

**HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT POLICE AND CRIME PANEL
COMPLAINTS SUB-COMMITTEE**

Report

Date:	16 June 2023
Title:	Complaints and additional comments
Report From:	Democratic Services Officer to the Panel

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Purpose of this Report

1. This report was prepared to inform Members of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Police and Crime Panel Complaints Sub-Committee (the Sub-Committee) of a complaint received against the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

Recommendation(s)

That the Complaints Sub-Committee:

2. Notes the content of this report and its appendices.

Executive Summary

3. This report was prepared to inform the Sub-Committee of a complaint received against the PCC.
4. The report requests that the Complaints Sub-Committee come to an agreement on the action to be taken in response to the complaint.

Contextual information

5. The complaint was received from complainant the on 30 April 2023.
6. The Monitoring Officer to the Panel has determined that the complaint may be treated anonymously at the public meeting, as the name and any personal details of the complainant are not relevant to the consideration of the complaint.

7. In accordance with the 'Protocol for the Informal Resolution Procedure Regarding Complaints made Against the PCC', the Democratic Support Officer has convened a meeting of the Complaints Sub-Committee.
8. The Democratic Services Officer wrote to the complainant and complained against, on 19 May 2023, setting out the timescales and informal resolution procedure, and giving all parties the opportunity to comment upon the complaints. All parties were given at least 14 calendar days to provide this information. No comments were received from either the complainant or the PCC.
9. Within their meeting the Sub-Committee will first consider whether the informal process should be applied, whether the complaints have been satisfactorily dealt with and, subject to any representations made may decide to treat the complaints as having been resolved. In such case, the Complaints Sub-Committee's reasons will be recorded and notified to the complainants and the PCC. If, on considering the complaints, the Complaints Sub-Committee feel that the matter needs to be formally resolved, it will decide its course of action and set this out in writing.

Complaints

10. The complaint to be considered by the Sub-Committee is worded below:

Donna Jones appeared on "GB News" and interviewed by Nigel Farage. Link to the channels clip of her appearance - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jKVVUPO81V8> "GB News" is not an impartial news channel, and has within less than two years of launching, been penalised by Ofcom, which also has further investigations into GB News ongoing. GB News is commonly known to be a politically very right-leaning entertainment channel that does not itself purport to be a respectable, independent news channel. Nigel Farage's own background needs little explaining, other than he is well known to be a very right-wing politician whose countless racist, xenophobic, Islamophobic and sexist comments are well reported. Ofcom investigations, and upheld complaints, into GB News include transgressions involving covid vaccines, political impartiality and racism/anti-semitism. The PPC's involvement reflects badly on her judgement and brings the wider police service's political impartiality into disrepute. This gives rise to two breaches of the Nolan Principles of conduct of public officials: Selflessness. There is no apparent public interest in the Police and Crime Commissioner appearing on a TV channel of this reputation, particularly in light of the abundance of legitimate news channels, publishers and social media that are available as alternatives. Objectivity. Appearing on a politically right-wing entertainment channel to be interviewed by a well-known, very right-wing politician displays a clear and unequivocal lack of objectivity. During the introduction to the interview, referring to the increased recruitment of police officers, Farage stated "really? Where are they? I haven't seen them. Oh I see them in cars, driving around, or normally sat at

the side of a motorway, making sure you're complying with the speed limit, but I don't seem them on the streets". Jones did nothing to dispute this lazy, harmful cliché. Jones did, however, state that "Some of them (Hampshire's own police officers) don't know how to investigate crime, they need to learn to do that". She also added (referring to new recruits) "they have spent a lot of the last three years sat in a classroom". She went on "we can have them learning about how to arrest people....rather than write essays about it". The ignorance of these comments is staggering. If Jones was unable to state anything positive about police officers in Hampshire, she was, rather predictably, rather more flowing with her praise for our dishonest, race-baiting, wretched government, including Suella Braverman and Chris Philp, both of whom, were they police officers, would long ago have been discharged for their various examples of dishonesty, misconduct and breaches of standards. According to the Police and Crime Commissioner's Code of Conduct, her appearance on this TV Channel has brought the office and the wider police service into disrepute (2.1.4) and misused her role improperly for political purposes (2.1.7).

Complaint:

11. Additional Comments

12. The original comments sent from the complainant are attached as Appendix 1.
13. A verbatim transcript of the video provided to the complaint has been attached as Appendix 2.
14. A copy of the PCC's code of conduct is attached as Appendix 3.

