Speaking Out complaint sent 18/01/2024

Dear Green Party CEO and Executive Chair,

I have recently been made aware of the Speaking Out procedure, and am therefore contacting you to make a formal complaint under that procedure.

This complaint concerns various actions of a majority of the members of the Party's Standing Orders Committee (SOC), both during the period from Autumn Conference 2021 up to and including Autumn Conference 2022, when I was myself a minority member of SOC, and during the subsequent period up to and including the present time.

I, along with various others, drew attention to the first of these actions at the Spring Conference 2022, which gave rise to the longest debate on record of any SOC report in the whole existence of SOC since its inception at the Spring Conference in 1980 (at which I had been elected a member of that inaugural SOC which drafted and created the Party's first Standing Orders for the Conduct of Conference [SOCC]). The result of that Spring 2022 debate was that a Late Motion which had been approved by a majority of the then SOC, and which would, if passed by Conference, have resulted in the suspension or expulsion of a large number of Party members of previous good standing, was ruled by a majority of Conference to have been wrongfully approved by SOC and to be in fact out of order and contrary to SOCC. SOC also then withdrew an improper and unconstitutional attempt to change Standing Orders for SOC designed to enable them to expel me from SOC.

Unfortunately, in the period running up to and at the 2022 Autumn Conference, this SOC continued to act in various ways which were unconstitutional, or constituted wilful breaches and misinterpretations of SOCC and wilful disregarding of all precedents and accustomed usages established for over 40 years. I was again the sole dissenting member of that SOC, and again attempted to move amendments to the SOC report at the Annual Conference: this is a procedure which was specifically written into the first SOCC in 1980 as a whistle-blowing right for dissenting SOC members to ensure that SOC would remain accountable to Conference. However, the majority of that SOC repeatedly ruled all my attempted amendments out of order so that Conference could not debate or vote on them.

Immediately following that Conference, I compiled a detailed paper listing and explaining the actions and decisions of that SOC to which I objected, and which I regard as having constituted misconduct in office. That paper is attached herewith. I sent that paper to my then SW regional representatives on GPRC a week after the Autumn Conference. GPRC is the national body within the Party with constitutional responsibility for oversight of agreed democratic procedures, and is the body with the power to expel or suspend members if it believes it to be in the Party's interest to do so. Since SOC had misused its own powers to evade its accountability to Conference, this appeared to be the only remaining avenue through which to restore constitutionality and due process However, as far as I am aware, GPRC has failed to take any action or institute any inquiry, and appears to be itself under the control of the same extreme Trans-activist caucus as SOC, so that no further action has been taken.

The new SOC elected in Autumn 2022 included two members continuing from the previous year, the convenor Tim Kiely and Ash Routh, and one other Trans-activist, Melanie Earp, giving them a

3-2 majority on the committee. It has continued to make decisions based on the Trans-activist ideology of its majority members, rather than conforming to an objective and even-handed interpretation of SOCC.

In the run-up to the 2023 Spring Conference, a Late Motion submitted by Lydia Vulliamy concerning Trans-woman prisoners in women's prisons - an issue which had sprung up due to the passing of the Scottish Gender Recognition Act and the jailing of a male rapist in a women's prison in Scotland - was arbitrarily ruled out of order by SOC on the factually incorrect ground that the issue had not arisen since the deadline for the First Agenda, despite the fact that it had over 120 co-proposers (more than twice as many as any of the Late Motions which were allowed). This motion would have been clearly in order under the interpretation of the rules which had been adopted for Late Motions at the previous conferences in 2022, but was improperly excluded due to the political bias of the SOC majority who did not wish it to be discussed. SOC again prevented this matter from being raised by an amendment to the SOC report, and once again avoided any accountability to Conference for their decision.

The Autumn 2023 Conference (which I did not attend as I was recovering from major surgery) decided that there will be no Spring Conference in 2024, so that the current SOC will not be accountable to Conference for anything it does until Autumn 2024.

Around November 10th 2023, Ash Routh, claiming to write on behalf of SOC, asserted that Green Party Women (GPW) has been disaffiliated from the Green Party by SOC. This cannot have been true for a number of reasons, most particularly that SOC was purporting to act beyond its powers (ultra vires).

Firstly, there is no such status in the Green Party Constitution as being "affiliated", so GPW has never been affiliated and cannot be disaffiliated.

The Constitution 5(xii) states that *members with interests in common may form a group subject to bye-laws approved from time to time by Conference*. GPW is and remains one such group. Members have a right to form such a group, and there is no power in the Constitution for any body or process to dissolve any such group. 5(xii) then states *Such groups may be accorded some or all of the rights of a Local Party by mutual agreement with the Regional Council, subject to reference to the Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee in the event of any unresolved dispute.* (I am not aware of anywhere that it is spelled out which *rights of a Local Party* are referred to, but it is generally assumed to include the right to propose motions to Conference, which is certainly a right conferred on Policy Working Groups when they are recognised as such by PDC.)

The Bye-laws referred to in 5(xii) state that *Conditional upon the membership of the group being open to all Green Party members only, and on the officers of the group being annually elected, the group may be recognised by the Policy Development Committee, Campaigns Committee or the Equalities and Diversity Committee as a Members Working Group.* GPW has hitherto been so recognised by EDC: the bye-law is silent in regard to any withdrawal of that recognition.

