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1st Report, 2016 (Session 5)

Web

Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

Complaint against Sandra White MSP



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Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

1. The remit of the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee is to consider and report on—
 - a. the practice and procedures of the Parliament in relation to its business;
 - b. whether a member's conduct is in accordance with these Rules and any Code of Conduct for members, matters relating to members interests, and any other matters relating to the conduct of members in carrying out their Parliamentary duties;
 - c. the adoption, amendment and application of any Code of Conduct for members; and
 - d. matters relating to public appointments in Scotland.
2. Where the Committee considers it appropriate, it may by motion recommend that a member's rights and privileges be withdrawn to such extent and for such period as are specified in the motion.



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John Scott
Scottish Conservative
and Unionist Party



Alexander Stewart
Scottish Conservative
and Unionist Party

Report

1. The Committee met on 8 and 22 September 2016 to consider a complaint from Mr Scott Simpson about Sandra White MSP. The complaint is that Sandra White re-tweeted a tweet containing a cartoon deemed to be offensive.
2. The Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland investigated Mr Scott's complaint and found that Sandra White was not in breach of the Code of Conduct. The Commissioner's full report is at annexe B.
3. The procedures followed by the Commissioner, and the Committee, in considering complaints are set out in full in volume 3, section 9 of the Code of Conduct.¹

Decisions of the Committee

4. The Committee is unanimous in its decision reached on the complaint. It agrees with the findings in fact and conclusion of the Commissioner that Sandra White did not breach the Code of Conduct.

Conclusion

5. While the circumstances surrounding this complaint do not constitute a breach of the Code of Conduct, actions of this nature – whether intentional or not – may not reflect well on members and the Parliament. The Committee would like to take this opportunity to remind all MSPs that they alone are responsible for their public statements and the content of their social media channels.

¹ Code of Conduct of the Scottish Parliament. Volume 3, Section 9. Available at: <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/msps/42841.aspx>

Annexe A – Extract from Minutes

3rd Meeting, 2016 (Session 5), Thursday 8 September 2016

Decision on taking business in private: The Committee agreed to take item 4 in private.

Decision on taking business in private: The Committee agreed to take future consideration of reports from the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland, and its own draft reports on the complaints, in private at future meetings. The Committee also agreed to take future consideration of a draft report and draft Standing Order rule changes on mandatory committees' remits in private at future meetings.

Complaints (in private): The Committee considered reports from the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland.

5th Meeting, 2016 (Session 5), Thursday 22 September 2016

Complaints (in private): The Committee continued its consideration of reports from the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland.

Complaints: The Committee announced its decision at Stage 3 on reports from the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland.

Complaints (in private): The Committee agreed its draft reports.

Annexe B – Report from the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland



Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland

CONDUCT of MEMBERS of the SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

Report by the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland

on complaint no. MSP/1846/15 – 16/20

Complainer:- Mr Scott Simpson Respondent:- Sandra White, MSP

21 March 2016

Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland

Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh EH12 5HE T: 0300 011 0550 E:
investigations@ethicalstandards.org.uk W: <http://www.ethicalstandards.org.uk>

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Appendix 4 Letter to respondent dated 23 December 2015

Appendix 5 Letter dated 11th November 2015 issued by the respondent to The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

CONDUCT of MEMBERS of the SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT Report on complaint no. MSP/1846/15 – 16/20 to the Scottish

Parliament Complainer: - Mr Scott Simpson Respondent: - Sandra White MSP

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Code of Conduct for Members of the Scottish Parliament (“the Code”) has been approved by the Scottish Parliament under its Standing Orders to provide a set of principles and standards for its Members.

1.2 Other relevant provisions relating to the conduct of MSPs include: the Scotland Act 1998 (“the 1998 Act”); the Scotland Act 2012 (“the 2012 Act”); the Interests of Members of the Scottish Parliament Act 2006, (“the 2006 Act”) and the Interests of Members of the Scottish Parliament (Amendment) Act 2016 (“the 2016 Act”).

