

Mr David Tredinnick MP: Resolution Letter

Letter to Mr Michael Barnbrook from the Commissioner, 12 January 2010

I have now concluded my consideration of the complaint you sent me on 7 July 2009 about expenses claims made by Mr David Tredinnick MP against his Incidental Expenses Provision.

In essence, your complaint was that Mr Tredinnick had made claims against the Incidental Expenses Provision for computer software, instruction and consultancy services which were not wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred on parliamentary duties.

I have consulted Mr Tredinnick and the House authorities about this matter and have considered very carefully Mr Tredinnick's longstanding parliamentary interest in astrology and alternative medicines.

Mr Tredinnick purchased computer software and instruction on its use in February 2006 and further instruction in the following month. In January 2007, Mr Tredinnick purchased a consultancy service from the same company to rectify a problem he had had with the software. The total cost of these purchases was £755.33. The software enabled the user to produce interpretations and analyses of a person's condition based on astrology and drawing on links to healthcare.

Mr Tredinnick has had a longstanding interest in complementary and alternative medicine and in its relationship to astrology. He is currently Chairman of the Parliamentary Group for Integrated and Complementary Healthcare. Mr Tredinnick's view is that many complementary or alternative therapies, including English herbal medicine and Ayurvedic medicine, have links to astrology. Mr Tredinnick has raised these issues in debates in the House of Commons and in discussions with other Members of Parliament. I consider that Mr Tredinnick has established in his evidence to me that he has a longstanding interest in alternative medicines and astrology and that he has pursued that interest as part of his parliamentary duties.

I have considered, therefore, whether it was necessary for Mr Tredinnick to purchase this software and its associated services in order to fulfill this aspect of his parliamentary duties. After careful consideration, Mr Tredinnick has himself decided that these claims could be perceived as supplementary to his parliamentary duties and, on reflection, he has decided that he should not have purchased this software against his parliamentary expenses. Mr Tredinnick has accepted, therefore, that to this extent he was in breach of the rules of the House in making these claims. He has apologised and paid back the full sums involved. I consider that a satisfactory resolution of this matter and have closed the complaint on this basis. I will inform the Committee on Standards and Privileges of the outcome.

I am copying this letter to Mr David Tredinnick MP.

12 January 2010

Mr David Tredinnick MP: Written evidence

1. Letter to the Commissioner from Mr Michael Barnbrook, 29 June 2009

I wish to register a formal complaint against Mr David Tredinnick, MP.

The complaint relates to an article in the Mail on Sunday, dated 29th June, 2009, headed 'The MPs' expenses foreseen in the stars', a copy of which I enclose.

In the article it states that Mr Tredinnick charged the taxpayer for studying astrology and the influence of the planets.

Apparently, Mr Tredinnick has admitted receiving hundreds of pounds to pay for computer software and tuition from a star gazing firm.

His Commons expenses show that he billed the taxpayer for £293.75p worth of computer software lessons from astrology firm Crucial Astro Tools.

He also received £75 for consultancy from the firm based in Surrey, which offers Solar Fire Gold top world astrology software for beginners and professionals for £150.

Mr Tredinnick must be on another planet if he considers these charges to the taxpayer to be to our benefit.

I personally consider them to be a flagrant breach of the Parliamentary rules.

It is no defence to claim that the payments had been cleared by the Commons fees office.

The code of conduct for Members of Parliament states that holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

The code also states that holders of public office should take decisions solely in the terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefit for themselves, their friends and their families.

The code further states that no improper use shall be made of any payment or allowance made to Members for public purposes and the administrative rules which apply to such payments and allowances must be strictly observed.

I have not submitted any evidence as the facts are already in the public domain and Mr Tredinnick appears to have admitted the allegations made against him by the Mail on Sunday.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

29 June 2009

Article in the Mail on Sunday, 29 June 2009

The MP's expenses foreseen in the stars

Tory MP David Tredinnick charged the taxpayer for studying astrology and the influence of the planets.

