



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body
Thursday 11 September 2025 (Session 6)

Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme – Website Complaints

Executive summary

1. The SPCB is invited to consider the findings of investigations into several complaints received in relation to the content of Members' websites funded by Parliament resources. The complaints allege that the websites are in breach of the SPCB's Policy on [SPCB's Policy on Members parliamentary funded communications](#) (The SPCB's Policy).

Issues and options

2. Complaints have been received for the following Members' websites: Angela Constance MSP; Jenny Gilruth MSP; Jenni Minto MSP; Rachael Hamilton MSP; Sarah Boyack MSP; Jackie Baillie MSP; Claire Baker MSP; Shona Robison MSP; Foyso Choudhury MSP; Monica Lennon MSP; Martin Whitfield MSP and Paul O'Kane MSP.
3. The SPCB's Policy requires that Members seeking reimbursement for their website costs must ensure that websites only include information regarding their Parliamentary duties in their electoral area, their work in the Parliament or the work of the Parliament itself. Members' websites funded from Parliament resources must not:
 - include party logos or be party political in nature;
 - criticise individuals, other parties, government or other campaigning organisations;
 - refer to governments by their parties;
 - include live social media feeds which are party political in nature;
4. Members may make reference to other roles they hold, including ministerial or shadow spokesperson roles however, Members may not describe the work they perform or have performed in these capacities.

5. If a Member has claimed reimbursement for website costs in the past, and has then opted to fund it privately, they are typically asked to repay some or all the historic costs, depending on when the costs were reimbursed. Members are then required to meet all costs privately thereafter.
6. The complaints received allege that the content of 12 Members' websites breach the SPCB's Policy. Each complaint has been investigated by officials and the findings, together with the actions taken to date, are detailed below for the SPCB's consideration.
7. The findings arising from each investigation have been consolidated into this paper, given the consistent themes within each complaint, that some complaints related to multiple Members and the timescale that each were received. Screen shots have not been provided but will be made available to the SPCB if so required. In each case, the SPCB is invited to consider the action to be taken which may include:
 - instructing removal of any content that breaches the SPCB's Policy;
 - seeking repayment of the costs that have been reimbursed to each member proportionately, based on the evidence gathered, the extent of each breach and the period of that breach; and/or
 - taking further action by referring any of the complaints to the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee.

Angela Constance MSP

8. The complainant has alleged that Ms Constance's website at <https://www.angelaconstance.scot/> includes:
 - A party logo and branding on multiple occasions;
 - information of a party-political nature that goes beyond the factual, non-partisan requirements of the parliamentary funded communications policy; and
 - information on Ms Constance's role as a Scottish Government Minister including updates and announcements related to her ministerial responsibilities.
9. Officials reviewed Ms Constance's website including, but not limited to, the examples provided by the complainant. Ms Constance was contacted to advise that the complaint had been received, together with the specific details of the complaint. Ms Constance was also provided with screen shots from the website to support the initial findings of the investigation.
10. The initial findings confirmed that advice on website set up and content, consistent with the SPCB's Policy, was provided to Ms Constance's staff in 2023.

Reference: SPCB (2025) – Paper 39

It was further confirmed that the website, following its creation, complied with the SPCB's policy. In the current session, website development and annual hosting costs totalling £1,751.18 have been reimbursed.

11. A review of the website confirmed that the complaint is valid. The website was found to include party logos, be critical of other parties and the current and previous Governments. The website also included news releases and images about the work of the Scottish Government and Ms Constance's ministerial role.
12. During discussions, Ms Constance accepted that the complaints are valid, has apologised for the oversight and errors and accepts full responsibility for the website's content. Ms Constance has further offered to repay any costs that the SPCB determines appropriate. Ms Constance has suspended the website pending the SPCB decision and has committed to ensuring that future versions of the website comply with the SPCB's policy.
13. Given the website complied with the SPCB's Policy in 2023, as confirmed by Parliament officials at that time, it is recommended that Ms Constance be asked to:
 - ensure that any and all information in breach of the SPCB's Policy be removed;
 - repay a proportionate amount of £270 that being half of the website's annual hosting costs, based on the extent of the breach and time period of that breach;
 - provide assurances that no further breaches of the SPCB's Policy will occur.
14. The SPCB will wish to note that Ms Constance has offered to repay the full amount that was reimbursed to her for website costs in the current session immediately upon being made aware of the complaint. However, as her website complied with the Policy in 2023, this would be disproportionate given the actions taken immediately by Ms Constance and the assurances that she has provided.

Jenny Gilruth MSP

15. The complainant has alleged that Ms Gilruth's website at <https://jennygilruthmsp.scot> includes:
 - pieces with information about the Glenrothes By-election in April 2025 and the Glenrothes Central and Thornton By-election in April 2025; and
 - party campaigning messages promoting the party and criticising other parties.
16. Officials reviewed Ms Gilruth's website including, but not limited to, the examples provided by the complainant. Ms Gilruth was contacted to advise that the complaint had been received, together with the specific details of the complaint.

