

Written evidence

1. Letter from the Commissioner to Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP, 4 February 2019

5 I would welcome your help with an inquiry I have started concerning your compliance with the House of Commons' Code of Conduct for Members in connection with the registration of your financial interests. I have begun this inquiry on my own initiative using the powers available to me under House of Commons' Standing Order No.150.

Background

10 You will recall that I inquired into a similar matter between 16 October and 26 November 2018, which resulted in the Committee on Standards asking you to make an apology to the House for a series of late registrations. You made that apology on 6 December 2018.

15 During my inquiry, I asked you to confirm that your Register entry was completely up-to-date. You did so on 24 October 2018. On 17 January 2019 you registered in category 6 your acquisition of a share in a residential property on 4 October 2018.

As you are aware, Members are required to register any relevant changes in their financial interests within 28 days of the change having occurred. While the 28-day period for registering this property had not elapsed on 24 October 2018, I am disappointed that you did not register it until 17 January 2019.

20 The Code of Conduct for Members

Paragraph 14 of the current Code of Conduct for Members states:

25 "Members shall fulfil conscientiously the requirements of the House in respect of the registration of interests in the Register of Members' Financial Interests. They shall always be open and frank in drawing attention to any relevant interest in any proceeding of the House or its Committees, and in any communications with Ministers, Members, public officials or public office holders."

The Guide to the Rules relating to the conduct of Members – on registration

The main purpose of the Register of Members' Financial Interests (the Register) is

30 "to provide information of any pecuniary interest or other material benefit which a Member receives which might reasonably be thought by others to influence his or her action, speeches or votes in Parliament, or actions taken in his or her capacity as a Member of Parliament".

After the publication of the first Register of a Parliament, it is the responsibility of Members to notify changes in their registrable interests within 28 days of each change occurring.

5 The detailed rules on the registration of financial interests are found in chapter 1 of the Guide to the Rules relating to the conduct of Members (copy enclosed). Paragraphs 47-50 of that chapter deal specifically with the registration requirements concerning Land and property (Category 6 of the Register).

Next steps

In the first instance, I would welcome your comments on this matter.

10 It would be helpful if you would answer the following questions.

(1) Whether at any time between 4 October 2018 and 17 January 2019 you considered registering your share in the residential property in Somerset?

15 (2) What led you to register your interest in that property on 17 January 2019?

(3) Why did you not register the interest sooner?

(4) Is your register entry now complete and accurate (copy enclosed for ease of reference)?

20 (5) If it is not, please contact the Registrar as soon as possible to make any necessary additions.

(6) Please state clearly the steps you have taken to ensure that all your interests, registrable in categories 1-10 as described in chapter 1 of the Guide, have now been registered.

25 Any other points you may wish to make to help me with this inquiry would be most welcome.

I have written to the Registrar of Members' Financial Interests today to ask her for copies of any correspondence she has had with you about this matter. I will share her reply with you in due course.

Important information

30 As you will be aware, my inquiries are conducted in private. Following the decision taken by the House on 19 July 2018, I will not publish the fact that I am conducting

an inquiry into an allegation into an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct. My office will not comment on any aspect of the inquiry to third parties. They will answer direct factual questions about the processes I follow and the standards system more generally but will neither confirm nor deny that I have begun an inquiry.

5 Procedure

You can see a copy of the Commissioner's Information Note, which sets out the procedure for inquiries via this [hyperlink]. Please note that this has not yet been updated to reflect the changes flowing from the decision of 19 July 2018.

10 This letter and any subsequent correspondence between us in connection with this inquiry is protected by parliamentary privilege. It should be kept confidential until the outcome of my inquiry is published. All the relevant evidence, including our correspondence, will be published when I have concluded my work.

15 While I do not, at this stage, know whether it will be necessary to interview you about this matter, it would be open to you to be accompanied at any such interview. I am, of course, very happy to meet with you at any stage if you would find that helpful.

Action

I would be grateful to have your response to this letter as soon as possible and no later than 11 February 2019.