He admitted yesterday he had received hundreds of pounds to pay for computer software and tuition from a star-gazing firm.

The MP's Commons expenses show how he billed the taxpayer for £293.75 worth of computer software lessons from astrology firm Crucial Astro Tools.

He also received £75 for consultancy from the firm, based in Surrey, which offers Solar Fire Gold 'top world astrology software for beginners and professionals' for £150.

Mr Tredinnick, MP for Bosworth, Leicestershire, defended the claims, saying it was necessary to pursue his interest in alternative medicine.

He said that after his studies, he was inclined to believe there was some truth in the astrology and the influence of the planets on the earth and said the payments had been approved in advance by the Commons' Fees Office.

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2. Letter to the Commissioner, from Mr Michael Barnbrook, 7 July 2009

With reference to your letter dated 2nd July¹ asking me to supply evidence to substantiate my complaint against Mr David Tredinnick, MP, that he breached the rules of the House.

The evidence is contained on the Parliament web site under 'allowances by Members' on the following pages;

2005/06

Page 19	Crucial Astro Tools (Two sessions of Computer Software Instruction)	£293.75p
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Page 26	Crucial Astro Tools (Computer Instructions)	£176.25p
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Page 27	Crucial Astro Tools (Computer Software)	£210.33p
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2006/07

Page 25	Crucial Astro Tools (Consultancy Services)	£75.00p
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I believe he has breached the rules by making an improper use of a payment or allowance for public purposes and other reasons, as set out in my previous letter dated 29th June, 2009.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

7 July 2009

3. Letter to Mr David Tredinnick MP from the Commissioner, 14 July 2009

I would welcome your help on a complaint I have received from Mr Michael Barnbrook in respect of claims you have made against the Incidental Expenses Provision.

I enclose a copy of Mr Barnbrook's letters of 7 July and 29 June and a copy of the Mail on Sunday article of 29 June referred to by Mr Barnbrook.

In essence, the complaint is that you made claims against the Incidental Expenses Provision for computer software, instruction and consultancy services which were not wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred on Parliamentary duties.

The Code of Conduct for Members of Parliament provides in paragraph 14 as follows:

"Members shall at all times ensure that their use of expenses, allowances, facilities and services provided from the public purse is strictly in accordance with the rules laid down on these matters, and that they observe any limits placed by the House on the use of such expenses, allowances, facilities and services."

In Mr Speaker Martin's introduction to the edition, he wrote as follows:

"Members themselves are responsible for ensuring that their use of allowances is above reproach. They should seek advice in cases of doubt and read the Green Book with care. In cases of doubt or

¹ Not included in the evidence.

difficulty about any aspect of the allowances or how they can be used, please contact the Department of Finance and Administration. The Members Estimate Committee, which I chair, has recently restated the Department's authority to interpret and enforce these rules."

The rules for the Incidental Expenses Provision (IEP) are set out in the Green Book (the relevant edition in this case was published in April 2005).

Paragraph 5.1.1 sets out the scope of the allowance as follows:

"The incidental expenses provision (IEP) is available to meet costs incurred on Members' Parliamentary duties. It cannot be used to meet personal costs, or the costs of party political activities or campaigning. The paragraphs which follow outline the main areas of expenditure which we recognise as incurred in supporting these duties, but it is each Member's responsibility to ensure that all expenditure funded by the IEP is wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred on Parliamentary duties."

Paragraph 5.3.1. provides details of allowable expenditure:

"The IEP may be used to meet the following expenses:

- ❖ *☐ Accommodation for office or surgery use—or for occasional meetings*
- ❖ *Equipment and supplies for the office or surgery*
- ❖ *Work commissioned and other services*
- ❖ *Certain travel and communications.*

In addition, you may transfer money from the IEP to the staffing allowance to meet staffing costs."

