

**IN THE MATTER OF AN INQUIRY CHAIRED BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LORD JUSTICE LEVESON UNDER THE PROVISION OF THE INQUIRIES ACT
2005**

FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF COLIN PORT

COLIN PORT the Chief Constable of Avon and Somerset Constabulary of Portishead, Bristol will say as follows:-

1. Prior to receiving the Notice on 2 February to which I shall refer and address, I had contacted the Inquiry to draw attention to and attempt to correct what I believe to be inaccurate evidence given to the Inquiry by Mr Richard Wallace of the Daily Mirror. Mr Wallace has made a number of allegations about the relationship between Avon and Somerset Police and the media in the course of the investigation into the tragic murder of Joanna Yeates. I will address these in some detail as the allegations are serious and the issues raised are directly relevant to the work of the Inquiry. Some of those issues concern Mr Christopher Jefferies from whom we have received a pre-action protocol letter claiming false imprisonment, trespass to property and person and breach of human rights.
2. In paragraph 7 of his second witness statement, Mr Wallace says "*Appeals for help from the public (disseminated through the media) can be critical to an Inquiry and the media therefore in some senses act as an adjunct to the investigation. For instance in this case we interviewed a pub landlord who had CCTV footage of one of the last sightings of Ms Yeates. Although police had spoken with the landlord before us, they did not take away the CCTV. As a result of our story they re-interviewed the landlord and took away the film*".
3. I recognise and appreciate the assistance provided by the media to the police and acknowledge that publicly when appropriate. However, on the assumption that the instance Mr Wallace refers to where he alleges the efforts of his newspaper resulted in a line of inquiry being pursued relates to the Hop House Public House is not accurate and was known to be inaccurate before publication.

4. The CCTV footage from the exterior of the Hop House Public House is covered in the Daily Mirror on 5 January 2011. The following chronology demonstrates that this CCTV footage was already an active line of inquiry and material had already been downloaded and viewed:

22/12/10: CCTV was recovered from a number of premises along Ms Yeates' route home. A short time period was prioritised to enable all the footage of her route to be secured quickly. This proved to be the relevant evidence in the investigation.

23/12/10: A subsequent report and examination of the material confirmed that Ms Yeates was seen walking past the Hop House camera heading in the direction of her home address.

27/12/10: CCTV recovery time parameters were extended as the body of Ms Yeates had been found.

27/12/10: A CCTV technician visited the Hop House to download additional footage. The manager was not present but it was clear that the brand of CCTV unit was one with a long retention period and thus footage would not be lost. A return visit was planned to swap the unit with a loan CCTV unit when the manager was available. During the week 27-31/12/10 a second CCTV technician attended once again to carry out the swap as planned but the premises were closed.

4/1/11: A CCTV technician attended at the Hop House with a new CCTV loan unit and seized the Hop House unit. A reporter was at the premises when he attended.

4/1/11: The investigation team reported on the full movements of Ms Yeates as seen on CCTV from the Ram Public House to the last sighting at the Hop House CCTV. They commented that a woman and child were visible behind Ms Yeates on the Café Nero footage but by the time she was seen on the Hop House camera, Ms Yeates was ahead of the adult and child.

4/1/11: Ryan Parry called the press office stating that he wanted to make us aware of CCTV footage from the Hop House Pub in Clifton of Jo Yeates on her journey home. He says that the manager has told him that we have not

yet seen this CCTV because we are waiting to take the whole CCTV unit and tells us that the paper is planning to publish tomorrow.

4/1/11: The press officer was briefed by the Deputy SIO who said that the CCTV had been viewed and presented no further lines of enquiry aside from using alongside other corroborating information and CCTV from the area in helping to get a general idea of her direction of travel. He said that standing alone, the quality of the Hop House CCTV footage was so poor it would be extremely difficult to confirm that it was Jo in the picture. We certainly could not deduce that she was being followed just because two people walked past a short time after as it is a busy main road.

On 4 January – the day before the piece appeared in the Mirror – the press officer briefed Mr Parry verbally to this effect and gave him the following statement in response to his enquiry:

"Avon and Somerset Police seized and analysed CCTV from the Hop House Public House when the initial missing enquiry into Jo Yeates' disappearance was launched. The picture quality of this CCTV is so poor that we cannot confirm that it is or is not Jo Yeates. We are currently analysing many hours of CCTV footage as part of the investigation as well as following many other lines of enquiry".

It is clear that it was not the story in the Daily Mirror that prompted these particular enquiries by the investigation team.

5. In Paragraph 9 of his second statement Mr Wallace says: *"... it is normal practice for the media to be given regular "off-the-record" background briefings by police during a major inquiry and after any subsequent arrests. Often such briefings will be given to a small group of crime reporters after a larger public press conference. The "off-the-record" information that the police may give this small group of reporters might include details additional to those that have been given to the press more widely, as well as information about particular facts that the press may be asked to withhold from the public. I understand from the Content Desk that our crime correspondent at the time, Jon Clements attended such briefings during the Joanna Yeates inquiry".*

6. This describes an approach adopted by the police sometimes to give discrete background briefings to media representatives on the basis that it is not published at that time and will not be published until or unless consent is given for the status of that information to change to "on-the-record". I shall deal with my views on the topic of "off-the-record" discussions later in this statement.
7. In Avon and Somerset we hold "pre-trial briefings" in high profile or complex cases where information is embargoed until the conclusion of a trial or until shown in public in the court room. These pre-trial briefings are strictly governed and editors are required to sign an indemnity form before their journalists are allowed to attend. To my knowledge there has been one occasion when a journalist has breached an embargo and that individual is no longer welcome at pre-trial briefings. The information provided at these briefings and any other off the record comment made on behalf of the force would not be non-attributable briefing.
8. During the course of the Joanna Yeates murder investigation we came under considerable pressure from the media, including "officials" from the Crime Reporters Association to give "off-the-record" briefings. ACPO also suggested a meeting with national editors but at no time during the missing person/murder investigation did Avon and Somerset give "off-the-record background briefings" to crime reporters or any other journalists. In fact we were criticised by the media for not doing this.
9. It became clear from a very early stage in this particular case that the intensity of media interest, the scale of the "media pack" and the high volume of "generalist" reporters would make any kind of "off-the-record background briefing" impossible. This was a live missing person investigation, then a murder investigation, where the identity of possible offenders was unknown. Therefore it did not bear comparison with the high profile Northumbria and Cumbria cases where we believe such briefings had been given.