20 *4 February 2019*

2. Letter from the Commissioner to the Registrar of Members' Financial Interests, 4 February 2019

I would like to ask for your advice on a matter concerning Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP and the registration of his financial interests.

25 I am investigating whether Mr Johnson has acted in breach of paragraph 14 of the Code of Conduct for Members by registering late his acquisition of a share in a property in Somerset. The current Register shows that he acquired the property in October 2018 and registered it in January 2019.

30 I enclose a copy of the letter I have today sent to Mr Johnson. It would be helpful to have copies of any correspondence you or your team have had with Mr Johnson about this matter. It would also be helpful if you would confirm the date by which the rules of the House required the registration of this interest.

Any other comments you may wish to make would be most welcome. It would be very helpful to have your response to this letter within the next two weeks.

4 February 2019

3. Letter from Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP to the Commissioner, 5 February 2019

I am very sorry for the late registration of my 20% share of a property in Somerset due to a misinterpretation of the rules.

5 I am afraid that I had not realised that this asset exceeded the thresholds mentioned
in Category 6 on the Register. This paragraph appeared to me to suggest that
Members were obliged to register any property with (i) a value over £100,000
and/or giving rental income of over £10,000 a year. The asset in question - that is,
10 the 20 per cent share - certainly qualifies on neither score. May I respectfully request
that the register is reworded so that colleagues can be in no doubt as to the rules.

To answer your questions in turn:

1) Yes. I considered registering the property but as I explained above, I did not understand fully that it met the threshold for registration.

15 2) I moved to register the property when I was notified that it had received an
income of £140 on 4 October and wanted to reclarify whether it met the
requirements.

3) Because I did not understand fully that it met the thresholds for registration.

4) and 5) I doubly check today and go back to the Registrar.

20 6) I have asked for my office in Parliament to be updated on any future
correspondence relating to Johnson family trusts.

I have fully apologised to the Registrar and I am happy now to ensure that my Register appears correctly and once again I apologise for the late registration.

5 February 2019

4. Letter from the Registrar to the Commissioner, 6 February 2019

25 Thank you for your letter of 4 February. As requested, I attach the correspondence
I have had with Mr Johnson about the share he now has in a residential property in
Somerset.

30 You will see that Mr Johnson's staff member first enquired on 17 January about
registering his interest in this property. She sent a registration form on the same
day. In response to a later question from me, the staff member explained on 21
January that Mr Johnson had not registered this property earlier because he
believed that he did not need to. This was because both the value of his share in the

property and his share of rent fell below the threshold for registering land and property. In fact the thresholds apply to the value of a Member's whole portfolio, and to income gained from the Member's whole portfolio. Since Mr Johnson already has a London property which he rents out, his portfolio already exceeds both thresholds, so the new property needs to be registered. The staff member said that as soon as Mr Johnson had understood this, he had asked her to forward to us the information needed for the Register. We added this new interest to Mr Johnson's draft Register entry, with the registration date of 17 February.

Mr Johnson contacted us again yesterday, 5 February, to say that he realises that he made an error in the information he supplied on 17 January. He now realises that he acquired his interest in this property on 25 January 2018, not 4 October 2018. (This means that it should have been registered on 21 February 2018 at the latest.) Mr Johnson asked us to correct the Register, which we will do. The correction will appear in the Register of 18 February 2019.

6 February 2019

Enclosures: Emails between Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP and the Registrar's office

From: Johnson, Boris

Sent: 05 February 2019 19:32

To: Commons Registrar

Subject: Boris Johnson

Dear [Registrar]

As you will be aware I have received correspondence this morning from the Commissioner for Standards in which she asked me to double check my register entry.

As you know back in October I began to thoroughly review my register and this led to some inquiries. Initially I believed that the threshold was the value of the share of the individual property and share of rent, as is with income received by me that is the measure for registration. I now understand it to be the sum of all property interests once over the initial threshold.

