

The Stranraer and Wigtonshire Free Press Annual Statement 2021

Introduction

The Stranraer and Wigtonshire Free Press newspaper is an independent publication in South-West Scotland, whose proprietor is the Earl of Stair.

The business comprises a paid-for weekly newspaper, published each Wednesday, as well as Our Wigtonshire, a bi-monthly paid-for magazine (magazine currently suspended due to the pandemic).

The editorial area stretches from the Mull of Galloway, the southern tip of Scotland, up to Ballantrae in Ayrshire and from Portpatrick in the west to Creetown in the east, a geographic 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 website is currently in abeyance pending a review, but Facebook and Twitter pages have recently been revived.

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

The newspaper has four full-time and one part-time staff members – including two reporters and two reporters – and utilises external correspondents, both local and national, and freelance photographers. We also avail of stories via the BBC Local Democracy Reporting Service.

Responsible person: Louise Kerr, senior reporter.

Our editorial standards

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 details on how to contact us regarding a problem are published each week in the newspaper. Contact details for IPSO are also published alongside our policy of adherence to the Editors' Code of Practice.

All reporters are familiar with the Editors' Code of Practice as the acceptable benchmark for reporting. Each reporter has been supplied with the Code of Practice and a copy is displayed with the Newsroom for consultation if required.

We strive at all times to give both parties a say in any contentious stories.

While guidance from IPSO would be sought should a complaint prove irreconcilable, we have not had reason to seek such assistance as yet. The Stranraer and Wigtownshire Free Press has also not yet sought pre-publication guidance from IPSO.

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.

Our complaints policy

We carry the following on a weekly basis:

'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.

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 a prominent position.

Our training process

Each reporter is trained on the job in court reporting and is instructed to follow the Editors' Code of Practice, a copy of which is given to each reporter. Reporters who wish to undergo further NCTJ training are supported to do so.

Our record on compliance

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