Appendix 1

Details of the alleged incident: Donna Jones appeared on "GB News" and interviewed by Nigel Farage. Link to the channels clip of her appearance - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jKVVUPO81V8> "GB News" is not an impartial news channel, and has within less than two years of launching, been penalised by Ofcom, which also has further investigations into GB News ongoing. GB News is commonly known to be a politically very right-leaning entertainment channel that does not itself purport to be a respectable, independent news channel. Nigel Farage's own background needs little explaining, other than he is well known to be a very right-wing politician whose countless racist, xenophobic, Islamophobic and sexist comments are well reported. Ofcom investigations, and upheld complaints, into GB News include transgressions involving covid vaccines, political impartiality and racism/anti-semitism. The PPC's involvement reflects badly on her judgement and brings the wider police service's political impartiality into disrepute. This gives rise to two breaches of the Nolan Principles of conduct of public officials: Selflessness. There is no apparent public interest in the Police and Crime Commissioner appearing on a TV channel of this reputation, particularly in light of the abundance of legitimate news channels, publishers and social media that are available as alternatives. Objectivity. Appearing on a politically right-wing entertainment channel to be interviewed by a well-known, very right-wing politician displays a clear and unequivocal lack of objectivity. During the introduction to the interview, referring to the increased recruitment of police officers, Farage stated "really? Where are they? I haven't seen them. Oh I see them in cars, driving around, or normally sat at the side of a motorway, making sure you're complying with the speed limit, but I don't seem them on the streets". Jones did nothing to dispute this lazy, harmful cliché. Jones did, however, state that "Some of them (Hampshire's own police officers) don't know how to investigate crime, they need to learn to do that". She also added (referring to new recruits) "they have spent a lot of the last three years sat in a classroom". She went on "we can have them learning about how to arrest people....rather than write essays about it". The ignorance of these comments is staggering. If Jones was unable to state anything positive about police officers in Hampshire, she was, rather predictably, rather more flowing with her praise for our dishonest, race-baiting, wretched government, including Suella Braverman and Chris Philp, both of whom, were they police officers, would long ago have been discharged for their various examples of dishonesty, misconduct and breaches of standards. According to the Police and Crime Commissioner's Code of Conduct, her appearance on this TV Channel has brought the office and the wider police service into disrepute (2.1.4) and misused her role improperly for political purposes (2.1.7).

Date of the alleged incident: 2023-04-26

What outcome you would like to see from this complaint: An apology to Hampshire's police officers and public for: the misjudgement in allowing herself to be interviewed on GB News by Nigel Farage; a spectacularly poor interview; and a promise to only appear on legitimate news channels in future.

Video Posted on YouTube by GB News titled Government reaches target of gaining 20,000 police officers: Donna Jones PCC is 'relieved'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jKVVUPO81V8>

Verbatim transcript:

Nigel Farage (NF): the 2019 Manifesto commitment to increase the number of police officers by 20,000 in England and Wales has been met. Wow he seemed so happy with it, but my initial gut reaction was, really, where are they? I haven't seen them. Oh I see them in cars driving around I don't or normally sitting on the side of the motorway you know to make sure you are complying with the speed limit but I don't see them on the streets. I see no evidence that police numbers are now at record levels. Yes, in the last three years, in England and Wales they've recruited 46,000 new police, which means 26,000 have left.

Well, joining me now is Donna Jones, Conservative Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight and the national lead for victims.

Donna, on the face of it, this is good news because it is your party meeting its Manifesto commitment so you must be quite pleased.

Donna Jones (DJ): Well, I'm relieved, I'm relieved that we got over the line of the 20,000, I think its 20,951. I was with Suella Braverman, this morning and Christopher, the Policing Minister, when the numbers were officially confirmed. But you know it's been a tough journey in policing over the last 10 to 12 years, we know that because of austerity, this is largely replacing police officer numbers that have reduced over the years. So there's a real re-establishment that needs to happen now.

Yes, more cops is great. We've got very young in-service officers now though, a third of my Force have been in service for less than three years. So, more cops is good, we need that, policing is largely a numbers game, but the experience now needs to be gained. Some of them don't know how to investigate crime, they need to learn how to do that, and they have spent a lot of the last three years sat in a classroom. So actually, I'm really pleased that Suella Braverman, our Home Secretary, has announced the end of the Police Degree, so it's not compulsory anymore, so we can have those new cops out learning how to arrest people under Pace Law and not writing essays about it. Lots to be done, a step in the right direction, but I don't think everyone should be crowing right now.

NF: Yeah, no Donna I think that point you make, and it probably applies to other things like nursing, but not actually doing degrees and being in classrooms, but being out doing things practically, that is a very, very strong point. Do you think as yet that your voters in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, are aware of an increased police presence?

DJ: In our cities, probably yes. In Portsmouth and Southampton, it's obviously you know 60% of our crime comes from those two areas across Hampshire in the Isle of Wight. So two million people, one of the largest Police Forces, so some areas, yes, have seen a greater concentration of police officers because, as I say, it's very much crime related. The rural areas are starting to see that now, Roads Policing Unit, you know so things are trickling through as more officers are coming on-board. It's then pushing other officers out into some of those Police specialisms, as we call them. Look, it is good news, I am really pleased today that the government have achieved what they set out to do. I'm keeping my fingers crossed now for the next pledge from the Conservatives for the next general election, hoping that that will be an uplift of more police officers. So, I do think that the government should be congratulated for this today. Some forces, such as the Metropolitan Police Service, have failed woefully to hit their number. My force, however, has overachieved our number. We had to recruit 498, we've recruited 600 new cops in the last three years, but like I say it's still a long way to go.