Having gone through my papers with my brother, I see that I was copied in on an email to my father on January 25 2018 from [redacted], of law firm Clarke Willmott LLP, notifying my father that the transfer of the property had been finalised with the Land Registry. This is different to 4 October which is the date I received correspondence relating to the property including a cheque for the sum of £140. As

mentioned in previous correspondence, it was only in January 2019 that I realised that I had inadvertently misinterpreted the rules and sought to make amends.

I have noted on the Commissioners letter that the date reads 4 October and feel it should read:

- 5 From 25 January 2018, a 20% share of a residential property in Somerset: (i) and (ii)

I apologise profusely for this further correction.

Yours sincerely

Boris Johnson

10

From: Commons Registrar

Sent: 22 January 2019 12:26

To: [Mr Johnson's staff member]

Subject: RE: Update - register

- 15 Dear Mr Johnson - and [staff member]

Thanks for this explanation, and for the further information about [redacted].

I have set out below your draft revised Register entry, as it will appear in the next published Register, which I expect to go online tomorrow. We would be grateful if you would kindly confirm that this is complete and correct.

- 20 Please continue to register your interests within 28 days of any changes.

With best wishes

[Registrar of Members' Financial Interests]

Johnson, Boris (Uxbridge and South Ruislip)

- 25 **1. Employment and earnings**

Payments from Hodder and Stoughton UK, Carmelite House, 50 Victoria Embankment, London EC4Y 0DZ, via United Agents, 12-26 Lexington St, London W1F 0LE:

- 5 *29 September 2017, received £15,372.17 for royalties on book already written. Hours: no additional hours. (Registered 20 December 2017) This is a late entry which was the subject of a Report, published on 6 December 2018, by the Select Committee on Standards.*
- 10 *17 October 2017, received £1,167.40 for Bulgarian and Hungarian subrights and royalties on book already written. Hours: no additional hours. (Registered 20 December 2017) This is a late entry which was the subject of a Report, published on 6 December 2018, by the Select Committee on Standards.*
- 15 *8 February 2018, received £499.49 for Czech subrights on book already written. Hours: no additional hours. (Registered 12 March 2018) This is a late entry which was the subject of a Report, published on 6 December 2018, by the Select Committee on Standards.*
- 30 March 2018, received £6,013.27 for royalties on book already written. Hours: no additional hours. (Registered 17 April 2018)
- 20 *17 April 2018, received £560.13 for Czech subrights on book already written. Hours: no additional hours. (Registered 09 May 2018)*
- 10 July 2018, received £11,290.17 for French and US royalties on books already written. Hours: no additional hours. (Registered 22 August 2018) This is a late entry which was the subject of a Report, published on 6 December 2018, by the Select Committee on Standards.*
- 25 28 September 2018, received £8,968.27 via United Agents, 12-26 Lexington St, London W1F 0LE, for royalties on book already written. Hours: no additional hours. (Registered 02 November 2018)
- 30 *12 December 2018, received £525.12 for Hungarian subrights on book already written. Hours: no additional hours. (Registered 17 December 2018)*
- Payments from HarperCollins UK, 1 London Bridge Street, London, SE1 9GF via United Agents, 12-26 Lexington St, London W1F 0LE:
- 35 *26 September 2017, received £1,382.58 for advance on book already written. Hours: no additional hours. (Registered 20 December 2017) This is a late entry which was the subject of a Report, published on 6 December 2018, by the Select Committee on Standards.*

11 January 2018, received £5,970.76 for US and Dutch royalties on book already written. Hours: no additional hours. (Registered 05 February 2018)

5 *5 July 2018, received £37.82 for French royalties on book already written. Hours: no additional hours. (Registered 22 August 2018) This is a late entry which was the subject of a Report, published on 6 December 2018, by the Select Committee on Standards.*

10 23 October 2018, received £491.75 via Rogers, Coleridge and White Ltd, 20 Powis Mews, London W11 1JN, for royalties on books already written. Hours: no additional hours. (Registered 02 November 2018)

Payments from HarperCollins UK, 1 London Bridge St, London SE1 9GF, via Rogers, Coleridge and White Ltd, 20 Powis Mews, London W11 1JN:

