information if requests for voluntary disclosure are not met.

In the meantime, the Commission renews its open invitation to anyone who believes they have information that may assist the Inquiry, who has not yet submitted it to the Commission, to submit that information as soon as possible via the secure website portal (www.bvi.public-inquiry.uk). As well as the website portal, the Commission has provided a number of different and secure ways for individuals to share information with the Inquiry Team, including a dedicated email address (contactcoi@bvi.public-inquiry.uk), a WhatsApp phone number for messages or audio/video calls (+44 (0)7832 111254), and a UK postal address (The Secretary, BVI Commission of Inquiry, Room RB 1.11, 22 Whitehall, London SW1A 2EG). Please be assured that all information will be received and held in strict confidence.

Steven Chandler
Secretary to the Commission

26 February 2021