PCC's Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire, including the register of interests v3.0, can be viewed online at <https://www.hampshire-pcc.gov.uk/transparency/policy-and-governance/code-of-conduct>

1.0 Code of conduct: Introduction

1.1 The code of conduct sets out the desire for the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire (Commissioner) and others associated with the elected local policing body, to uphold office in line with the intentions of the Policing Protocol Order 2011 and abide by the 'Nolan Principles':

- Selflessness: Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.
- Integrity: Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.
- Objectivity: In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.
- Accountability: Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
- Openness: Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
- Honesty: Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
- Leadership: Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

1.2 The scope of this code applies to the following persons (if appointed):

- The Commissioner
- Deputy Commissioner
- Any appointee to a panel or committee (such as: Joint Audit Committee; Misconduct Panel)

1.3 This code does not apply when any person, as mentioned above, is acting in a purely private capacity.

2.0 General obligations

2.1 All persons agree to:

- 2.1.1 treat others with dignity and respect
- 2.1.2 not use bullying behaviour or harass any person
- 2.1.3 abide by legal requirements
- 2.1.4 act in a manner which could not reasonably be regarded as bringing the office into disrepute.
- 2.1.5 respect the impartiality of officers and not to obstruct or interfere with any officer who may be discharging any responsibilities placed upon them by law.
- 2.1.6 not use resources for personal benefit or for the benefit of family or friends, or any other person in relation to any business interest.
- 2.1.7 not use resources improperly for political purposes (including party political purposes)
- 2.1.8 only claim expenses and allowances as permitted in the PCC/DPCC Expenses Scheme
- 2.1.9 reach decisions having given consideration to relevant information and any advice from the OPCC's staff
- 2.1.10 not disclose confidential information (other than in very limited circumstances)

2.2 Each person shall:

- 2.2.1 enter in the register of disclosable interests maintained by the monitoring officer every disclosable interest as set out in the schedule
- 2.2.2. within 28 days of any change in circumstances to enter in the register of interests the changes insofar as are related to disclosable interests.
- 2.2.3 within 28 days of receipt, to register the acceptance of any gift or hospitality worth £25 or more.

2.3 If the Monitoring Officer considers disclosure could result in the risk of violence or intimidation, details of the interest will not be published. The register should indicate the interest has been disclosed and is withheld by virtue of this section.

2.4 If there is any doubt about whether something could be considered a recordable interest the Monitoring Officer must be consulted.

3.0 Conflicts of interests

3.1 In any case where exercising the functions of office may conflict with any disclosable or other interest, which has become known, the person shall declare such conflict. A determination of whether the conflict of interest is so substantial the function can not be exercised personally should be taken.

3.2 A person will consider a conflict of interest to be so substantial and should not exercise the function personally, if a member of the public with knowledge of the

relevant facts would reasonably consider the interest so significant it would likely prejudice judgement on the decision.

3.3 In the event of declaring a conflict of interest, the person shall withdraw from any discussion or decision.

3.4 If a person is unable to take a decision, due to a conflict of interest, the advice of the Monitoring Officer shall be sought – including whether the matter may be delegated.

4.0 Disclosure of information

4.1 Confidential or restricted information must not be disclosed unless: consent has been authorised; relevant time has elapsed; provision is required by law; or, disclosure to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice where the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person.

4.2 Any disclosure made shall be reasonable, be in the public interest and made in good faith.

5.0 Gifts and Hospitality

5.1 As a general rule offers of gifts or hospitality should be refused courteously in a manner that does not cause offence or embarrassment to the organisation or individual making the offer.

5.2 If consideration is being given to accepting a gift or hospitality, the Monitoring Officer should be consulted prior to a decision being taken. In deciding whether a gift should be accepted the following points should be considered:

- Why is the offer being made?
- What are the background circumstances to it?
- Does the donor feel obliged to make the offer?
- What does the donor expect in return?
- What could be the outcome if the offer is accepted or declined?
- Would the PCC be prepared to justify its acceptance to the public?

6.0 Transparency

6.1 A register of interests and recording of declarations of conflicts of interest will be maintained. The register will be published on the website.

6.2 A gifts and hospitality register will be published on the website. The register will contain information relating to gifts and hospitality with a real or perceived value of at least £25, or as required by the Monitoring Officer in the interests of transparency.

REQUIRED LEGAL INFORMATION:

Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Elected Local Policing Bodies (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2012	January 2012

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
Protocol for the Informal Resolution Procedure Regarding Complaints made against the Police and Crime Commissioner	https://documents.hants.gov.uk/partnerships/hampshire-pcp/PCP-ProtocolfortheInformalComplaintsProcedure.pdf