15 *30 September 2017, received £42.79 for royalties on books already written. Hours: no additional hours. (Registered 20 December 2017) This is a late entry which was the subject of a Report, published on 6 December 2018, by the Select Committee on Standards.*

30 April 2018, received £244.91 for royalties on books already written. Hours: no additional hours. (Registered 09 May 2018)

20 19 December 2018, received £435.72 for Ukrainian subrights on book already written. Hours: no additional hours. (Registered 15 January 2019)

25 *5 September 2017, received £63.72 from Penguin Books Ltd, 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, via United Agents, 12-26 Lexington St, London W1F 0LE, for royalties on book already written. Hours: no additional hours. (Registered 20 December 2017) This is a late entry which was the subject of a Report, published on 6 December 2018, by the Select Committee on Standards.*

30 *From 11 July 2018 until 10 July 2019, articles for the Telegraph Media Group Ltd, 111 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 0DT, for which I expect to receive £22,916.66 a month. Hours: 10 hrs a month. First payment received on 13 August 2018. I consulted ACoBA about this appointment. (Registered 17 September 2018) This is a late entry which was the subject of a Report, published on 6 December 2018, by the Select Committee on Standards.*

35 Payments from The Spectator (1828) Ltd, 22 Old Queen Street, London SW1H 9HP, for articles:

28 September 2018, received £800. Hours: 2 hrs. (Registered 15 October 2018)

21 December 2018, received £350. Hours: 2 hrs. (Registered 15 January 2019)

5 9 October 2018, received £2,000 from Associated Newspapers Ltd, Northcliffe House, 2 Derry Street, London W8 5TT, for an article. Hours: 2 hrs. (Registered 02 November 2018)

10 2 November 2018, received £94,507.85 from GoldenTree Asset Management, 300 Park Avenue, 21st Floor, New York, NY 10022 via Chartwell Speakers, 14 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8HN, for a speaking engagement on 8 November 2018. Travel and accommodation also provided. Hours: 2 hrs. (Registered 09 November 2018)

15 Payments received through via Jeremy Lee Associates, 14 Berners Street, London, W1T 3LJ, for speaking engagements. I consulted ACoBA about this arrangement. (Registered 16 January 2019)

20 21 December 2018, received £28,900 from KNect365, KNect House, 30-32 Mortimer Street, London W1W 7RE, for a speaking engagement on 4 December 2018. Hours: 2 hrs. Transport and accommodation also provided. (Registered 16 January 2019)

2. (b) Any other support not included in Category 2(a)

Name of donor: Jon Wood

Address of donor: private

25 Amount of donation, or nature and value if donation in kind: £50,000 for office and staffing costs

Date received: 1 October 2018

Date accepted: 1 October 2018

Donor status: individual

(Registered 17 October 2018)

30 Name of donor: CTF Partners Limited

Address of donor: 4th Floor, 6 Chesterfield Gardens, London W1J 5BQ

Amount of donation: Interest free loan of £20,000 for office and staffing costs, repaid on 18 January 2019.

Date received: 20 December 2018

5 Date accepted: 20 December 2018

Donor status: company, registration 07196537

(Registered 04 January 2019, updated 18 January 2019)

Name of donor: CTF Partners Limited

Address of donor: 4th Floor, 6 Chesterfield Gardens, London W1J 5BQ

10 Amount of donation: £3,000 for office and staffing costs.

Date received: 21 December 2018

Date accepted: 21 December 2018

Donor status: company, registration 07196537

(Registered 04 January 2019)

15 Name of donor: J C Bamford Excavators Ltd

Address of donor: Lakeside Works, Rocester, Uttoxeter ST14 5JP

Amount of donation, or nature and value if donation in kind: £10,000

Date received: 15 January 2019

Date accepted: 15 January 2019

20 Donor status: company, registration 00561597

(Registered 18 January 2019)

3. Gifts, benefits and hospitality from UK sources

Name of donor: Surrey County Cricket Club

Address of donor: The Kia Oval, Kennington, London SE11 5SS

Amount of donation, or nature and value if donation in kind: Two tickets with hospitality to Test Match at the Oval, value £1,800