Paragraph 5.11.1. sets out spend which may be met from the incidental expenses provision:

"Pages 17-18 give examples of expenditure which is allowable, provided that it is incurred wholly, exclusively and necessarily on Parliamentary duties. There are also examples of expenditure which is not allowable. If in doubt please consult the help number given at the top of this page."

Paragraphs 5.13.2 and 5.13.3 give the following details on allowable expenditure:

5.13.2. Work commissioned and bought in services

"... ❖ Consultancy eg on software or websites..."

5.13.3. Allowable expenditure:

"... ❖ Purchase of hardware and software..."

Section 12 of the Green Book provides as follows:

"Computers and other IT equipment for Members and their offices

This equipment is free of charge, on loan to Members for Parliamentary use only. It is provided by the Parliamentary Communications Directorate (PCD) on behalf of the Department of Finance and Administration.

Members can also use their IEP to buy additional items, providing they are used solely for Parliamentary purposes.

Further details are on the Parliamentary Intranet or via the help desk on 020 7219 2001."

I would welcome your comments on this complaint in the light of this summary of the relevant rules. In particular, it would be helpful to know:

1. the reasons for purchasing the software, details of the software, what it was intended to achieve, and the use you made of it;
2. on what machines you installed this software, why it was necessary for your office and/or surgery, how it was wholly, exclusively and necessarily deployed in the course of your parliamentary duties; and why three sessions of instruction were necessary;
3. why you commissioned consultancy services from Crucial Astro Tools, to what use you put these services and why you consider that the expenditure was wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred in the performance of your parliamentary duties;
4. whether you had discussions with the Department of Resources (formerly the Department of Finance and Administration) or parliamentary IT staff about claiming against the Incidental Expenses Provision for such software, instruction and consultancy services and, if so, the substance of those discussions.

Any other points you would wish to make to help me in considering this complaint would, of course, be very welcome.

I enclose a note which sets out the procedures I follow. I have written to the complainant to let him know that I have accepted his complaint and am writing to you about it. It would be most helpful if you could let me have a response to this matter within the next three weeks. If there is any difficulty about this, or you would like to have a word about any other aspect of the complaint, please contact me at the House.

I would welcome your help on this matter.

14 July 2009

4. Letter to the Commissioner, from Mr David Tredinnick MP, 23 July 2009

Thank you for your letter of 14th July.

A. Background to the purchase of the Crucial Astro Tools software and instruction

For the last twenty years I have been either an officer or chairman (2006-) of the Parliamentary Group for Complementary and Alternative Medicine or the Parliamentary Group for Integrated Health Care as it is now called. Complementary and alternative medicine was categorised by the House of Commons Select Committee on Science and Technology in its report of November 2000. [See Exhibit 1²] Many of those therapies have links to Astrology, including English Herbal Medicine and Ayurvedic medicine which originates from the Indian Subcontinent, Chinese Medicine and Aromatherapy.

In 2005/6 I decided to take a closer look at Ayurvedic Medicine and English Herbal Medicine as taught by Nicholas Culpepper, its father figure. Both Culpepper and the teachers of Ayurvedic Medicine link plants and the harvesting of plants to the motions of the sun and moon and other planets. Furthermore they link specific plants to planets and signs. I also wanted to see whether comparisons could be made between the Indian Ayurvedic system and English Herbal Medicine. To do this effectively I purchased computer software, instruction on the software and its interpretation from Crucial Astro Tools.

² Not included in the evidence.