Reference: SPCB (2025) – Paper 39

Ms Gilruth was also provided with screen shots from the website to support the initial findings of the investigation.

17. A review of the website confirmed that the complaint is valid. Two news articles specific to the by-elections and their results were available to view online and other items promoted a party and criticised other parties. Claims in respect of the creation of the website and associated annual hosting costs of £5,398 have been reimbursed in this session.
18. During discussions, Ms Gilruth accepted that the complaints are valid, has apologised for the oversight and errors and accepts full responsibility for the website's content. She has since taken appropriate actions to comply fully with the SPCB's Policy. She has also advised that her Office Manager has carried out an internal review and additional checks are now in place to avoid future reoccurrence. Staff will attend training to refresh understanding of the SPCB's Policy.
19. Based on the extent of the breach, action already taken and the time period of that breach, it is recommended that Ms Gilruth be asked to:
 - repay a proportionate amount of £78.83 being equivalent to one month of the website's annual hosting costs; and
 - provide assurances that no further breaches of the SPCB's Policy will occur.

Jenni Minto MSP

20. The complainant has alleged that Ms Minto's website at <https://www.jenniminto.scot> includes:
 - Promotion of a party, through party-political messaging and content; and
 - Hosts content that exceeds the factual, non-partisan remit expected of Parliament-funded communications;
21. Officials reviewed Ms Minto's website including, but not limited to, the examples provided by the complainant. Ms Minto was contacted to advise that the complaint had been received, together with the specific details of the complaint. Ms Minto was also provided with screen shots from the website to support the initial findings of the investigation.
22. While it was confirmed that Ms Minto's website is privately funded, and no web related costs have been reimbursed in the current session, the website includes the Parliament's identity and includes a statement that the website costs are met from parliamentary resources.
23. Ms Minto has advised that whilst it was initially intended that the site become an official parliamentary website, the decision has since been taken to close the website. Ms Minto further has advised that the site has not been updated for some time due to technical difficulties.

24. Although the website is funded privately, it is recommended that Ms Minto be asked to:

- ensure that the website is closed or amended to remove the Parliament's identity and the statement that the website has been funded from Parliament resources; and
- provide assurances that any future website complies with the SPCB's Policy as appropriate.

Rachael Hamilton MSP

25. The complainant has alleged that Ms Hamilton's website at <https://www.rachaelhamilton.co.uk> includes:

- A party logo;
- references to the Member as the Scottish Conservative and Unionist MSP for Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire or your MSP;
- information on their party roles as well as work done in those roles;
- news pieces that refer to Borders Conservatives and which are party political in nature and not solely about the Members' work;
- referring to Government by party;
- being critical of both Scottish and UK Governments and individuals in various news pieces; and
- material that would be seen as electioneering and campaigning.

26. Officials reviewed Ms Hamilton's website including, but not limited to, the examples provided by the complainant. Ms Hamilton was contacted to advise that the complaint had been received, together with the specific details of the complaint. Ms Hamilton was also provided with screen shots from the website to support the initial findings of the investigation.

27. A review of the website confirmed that the complaint is valid. The website was found to include all of the issues raised within the complaint. A total of £960 has been reimbursed for website annual hosting costs in the current session.

28. Officials contacted Ms Hamilton in March 2024 advising that changes were required to the website to ensure compliance with the SPCB's Policy and eligibility for reimbursement for website costs. This included the removal of social media feed and removing party logos and branding. Ms Hamilton was invited to revert to officials for further review following changes or to advise if the website would be funded privately. Officials would then give consideration to any repayment of costs relating to the website that had already been reimbursed.

Reference: SPCB (2025) – Paper 39

29. Ms Hamilton did not respond to officials in 2024 and has not made any of the changes recommended or repaid any funds already claimed. Ms Hamilton has since advised that the website has been funded privately following the advice provided in 2024. It was confirmed that Ms Hamilton has not sought reimbursement for website costs since June 2024.

30. While it has been confirmed that Ms Hamilton is currently funding the website privately, it is recommended that Ms Hamilton be asked to:

- repay a proportionate amount of £180 being half of the website's annual hosting costs, based on the extent of the breach, the time period of that breach and previous advice provided; and
- provide assurances that no further breaches of the SPCB's Policy will occur.

Sarah Boyack MSP

31. The complainant has alleged that Ms Boyack's website at <https://sarahboyack.com/> includes:

- work the Member undertook as a Minister and party spokesperson.

32. Officials reviewed Ms Boyack's website including, but not limited to, the examples provided by the complainant. Ms Boyack was contacted to advise that the complaint had been received, together with the specific details of the complaint. Ms Boyack was also provided with screen shots from the website to support the initial findings of the investigation.

