



House of Commons
Committee on
Standards and Privileges

**Conduct of
Mr George Galloway**

Sixth Report of Session 2004–05

*Report and Appendix
together with formal minutes*

*Ordered by The House of Commons
to be printed 5 April 2005*

Committee on Standards and Privileges

The Committee on Standards and Privileges is appointed by the House of Commons to oversee the work of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards; to examine the arrangements proposed by the Commissioner for the compilation, maintenance and accessibility of the Register of Members' Interests and any other registers of interest established by the House; to review from time to time the form and content of those registers; to consider any specific complaints made in relation to the registering or declaring of interests referred to it by the Commissioner; to consider any matter relating to the conduct of Members, including specific complaints in relation to alleged breaches in the Code of Conduct which have been drawn to the Committee's attention by the Commissioner; and to recommend any modifications to the Code of Conduct as may from time to time appear to be necessary.

Current membership

Rt Hon Sir George Young Bt MP (*Conservative, North West Hampshire*) (Chairman)
Mrs Angela Browning MP (*Conservative, Tiverton and Honiton*)
Mr Wayne David MP (*Labour, Caerphilly*)
Mr Andrew Dismore MP (*Labour, Hendon*)
Rt Hon Derek Foster MP (*Labour, Bishop Auckland*)
Mr David Heath CBE MP (*Liberal Democrat, Somerton and Frome*)
Rt Hon Andrew Mackay MP (*Conservative, Bracknell*)
Mr Kevin McNamara MP (*Labour, Hull North*)
Mr Stephen Pound MP (*Labour, Ealing North*)
Mr Simon Thomas MP (*Plaid Cymru, Ceredigion*)

Powers

The constitution and powers of the Committee are set out in Standing Order No. 149. In particular, the Committee has power to order the attendance of any Member of Parliament before the committee and to require that specific documents or records in the possession of a Member relating to its inquiries, or to the inquiries of the Commissioner, be laid before the Committee. The Committee has power to refuse to allow its public proceedings to be broadcast. The Law Officers, if they are Members of Parliament, may attend and take part in the Committee's proceedings, but may not vote.

Publications

The Reports and evidence of the Committee are published by The Stationery Office by Order of the House. All publications of the Committee (including press notices) are on the Internet at: www.parliament.uk/sandp. A list of Reports of the Committee in the present Parliament is at the back of this volume.

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Dr Christopher Ward (Clerk), Miss Jenny McCullough (Second Clerk) and Lisa Hasell (Secretary).

Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to The Clerk of the Committee on Standards and Privileges, Journal Office, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 6615.

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Conduct of Mr George Galloway

1. In April 2003, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards received complaints alleging that Mr George Galloway, Member for Glasgow Kelvin, had received some £375,000 from the former Iraqi regime, under the guise of the United Nations' Oil for Food Programme, which he had not recorded in the Register of Members' Interests. The underlying allegations became the subject of a libel action between Mr Galloway and the Telegraph Group Limited, publishers of the *Daily Telegraph*.

2. In December 2003, in our first Report of Session 2003–04,¹ we agreed with the Commissioner that, for the reasons he set out in a memorandum published with that report, it would not be appropriate either to dispose of the complaints at that stage, or for him to pursue further his inquiries of Mr Galloway that referred to matters in dispute in the legal action. We accepted that this would mean “some delay” in reaching conclusions on the complaints, and undertook both to keep the matter under constant review and to report further to the House as necessary.

3. Judgement in the libel action was given in Mr Galloway's favour on 2 December 2004 and, following this, the Commissioner resumed his inquiries of Mr Galloway. We have now considered a further memorandum from the Commissioner on progress since December 2003, in which he reports that the Telegraph Group Limited has started the legal processes involved in seeking leave to appeal against the judgement.

4. We agree with the Commissioner that it would not be appropriate for him to pursue the complaints further while the legal proceedings between Mr Galloway and the Telegraph Group Limited continue. We regret that this will inevitably mean further delay in completing the Commissioner's investigation of these serious complaints. As it must be in both the public interest, and the interest of all concerned, for the Commissioner to be able to conclude his inquiries as soon as possible into matters which have now been under investigation by him for almost two years, we hope that every effort will be made by all concerned to avoid any unnecessary delay in concluding the remaining legal proceedings.

¹ HC 73 (2003–04).

Appendix: Memorandum from the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards

Complaints against Mr George Galloway

1. In April 2003 I received complaints asking me to investigate allegations about Mr George Galloway (the Member for Glasgow Kelvin) based on documents reported to have been found by a Daily Telegraph reporter in Baghdad. The documents purported to show that Mr Galloway had received some £375,000 from the former Iraqi regime, under the guise of the UN Oil for Food Programme, which he had not recorded in the Register of Members' Interests.