B. Answers to your specific questions

5. I purchased Solarfire V software from the sole UK supplier Crucial Astro Tools. Solarfire V provides interpretation in both Western and Indian astrology and it is easy to switch between the two systems. It is the best programme on the market, (but not the most expensive). As a result I now have a better understanding of the Indian system of Medicine, Ayurvedic, its definitions of personalities as being Vata or Airy, Kapha or Earthy or Pitta—Fiery types and how these personalities are reflected in Rashi and Navamsha Indian astrological readings. I also have a better understanding of how Culpepper linked plants to planets and signs and can check their characteristics using the Western programme in Solarfire V. All this information is helpful in discussions and debates in my work in Parliament. I have not yet made a major speech on the subject in the House because of prejudice but one day I will. In discussions I use this information frequently.
6. The software is installed on my personal Parliamentary laptop. I have a second copy which at one time I had intended a researcher to use but it has never been installed and remains a back-up copy. The software has not been used in connection with my surgery or in my office generally but has been available to me in respect of my work in complementary medicine in Parliament which was the original intention. I am not very computer literate and had the necessary instruction to operate the programme satisfactorily.
7. Crucial Astro Tools are the sole UK provider of the Solarfire programme which I regarded then and still do now as the most suitable software. It was logical to receive instruction from them as the supplier. It was necessary for my work in Parliament.
8. As a general rule I have always consulted the Department of Resources about claims for expenditure unless routine. On this occasion I explained to the Department's advisor why I intended to make these claims in advance of making them and I was told that I could. Unfortunately I do not have a written record of that conversation but I do have a note relating to a claim made the following year which shows that I consulted them on other occasions [See Exhibit 2]³

C. Prejudice against Astrology and Complementary Medicine

There is still much prejudice against astrology despite the fact that there are now British universities offering degrees in the subject. There is also prejudice against complementary medicine, and over the years I have been lampooned for supporting a range of therapies and treatments including osteopathy and chiropractic (which are both now regulated by Statute). In the Chamber I have been referred to by a Health Minister (John Denham) as the "Hon. Member for Holland & Barrett" (a manufacturer and supplier of herbal and homeopathic medicines and health foods). However, I have been proved right in the end supporting these "worthless" medical disciplines which are now part of the health service.

D. Astrology and Medicine

I have also studied and make reference to in Parliament the impact on healthcare of the moon. More research is needed into why police forces deploy more officers on or around the full moon [See Exhibit 3 link to BBC Radio 4, Wednesday 15th July 2009, "[...] considers why lunar is lunatic"⁴]; why Accident & Emergency Departments in hospitals increase staff at the full moon; why surgeons will not operate on certain conditions at the full moon (because, apparently, it impairs blood clotting). It would also be helpful to have research conducted into the effects of other planets.

E. Astrology: Its use by famous people and its complexity

The time and date of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth I was set to coincide with an unusually auspicious time (Jupiter, planet of expansions, was well placed). Shakespeare wrote about it, Churchill referred to it, Thatcher and Regan used it to judge the best time for events. In the West most people know their sun signs. However, this is a vast and complex subject of which sun sign astrology is a very minor part. Assessments require an understanding of the positions of all planets and their relationships to one another at a given time and much more.

³ Not included in the evidence.

⁴ Not included in the evidence.

F. Current issues I am considering on use of complementary medicine

1) NICE Guidelines

Recently in a landmark decision the National Council for Clinical Excellence (NICE) decided that chiropractic, osteopathy and acupuncture would be available on the health service for the treatment of lower back pain. This followed successful trials showing the effectiveness of all three and because it has been shown that these three treatments are cost effective and providing cheaper effective treatments. Acupuncture is provided by Western trained practitioners and by traditional Chinese Medicine practitioners who use both acupuncture and herbs. Some Chinese therapists treat with reference to the astrological disposition of the individual. All Chinese medical practitioners are taught the relationship between the five Chinese elements — wood, metal, air, fire and water. An understanding of this is important.

2) Aromatherapy on the health service?

A number of CAM organisations are now regulated by the Complementary & Natural Health Care Council (CNHC) [See Exhibit 4]⁵. Soon one body representing all aromatherapists may apply to the Department of Health or NICE for recognition as a therapy available on the NHS. Many aromatherapists make use of astrology. I attach extracts from “Astrological Aromatherapy”—P. Davis, Daniel, 2002 [See Exhibit 5]⁶. I have chosen to include this section “How it all began” which explains the link and also illustrates some of the other points I have made.