5 Date received: 8 September 2018

Date accepted: 8 September 2018

Donor status: company, registration IP27896R

(Registered 01 October 2018)

Name of donor: Democratic Unionist Party

10 Address of donor: 91 Dundela Avenue, Belfast BT4 3BU

Amount of donation, or nature and value if donation in kind: Hospitality and travel to Belfast for myself and a member of staff, estimated value £355.94

Date received: 24 November 2018

Date accepted: 24 November 2018

15 Donor status: registered political party

(Registered 20 December 2018)

4. Visits outside the UK

Name of donor: American Enterprise Institute (AEI)

Address of donor: 1789 Massachusetts Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20036

20 Estimate of the probable value (or amount of any donation): For myself, flights £6,666.09, hotel accommodation £1,459.52 and other costs of £1,059.56; for my staff member, flights £6,666.09, hotel £994.82; total £16,846.09

Destination of visit: Washington DC, USA

Dates of visit: 13-15 September 2018

Purpose of visit: To receive Irving Kristol Award at AEI Annual Dinner.

(Registered 15 October 2018)

Name of donor: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Address of donor: PO Box 55937, Riyadh 11544

- 5 Estimate of the probable value (or amount of any donation): Travel, food and accommodation, estimated value of £14,000

Destination of visit: Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Dates of visit: 19 – 21 September 2018

- 10 Purpose of visit: Meeting with regional figures to promote education for women and girls.

(Registered 17 October 2018)

6. Land and property portfolio: (i) value over £100,000 and/or (ii) giving rental income of over £10,000 a year

- 15 From 1 November 2016, house in London, owned jointly with my wife: (i) and, from 1 March 2017, (ii). (Registered 20 March 2017)

From 4 October 2018, a 20% share of a residential property in Somerset: (i) and (ii). (Registered 17 January 2019)

From: [Mr Johnson's staff member]

- 20 **Sent:** 22 January 2019 11:13

To: Commons Registrar

Subject: RE: Update - register

Dear [Registrar],

Thank you for your email and I can confirm all appears correct.

With regard to the property in Somerset, Mr Johnson understands this is a late registration and apologises for this. Unfortunately, it is the result of a misinterpretation of the rules, as when initially read, it was believed that it was the value of Mr Johnson's share of the property and share of rent, as is with income received by him that was the measure for registration. On reviewing the rules again, Mr Johnson now understands it to be the total value of all properties owned by the Member and rent including any rent received from other properties, in this case his property in London. As soon as this was understood, he has requested I forward the information to you to update the register.

10 [material relating to another interest, which has been redacted]

Many thanks for your help. Please let me know if you need any further information on this.

Very best wishes,

[Mr Johnson's staff member]

15

From: Commons Registrar

Sent: 21 January 2019 12:26

To: [Mr Johnson's staff member]

JOHNSON, Boris

20 **Subject:** RE: Update - register

Dear Mr Johnson - and [staff member]

Thank you for this. I have set out below your draft revised Register entry, as it will appear in the next published Register, to be dated 21 January. We would be grateful if you would kindly check each item and confirm that all is complete and correct. If you have questions please feel free to call.

25

I would be grateful also for a short explanation as to why this item was registered late. If you believed that it did not need to be registered it would be helpful to know the basis for that belief.

Please continue to register your interests within 28 days of any changes.

30 With best wishes

[Registrar of Members' Financial Interests]

Johnson, Boris (Uxbridge and South Ruislip)

1. Employment and earnings

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9 October 2018, received £2,000 from Associated Newspapers Ltd, Northcliffe House, 2 Derry Street, London W8 5TT, for an article. Hours: 2 hrs. (Registered 02 November 2018)

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21 December 2018, received £28,900 from KNect365, KNect House, 30-32 Mortimer Street, London W1W 7RE, for a speaking engagement on 4 December 2018. Hours: 2 hrs. Transport and accommodation also provided. (Registered 16 January 2019)

2. (b) Any other support not included in Category 2(a)