10. By day 4 of the missing person investigation (Thursday 24 December) media interest in the story was very high. Joanna Yeates' disappearance was the lead story on national broadcast media channels and rumour and media speculation was already rife. Over the Christmas and New Year holidays this became relentless with media calls around the clock chasing first edition leads and making bids in the early hours for TV breakfast shows.
11. As the murder investigation progressed, we were subjected to constant speculative questioning by the media. Such were our concerns about the revelation of key lines of enquiry through a continuing process of elimination by the media, that we ceased to give a response to many speculative enquiries where we felt the integrity of the investigation and subsequent trial could be compromised. These enquiries were about the probability or otherwise of all aspects of the case ranging from specific evidence to implausible hypotheses.
12. On 11 January we issued the following statement in response to these issues and the press office ceased to take overnight media calls relating to the Joanna Yeates murder investigation between 9pm and 7.30am:

"While we very much appreciate the assistance of the media in trying to find whoever is responsible for killing Jo, some lines of enquiry are best served by being undertaken away from the intense scrutiny of the media. When we do have new confirmed facts and when we believe it is right and timely to do so, we will release them".

In Paragraph 10 of his statement, Mr Wallace gives a number of specific examples *"of information contained in the Daily Mirror articles of 31 December 2010 and 1 January 2011 that I believe from my discussions with the Content Desk would have been sourced from the police during the Joanna Yeates inquiry"*. Clearly Mr Wallace is using the term "sourced" in the sense that the information was obtained other than through a completely open press release or at a press conference. I will deal with each of his examples in turn, demonstrating that they are either untrue or provided openly to the media at large:

- a) *The arrest of Mr Jefferies on suspicion of the murder of Joanna Yeates on Thursday 30 December 2010 was itself announced in a statement from Avon and Somerset Police. The off-the-record guidance to reporters on the ground from the police was that it was Mr Jefferies who had been arrested.*

This is not true. Avon and Somerset Police operate to ACPO guidelines and do not release the name of detainees prior to charge. The media are fully aware that any confirmation of identification will be made only through a force's press office. The suggestions of "off-the-record guidance to reporters on the ground from the police" is disingenuous as the following demonstrates.

On 30 December the Press Association called the press office to ask for an official line about Mr Jefferies being held "at Trinity Road Custody". She had been told by the police station front office that he was there.

Further investigation by the press office confirmed that a front office clerk had been approached by a journalist from the PA. After taking advice from the Duty Inspector she made the following comment to the journalist:

"The message already out in the public domain – Sky News. I can confirm Chris Jefferies is being held detained within Avon and Somerset Constabulary. However I cannot confirm or deny he is at this station".

This statement was withdrawn immediately following intervention from the Corporate Communications team and the incident dealt with internally. The PA and all other media (including Sky who were running Mr Jefferies name before the PA enquiry was made) were advised that we could not and would not confirm the name of the 65 year old man. We also understand that a local reporter said he overheard a radio conversation of a police officer on the Canynge Road cordon, although this is not verified.

The SIO was very aware of the media interest and took considerable care to avoid the media having any opportunity of witnessing any part of the arrest procedures and identifying Mr Jefferies. The SIO made an entry in his policy book on 29 December which reads "*Christopher Jefferies will be arrested on suspicion of the murder of Joanna Yeates tomorrow morning (30.12.10) during the hours of darkness at approximately 07:00 hours. DS (name) will*

oversee the arrest and search of his flat and seizure of his two motor cars. REASON Jefferies has today provided statements to the media which has appeared on rolling news and in newspaper websites. There is now significant media interest in him. The timing and logistics of Jefferies arrest will ensure to the best of our ability that the media are not initially aware of the arrest, are not provided with his name and cannot photograph/video him being taken away by officers. There are currently media vehicles parked outside 44 Canynge Road and I anticipate them continuing to be active in situ tomorrow morning. Jefferies has the right to respect for his private and family life his home and his correspondence under Article 8 HRA 1998. We do not release details of suspects in criminal investigations. Whilst at this time he is only a suspect. I also have in mind that with regards any information provided/given to the media could have an impact on the fairness of any future trials".

Apart from the inadvertent confirmation of his name, that policy was entirely successful.

b) The day before Mr Jefferies' arrest (29 December 2010) police sources briefed the media that Mr Jefferies had told neighbours that he had seen three people leave Ms Yeates' flat including Ms Yeates herself on the night she disappeared. Mr Jefferies said he was parking his car outside the house when he saw three people. But Mr Jefferies later told the media and neighbours in impromptu comments before his arrest that in fact he had not seen Ms Yeates. I believe the police felt there was an inconsistency in his story although Mr Jefferies had a different view. Mr Jefferies told Sky News on 29 December: "It is a serious distortion of what I said to the police and I have no further comment to make as that, no doubt, will be distorted I made some comment which was very, very, very much vaguer than that. Anything that I have said to the police and I'm not prepared to make any comments to the media".

This statement is not true. The police did not brief the media about what Mr Jefferies claimed to have seen. In a Daily Mirror article on 30 December, Mirror reporters Richard Smith and Ryan Parry reported Mr Jefferies' claims of seeing a "mystery group" in the communal hallway around 9pm. Quotes from neighbours to whom Mr Jefferies had apparently spoken about the sighting were included in the Mirror article.

In response to a media enquiry on 29 December about the rumours of a sighting we confirmed that we had spoken to the landlord but that this was one of many lines of enquiry.

- c) *In the article of 31 December we reported that "a source close to the police investigation" said that it was believed "Jo's" murderer had tried to conceal her body". This information to the best of my knowledge came from one of the off-the-record briefings referred to above.*

This statement is not true so far as I am aware. There were many claims by the media of revelation by "sources close to the police investigation" but it was never made clear who these "sources" were. As previously stated there were no off-the-record briefings at any time during the investigation.

- d) *The facts that on 31 December police successfully applied to magistrates for a 72 hour extension to question Mr Jefferies further and that he was released on police bail the following day, 1 January 2011, would I believe both have come from the police.*

This is correct. A statement was released to the media on 31 December confirming that the police had been granted more time to question a 65 year old man.

- e) *Where we report in the 31 December article that the police had not ruled out a link between the murder of Glenis Carruthers in 1974 and that of Joanna Yeates, I believe from my discussions with the Content Desk that one of our reporters asked the police about a possible link and our report was based on the response given.*

This is not true and it was known not to be true at the time of publication. A close family member of Glenis Carruthers (whose killer has not been found) was contacted directly by a journalist (we do not have the name) on the evening of 30 December asking about family connections with Christopher Jefferies. The Head of the Cold Case Team responded to the family member to apologise for the fact that the family member had been contacted and explaining that it was purely a fishing expedition.

