

03 October 2019

Dear Sir/Madam,

It is with regret that I write this communication with the intention of submitting a formal complaint against Joyce Watson AM, in regard to her behaviour as a member on the Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee during the submission of oral evidence regarding the National Assembly for Wales' proposed bill to ban the use of wild animals in travelling circuses in Wales on the 2nd of October of this year.

Toward the end of the session which, up to this point had been handled with the greatest degree of professionalism and goodwill by all members of the committee, Mrs Watson, in her capacity as a committee member, during the time dedicated to putting questions to myself and my fellow witnesses, made the following statement, which was directed to myself:

"I just want to ask one final question which isn't on the paper, but I'm going to ask it anyway. You were selective in your psychological studies of animal behaviour, because it's an area I studied at degree level so I know that you were selective and I know that there are other views that oppose what you've said. But I'm going to put that aside, I just want it on the record that I'm aware of alternative views."

Mrs Watson then went on to ask a question seeking confirmation on whether or not an independent specialist had witnessed how I train my animals, ignoring my request for her to explain and justify her previous statement, which amounted to, at the very least, an insinuation of dishonesty on my part without granting me the right to reply.

Whilst I have no reason to doubt Mrs. Watson's claims about her own academic history, the basis of my complaint is on her improper conduct, cited above, which has the potential to influence other Assembly Members and any person, whether a member of the public or the media, who watches the recording of the session online into believing this claim about my character. Consequently, this may subsequently damage my career prospects and even negatively affect the impartial nature and integrity of the legislative process surrounding the previously mentioned bill.

I eagerly await a response on this matter.

Yours faithfully,

Thomas Chipperfield

Thomas Chipperfield  
MHS Streetway Farm  
Cannocks  
Staffordshire  
WS11 8LX

09 October 2019

Dear Mr Chipperfield,

CCERA Committee – 02 October 2019

Thank you for your correspondence, dated 3 October 2019, which the Llywydd has passed to me to respond to in my capacity as Chair of the Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee ('the Committee'). It is my responsibility, as Chair, to oversee the smooth running of committee proceedings. I have the authority, if necessary, to call Members to order for their behaviour during proceedings, in accordance with the Assembly's Standing Orders.

The Committee is grateful to you for attending its meeting on 2 October to give evidence. I know Members found the session informative.

In your correspondence, you refer to comments made by Joyce Watson AM during your appearance before the Committee. I was content that, in raising with you the issue of conflicting evidence on animal training practices, the Member was not in breach of the Assembly's Standing Orders in relation to behaviour in committees. Probing evidence with witnesses is an important element of committee scrutiny, and while I note your concerns, I am content that the Member conducted herself properly in her questioning.

I am sorry that you do not feel you were afforded an appropriate opportunity to respond to Joyce Watson AM's comments during your appearance. Should you wish to provide a



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response in writing I will ensure that it is circulated to Members and, subject to your agreement, published on the Committee's webpage.

You will be aware that the evidence session ran over by some 20 minutes. I hope this demonstrates my willingness, and that of the Committee, to give witnesses every opportunity to express their views and inform our scrutiny of the Wild Animals and Circuses (Wales) Bill.

I am copying this letter to Joyce Watson AM and to the Llywydd, for information. If you are content, your letter and my response will be published on the Committee's webpage in the interest of openness and transparency.

I trust that I have addressed the issues raised in your letter.

Yours sincerely,



**Mike Hedges AM**  
**Chair of Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee**

cc: Elin Jones AM Llywydd (Presiding Officer)  
Joyce Watson AM

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.



9 October 2019

Dear Mr Hedges,

Thank you for your response to my complaint. Whilst I appreciate your consideration of my concerns, I fear that I have been unclear in expressing them.

I have no issue with my submission or connected statements being probed or questioned, I was aware of that being the purpose of my being invited to testify in the Senedd, my concern lies in how Mrs Watson used her time to question me to accuse me of being selective with my evidence. Not only was no explanation offered for this allegation, in terms of theories on animal psychology, but also no proof of my acting in bad faith was given, which is the substance of Mrs Watson's claim. It is precisely this point that I take issue with.

Specifically, having just consulted the Standing Orders Assembly Members are subject to, I feel that Mrs Watson's action was in violation of,

**Personal Statements**

12.53 A personal statement must be brief, factual and must not be subject to debate.

I would like to add that I am aware of how generous you, as chair, and the rest of the committee were in granting myself and my colleagues the time you did. This fact was on my mind when repeatedly asking for your permission to add further points to the subjects being discussed.

In summary, I feel that Mrs Watson's accusation of my attempt at deception is damaging to my reputation. I respectfully ask for action to be taken on this matter.

Thank you again for your time in considering this issue.

Kind regards,

Thomas Chipperfield

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MHS Streetway Farm  
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17 October 2019

Dear Mr Chipperfield,

Thank you for your correspondence dated 9 October in which you reiterate your concerns about comments made by Joyce Watson AM during your appearance before the Committee on 2 October.

I fully understand the nature of your complaint. However, I wish to reiterate that, as Chair, I am content that Joyce Watson AM conducted herself properly in her questioning, and I did not consider her comments to be out of order.

It may be helpful to clarify that Members' behaviour in Committees is governed by the Assembly's Standing Order 17.25. Once again, I am content that the Member was not in breach of the Standing Order at any time during your appearance.

As outlined in my previous correspondence, should you wish to provide a response to Joyce Watsons AM's comments in writing I will ensure that it is circulated to Members and, subject to your agreement, published on the Committee's webpage.

I trust that I have addressed the issues raised in your correspondence.

Yours sincerely,



**Mike Hedges AM**  
**Chair of Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee**



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