Finally, I have to say that I think a Member of Parliament should be free to choose what he researches and to be able to resource research from his allowances, providing it is within the scope of his Parliamentary work. I think it would be a breach of Privilege for anyone to interfere with what a Member chooses to study.

I hope the above is helpful and look forward to hearing from you in due course.

23 July 2009

5. Letter to Mr David Tredinnick MP from the Commissioner, 27 July 2009

Thank you for your letter of 23 July responding to mine of 14 July about this complaint in respect of your claims against the Incidental Expenses Provision for software services provided by Crucial Astro Tools.

I was grateful to have your explanation of the position. Could you help me on some additional points?

- 1 Do you have anywhere any written description or other ways for me to identify the content of the Solarfire V software you bought from Crucial Astro Tools? That would be helpful in linking that software to Ayurvedic medicine and Culpeper.
2. Could you let me know whether the four claims identified by the complainant were the full total of the claims that you made in respect of the purchase of the services from Crucial Astro Tools for your study into Ayurvedic medicine and English herbal medicine, as taught by Nicholas Culpeper?
3. I would be grateful if you could clarify your answer to the third question in my letter of 14 July. The relevant invoice refers to consultancy services. Your response refers to instruction from the supplier. This was, however, separately invoiced as two sessions of computer software instruction and one of computer instruction, all in 2005-06. Could you clarify what was provided by way of consultancy services for which you were invoiced on 4 January 2007? And was it different from the consultancy service referred to in the Department’s note of 2 March 2007?
4. Could you let me know if you consulted Parliamentary IT staff at any time about this, including the loading and use of the software on your parliamentary laptop?

⁵ Not included in the evidence.

⁶ Not included in the evidence.

I would be very grateful if you could let me have a response within the next two weeks. Subject to your response, I am likely then to seek advice from the Department or Resources.

Thank you again for such a prompt response.

27 July 2009

6. Letter to the Commissioner from Mr David Tredinnick MP, 6 August 2009

Thank you for your letter of 27th July requesting information on some additional points. I have set out my answers below but have also had time to further reflect on the nature of the complaint and offer for your consideration some further thoughts.

I respectfully submit that my decision to explore the relationship between Healthcare and Astrology falls within the scope of “policy matters including your views or opinions on them” (Guidance for Members para 7) and that it was reasonable for me to purchase specialist software in support as set out in Para 5.13.3 of the rules on the Incidental Expenditure Provision allowable expenditure, which includes “purchase of hardware and software”.

I further suggest that this complaint would not have been made if I had chosen to investigate any other subject. It is because Astrology is little understood and the subject of much superstition, disbelief and outright hostility that I am the subject of this complaint. Furthermore I put it to you that this complaint is political. The complainant is the Law and Order spokesman for the British National Party and first and foremost he wants to embarrass me politically. He is also patronising in his use of language “to pay for computer software and tuition from a star gazing firm”, with no understanding of Astrology and/or its links to healthcare, nor was he aware of my research. I would be grateful if you would confirm that Mr Barnbrook is the only person to have lodged a complaint; if so I suggest this further reinforces my point that the complaint is first and foremost political.

In my earlier letter I set out to show that regardless of my own view there is a large body of opinion that Astrology does have links to healthcare. I deliberately avoided bombarding you with examples but it is correct to say that in all major civilisations there are and always have been those who believe this to be so. In my earlier letter I used as an example the links between Aromatherapy and Astrology. Aromatherapy makes use of oils made from herbs. I used this example because Aromatherapy is an increasingly popular treatment employing herbal remedies and I attached extracts from a book about Aromatherapy and Astrology⁷ to make the point. I could have given other illustrations of the connections between Astrology and Ayurvedic medicine or Chinese medicine to name but two. To further demonstrate this multicultural aspect I have attached an extract from a book which specifically refers to links between Astrology and Chinese medicine (see Exhibit 1) Chinese medical practices are appearing in most high streets and very soon Traditional Chinese Medicine will be regulated by law—the sooner the better—I have been working on this. Anyone assessing the validity of the discipline should be aware of the link between Traditional Chinese Medicine and Astrology.