On the same evening of 30 December Ryan Parry spoke to a press officer to ask if there was any link between the Yeates murder and the murder of Glenis Carruthers in 1974. Our media log states:

"CS stressed again that there is no link between this murder and any other in the ASC area".

On 31 December the press office prepared the following to respond to any further questions about links to this or other murders in the Avon and Somerset area:

"We would like again to stress that there are no links between this murder and any unsolved crime within Avon and Somerset".

- f) *Information regarding various theories being considered by detectives contained in the article dated 1 January 2011 would have I believe also come from the police.*

The analysis of theories allegedly being considered by the police did not come from Avon and Somerset Police. It appears from the 1 January Mirror article that Peter Kirkham, a former "murder-squad" DCI with the Metropolitan Police now a consultant SIO was brought in by the Mirror to give his view. Mr Kirkham had no connection with the Joanna Yeates investigation nor any contact with the murder investigation team. In the last year, Mr Kirham has written analyses in the Mirror of a number of high profile cases including the murder of Joanna Yates, the disappearance of Madeleine McCann and trial of Amanda Knox in Italy and on 27 February 2012 he commented on BBC radio on the evidence of a senior Metropolitan police officer to this Inquiry.

13. In Paragraph 11 of his statement Mr Wallace says *"the police also give more general guidance to the press. When Mr Jefferies was arrested on 30 December the Content Desk informed me that (off-the-record) the police were saying that they were confident Mr Jefferies was their man. It is not uncommon for the police to give such an indication. I believe that our coverage of this news story should be viewed against that background".*

As previously stated there were no "off-the-record" briefings during the investigation. At no stage did we give any indications or views of the status of Mr Jefferies in the ongoing investigation. We do not accept that it is common for this force to give the sort of indication Mr Wallace alleges. It would be grossly improper.

Before addressing the issues/matters raised by the Inquiry I would just like to mention the involvement of the Attorney General in this case. Following the arrest of Mr Jefferies and the extensive media reports the Attorney General made comments on the radio on 30 December 2010 about the nature of the reporting. Unbeknown to us he issued a Media Advisory Note on 1 January. The police were not notified and we became aware of its existence on the evening of 2 January by chance during a discussion with the Crown Prosecution Service. They had been informed when the Advisory Note was issued. We subsequently contacted and maintained contact with the Attorney General's office at intervals throughout the investigation passing on our concerns about media reports. Once we were aware of it we drew the attention of the press to the existence of the Advisory Note at appropriate opportunities.

I now turn to Notice under Section 21(2) of the Inquiries Act 2005 dated 2 February 2012 ("The Notice") which identifies 69 matters or issues upon which I am required to address.

14. For the sake of convenience, I propose to set out the matters or issues listed in the Notice using the numbering from the Notice and to set out my response after each one. Where they exist, the documents I have been asked to provide to the Inquiry are being sent separately.

15. Where the facts set out in my responses are within my direct knowledge they are true. Where information is provided but supplied to me by others that information is true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. Where I have been asked to express a view or opinion, they are mine and genuinely held.

(1) Who you are and a brief summary of your career

Response: I am the Chief Constable of Avon and Somerset Police. My career in the police service began in 1974 in the Greater Manchester Police. I was promoted through the ranks to Chief Inspector with a strong emphasis on criminal investigation work.

In 1989 I joined the Warwickshire Constabulary on promotion to Detective Superintendent and took charge of Crime Operations. I was promoted to Detective Chief Superintendent and appointed Head of CID in 1991.

In 1994 I was appointed as the Investigations Co-ordinator to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. In this capacity I led a large multi-disciplinary/multi-lingual/multi-cultural team operating in differing geographical locations throughout the former Yugoslavia and the Netherlands.

In 1995/96 I was appointed Director of Investigations to the International Criminal Tribunal in Rwanda which involved leading and developing an investigative/prosecution team for the Tribunal.

I returned to Warwickshire in 1996 to establish a new organisational development department and later as Acting Assistant Chief Constable I had responsibility for leading and co-ordinating Operational Policing. Later that year, I was appointed as the Assistant Chief Constable and head of the South East Regional Crime Squad (SERCS). This was an organisation of approximately 700 people investigating the top echelon of criminality who were engaged in such activities as contract killings, armed robbery, gun running, people smuggling and drug distribution.

I was appointed the Deputy Chief Constable of Norfolk in June 1998. In April 1999 I was appointed the "Officer in overall command" of the Rosemary Nelson murder investigation in Northern Ireland. This was the first (and to date the only) time that a police officer from England has headed a live criminal investigation in Northern Ireland.

I left that investigation officially in 2002 and returned to my duties in Norfolk. I became Acting Chief Constable of Norfolk and was appointed to my present position on 27.1.05.

I am currently the ACPO lead for international policing.

(2) What were your first impressions upon taking office as Chief Constable of Avon and Somerset Constabulary about the culture of relations with the media which you had inherited?

Response: I recall that when I was interviewed for the position of Chief Constable of Avon and Somerset, I was questioned about my attitude to the media. It appeared to me upon researching the issue and upon taking up my post that for whatever reason the relationship with the media was not entirely satisfactory from the point of view of either the police or the media. The policy at the time appeared to me to be defensive. The media clearly felt that the Chief Constable did not like the media and did not want to engage in any way, shape or form. I felt that the culture was generally one of suspicion and mistrust both of the national and local media. Clearly there was friction as evidenced by an article in the Western Daily Press for 18 June 2004. A copy will be provided to the Inquiry but in summary the newspaper had criticised the Chief Constable following publication of poor performance figures. He responded through solicitors demanding a front page apology with his picture but instead his picture was published on the front page as part of an article headlined "We will not be gagged".

I was recently asked in an internal webchat how I would describe the Constabulary's relations with the press at this time. My response was that "generally I felt they were pretty good. We will have our moments but the media agenda will sometimes be different from ours. I think we should be as open as possible and yes they may expose embarrassing situations but I do believe that a free press is important to any democracy but so is accountability and truth in reporting".

- (3) **Describe the personal contact which you currently have with the local and national media. The Inquiry would like an overall picture of the type, frequency, duration and content of your contact with the media**

Response: I do not have regular or indeed frequent contact with the media. It tends to be issue based surrounding particular events where it is necessary for me as the Chief Constable to show a leadership role. I expect other chief officers and indeed all ranks to engage with the media and comment where it is appropriate and where they are competent to deal with the issues.