25 Name of donor: Jon Wood

Address of donor: private

Amount of donation, or nature and value if donation in kind: £50,000 for office and staffing costs

Date received: 1 October 2018

30 Date accepted: 1 October 2018

Donor status: individual

(Registered 17 October 2018)

Name of donor: CTF Partners Limited

Address of donor: 4th Floor, 6 Chesterfield Gardens, London W1J 5BQ

5 Amount of donation: Interest free loan of £20,000 for office and staffing costs, to be repaid by 20 January 2019.

Date received: 20 December 2018

Date accepted: 20 December 2018

Donor status: company, registration 07196537

(Registered 04 January 2019)

10 Name of donor: CTF Partners Limited

Address of donor: 4th Floor, 6 Chesterfield Gardens, London W1J 5BQ

Amount of donation: £3,000 for office and staffing costs.

Date received: 21 December 2018

Date accepted: 21 December 2018

15 Donor status: company, registration 07196537

(Registered 04 January 2019)

3. Gifts, benefits and hospitality from UK sources

Name of donor: Surrey County Cricket Club

Address of donor: The Kia Oval, Kennington, London SE11 5SS

20 Amount of donation, or nature and value if donation in kind: Two tickets with hospitality to Test Match at the Oval, value £1,800

Date received: 8 September 2018

Date accepted: 8 September 2018

Donor status: company, registration IP27896R

(Registered 01 October 2018)

Name of donor: Democratic Unionist Party

Address of donor: 91 Dundela Avenue, Belfast BT4 3BU

- 5 Amount of donation, or nature and value if donation in kind: Hospitality and travel to Belfast for myself and a member of staff, estimated value £355.94

Date received: 24 November 2018

Date accepted: 24 November 2018

Donor status: registered political party

- 10 (Registered 20 December 2018)

4. Visits outside the UK

Name of donor: American Enterprise Institute (AEI)

Address of donor: 1789 Massachusetts Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20036

- 15 Estimate of the probable value (or amount of any donation): For myself, flights £6,666.09, hotel accommodation £1,459.52 and other costs of £1,059.56; for my staff member, flights £6,666.09, hotel £994.82; total £16,846.09

Destination of visit: Washington DC, USA

Dates of visit: 13-15 September 2018

Purpose of visit: To receive Irving Kristol Award at AEI Annual Dinner.

- 20 (Registered 15 October 2018)

Name of donor: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Address of donor: PO Box 55937, Riyadh 11544

Estimate of the probable value (or amount of any donation): Travel, food and accommodation, estimated value of £14,000

Destination of visit: Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Dates of visit: 19 – 21 September 2018

Purpose of visit: Meeting with regional figures to promote education for women and girls.

5 (Registered 17 October 2018)

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From 1 November 2016, house in London, owned jointly with my wife: (i) and, from 1 March 2017, (ii). (Registered 20 March 2017)

10 From 4 October 2018, a 20% share of a residential property in Somerset: (i) and (ii). (Registered 17 January 2019)

From: Commons Registrar

Sent: 17 January 2019 17:43

15 **To:** [Mr Johnson's staff member]

Subject: RE: Update - register

Dear [staff member]

Thank you for getting this to us this afternoon as promised.

20 [The Registrar] is not back in the office until Monday. In the meantime, I can confirm that you have provided all the information we need to draft the new entry.

Kind regards

[Assistant Registrar of Members' Financial Interests]

From: [Mr Johnson's staff member]

25 **Sent:** 17 January 2019 16:49

To: Commons Registrar

Subject: Update - register

Dear [registration team]

5 Further to my phone call just now, as discussed we have become aware that Mr Johnson owns a share of a property in Somerset that is required to be registered.

Unfortunately we weren't aware that this needed registering and so we sincerely apologise for the delay in making this declaration.

10 Whilst the rental income from this property is not expected to be over the registrable amount, if it is taken in conjunction with his London property too, these will total over £10,000.

I have attached the relevant form but if you have any questions, please do let me know.

Once again many thanks for your help.