1.3 For the purpose of considering this complaint, the relevant provisions are paragraphs 5.1.1 and 5.1.2 of Volume 2 of the Code. The relevant edition of the Code is edition 5 which was approved by the Parliament in April 2011.

1.4 Paragraphs 5.1.1 and 5.1.2 are in the following terms:-

Code of Conduct for MSPs Volume 2

5.1.1 A member should not, in relation to contact with any person or organisation who lobbies, do anything which contravenes this Code of Conduct or any other relevant rule of the Parliament or any statutory provision.

5.1.2 A member should not, in relation to contact with any person or organisation who lobbies, act in any way which could bring discredit upon the Parliament.

1.5 The investigation of the complaint has been undertaken in terms of the Scottish Parliamentary Standards Commissioner Act 2002 (“the 2002 Act”) and the Directions by the Standards Procedures and Public Appointments Committee dated 1 March 2012.

1.6 This Report falls to be submitted to the Parliament in terms of section 9 of the 2002 Act.

2.0 Complaint

2.1 The complainer is Mr Scott Simpson (“the complainer”) and his complaint is about Sandra White MSP (“the respondent”).

2.2 Ms White is the MSP for Glasgow Kelvin and is a member of the Scottish National Party.

2.3 The complaint relates to the respondent's actions in re-tweeting a cartoon showing piglets suckling from a sow bearing the name "ROTHSCHILD" and a picture incorporating the Star of David symbol. The piglets are separately identified by: a union jack flag and "MI5"; "MOSSAD" and "ISIS"; "AL-QAEDA"; a stars and stripes flag and "CIA"; an Israeli flag; and "BOKO HARAM".

2.4 The complaint was made on a complaint form dated 6 December 2015, which is attached as **Appendix 1**. The complainer also submitted screen shots of various tweets by Charles Edward Frith, including the one described in the preceding paragraph, and copies of press coverage of an apology made by the respondent in relation to the material which she had re-tweeted. Copies of the press articles are attached as **Appendix 2**.

2.5 The complaint referred to certain matters which are outside my jurisdiction, and to a section of the guidance set out in Volume 3 of the Code. It appeared to me, however, that the allegation might be relevant to paragraphs 5.1.1 and 5.1.2 of the Code. I so advised the complainer in my letter dated 18 December 2015, a copy of which is attached at **Appendix 3**.

3.0 Response

3.1 The respondent did not respond to my initial notification of the complaint by letter dated 23 December 2015, a copy of which is attached as **Appendix 4**.

4.0 Admissibility and investigation

4.1 Stage 1 of the investigation of a complaint requires an assessment of admissibility. In assessing admissibility, the key tests are whether the complaint is relevant, whether the complaint meets the requirements for form, content and execution and whether the complaint warrants further investigation if it appears after an initial investigation that the evidence is sufficient to suggest that the conduct complained about may have taken place.

4.2 The complaint clearly met the requirements of the second test of admissibility, as set out in section 6(5) of the 2002 Act. There was also sufficient evidence to suggest that the conduct complained about may have taken place, and therefore that the complaint satisfied the third test (2002 Act, section 6(6)). In relation to relevancy, which is the first test of admissibility, the complaint satisfied the first two elements, as set out in section 6(4) (a) and (b) and it appeared at first sight that the conduct complained about might amount to a breach of paragraphs 5.1.1 and 5.1.2 of the Code. I therefore advised the complainant, the respondent and the clerks to the Parliament's Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee that I had determined that the complaint was admissible.

4.3 In writing to the respondent at that stage, I indicated my intention to arrange an interview. The interview took place on 17 March 2016.