On a local basis the local Bristol newspaper hosts the Gold Star Awards which are for local heroes which I attend every year and they attend our Community Policing Awards which is jointly organised with the Police Authority. The Editor of the newspaper is on the panel of judges as am I, the sponsors and two members of the Police Authority.

I also meet with the media at an event which takes place twice a year between 5.30 – 8.00 called "Meet the Media". It is held in a private room in a restaurant where the chair of the Police Authority, chief officers, members of the Corporate Communications Team and myself meet with representatives of the local newspapers, national newspapers, local media, community media and national media. This is a very informal gathering providing an opportunity to get to know each other better and for grievances or concerns of a general kind to be aired in an informal setting. There is no agenda and specific cases are not discussed. I consider this to be a positive demonstration of our openness and transparency.

Within the organisation media breakfasts are jointly hosted by the Director of Corporate Communications and Deputy Chief Constable. These take place twice a year at media locations and at Police HQ. I have only attended one of these and that was to inform the media that we were being pursued by the Commission for Racial Equality/Equal Opportunities Commission for alleged positive discrimination. This was considered to be an ideal opportunity given the fact that all media was represented at the meeting for me to

make a statement from the Constabulary rather than hearing from any other body.

I participate from time to time in local radio phone in programmes and in online webchats. The latest of these radio programmes was on 27 February 2012 where I was asked about a number of issues including police leaks.

In my lead for ACPO on international policing, I have infrequent contact with the media.

In summary my contact with the media is intermittent and mostly issue driven. Apart from the very little involvement on a regular basis as described above, there is no pattern of frequency duration or content to my dealings with the media.

(4) Describe what you are seeking to gain for Avon and Somerset Constabulary through your personal contact with the media?

Response: I want the media to help us to prevent and detect crime. I also want the public to understand policing not just in relation to high profile serious crime but on a community level. As a leader, I am responsible for law enforcement in the area and to be held to account for what I and my staff do. I expect part of that accountability process to involve the media. On the other hand, given the propensity of the some elements of the press to publish negative items about policing which possibly lead the public to mistrust police. I think it is important that journalists hear the other side of the story both on a formal and informal basis. I hope we can demonstrate transparency of the police service and that for the most part is made up of good people who care passionately about public service. It is also about the way the public identify that when things go wrong then leaders of the police service stand up and are counted.

Since the culture of this force is relevant to this and a number of issues that I shall address in evidence, it is probably convenient for me to explain at this point what we are trying to do by way of development of our officers and staff. We have a mission to make the communities of Avon and Somerset feel safe and be safe. We have a vision that the communities of Avon and Somerset have the highest confidence in our delivery of policing and we have our values. Public first, quality counts, today's business today, and friendly, professional and interested. The media has a role to play in helping to deliver our mission and provide reassurance to the public.

I expect chief officers and district and departmental heads should have a relationship with the media for the same reasons as myself. We have facilities in local newspapers for regular columns for local officers to comment on what that individual is doing. For example if there was a series of burglaries, I want them out and talking and writing about it, for people to be aware.

I recognise that the media are competing in a commercial world. There are pressures to get the story. The relationship has to be considered in the context of the forms of communication that exist today. We have now got the internet, local neighbourhood watch, local newsletters. We have national newspapers, local newspapers, national TV, local TV, community media, local radio and national radio. We have 24 hour Satellite TV. There is a massive increase in the use of social networks such as Facebook and Twitter. This is all very different from when I was a DI 20 years ago. Then the local reporter would come to the police station and go through the crime register.

- (5) Describe in general terms and using illustrative examples what you consider the local and national media has been seeking from you in your personal dealings with them during your time as Chief Constable of Avon and Somerset Constabulary**

Response: Put very shortly, the media ideally would like exclusive access and exclusive stories. On a personal level, the media want to

know me as a leader, how I work as an individual about my personality and what makes me tick although I never discuss my family. They want an understanding of the organisation/service and where it is going – what the views of the leaders of the service are. They want my opinion about how the organisation is performing. When we give performance figures they want comment from me. They want to know from me about budgets and about the effects of Government cuts. I have a view on all of these issues, some of which I will articulate some of which I will not.

They want reassurance that police leaders are aware of the real world and do not sit in ivory towers. In a relatively small community of South West journalists, I acknowledge there will be relations with police officers and provided those relationships are professional, I encourage them.

They also seek more and more to demonstrate the role the media have in investigations or investigation into public bodies, ie MPs expenses, police forces, hacking and that can sometimes give rise to tensions.

They want an open relationship. They want a relationship where if things go wrong they have the possibility of speaking to me direct as Head of the organisation. Two examples of what I have in mind arose during the Joanna Yeates investigation. The editor of the Bristol Evening Post contacted me as he believed that we had denied his newspaper certain information, then it being given to national newspapers. I completely understood his point but sought to assure him that we had not given anything to the national media that had not been given to him.

On the question of the alleged leaks that I have dealt with in this statement there were no deliberate leaks and any leaks were unintentional. I subsequently had a meeting with the regional Head of BBC, regional Head of ITV and the Editor of the Bristol Evening Post and talked them through the issues and sought to reassure them that we were not leaking information. I know they appreciated the opportunity to hear directly from me on these important matters.

(6) Have you ever had "off the record" conversations with the media? If so please explain why and give examples

Response: Yes. Whilst it has not by any means been a frequent event, during the course of my career in the police service I had had "off the record" conversations with the media in a variety of different circumstances when I judged it to be in the public interest that I should do so. It is, however, important that I should explain what I understand by the term "off the record". To me "off the record" is information or an opinion held by me which is communicated on the basis that it cannot be used or become attributable.

By way of example, when I was in SERCs we were conducting an undercover operation abroad. The News of the World sent an undercover reporter into the area which could have jeopardised the whole operation and put people's lives at risk. I went to see the editor at the time and had an "off the record" conversation with him along the lines "...we know you have an undercover reporter in this area, these are the implications, I would like you to withdraw. You will do what you want but this is how I see the situation". If the editor had wanted to he could have published the story but he did not. I believe that my approach successfully avoided a potentially dangerous situation.

I firmly believe there is a time for such conversations.