2. In December 2003 I reported to the Committee that, in the light of legal advice that disposing of these complaints could, in some circumstances, prejudice a libel action which Mr Galloway had begun against the Telegraph Group Limited, I could not complete my inquiries until after the action was concluded. The Committee agreed that it would not be appropriate either to dispose of the complaints at that stage or for me to pursue my inquiries of Mr Galloway referring to matters in dispute in the legal action. (First Report, Session 2003–04, HC 73).

3. Judgment in the libel action was given in Mr Galloway's favour on 2 December 2004. In his judgment, Mr Justice Eady made clear that his decision to award Mr Galloway damages against the Daily Telegraph did not imply a finding one way or the other on the truthfulness of the allegations against Mr Galloway:

“There has been no plea of justification in this case, and accordingly it has not been part of my function to rule directly upon the truth or otherwise of the underlying allegations [against Mr Galloway].”

4. Following delivery of the judgment I re-commenced my inquiries of Mr Galloway, and interviewed him about the complaints on 24 February 2005. I have also continued, as I did pending and during the trial, to pursue other lines of inquiry concerning the complaints.

5. During my meeting with him on 24 February Mr Galloway informed me that the Telegraph Group Limited intended to seek leave to appeal Mr Justice Eady's judgment. This has since been confirmed by the company. I understand that the legal process involved has already begun.

6. In the light of all the information and advice available to me, I consider it would be inappropriate for me to seek to conclude my investigation of the outstanding complaints against Mr Galloway while legal proceedings continue. There is the additional consideration that some avenues of inquiry not directly involving Mr Galloway have also yet to be concluded, and that concluding them falls outside my immediate control.

7. I invite the Committee to note the current position. I will, of course, seek to bring my inquiries to a close as soon as I am able to do so.

4 April 2005

Sir Philip Mawer

Formal minutes

Tuesday 5 April 2005

Members present:

Sir George Young, in the Chair

Mrs Angela Browning
Mr Wayne David
Mr Andrew Dismore
Mr Derek Foster

Mr Andrew Mackay
Mr Kevin McNamara
Mr Stephen Pound

* * *

Mr Stephen Pound reaffirmed his declaration [11 May 2004] that, in view of remarks he had made about Mr Galloway in a radio interview broadcast in Canada on 23 October 2003, before he was nominated for appointment to the Committee, he would take no part in any proceedings relating to the conduct of Mr Galloway.

The Committee further deliberated.

Draft Report [Conduct of Mr George Galloway], proposed by the Chairman, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 4 read and agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Sixth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chairman do make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That the Memorandum from the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards be appended to the Report.

Ordered, That the Appendix to the Report be reported to the House.—(*The Chairman.*)

* * *

[Adjourned till Tuesday 19 April at 9.30 am.]

Reports from the Committee on Standards and Privileges in the current Parliament

Session 2004–05

First Report	Conduct of Mr Anthony Steen	HC 71
Second Report	Conduct of Mr David Blunkett	HC 189
Third Report	Conduct of Mr Jonathan Sayeed	HC 233
Fourth Report	Review of the Code of Conduct	HC 472
Fifth Report	Conduct of Mr Jonathan Sayeed: Further Report	HC 473
Sixth Report	Conduct of Mr George Galloway	HC 509

Session 2003–04

First Report	Conduct of Mr George Galloway	HC 73
Second Report	Conduct of Ms Diane Abbott	HC 285
Third Report	Conduct of Mr John Spellar	HC 339
Fourth Report	Conduct of Mr Iain Duncan Smith	HC 476 I–III
Fifth Report	Privilege: Protection of a Witness	HC 447
Sixth Report	Privilege: Protection of a Witness (Government Response)	HC 1055

Session 2002–03

First Special Report	Standards of Conduct: Letters from the Committee on Standards in Public Life	HC 516
First Report	Complaint against Mr Nigel Griffiths	HC 195
Second Report	Eighth Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life: "Standards of Conduct in the House of Commons"	HC 403
Third Report	Complaints against Mr Michael Trend	HC 435
Fourth Report	Complaints against Mr Henry McLeish	HC 946
Fifth Report	Complaints against Mr Clive Betts	HC 947
Sixth Report	Pay for Select Committee Chairmen	HC 1150
Seventh Report	Guidance for Chairmen and Members of Select Committees	HC 1292

Session 2001–02

First Report	Complaint against Mr Geoffrey Robinson: Supplementary Report	HC 297
Second Report	Complaint against Mr Roy Beggs	HC 319
Third Report	Complaint against Mr John Maxton	HC 320
Fourth Report	Restrictions on the Initiation of Parliamentary Proceedings: A Consultation Paper	HC 478

Fifth Report	Complaints against Mr Keith Vaz	HC 605 I-II
Sixth Report	Registration of Interests by Members who have not taken their seat	HC 624
Seventh Report	Complaints against Mr Nigel Griffiths	HC 625
Eighth Report	Complaints against Mr Archy Kirkwood	HC 755
Ninth Report	A new Code of Conduct and Guide to the Rules	HC 763
Tenth Report	Complaint against Mr Peter Brooke	HC 1147