I hope I have by now shown conclusively that there are without doubt schools of thought that make these links

In answer to your specific points

1. I attach relevant written information about the Solarfire software, including the introduction (Exhibit 2) and charts or diagrams which illustrate different aspects of its astrological interpretations (Exhibit 3). If you require further information I will, of course, provide it.

My purpose in having the software is to provide a tool for analysing the astrological disposition and thereby certain aspects of the health of an individual and at different times in their lives. For example in Western Astrology the sun sign is said to be associated with different parts of the body, (eg Aries with the head, Capricorn with the knees, Cancer with the stomach). A therapist could take that into account when prescribing. I have, for your convenience, attached further extracts from Astrological Aromatherapy⁸, a summary of Culpepper’s views (Exhibit 4)⁹ and in

⁷ Not included in the evidence.

⁸ Not included in the evidence.

⁹ Not included in the evidence.

particular the health aspect of one individual "Charles" (Exhibit 5)¹⁰ It can be seen that the author considers just how this can impact on this individual's sun sign (sun in Aries) but also his Ascendant (sign on the horizon when he was born), moon sign and the position of all the other planets. With Solarfire it is possible to print a chart showing the position of all the planets in an individual's chart and for someone with the necessary experience the ability to decide what planetary influences are present. Some of the further insights that are available through Solarfire 5 interpretations are shown in Exhibit 6¹¹

Referring the planetary influences to planetary influences of particular herbs, as set out by Culpepper or in the modern Astrological Aromatherapy should enable a better diagnosis and treatment. This is the basic hypothesis: that the astrological make up has a bearing on remedies employed. The choice is for the practitioner to make, having studied the Astrology and then relate it to the herbs or vice versa. The link is made by the individual's interpretation of the software.

In summary, the objective was to have a reasonable understanding of the Astrological make up of individuals and then see to what extent there was a link to the use of specific herbs in different medical systems that make use of herbs.

2. Yes, the four claims identified are the full total of the claims that I made in respect of purchase of services from Crucial Astro Tools.

3. On 6.2.06 I purchased computer software (£210.33) and instruction on its use (£176.25). On 6.3.06 I received further computer instruction (£293.75) Later in the year I could not make the software work and the consultancy service on 4.1.07 (£75.00) was to rectify the problem. It was different to the consultancy service referred to in the Department's note of 2.3.07 which did not refer to a Crucial Astro Tools invoice.

4. I might have consulted the Parliamentary IT staff about loading the software but think it unlikely as my recollection is that it was loaded for me by Crucial Astro Tools. As it was specialist software and not support by Parliamentary IT I think it unlikely I consulted them but I cannot remember.

Finally I should make it clear that my consideration of the impact of Astrology on healthcare is only part of a wider interest concerning the impact of different energies in different situations on an individual and their surroundings.

I would like to, if I may, give you two further examples to make this point.