33. A review of the website confirmed that the complaint is valid. References are made to Ms Boyack being a former Minister and being a party spokesperson as well as the work she performed in those roles.

34. While Members can include references to party spokesperson or Ministerial roles in their parliamentary funded communications, they may not include the work they undertake in these roles. Total website hosting costs of £422.14 have been reimbursed in the current session. Ms Boyack has apologised for this error and has now made the necessary changes to the site.

35. Given the minor extent of the breach identified, it is recommended that no further action be required.

Jackie Baillie MSP

36. The complainant has alleged that Ms Baillie's website at: <https://www.jackiebaillie.scot/> includes:

- References to the Scottish Government by party.

37. Officials reviewed Ms Baillie's website including, but not limited to, the examples provided by the complainant. Ms Baillie was contacted to advise that the

complaint had been received, together with the specific details of the complaint. Ms Baillie was also provided with screen shots from the website to support the initial findings of the investigation.

38. A review of the website confirmed that the complaint is valid. A number of online news items were found to include references to the Scottish Government by party name and were found on some occasions to be critical in nature.
39. During discussions, Ms Baillie accepted that the complaints are valid and has apologised for the oversight and error. Ms Baillie further advised that the website had previously been privately funded and has been parliamentary funded in the current session only.
40. Ms Baillie advised that she was generally careful of how information is published on the website but highlighted that errors are more likely given similar text is used when issuing other forms of communications, including press releases. As a result, Ms Baillie has advised that the website will be privately funded in future and no claims for reimbursement will be sought for 2025. Claims totalling £4,420.87 have been reimbursed in the current session for the period 2021 to 2024.
41. Ms Baillie believes that there may be merit in reviewing the apparent inconsistencies in the SPCB's Policy and other parliamentary practices, such as being able to use certain terms in the Chamber and then include clips from the Chamber in parliamentary funded communications. Ms Baillie was advised that this would be included in the next review of the SPCB's Policy.
42. Given this the website will no longer be parliamentary funded, it is recommended that Ms Baillie be asked to ensure that the Parliament's identity and the statement that the website is funded from Parliament resources be removed.

Claire Baker MSP

43. The complainant has alleged that Ms Baker's website at: <https://clairebaker.org/> includes:

- reference to a spokesperson role; and
- reference to the Government by party.

44. Officials reviewed Ms Baker's website including, but not limited to, the examples provided by the complainant. Ms Baker was contacted to advise that the complaint had been received, together with the specific details of the complaint. Ms Baker was also provided with screen shots from the website to support the initial findings of the investigation.
45. A review of the website confirmed that the complaint is valid, however it should be noted that no new content has been added after 2021. The website was found to include references to Ms Baker's previous role as a shadow spokesperson and the work performed in that role. Items critical of Government and references to the Government by party were also identified. As a

parliamentary funded website, the site should include the parliament identity but does not. Claims for website costs of £394 have been reimbursed in the current session.

46. Ms Baker has apologised for the oversight and error and confirmed, that following resolution of some technical issues, she has recently updated the website and has now taken steps to comply with the SPCB's Policy.

47. It is recommended that Ms Baker be asked to provide assurances that any future Parliament funded website is fully compliant with the SPCB's Policy.

Shona Robison MSP

48. The complainant has alleged that Ms Robison's website at <http://shona.robison.scot/> includes:

- A live embed of a Twitter/X feed, which includes multiple retweets that appear to be party political in nature.
- That those tweets and retweets were critical of other parties and Government.

49. Officials reviewed Ms Robison's website including, but not limited to, the examples provided by the complainant. Ms Robison was contacted to advise that the complaint had been received, together with the specific details of the complaint. Ms Robison was also provided with screen shots from the website to support the initial findings of the investigation.

50. A review of the website has confirmed that the complaint is valid. The website includes a link to her live Twitter/X feed and includes additional party-political tweets then retweeted by Ms Robison.

51. Ms Robison has apologised for this oversight and error and the site has been amended to remove the live social media feed. Ms Robison advised that she and her office were not aware that these could not be included and has recently re-circulated the SPCB's to her staff. There were no other breaches on the website. Claims for website costs totalling £789.60 have been reimbursed in the current session.

52. Given the findings and action already taken by Ms Robison, it is recommended that Ms Robison be asked to provide assurances that any future Parliament funded website is fully compliant with the SPCB's Policy

Foyso Choudhury MSP

53. The complainant has alleged that Mr Choudhury's website at <https://foysolchoudhury.co.uk/> includes

- References to a party spokesperson role.