When I was in Ireland, I had first had experience of policing and the media attitude to the police, in a divided community. A section of the media did not want to hear anything about my investigation but I needed to get my story into the media for the benefit of the investigation. I quickly learned that if I wanted them to be supportive or at least neutral, of me and the role I was playing there then I had to have off the record conversations to give them background. By way of example, I was contacted by a journalist and asked for an off the record comment regarding an alleged relationship between a solicitor and a client and to confirm they had been on holiday together and to confirm the makeup of an explosive device. I made it clear that I would not comment on or off the record regarding the explosive device but I also made it clear that the

relationship between the solicitor and the client was entirely professional and that there had been no allegation of them going on holiday together. An article was printed that dealt with the explosive device but made no mention of the alleged relationship.

Another example of being able to set the context of a particular investigation arose where people have made a completely wrong assumption. I dealt with a car bombing and the media were starting to talk about animal rights activists as being responsible. It was actually a personal vendetta against one individual from another and had nothing to do with domestic extremism or animal rights. I was able to set the record straight without having to go public to counteract the rumour.

I had no such conversations in the Joanna Yeates investigation. There was however an example of my being approached directly by the media. A journalist from the Sun believed that a pair of Joanna's earrings were missing. In fact, they were not. The Corporate Communications Department were not responding to the speculative enquiries that were coming in and so in frustration, the journalist rang me via the Communications Department. This was not an "off the record" conversation and I simply said "don't go there, there is no story there". The story did not appear in any newspaper.

(7) To what extent have you accepted hospitality from the media whilst Chief Constable of Avon and Somerset Constabulary?

Response: I have accepted hospitality in the form of meals and drinks from the media as recorded in the Hospitality Record. The occasions have been infrequent, probably no more than two occasions in a year. The latest occasion was a breakfast provided by the BBC when I attended to participate in a radio phone in programme.

- (8) Insofar as you have accepted hospitality from the media, what has been the nature of the hospitality that you have accepted?**

Response: As in (7) above.

- (9) To what extent have you provided hospitality for the media?**

Response: As above. I have reciprocated meals and drinks but again this happens probably twice a year on average.

- (10) Insofar as you have provided hospitality to the media, what has been the nature of that hospitality?**

Response: As above in my responses to (3) and (7).

- (11) Have you ever accepted gifts from the media? If so, please give full details (including who gave you the gifts, when, what the gift was and why you believe they gave you the gift)**

Response: Yes on two occasions. In both cases I attended dinners at which each guest received a copy of a book. One was in 2006 and the other in 2010. I believe in each case that reason for the gift was simply as a memento of the evening. The books were entered in the hospitality register.

- (12) What mechanisms are in place to monitor and record hospitality as between the Chief Constable and the media?**

Response: There is a Hospitality Register in which hospitality, whether it is media or otherwise is registered.

(13) What mechanisms are in place to monitor and record meetings with the media generally?

Response: The Communications Department have a system of recording contact with the media. Where there is a formal interview with journalists face to face, I would expect them to tape record it. For less formal contact depending on the content I might make a note but if action follows a conversation, that would reflect what had been discussed.

(14) Have you ever discussed the media or media coverage with politicians? If so how important is such communication and why?

Response: Yes. I have written and commented on a number of instances regarding the behaviour of one particular MP, Ian Liddell-Grainger, the use of his blog and the disgraceful way he has used the medium to slander myself and my family. I have also written to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards about his behaviour. As a locally, democratically elected representative of the community, politicians need to have confidence in police officers and the conduct of this particular member could have undermined my position as the leader of the organisation.

I also wrote to MPs when I was in litigation against the BBC. I briefed them on the circumstances and inaccuracies of the story.

(15) Have you any known or sensed that a politician has put pressure on you to take a particular course of action as a result of lobbying or influence exerted on that politician by the media? If so, please explain (although you need not identify the politician at this stage if you do not wish to do so)

Response: Absolutely not.

- (16) Has the prominence which politicians have given to subjects ever given rise to pressure to alter policing priorities so as to allocate more priority to the subject being given prominence by the politicians? If so, please explain**

Response: Yes. Specifically Dan Norris MP in relation to the so called "Sarah's Law". He wanted Avon and Somerset to become a possible test area but I refused because I did not believe that "Sarah's Law" as I understood it at the time had been properly thought out. Dan Norris wrote to me about this and we had a couple of meetings and he also mentioned it in Parliament but it did not change my view. The pilot sites were identified in other force areas and the proposals have now become law.

- (17) Set out your understanding of the type of contact which Avon and Somerset Constabulary personnel have with the local and national media covering nature, extent, frequency and (in general terms) topics/content**

Response: I have already touched upon some aspects of media contact which generally centres around the Corporate Communications Department. The office is open between 8am and 5.30pm. After that the contact is made with the Force Incident Manager who can then communicate with the on-call press officer. We also have a website to publish specific stories and there is a specific website for the media to keep them informed about what is going on. We use Twitter and Facebook. We use the Corporate Communications Department as a funnel but there will be instances where the media can contact individual officers but if the officers are not confident in what they are saying they will seek advice from the press office. I would expect the District Commander and members of the Senior Leadership Team to engage with the media as I expect the Constabulary to have openness, transparency and accessibility. Except for the very limited regular "events" which I referred to in relation to issue (3) above, I do not believe that it is possible to draw any general statistics about the nature, extent, frequency and topics/content. Very much depends upon what is happening both in our organisation and in the area/country or even the world as

something we are doing may attract media attention one day but not another.

- (18) Are contacts with the media restricted to certain staff or are all staff able to deal with the media?**

Response: This has been addressed in my responses above.

- (19) What do you expect Avon and Somerset Constabulary to gain from such contacts with the media?**

Response: Apart from the obvious benefits that the media can bring to criminal investigations, we hope to be able to inform the public who are after all our "customers" of the reality of policing in the 21st century which is certainly not as portrayed in "Life on Mars" or "Midsomer Murders". I also want to provide the public with a wider understanding about policing issues and information about what is going on in their area. I am particularly keen on local officers having columns in local newspapers.

- (20) What do the media seek from such contacts with Avon and Somerset Constabulary personnel?**

Response: I have already commented on this topic in relation to issue 5 and I do not think the media distinguish between what they want from me and what they want from my colleagues.

- (21) What hospitality are Avon and Somerset Constabulary personnel permitted to accept from the media? Inter alia, are they entitled to accept a meal or a drink from a journalist?**

Response: In principle there is no objection to personnel accepting hospitality. I refer back to our culture and mission statement. I do not think recognising what is acceptable and what isn't is difficult and I am confident that my colleagues are able to exercise their own

judgment on this. This should be clear to anyone who examines the Register.