4.4 At interview, the respondent accepted that she had re-tweeted the cartoon, but explained that she had done so accidentally, on a weekend evening, when in fact she was attempting to delete it from her twitter account. Ms White demonstrated how she thought this had occurred, using her iPhone. She had been unaware that the cartoon was still on her twitter account until she was notified of a complaint made by the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities to the SNP headquarters on the following Monday. The respondent explained that, at that point, she had arranged for one of her staff to remove the cartoon from her twitter account, and had submitted an apology. Following further correspondence with the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities, the respondent issued a second apology by letter. A copy of the letter of apology dated 11 November 2015 is attached at **Appendix 5**).

4.5 Ms White indicated in the course of the interview that she did not know the originator of the cartoon and had had no contact with him except as a recipient of the tweet which she then re-tweeted as described. She explained that she had attempted to delete the cartoon because she considered it to be “vile”.

4.6 The respondent advised that the re-tweet had been made on a personal twitter account which she had had since around the time of the parliamentary election in 2011: records show that it was in fact March 2011. She is identified on the account as “Sandra White @SandraWhiteMSP”. Ahead of the interview, it appeared that the respondent had in excess of 6800 followers and was a follower of some 630 others. The originator of the cartoon was not amongst those whom the respondent followed.

4.7 There is no record of any further tweets from the originator of the cartoon appearing on the respondent’s twitter account during the period between my decision in December 2015 to proceed with a Stage 2 investigation and the interview held earlier this month.

4.8 The cartoon to which the complaint relates is clearly offensive, in the sense of being anti-Semitic. It appears that the originator regularly posts material on social media. However, I have no information to suggest that this material is targeted towards specific policy makers. It is therefore unclear whether he is to be regarded as a “person who lobbies” - a phrase which is not further defined in the Code.

5.0 Findings in Fact

5.1 I have made the following findings in fact:

- On the evening of Friday, 6 November 2015, the respondent retweeted a cartoon as described in paragraph 2.3 of this report.
- The cartoon contained offensive, anti-Semitic material.

- The respondent was attempting to delete the cartoon from her iPhone and re-tweeted it by mistake.
- Following a complaint made by the Scottish Council for Jewish Communities to the SNP headquarters in the following week, the respondent instructed the deletion of the cartoon from her twitter account and issued an apology for her mistake.
- The respondent issued a further apology by letter to the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities on 11 November, as shown in Appendix 5.
- The respondent did not initiate contact with the originator of the cartoon.
- Any “contact” between the respondent and the originator of the cartoon was, therefore, indirect and unsolicited, and there is no evidence of any subsequent contact between them.

5.2 I have been unable to determine whether the originator of the cartoon is to be regarded as a person who lobbies, in terms of paragraphs 5.1.1 and 5.1.2 of the Code.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 I have concluded that the respondent has not breached paragraphs 5.1.1 or 5.1.2 of the Code. Although the cartoon which she re-tweeted was offensive and could in other circumstances have been regarded as bringing discredit upon the Parliament, I am satisfied that (a) the respondent did not intend to re-tweet the cartoon, the content of which she decried (b) the respondent issued a full apology as soon as she was made aware of her error in re-tweeting the cartoon, (c) there is insufficient information to support a conclusion that the originator of the cartoon can or should be regarded as “any person ... who lobbies”, and (d) there is no evidence of anything which might properly be regarded as contact between the respondent and the originator of the cartoon.

Bill Thomson
Commissioner

21 March 2016

Appendix 1 — The Complaint

Appendix 2 — Extracts from The Jewish Chronicle Online dated November 12, 2015 and from BBC News online (Scotland Politics) dated 13 November 2015.

Appendix 3 — Letter to complainant dated 18 December 2015

Appendix 4 — Letter to respondent dated 23 December 2015

Appendix 5— Letter dated 11th November 2015 issued by the respondent to The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

COMPLAINT FORM

Please use this form if you wish to make a complaint alleging misconduct against:

- (a) a councillor; or
- (b) a member of a devolved public body; or
- (c) a MSP.