In 1996 I was a member of the last Parliamentary delegation to Hong Kong, before independence. Colleagues on these delegations are, as might be expected, asked by the organisers, in this case the Hong Kong Government, if they have any special interests. Perhaps unsurprisingly I expressed an interest in Traditional Chinese Medicine and met doctors practising in a hospital who used both acupuncture and herbal remedies. It was also arranged for me to visit the Governor, Chris Patten's, official astrologer. I learnt first that all Hong Kong Governors have had the service of a Chinese astrologer to look to auspicious dates, warn against the opposite and generally support the well being of the Governors of the (then) Colony. In conversation with him I was told that he and very many in Hong Kong had concerns that the new Bank of China, the tallest building in Hong Kong, had a detrimental impact on the Governor and Hong Kong Governance because of its position in relation to Government House. I was told that its position created bad energy because it created "cutting chi" the concept that one building's angles can channel negative energy in the direction of another. When I returned to the UK I studied this phenomenon and came to the conclusion that this did happen. I remember one particular study in Canada which seemed to demonstrate conclusively that a badly placed building had affected longevity in an old peoples' home. The survey in question was statistically sound.

Soon afterwards when I moved my office in Parliament I employed (at my own expense) a Chinese astrologer to check the energy in my new office. She recommended a different positioning of desks and other furniture to ensure harmony. She employed another Chinese concept of "Right Direction" to enable an individual to work in alignment with their own natural energies. She also persuaded me to reposition a staff desk originally under slanting beams because this could produce a negative energy akin to "cutting chi". (See Exhibit 7 Best and Worst Directions)¹²

¹⁰ Not included in the evidence.

¹¹ Not included in the evidence.

¹² Not included in the evidence.

I well appreciate that what I have described above may appear to many odd, but there are those and many millions of them in the world who fervently believe in these concepts. I think this country would be a better and healthier place if greater attention was paid to these subjects. That is why I seek to promote them.

I hope this is helpful.

6 August 2009

7. Letter to Mr David Tredinnick MP from the Commissioner, 12 August 2009

Thank you for your letter of 6 August responding to mine of 27 July about this complaint in respect of your claims against the Incidental Expenses Provision for software and services from Crucial Astro Tools.

I was very grateful for this response and for your explanation of your interest in the relationship between healthcare and astrology. On the basis of the information you have given me, it seems that your purpose in buying the software was to compare the Ayurvedic system and English herbal medicine. As the main purpose of the software seems to be to enable an astrologer to produce and interpret a chart for a particular individual, it would be helpful to know whether you have used it in this way, and if so approximately how many charts you have produced for individuals using this software and for what reason; and how any comparisons it has enabled you to make between the Vedic and Western systems for the same person have been used in the performance of your parliamentary duties. If this is the use to which the software has been put it would be helpful to know why it was necessary for you to buy two copies, as you explained in your letter of 23 July.

You have suggested that the complaint comes into the one of the categories listed in Procedural Note 3 which the Commissioner will not consider, namely "policy matters, including [a Member's] views or opinions on them". I should say that this inquiry is about whether your expenditure was wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred in the performance of your parliamentary duties. I am not seeking to form a view on the merits of your views on astrology or herbal medicine.

You made a number of other points in the course of your letter, which I have noted. I can confirm that I have not received other complaints against you about this matter. My decision on accepting complaints is based on whether the evidence I receive from the complainant is sufficient to justify my instituting an inquiry. It is not of course based on the status or political allegiance of the person making the complaint.

Thank you again for your help on this matter. I would be very grateful if you could let me have a response by 8 September. I will then to seek advice from the Department of Resources.

12 August 2009

8. Letter to the Commissioner from Mr David Tredinnick MP, 24 August 2009

Thank you for your letter of 12th August. The purpose of the software, as you comment in your second paragraph, is to compare the Ayurvedic system and English herbal medicine. It was also to enable me to form a considered opinion about links between astrology and healthcare, looking at the famous herbalist Culpepper's writings about these links and other more modern interpretations such as those set out in "A Handbook of Medical Astrology" by Jane Ridder-Patrick, published by Penguin in 1990.

To make assessments of the links between astrology and healthcare I would look at charts on the computer screen. I would then test my own opinion by reference to the Solarfire viewing interpretation file which "contains text on a large variety of astrological topics" (see Exhibit 1. Viewing Interpretations (Solarfire)).¹³ The charts that I considered were those of well known people taken from a file of such people which came with Solarfire or other well known personalities whose birth details I had come across.