(22) What hospitality are Avon and Somerset Constabulary personnel permitted to afford to the media?

Response: I refer to my previous response which applies equally to the reciprocation of hospitality.

(23) Do you consider the level of hospitality accepted by Avon and Somerset Constabulary personnel to be appropriate now and to have been appropriate in the past? In addressing this issue please give your reasons and set out what you consider to be an appropriate level of hospitality for a police officer to accept from the media (if any)

Response: Yes. I am not aware of any occasion when inappropriate hospitality has been accepted from a media representative. I have no difficulty in principle with the concept of limited hospitality such as a meal or drink. My officers can be trusted to exercise sound judgment and common sense. I would confidently expect them to know what is acceptable and what isn't.

(24) What mechanisms are in place to record hospitality as between the media and Avon and Somerset Constabulary personnel?

Response: A Hospitality Register exists.

(25) How (if at all) is hospitality between Avon and Somerset Constabulary (including you) and the media controlled and/or regulated?

Response: The Hospitality Register.

- (26) Are the hospitality rules governing contact between Avon and Somerset Constabulary personnel (including you) and the media different from those covering contact with other third parties? If so what are the difference?**

Response: There is no distinction made between hospitality from the media and any other third party.

- (27) What policies and procedures are in place to record contact between: (a) you and the media; (b) senior managers and the media; (c) other personnel and media? Please answer in relation to both formal and informal communications**

Response: The Corporate Communications Office have procedures but other than that there is no formal policy or procedure.

- (28) Are records of hospitality and other contact with the media audited and/or policed and if so, how and by whom?**

Response: I periodically look at the Hospitality Register but there is no formal system in place for policing and auditing hospitality generally. It is something that I am currently reviewing as the register shows that, without a monetary minimum, completely insignificant items are being recorded.

- (29) In your opinion are the policies and procedures described above (a) working effectively; (b) sufficient; and (c) capable of improvement**

Response: Apart from the observation made above, I am content that the systems we have work effectively and is sufficient but are being reviewed.

- (30) What systems, policies and procedures are in place in Avon and Somerset Constabulary to ensure that all members of the force (including civilian employees) know what is and what is not appropriate contacted with the media? Do they follow/reflect the relevant ACPO guidance?**

Response: Our approach follows ACPO guidelines but I refer again to the culture of the organisation. Our officers are told and reminded throughout their training of the standards of behaviour expected of them. Our Professional Standards Department regularly address training sessions of officers and staff at all levels.

- (31) Are you satisfied that the policies and procedures described above are sufficient and working effectively? Do you consider that they are capable of improvement? If so, how?**

Response: I do not regard the question of media relationships and hospitality to be a problem for Avon and Somerset but I am not complacent. Our Communications team have published an updated media protocol which reflects current thinking and draws upon the lessons learned particularly from the Joanna Yeates investigation. I have stated before this is not an issue of policy or process, it's an issue of culture and the cultural tone sets the scene.

- (32) What training is in place in Avon and Somerset Constabulary to ensure that all members of the force (including civilian employees) know what is and what is not appropriate contact with the media? Does the training follow/reflect the relevant ACPO guidance?**

Response: I believe that the question of appropriate contact with the media is wider than specific training but comes down again to the culture of the organisation. People at all levels receive media training which reflects current ACPO guidance.

(33) To what extent are leaks from Avon and Somerset Constabulary to the media and/or private detectives a problem for Avon and Somerset Constabulary?

Response: Any leak is very serious since quite apart from those who might be directly affected it has the potential to undermine public confidence. I believe that deliberate leaking for money or other motives is extremely rare, but simply put is treachery. Often what appears or is said to be a leak from the police is not in fact a leak at all. I can demonstrate this by reference to the evidence of Mr Wallace which I have addressed earlier in this statement. On the face of the Daily Mirror articles, there have been leaks but there is no evidence that information obtained by journalists which was confidential to the investigation team has been leaked. It also has to be borne in mind that information which superficially is thought to be exclusive to the police may be known to other agencies who can come into contact with the crime scene, such as scene guarders, morticians, paramedics, coroners and witnesses. Once the lines of enquiry start, then there is contact with witnesses and family. The media can go into all of these people. It is also not uncommon for journalists to attribute information to, for example, "a source close to the investigation" but would never reveal to any subsequent investigation who that source was, making successful investigation very difficult. There is no way of proving there was, in fact, any police source. I do not think that leaks are a serious problem for Avon and Somerset but any suspected leak is robustly investigated.

(34) What systems and procedures are in place to identify, respond to and detect the source of leaks?

Response: Any evidence, intelligence or report of a leak will be investigated. As I have said above, what is investigated as a leak often turns out not to be a leak at all, as the information following by way of response to issue (35) below demonstrates.

- (35) How many investigations have been conducted into actual or suspected leaks from Avon and Somerset Constabulary to the media during the last 5 years and how many have led to the successful identification of the source of the leak? What was the outcome of other investigations?**

Response: There have been 20 investigations undertaken by the Professional Standards Department Internal Investigation Unit in the last 5 years that were categorised as "leaks." There are 14 incidences where no police leak was found. Of the remaining 6, 4 have resulted in disciplinary action, in one case, no offender has been traced and one is ongoing.

- (36) Has disciplinary action been taken against any member of staff (whether civilian or police officer) for leaking information to the media during the last 5 years? If so please identify the number of cases and their outcome. There is no need to identify the person or persons subject of the disciplinary process.**

Response: There have been four cases in which disciplinary action has been taken. In these cases, officers received final written warnings and in the other the officers received management advice.

- (37) What payments (if any) are considered to be legitimate financial transactions between Avon and Somerset Constabulary and the media?**

Response: None.

- (38) What policies and / or guidance is in place in relation to financial transactions between Avon and Somerset Constabulary personnel and the media?**

Response: There are none. It is common sense that public officials should not take money from journalists.

- (39) To what extent do you believe bribery of personnel by the media to be a current problem for Avon and Somerset Constabulary (if at all?)**

Response: In an organisation of 6000 individuals, I know there will be corrupt individuals. My colleagues and I must root them out.