The complaint must be **legible** and **signed** by you.

If you need help to complete the form, please telephone the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland on **0300 011 0550**. Please note that we are an independent body, therefore are not able to assist you in formulating your complaint.

Your details

Title: Mr

First Name: Scott

Surname: Simpson

Address: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Postcode: [REDACTED]

Phone number (Day): [REDACTED]

(Evening): [REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Who are you complaining about? Please give the name of the councillor(s), member(s) or MSP(s) you consider has / have broken the Code of Conduct* and the name of their council or public body.

Name of the councillor/member/MSP

Name of their council or public body
(not applicable for MSPs)

Sandra White MSP

* The Councillors' Code of Conduct or the Code of Conduct for the public body. You can read the Codes on the web-site **www.publicstandardscommissioner.org.uk** or we can send you a copy. The MSPs' Code of Conduct can be found in the following web address: **http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/msp/conduct/code_final.pdf**

What are you complaining about? The Commissioner shall, so far as possible, investigate your complaint confidentially. Please note, to enable a full and fair investigation it is likely that your complaint will be forwarded to the person you are complaining about and to a limited number of senior officers in the relevant council/body.

What is the misconduct about which you are complaining? Please describe each incident in as much detail as possible.

It has been widely reported that Sandra White 'retweeted' an image received from Charles Frith of a cartoon showing piglets suckling from a pig bearing a Star of David and the word 'Rothschild'. The implication I assume is that 'the Jews' are responsible for wars. I understand that Frith is well known for his anti-Semitic views and has been described as a holocaust revisionist.

Such an image appears to be anti-Semitic and is likely to be grossly offensive to Jewish people. In my view there is a *prima facie* breach of section 74 of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003 – an Act passed by the Scottish Parliament of which Sandra White was a member. I am aware that Sandra White claims that the cartoon was 'retweeted' in error, but three questions arise: (a) was this error so serious as to bring the Scottish Parliament into disrepute, (b) was an 'official' computer or email account used either to receive or to redistribute this image and (c) is Sandra White fully co-operating with the police in Scotland and/or where Frith lives to establish whether any criminal offence has been committed? I believe these matters should be investigated by the Commissioner.

Which part of the Code do you feel has been breached (list separately for each person which you are complaining)?

Curiously, there appears to be no specific rule relating to the use of social media outside the Chamber. However, Volume 3, Section 7, paragraph 7.1 would seem to cover the position: 'Members of the Scottish Parliament are accountable to the Scottish electorate who will expect them to carry out their Parliamentary duties in an appropriate manner consistent with the standing of the Parliament and not to engage in any activity as a member that would bring the Parliament into disrepute.'

On what date(s) did this happen? Normally, you should make a complaint within one year of the alleged misconduct.

On or about 9 November 2015.

Have you made a complaint about the alleged misconduct to any other public authority? For example to the council or body concerned, the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman or any Parliamentary Authority.

No.

Supporting Evidence: Please attach copies of documents, names and details of witnesses and any other evidence that you feel is relevant to your complaint. Please **do not send** originals.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-34807884>

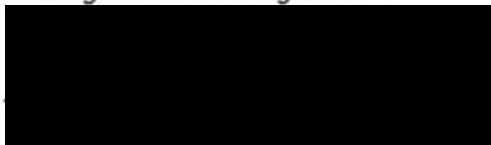
<https://storify.com/InTheSoupAgain/a-bucket-of-charles-frith-s-racism>

<http://everyday.antisemitism.uk/2015/11/09/scottish-politician-apologises-for-accidental-antisemitic-conspiracy-tweet/>

Declaration

I confirm that the information I have given in this form is correct to the best of my knowledge. I request that the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland investigates this allegation.

Signed:



Date: 6 Dec 2015

Please send this form to: **Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland, Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh, EH12 5HE.**

Tuesday 8 December, 2015

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Scottish National politician Sandra White apologises for posting 'repellent' antisemitic cartoon

By **Marcus Dysch**, November 12, 2015



A Scottish National Party politician has apologised "unreservedly" after she [posted an antisemitic image on Twitter](#).