Very best wishes,

15 [Mr Johnson's staff member]

5. Letter from the Commissioner to Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP, 11 February 2019

Thank you for your letter of 5 February 2019, acknowledging and apologising for your late registration of your shared ownership of a property in Somerset.

20 You suggest that the Register might be more helpfully worded and ask that we consider rewording it so that "colleagues can be left in no doubt as to the rules". I note that the Register does not repeat the full wording of paragraph 47 of chapter 1 of the Guide:

25 *Members must register subject to the paragraphs below, any land or property in the UK or elsewhere which:*

has a value of more than £100,000; or forms part of a total property portfolio whose value exceeds £100,00; and/or

alone or together with other properties owned by the Member, provides rental income of more than £10,000 in a calendar year.

However, I also note that the heading for category 6 in the Register says “Land and property portfolio: (i) value over £100,000 and/or (ii) giving rental income of over £10,000 a year” [my added emphasis]. I therefore think that, those Members relying on the wording in the Register, rather than reading the Guide to the Rules, should be in no doubt that it is the combined value of the properties owned/rentals received which is the measure for registration.

I enclose a copy of the Registrar’s letter to me of 6 February 2019. I note that you have identified a further error in your current Register entry in respect of your share in the property in Somerset, in that you acquired that share on 25 January 2018, not 4 October as first registered.

I appreciate that this late registration arises in part from your misunderstanding of the rules of the House in respect of the registration of land and property, and I note that you have offered your apologies. I would be grateful to receive any additional comments that you wish to make before I begin drafting my Memorandum to the Committee on Standards.

11 February 2019

6. Letter from Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP to the Commissioner, 6 March 2019

Thank you for your letter dated 11 February 2019. I am grateful to you for your appreciation that this late registration arises in part from my misunderstanding of the rules of the House and that you have noted my apologies which I am happy to reiterate.

With regard to any additional comment, I am grateful for the opportunity to restate the apology that I have made to the Registrar in my correspondence of 5 February and to repeat that as soon as I understood that a misinterpretation had been made I moved to immediately correct the situation. I am also glad that this correction has now been published in the Register of 18 February 2019.

I remain fully at your disposal should you require any further information or have any additional queries.

6 March 2019

7. Email from Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP to the Commissioner, 19 March 2019

Thank you for your further letter of 12 March. I have no amendments to the submissions and apologies I have made to you and the Registrar previously, regarding the allegations you are advancing.

I note that you have simultaneously exonerated my brother for exactly the same mistake and have accepted his point that the rules were unclear. If the rules were uncertain to him they should surely be unclear to me too?

Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to ask.

19 March 2019

8. Letter from the Commissioner to Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP, 25 March 2019

5 Thank you for your email of 19 March 2019. I have today sent my Memorandum to the Clerk to the Committee on Standards.

In the second paragraph of your email, you say that you note that I “*have simultaneously exonerated [your] brother for exactly the same mistake and accepted his point that the rules are unclear.*” That is inaccurate. I found that he too had acted in breach of the rule regarding the registration of land and property.

10 Your brother advanced a similar argument to yours. In response, I said “*You explained in your letter that you had misunderstood how the threshold for registration in category 6 of the Register applies to properties in which the Member has a part share. However, I note you had already registered another property in which you had a part share, and the rules are clear that where a Member owns more than one*
15 *property, it is the total value/rental income from the properties that is relevant.*”

Your brother’s registration of financial interests had not previously been the subject of an inquiry and, taking into account the wider circumstances, I considered it appropriate to conclude the matter by way of the rectification procedure. I have already explained why I do not think that is appropriate in your case.

20 Given that your only comment on my draft Memorandum was based on a misunderstanding of the facts, I have not added it to the body of the Memorandum. I have, instead, added the text of your email and this reply to the written evidence appended to it.

25 The Clerk will send you a copy of the full Memorandum and let you know the next stage in this process shortly. Until such time as the Committee publishes its Report this matter remains confidential and protected by parliamentary privilege.

I am grateful to you for your prompt responses throughout my inquiry.

25 March 2019