- (40) What steps are taken: (a) to educate your personnel about bribery; (b) to otherwise prevent the bribery of your personnel ; (c) proactively to detect bribery; (d) retrospectively to investigate bribery; (e) to discipline personnel (if any) who are found to have accepted bribes from the media?**

Response: I refer once again to our mission statement. We attempt to conduct ourselves to the highest standards and create an environment which gives people the confidence to refer potential problems to their line manager. We also have a whistleblower facility where members of staff can report concerns by email or telephone. Bribery is, of course, a criminal offence the nature of which will be part of the initial training. The need for complete transparency in all our dealings is something which I address to a number of meetings of all ranks. In particular I address all probationers into the organisation as to how I expect them to behave and that I will come after anyone who is corrupt, a thief, a racist, a bigot or a thug. Where issues are brought to our notice then Professional Standards will deal. One possible cause of corruption is financial hardship and we work with the Police Federation and other staff associations to try and address this kind of problem. There are financial advice surgeries and the Benevolent Fund awards grants to officers who are suffering from financial hardship. I expect individual leaders to identify people who may be at risk and our Internal Investigations Unit regularly participates in training courses for recruits, police staff and CID. Their presentation includes advice about risk areas and the use of social networking.

If there is a complaint, intelligence or evidence that an officer was involved in corrupt behaviour, an investigation would be undertaken

and if the evidence justified it, a report would be prepared for the CPS. There is no place for corrupt people in the police service.

- (41) Does Avon and Somerset Constabulary have a press office? If it does have such an office, what role does it fulfil? In particular, does it have a gatekeeper function for controlling the flow of information to the media? Please also give your view as to its utility and role.**

Response: The Head of Corporate Communications fully describes the work of the department. The Corporate Communications department is essential for internal and external communications given the expectations of the 24/7 thirst for news culture which includes the public.

- (42) What is the media's attitude towards the press office? In particular, are they satisfied by the provision of information and the routing of communications through your press office or do they prefer direct contact with individual personnel within the Avon and Somerset Constabulary?**

Response: The media would no doubt prefer contact with individual officers but modern policing without a communications office would be impracticable. I am aware that the media has a certain amount of frustration with the communications office and one journalist called it "The Suppress Office" but we do try to be as open as we possibly can.

- (43) In the last 5 years, how many people have worked in Avon and Somerset Constabulary's press office at any one time?**

Response: At its peak, there were 17.4 posts (excluding the e-services team) in the Corporate Communications Department. Budget cuts over the last two years have reduced this number to 15.

- (44) In the last 5 years how many of the personnel who have worked in Avon and Somerset's press office had previously worked for the News of the World? Insofar as you are able please name them.

Response: None to my knowledge.

- (45) In the last 5 years, how many of the personnel who have worked in Avon and Somerset Constabulary's press office had previously worked for a title owned by Rupert Murdoch? Insofar as you are able please name them.

Response: None to my knowledge

- (46) In the last 5 years, what proportion of personnel in Avon and Somerset Constabulary's press office has come from a media background?

Response: A total of 9 have come from a media background, although 2 are no longer with Avon and Somerset. All nine worked for local / regional television, radio or newspapers. Of the remaining 7 who are still with us, 4 came to work for the police from another non-media organisation.

- (47) What limitations, if any, are there on staff from Avon and Somerset Constabulary leaving to work for the media or vice-versa?

Response: There are none so far as outgoing staff are concerned. I am not aware of any limitation imposed on staff from the media joining the police service. I have doubts whether such limitations can be incorporated into employment contracts in a form that would be enforceable if breached.

- (48) Are records kept of those who join Avon and Somerset Constabulary from the media or go on to work for the media after leaving Avon and Somerset Constabulary? If so, please describe the system in place.**

Response: When probationers arrive on the first day and I address them I am supplied with a list of their names and their background, including where they have worked. Whilst staff records are maintained which have details of previous employment, there is no system which specifically records details of staff joining from the media. As to leaving staff, we have no right to information about new employment.

- (49) To the best of your knowledge, are there any discernible patterns in the movement of personnel from the media into Avon and Somerset Constabulary and vice versa?**

Response: There is no pattern of movement between the media the Avon and Somerset Police or vice versa.

- (50) What levels of awareness and experience are there in Avon and Somerset Constabulary of "media crimes" and, in particular: (a) unlawful interception of communications (including the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000); (b) bribery of officials by the media; (c) blackmail; (d) harassment by paparazzi and journalists; (e) traffic and/or public order offences committed by photographers and journalists pursuing stories; (f) inciting officials to communicate confidential information held by Avon and Somerset Constabulary/conspiring with them to obtain such information; and (g) crime within media organisations other than the foregoing (eg dishonest expense claims).**

Response: We are equipped to deal with crime of all kinds. If crime, whatever its nature, comes to our attention we will deal with it.

(51) What sort of priority is given to and what level of resources are available to deal with the above?

Response: The answer would depend entirely upon the precise nature of the allegations but investigations relating to corruption would certainly be treated as a priority and the resources necessary would be deployed.

(52) What was the media strategy for the Joanna Yeates murder enquiry?

Response: The strategy is set out in the statement to the Inquiry from the SIO, DCI Phillip Jones.

(53) Who set this strategy?

Response: The SIO, in consultation with the Head of Corporate Communications and the Gold Commander.

(54) What was the senior investigating officer's role in the handling of the media?

Response: The SIO was the spokesperson on behalf of the investigation. There is a view held by some that this role should be performed by someone not involved in the investigation as it could be a distraction for the SIO. I do not hold that view, quite the contrary. In my experience the public and the media and the investigation team get confidence from the SIO making direct appeals from an informed and, if necessary, detailed basis. It is important that the offenders also understand the SIO is visible and determined in their pursuit to find the truth. One way of demonstrating this is the SIO being visible. I had a discussion with DCI Jones along these lines.

(55) Who directed and controlled police contact and communications with the media?

Response: The Communications Department and the Gold Commander controlled the communications with the media in conjunction with the SIO.

(56) What records were kept of contact with the media? Please explain how contact with the media was recorded, if at all. Were records kept of all information shared with the media? If not, why not?

Response: The head of our Corporate Communications Department deals with this in detail in her statement to the Inquiry.

(57) Were there any leaks/unauthorised leaks to the media in respect of this murder enquiry which were believed to have originated from Avon and Somerset Constabulary? If so, please give details and the results of any investigations into the leaks.

