

Annual Report – Stranraer and Wigtownshire Free Press/Our Wigtownshire

Introduction

The Stranraer and Wigtownshire Free Press newspaper is an independent publication in South West Scotland, owned by Lord Stair and printed on site in Stranraer.

The business is made up of a local paid for newspaper, which is published every Wednesday, as well as a bi-monthly magazine Our Wigtownshire.

The editorial area stretches from Drummore in the southern tip of Scotland up to Girvan in Ayrshire and east to Creetown, a spread of some 30 miles from its base in Stranraer.

The newspaper is sold in newsagents across Dumfries and Galloway, through delivery and other suppliers.

The newspaper does have a website but this is currently under review and not carrying editorial items. It also has Facebook and Twitter pages.

The content of the newspaper remains the traditional news, sport, local entertainment, farming and community items.

The newspaper has three permanent editorial members of staff – editor and two reporters – and uses external correspondents, both local and national, and freelance photographers.

Responsible person: Alan Hall, editor.

Our editorial standards

The Stranraer and Wigtownshire Free Press remains editorially independent from any political party.

Our office is based in the centre of town allowing easy access to the majority of our readers. Because of this, if an error has been made we are normally quickly alerted.

It is our policy to deal with any errors as quickly as possible and how to do report an error is published each week in the newspaper.

All reporters use the Editors' Code of Practice as the acceptable benchmark for

reporting. Each reporter has been supplied with the new Code of Practice (issued January 1 2018) and a copy is displayed next to each editorial desk for consultation if required. As a local newspaper we are sensitive to the tastes of our readers and avoid a tabloid style of content.

We hold firm to the belief that stories are not published until both sides have had a chance to comment. Our reporters are expected to follow the principle of fair and accurate reporting.

We would seek editorial guidance from IPSO if a complaint from a reader cannot be resolved between the two parties. We have not had any reason to do so as yet. The Stranraer and Wigtownshire Free Press has also not yet sought pre-publication guidance from IPSO. However, it would do so if it needed advice on interpreting the Editors' Code of Practice or the public interest exception.

Our complaints-handling process

We always aim to correct any factual error as quickly and as amicably as possible.

If a complaint is made then the reporter involved will discuss the issue with the complainant or the editor can be involved at this stage, if requested.

How to alert the newspaper to a possible error is published each week on Page 2 and can be through email, by telephone, by post or in person at the Stranraer office – all details of which also appear on Page 2. Contact details for IPSO are also published and the fact that we abide by the Editors' Code of Practice. The new IPSO mark is also contained beside the contact details.

Our Policy:

The Stranraer and Wigtownshire Free Press was established in 1843 and is editorially independent from any political party. It is our policy to deal with any major errors as quickly as possible. If you would like to report an error, please contact the editor as soon as possible. We are a member of the Independent Press Standards Organisation – www.ipso.co.uk – and abide by the Editors' Code of Practice.

Once a complaint has been made it will be discussed by the editorial individual involved and the editor. The complainant will be contacted if further information or a correction is required. All details of complaints are kept in printed form on file. This will remain on file until resolved and then for a further year. If at fault, the newspaper will keep a record for current and future reporters to consult.

A copy of the Editor's Code of Practice is available if requested by a complainant. If a resolution cannot be found, the complainant will be provided, if they wish, with

contact details of IPSO, which are also readily available in the newspaper each week.

Any correction will be agreed with the complainant and published in an equally as prominent position as the original story, as allowed.

Our training process

The newspaper only employs journalists educated to a degree or masters level and media law and shorthand are the minimum requirements in those qualifications.

Each reporter is trained on the job in court reporting and is instructed to follow the Editors' Code of Practice without fail, a copy of which is given to each reporter. Reporters who wish to undergo further NCTJ training are supported to do so.

The editor will also raise any concerns over style or a failure to follow the code so the reporter can update their own style folder.

Our record on compliance

We have not had any complaints in the period under review ruled on by IPSO's Complaints Committee.

Appendix

http://www.editorscode.org.uk/the_code.php