Sandra White, who represents the party in the Glasgow Kelvin seat at Holyrood, had highlighted a cartoon of piglets suckling a large pig with the word "Rothschild" written on it and showing a bank with a Star of David.

The smaller animals were emblazoned with flags of countries including Britain and Israel and also carried the words Al-Qaeda and Mossad.

The image had originally been posted from an account run by a man called Charles Frith, who has repeatedly posted antisemitic messages and images. Ms White has previously re-posted messages from his account.

In an open letter to the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities, Ms White said she had not intended to re-tweet the image on the social media site.



The message Ms White re-tweeted

"I would like to take this opportunity to apologise unreservedly for the offence that has been caused by my accidental retweeting of this offensive image which I too find repellent and offensive," the MSP wrote.

"I had not intended to retweet this picture, and was horrified to learn that I had done so. As soon as this was brought to my attention, I deleted the tweet."

Ms White said she was well-known in Scotland for her "love and tolerance for all peoples; all faiths and all religions" and her work to "stand up for all suffering prejudice regardless of race or creed".

A long-standing critic of Israel and pro-Palestinian activist, Ms White said views on the Middle East conflict could not justify racial or religious hatred.

The tweet was removed from Ms White's account on Monday after the JC brought it to the SNP's attention.

ScoJeC had complained to Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon about the tweet.

The Jewish group said: "We were utterly appalled that any MSP should have seen fit to disseminate such a bizarre and hateful image as the right-hand side of the above picture, which, as we pointed out to the First Minister, is reminiscent of the very worst of Nazi propaganda."

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The Community Security Trust said it was "one of the most disgusting examples of antisemitism" ever from a politician.

Ms Sturgeon has repeatedly acknowledged the Jewish community's concerns about antisemitism in Scotland.

In September she said she did not believe there was an "antisemitic culture in the Scottish Parliament".

- Meanwhile the head of the SNP's Friends of Palestine group claims he was detained by security services in Israel after landing in the country earlier this week.

Andy Murray said he was held for more than 24 hours at both Ben Gurion Airport and at a detention centre before being deported back to Britain.

Mr Murray told the *Herald Scotland* newspaper that he believed a meeting with Israeli embassy officials at a conference in Aberdeen last month had led to the action against him.

His computer was allegedly searched by a security team before he was eventually put on a flight back to the UK.

Mr Murray said he had asked the SNP's Glasgow North West MP Carol Monaghan to contact the Foreign Office to ask for his release.

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Why the Scottish Green Party's 'hymn of hate' matters
SNP politician 'apologises' for 'offence caused' by antisemitic tweet
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Last updated: 2:56pm, November 12 2015

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Breaking

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MSP Sandra White apologies over anti-Semitic tweet

13 November 2015 | [Scotland politics](#)



An SNP MSP has apologised unreservedly after retweeting a "repellent and offensive" anti-Semitic image.

Sandra White said she had not intended to retweet the picture, and had deleted it when she realised what had happened.

The image showed six piglets suckling at a sow with the word "Rothschild" and the Star of David on it.

The piglets are shown as representing the UK, the US, Israel and terror groups Islamic State, Al Qaeda and Boko Haram.

Ms White has **written a letter of apology** to the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (ScoJec) for any offence that had been caused.

'Accidental retweeting'

In her letter, the Glasgow Kelvin MSP wrote: "I would like to take this opportunity to apologise unreservedly for the offence that has been caused by my accidental retweeting of this offensive image which I too find repellent and offensive.

"I had not intended to retweet this picture, and was horrified to learn that I had done so. As soon as this was brought to my attention, I deleted the tweet.

"Anyone who knows me or has known me over the many years I have served in public office will know of my love and tolerance for all peoples; all faiths and all religions."