Response: I am aware that there was inadvertent confirmation to the media that Mr Jefferies had been arrested. I have written to Mr Jefferies taking responsibility for this confirmation and have now copied my correspondence to the Inquiry explaining this to him. In early January 2011 there was concern on the part of the investigation team resulting from information that journalists appear to have obtained that there were leaks to the media and these concerns were referred to the Professional Standards Department Internal Investigation Unit and an investigation was initiated on 4 January 2011. On 10 January 2011, a freelance journalist approached a serving Avon and Somerset officer who had no connection with the Joanna Yeates investigation seeking information about the investigation. This approach was reported by the officer concerned to PSD and was investigated. During the course of our investigation two persons, neither of whom are police officers, were arrested. The investigation was extended each time when there was media

reporting of information that might have been leaked, but after an exhaustive, but as yet not complete, investigation there is no evidence of any deliberate leak by Avon and Somerset Police.

I am aware that Mr Jefferies wants a referral to the IPCC. Voluntary referral has already been considered in the course of our investigation but, unless or until there is evidence of a police leak, the threshold for referral is not made. The IPCC have been made aware of our investigation and I continue to keep the possibility of referral under review.

I am also aware that Mr Jefferies gave further evidence to the Inquiry today based on his second statement. I have had no opportunity to consider this but if, upon consideration, the Inquiry will be assisted by further information, I will submit a supplemental statement.

(58) What do you know of whether any Avon and Somerset police officer or member of police staff had "off the record" conversations with the media or gave "off the record" briefings to the media during the investigation into the murder of Joanna Yeates?

Response: I am satisfied as a result of assurances from those responsible that there were no "off the record" conversations or "off the record" briefings.

(59) To what extent is it the practice of Avon and Somerset Constabulary police officers and police staff to have "off the record" conversations with media?

Response: I have explained my own personal approach in respect of issue (6) above. Such conversations involving other Avon and Somerset police officers are likely to be rare but are not, in principle, contrary to Force or Police Regulations.

- (60) Insofar as applicable are records kept of what information is shared on an "off the record" basis?**

Response: These tend to be background non-specific and not attributable. I have, on occasions, kept records when I felt the need. On other occasions I have not felt the need.

- (61) Are "off the record" conversations discouraged or prohibited by any Avon and Somerset policy or training? If so, please specify and explain why they are discouraged/prohibited.**

Response: The disclosure of confidential information is prohibited and is a disciplinary matter and could be a criminal matter. We do advise in training re "off the record" briefings but this is as it pertains to data protection.

- (62) What is your general view of the practice of police officers and police staff having "off the record" conversations with the media? Can there be benefits to them which are in the public interest?**

Response: I have addressed this issue at (4) above. I believe there can be benefits, indeed, I have had experience of such conversations which have proved to be of benefit. I believe that the public interest is the only criteria that governs such conversations.

- (63) Insofar as applicable, what do you consider are the driving forces behind or the main causes of leaks from the Police Service?**

Response: I do not accept that all leaks that occur in relation to criminal investigations are the responsibility of the police. It has to be remembered that it is not just those who work in the police service who have access to information. In a typical murder enquiry we will interview over 400 people and all have access to social media and talk to others. It is, furthermore, very easy for a journalist to

attribute information to "a source close to the enquiry" giving the clearest implication that it was the police who gave the information when it may have been acquired from a completely different source or even be nothing more than speculation. Journalists could use comments from "a source close to the enquiry" to give their piece authenticity and legitimacy that it would not ordinarily have. Insofar as there are leaks by police officers, the driving force may well be money, revenge, emotional involvement or a display of power.

(64) Is it necessary for police forces to have a press office and what is your view of the utility and role of police press offices?

Response: It is absolutely necessary to have a press office. Corporate Communications engage both externally and internally and the Joanna Yeates investigation is a very good example of how, to a large extent, the SIO in a high profile investigation can be left to get on with the job of investigating the crime without constantly being side tracked by having to deal with media issues.

(65) What limitations do you consider there should be on police officers and police staff leaving the police service to work for the media and vice versa?

Response: I think there should be no problem with people from the media coming into the police or vice versa but my personal view is that in relation to officers who have worked at senior level there should be a "cooling off" period.

- (66) What role do you consider that Police and Crime Commissioners and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime should have in ensuring that relationships and communications between the police and the media, both locally and nationally, are appropriate and operate in the public interest?**

Response: I cannot comment upon the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime but I am very aware that one of the Prime Minister's reasons for the abolition of Police Authorities is his view that they are anonymous. I have seen an increasing appetite for Police Authorities to develop communication strategies which are different but, in the case of Avon and Somerset, generally complimentary to the Constabulary's media strategy. I see it as a natural consequence that candidates for the position of Police and Crime Commissioners will want to raise their own public profile during their campaign. I also see it as a natural consequence that Police and Crime Commissioners will want to be seen in the local media and seen to be influential in policing. They will provide a rich reservoir for the media.

- (67) What is your view of the recommendations contained in the HMIC's recent report "*Without Fear or Favour*" insofar as they concern relations between the media and the police? (If you have not seen it, the report is available online).**

Response: The report is currently subject to consideration in Avon and Somerset.

- (68) What is your view of the recommendations contained in Elizabeth Filkin's report "*The Ethical Issues Arising from the Relationship Between Police and Media?*" (If you have not seen it, the report is available online).**

Response: This report was commissioned by and is plainly directed to the Metropolitan Police. The challenges facing the Metropolitan Police are sometimes very different from provincial forces. It seems

that the report focuses on a number of leadership issues but the recommendations seem to me to represent a common sense approach.

- (69) Do you consider that there are any different or further steps which could and/or should be taken to ensure that relationships between the police and the media are and remain appropriate?**

Response: I remain convinced that generating a culture of transparency, openness and accountability is the key to maintaining appropriate relationships with the media. I believe that an enquiring media is essential in a democratic society and that the over regulation of the relationship risks undermining the media as a real source of ensuring accountability, particularly on the part of those in public office. I was recently asked to write 100 words to commemorate the 175th anniversary of a local newspaper. I wrote *"An open accessible media is essential to any democracy. But local newspapers? Who needs them when we've got access to so many different channels of news? Actually, many people do. For them it is an important part of their life. Hatches, matches and despatches, local news, what's on, latest results from the town's football/cricket/rugby leagues - and burrowing away, reporting responsibly on issues which some would prefer to be buried. The advent of 24 hour broadcast and social media have placed local newspapers under the greatest threat in their long history. I'd like to congratulate the Gazette on reaching 175 years. Many happy returns."* I hold a similar view on the media generally. The actions of a small group of irresponsible individuals who have been influential and whose behaviour has been copied by others, eg., Mr Liddell-Grainger, should not undermine the finest traditions of our society which include an open accountable and just press.

[Redacted signature box]

Dated this

21st

March 2012

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Colin Port