Reference: SPCB (2025) – Paper 39

54. Officials reviewed Mr Choudhury's website including, but not limited to, the examples provided by the complainant. Mr Choudhury was contacted to advise that the complaint had been received, together with the specific details of the complaint. Mr Choudhury was also provided with screen shots from the website to support the initial findings of the investigation.
55. While a review of the website confirmed that the website includes references to Mr Choudhury's party spokesperson role, it was confirmed that the website is privately funded. While website design costs of £250 were reimbursed to Mr Choudry in 2021 for website design, Mr Choudhury has confirmed that the costs reimbursed at that time were not for the current website and no reimbursement claims have been submitted since.
56. Given the findings, and confirmation from Mr Choudhury that the website is privately funded, no further action is required.

Monica Lennon MSP

57. The complainant has alleged that Ms Lennon's website at <https://monicalennonmsp.org/> includes:
- references to a party;
 - reference to the Government by party; and
 - content that was critical of the Government.
58. Officials reviewed Ms Lennon's website including, but not limited to, the examples provided by the complainant. Ms Lennon was contacted to advise that the complaint had been received, together with the specific details of the complaint. Ms Lennon was also provided with screen shots from the website to support the initial findings of the investigation.
59. A review of the website confirmed that the complaint is valid. The website contains references to a party and one item makes references to the Government by party name. Critical comments about the Government were also evident. In the current session, claims totalling £1,261 have been reimbursed for website costs.
60. Ms Lennon has apologised for the oversight and error and has taken action to address the issues immediately on becoming aware of them. It was advised that multiple staff members update the website and oversights and errors may have arisen as a result. Ms Lennon has instructed an internal review of the website and further training for staff to ensure all are aware of the SPCB's Policy.
61. Based on the extent of the breach, action already taken and the time period of that breach, it is recommended that Ms Lennon be asked to
- ensure that any and all information in breach of the SPCB's policy is removed;

Reference: SPCB (2025) – Paper 39

- repay a proportionate amount of £22.46 being equivalent to one month of the website's annual hosting costs; and
- provide assurances that no further breaches of the SPCB's Policy will occur.

Martin Whitfield MSP

62. The complainant alleged that Mr Whitfield's website at <https://www.martinwhitfieldmsp.com/> includes:

- reference to Government by party; and
- content that was critical of Government.

63. Officials reviewed Mr Whitfield's website including, but not limited to, the examples provided by the complainant. Mr Whitfield was contacted to advise that the complaint had been received, together with the specific details of the complaint. Mr Whitfield was also provided with screen shots from the website to support the initial findings of the investigation.

64. A review of the website confirmed that the complaint is valid. The website makes one reference to Government by party name. Critical comment of the Government and one individual within Government was also evident. In the current session, claims totalling £2,335 have been reimbursed for website costs.

65. Mr Whitfield has apologised for the oversight and error and has confirmed that he took action to address the issues identified immediately when he became aware of them.

66. Given the findings and action already taken by Mr Whitfield, it is recommended that Mr Whitfield be reminded the SPCB's Policy.

Paul O'Kane MSP

67. The complainant alleged that Mr O'Kane's website at (<https://paulokanemsp.scot/>) includes:

- promotion of party views,
- reference to a party spokesperson role.
- reference to Government by party; and
- content that was critical of Government.

68. Officials reviewed Mr O'Kane's website including, but not limited to, the examples provided by the complainant. Mr O'Kane was contacted to advise that the complaint had been received, together with the specific details of the complaint. Mr O'Kane was also provided with screen shots from the website to support the initial findings of the investigation.

69. A review of the website confirmed that the complaint is valid. Mr O’Kane has included reference to a party, provided information in respect of a party’s plans, has been critical of Government and referred to the Government by party. Mr O’Kane further refers to the party when referencing Council roles and a shadow ministerial role. In the current session, claims totalling £6,310 have been reimbursed for website costs.

70. Mr O’Kane has apologised for the oversights and errors noting that these were included in the early phase of the whilst he was less familiar with the SPCB’s Policy. Mr O’Kane has advised that no non-compliant content has been posted on his website since and his office has taken action to address the issues identified immediately when they became aware of them.

71. It is recommended that the SPCB note the action already taken by Mr O’Kane to address the issues raised. Given that the SPCB’s Policy has been applied by Mr O’Kane in recent years, it is recommended that no further action be taken.

Governance

72. Members are required under the code of conduct to follow all SPCB policies. The SPCB are responsible for considering the findings of any investigation into a policy breach.

Resource implications

73. The resource implications of this paper relate to the repayment of expenses by Members rather than additional costs.

Publication Scheme

74. This paper can be published in line with the SPCB’s publication policy.

Next steps

75. Following consideration by the SPCB, each Member will be advised of the outcome and responses issued in relation to the SPCB’s finding to the different complainers accordingly.

Decision

76. The SPCB is invited to consider the recommendations as detailed in the paper above.