Ms White **led a debate at the Scottish Parliament earlier this year** calling for Holyrood to recognise the Palestinian state and the need for a two state solution to the situation in Israel and Palestine.

But she said in her letter that "there is nothing that happens in Israel or Palestine that can be justification for any racial or religious hatred".

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has also written a letter to ScoJec director Ephraim Borowski in which she stated that "the image in question is certainly not something I would expect to see tweeted by Sandra or by any member of the party."

Ms Sturgeon added: "Having spoken to Sandra directly about this matter I know that she understands the seriousness of this accidental re-tweet and deeply regrets the offence it has caused. We all share the view that nothing must be done that provides the views expressed in the image any legitimacy whatsoever.

"Regarding the original tweet itself, I find it and the image it contained abhorrent. I will not tolerate anti-Semitism or religious or racial hatred of any kind at any level in our society."

Mr Borowski welcomed Ms White's apology and Ms Sturgeon's comments.

'Unequivocal condemnation'

He added: "Her original post was exceptionally public, broadcast on Twitter to an international audience, and remained there for three days before being deleted.

"We are glad she has now, as we requested, made her apology and unqualified condemnation of anti-Semitism in all its forms, wherever it may be found, equally public, by posting that on Twitter too.

"We are grateful to the first minister for her unequivocal condemnation of the original post as 'abhorrent' and 'completely unacceptable', and for making unambiguously clear her refusal to tolerate any form of anti-Semitism in Scottish society.

"We have replied expressing the hope that we will continue to maintain a constructive relationship with her government to the benefit of the Jewish community and Scotland as a whole."

ScoJec said the image retweeted by Ms White had been "reminiscent of the very worst of Nazi propaganda" in its use of "cartoon hook noses and rubbing hands" and had contained pictures that originated on neo-Nazi websites in the US.

It said the image had "played to the enduring anti-Semitic charge that Jews use wealth to control

others to go to war on their behalf."

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Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland

CONFIDENTIAL

Mr Scott Simpson

Reference: MSP/1846/15-16/20/DW

18 December 2015

Dear Mr Simpson

Public Standards
Code of Conduct for Members of the Scottish Parliament
Complaint against Sandra White MSP

I refer to your complaint form dated 6 December.

The procedure for dealing with a complaint about the conduct of an MSP is set out in Part 9 of Volume 3 the Code of Conduct for MSPs ("the Code"). Paragraph 9.9 requires me to notify the member who is the subject of the complaint. I will therefore be writing in early course to Sandra White MSP to inform her of the nature of your complaint. Please let me know by return if there is any reason why I should not disclose your name to her (in terms of paragraph 9.10 of the Code).

I am also required to consider whether your complaint is admissible, in terms of paragraphs 9.12 and 9.13 of Volume 3 of the Code. There are certain complaints which are excluded from my remit. These are set out in paragraph 9.1.6 of Volume 2 to the Code.

The use of an official computer or email account is governed by the Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme, in relation to which complaints are excluded under paragraph 9.1.6 (c). If you wish to pursue this aspect of your complaint, you should write to the Presiding Officer at the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh EH99 1SP, with a request that it be addressed by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body.

The first part of your complaint concerns what you perceive to be a prima facie breach of Section 74 of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003. You have also mentioned a question about whether Sandra White is co-operating fully with Police Scotland. Criminal investigations are outside the scope of the Code and of my remit. If you wish to pursue these issues, I would suggest that they should be raised with Police Scotland. Breach of a statutory provision, were that to be established, could be relevant in terms of paragraph 5.1.1 of Volume 2 of the Code. Paragraphs 5.1.1 and 5.1.2 are part of the section dealing with Lobbying and Access to MSPs. I intend to make an assessment of whether your complaint is admissible under one or other of those provisions of the Code.

Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland

Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh EH12 5HE

T: 0300 011 0550 E: info@ethicalstandards.org.uk W: <http://www.ethicalstandards.org.uk>

I am not aware that there are any other provisions in the Code which address your complaint about bringing the Parliament into disrepute. The paragraph to which you have referred in Volume 3 is purely for guidance. It is not therefore something which can form the basis of a complaint which I can investigate. However, if you consider that I have failed to take account of any aspect of your complaint, please let me know as soon as possible.

If you wish me not to inform Sandra White of your name when sending her notice of the nature of your complaint, please contact me no later than **Monday, 21 December 2015**.

You can write to me at:

Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland
Thistle House
91 Haymarket Terrace
Edinburgh
EH12 5HE

or email investigations@ethicalstandards.org.uk. Alternatively, you may telephone the Investigations Manager on 0131 347 3890.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Thomson". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of "Bill" and "Thomson" being capitalized and prominent.

Bill Thomson
Commissioner



Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland

CONFIDENTIAL

Ms Sandra White MSP
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Reference: MSP/1846/15-16/20/DW

23 December 2015

Dear Ms White

Public Standards
Code of Conduct for Members of the Scottish Parliament
Complaint by Mr Scott Simpson

I received a complaint from Mr Scott Simpson relating to your re-tweeting of a cartoon by Charles Frith showing piglets suckling from a sow bearing the name ROTHSCHILD and a picture incorporating the Star of David symbol.

The complaint alleges that you have brought the Parliament into disrepute; it questions whether an official computer or email account was used, and suggests that you may have contravened section 74 of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003, as well as querying whether you are co-operating with Police Scotland.

I have advised the complainant to contact Police Scotland if he wishes to pursue the criminal issue and co-operation with the police, and the Presiding Officer if he wishes to pursue the use of parliamentary resources.

I am considering whether the complaint is admissible in terms of paragraph 5.1.1 or 5.1.2 of Volume 2 of the Code of Conduct for MSPs. An extract of these paragraphs is attached/noted below for ease of reference.

If you wish to make any comment at this stage, please email or write to me by Monday, 11 January 2016.

Yours sincerely

Bill Thomson
Commissioner

Enc: MSP Code of Conduct Extract

5.1.1 and 5.1.2 of Volume 2 of the Code of Conduct for MSPs

5.1.1 A member should not, in relation to contact with any person or organisation who lobbies, do anything which contravenes this Code of Conduct or any other relevant rule of the Parliament or any statutory provision.

5.1.2 A member should not, in relation to contact with any person or organisation who lobbies, act in any way which could bring discredit upon the Parliament.



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Sandra White MSP

for Glasgow Kelvin

PUTTING KELVIN FIRST



[REDACTED]
The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities
[REDACTED]

11th November 2015

Dear [REDACTED]

I would like to take this opportunity to apologise unreservedly for the offence that has been caused by my accidental retweeting of this offensive image which I too find repellent and offensive.

I had not intended to retweet this picture, and was horrified to learn that I had done so. As soon as this was brought to my attention, I deleted the tweet.

Anyone who knows me or has known me over the many years I have served in public office will know of my love and tolerance for all peoples; all faiths and all religions.

They will know of my steely commitment to stand up for all suffering prejudice regardless of race or creed.

There is nothing that happens in Israel or Palestine that can be justification for any racial or religious hatred.

I truly believe that Scots of all backgrounds are welcoming and inclusive and this is something I have always been proud of.

I recently visited the Jewish Archives Centre in Glasgow, where I saw first-hand the immense contribution that the Jewish community has made to Scotland in recent years.

Once again, I would like to take this opportunity to apologise unreservedly for any offence that has been caused.

Yours sincerely,

Sandra White MSP

PUTTING KELVIN FIRST - SANDRA WHITE MSP

Sandra White MSP

Room 5.07, Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

Tel: 0131 348 5688 Fax: 0131 348 5945 email: sandra.white.msp@scottish.parliament.uk