Even if we assume that by "been disaffiliated" Ash Routh or SOC meant "had its recognition withdrawn", SOC has no power to withdraw such recognition. The Constitution does not explicitly give such a power to any person or body, and the only inference that can be made from the Constitution is that if anyone possesses such a power it can only be the body responsible for conferring such recognition - i.e. (in this case) EDC. SOC has no executive power in this regard whatsoever.

The only power which SOC has in relation to this matter is the power to make a judgement as to whether or not, in its view, GPW has contravened the bye-law in regard to *the officers of the group being annually elected*. It appears that they decided to take a view that this bye-law was technically breached by the Autumn 2021 GPW elections not having been completed until January 2022. (It should be noted that the then SOCC, of which I was a member, had no such concerns in this regard at the time.)

SOC should therefore have reported its judgement on this point to EDC, and it would then be up to EDC to determine whether this breach should result in EDC taking any action. If GPW disagreed with any action that EDC decided upon, that would then be *subject to reference to the Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee in the event of any unresolved dispute*.

As I understand it, the GPW constitution requires only that its officers should be elected annually, not by any specific date or within each calendar year. Many organisations have a similar requirement written in similar terms. Where organisations have forms of rules laid down by statute, such as limited companies or charities, those rules include a fair degree of flexibility in the meaning of "annually", so that typically an Annual General Meeting is required to take place not less than nine months and not more than fifteen months from the previous AGM. In my opinion, it would have been reasonable and appropriate in circumstances where there is no more precise stipulation for SOC to interpret GPW's annual election requirement similarly.

Instead, the SOC majority chose to make a ruling which not only declared the 2021 GPW elections retrospectively to have been carried out beyond their due time-frame, but deemed them to be therefore invalid, and every action taken by any subsequent GPW committee to have been consequentially invalid as a result. This extreme ruling defied all logic and any concept of reasonableness, to such an extent that it can only be interpreted as revealing a motive of deliberately inflicting as much damage as possible on GPW as an organisation.

This apparent vindictiveness against GPW has to been seen against the background of a continual campaign against GPW and its leading members by Trans-activists in various positions within the Party. In Autumn 2021 SOC became one of a number of national Party bodies to be taken over by members of a caucus of dedicated Trans-activists who have formed a party-within-a-party in the Green Party for the past few years. This infiltration has been particularly noticeable in those bodies with powers and responsibilities over Party discipline, GPRC and Disciplinary Committee (to which members have frequently been elected unopposed), and the campaign against GPW has included the repeated suspension and attempted expulsion of Emma Bateman, and the current suspension of Zoe Hatch. This

infiltration has lately become more sinister in character with Ash Routh and Melanie Earp combining their roles on SOC with key positions on GPRC, including involvement in the disciplinary referrals and appeals processes, creating a power nexus with huge and unhealthy potential for persecution, corruption and injustice.

[A further clear example of this potential, although it is not clear whether or to what extent any SOC members may have been personally involved, occurred this last Monday, 15th January, in relation to the AGM of Green Party Seniors (GPS). Three members who were standing for election and re-election as officers of GPS (Freda Davies, a former co-chair of GPRC, Nicola Watson and Eric Walker) were informed at very short notice before the meeting that they had been placed under so-called No Fault Suspensions, which prevented them from standing or taking any part in the meeting. This short notice also prevented any other persons being nominated for the positions of co-chairs and membership secretary of GPS, so that those elections had to be voided. GPS has therefore been effectively decapitated in a similar fashion to that employed against GPW.]

It should be noted in passing that Ash Routh has in correspondence described SOC's decision to "disaffiliate" GPW as having been "unanimous". This is I believe a misleading use of that term, but one which Ash Routh has used on other occasions, including when I was on SOC, to refer to decisions which, after debate, were taken without being pushed to a formal vote when it became clear that the dissenting minority would be outvoted.

It should also be noted that SOC is, constitutionally, *"the final authority for the interpretation of the Constitution and Standing Orders ... subject to the approval of Conference",* and that it is for this reason that SOC's rulings have to be reported to each Conference in the SOC Report, which may be subject to amendment by Conference. With no 2024 Spring Conference, rulings by the current SOC should therefore be regarded as provisional and advisory until they are, or are not, ratified the the 2024 Autumn Conference.

I shall always be proud that, amongst the many positions I have held within the Party during over 44 years of membership, I was a founder-member of its first SOC in 1980. I continued as a member of SOC until Autumn 1982, and was its convenor during the last year of that period. At that time we laid down the rules which, together with the integrity and impartiality of SOC itself, have been the bedrock of the Party's internal democracy and accountability ever since. Sadly, that impartiality and integrity appear to be no more, and to have been replaced by a ruthless brand of Trans-activist McCarthyism.

The abuse of position by a majority of SOC members (i.e. those excluding myself, Martin Hemingway and Sarah Bingham) since Autumn 2021 has, I believe, amounted to gross misconduct in office, imperilling the internal democracy of the Party, and making them unfit to continue in office. I do not know what effect this Speaking Out procedure can have, or how (if at all) it fits in with the Constitution of the Party and powers under that Constitution, but I am making this Speaking Out complaint because the safeguarding of our internal democracy is essential to not just the well-being but the very survival of our Party.

Brig Oubridge