It was not necessary to produce, by which I also understand print, charts. Were I minded to produce and print interpretations I would not use Solarfire software but rather interpret, produce and print using another computer

¹³ Not included in the evidence.

programme, Astrolabe, which I purchased at my own expense some years ago. Solarfire text interpretations are intended as a guide to the person considering the astrology and assume a fair level of knowledge of astrology. They are not user friendly; indeed the first line of the introduction into a Solarfire text report begins “These interpretations have been written to apply to a geocentric tropical natal chart using a quadrant based house system”. (See Exhibit 2)¹⁴ The text that follows is similarly obscure. What is helpful about these Solarfire interpretations is that they make specific reference to astrology and healthcare (See Exhibit 2, page 1) and throughout the text to the links of the parts of the body to specific degrees of the Zodiac.

In contrast, a report produced using Astrolabe software is easy to understand so that a person with no knowledge of astrology at all can read a report and have a clear understanding of its contents. For your convenience I have printed a complete Astrolabe report (See Exhibit 3)¹⁵

With reference to your question about the purchase of two copies of the software, having checked again it appears that I only charged one copy of the software to the IEP Allowance and not two as I had originally thought. The current list price of the latest version of Solarfire Solarfire Gold — is £189, whereas the invoice of 6/02/06 which I submitted was fractionally less at 179, the difference presumably because the new software is an improvement.

I hope this is helpful. [personal details]

24 August 2009

9. Letter to Mr David Tredinnick MP from the Commissioner, 2 September 2009

Thank you for your letter of 24 August responding to mine of 12 August. I am most grateful for the information you provided.

If I have understood correctly, you used the Solarfire software to produce charts about well-known public figures. You then checked those charts against your own opinion on the personalities of those individuals. The example you have given me is Mr Mark Spitz.

If that is a correct understanding, I still need some help as to how you related the Ayurvedic system, as shown in the Solarfire chart, to English herbal medicine, and how you used the outcome of this work in support of your parliamentary duties. It would be very helpful, therefore, if you could confirm or amend my understanding of your use of Solarfire; explain how the charts you produced linked to English herbal medicine; and give specific examples of how the Solarfire software assisted you in your parliamentary duties.

It would be most helpful if you could let me have a response by 22 September, when I would hope the position would be sufficiently clear for me to seek the advice of the Department of Resources.

Thank you again for your help in this matter.

2 September 2009

10. Letter to the Commissioner from Mr David Tredinnick MP, 16 September 2009

Thank you for your letter of 2nd September and further questions. In my answers set out below, for clarity, I have referred to the hard copy of the Solarfire user guide which for your convenience I have obtained and attach to this letter. I have also left at your office with this letter a number of books on Medical Astrology to which I refer.

In answer to your specific questions

¹⁴ Not included in the evidence.

¹⁵ Not included in the evidence.

1 Background

In 2006 I purchased the then latest version of Solarfire Software and some instruction on its use for a specific research project in connection with my work as a Member of Parliament and more particularly as Chairman of the Parliamentary Group for Integrated and Complementary Healthcare. I did so in accordance with rules set out in the Green book allowing the purchase of “consultancy on software” 5.13.2 and “purchase of hardware and software” 5.13.2. In essence this project was to test the hypothesis that there are links between astrology and English herbal medicine and secondly that there are links between Indian astrology and ayurvedic medicine, and third if possible consider any links between English herbal medicine and the Indian system of ayurvedic medicine.

I purchased the Solarfire software version 6 (not 5 as I mistakenly described it in earlier correspondence) as the most suitable programme for the task.

2 Methodology

The methodology I employed was as follows. Accessing one of several files of the birth charts of well known individuals supplied as part of the Solarfire software, such as the file illustrated on page 68 of the Solarfire user guide, I would chose one and display it on the screen. Then I would make my own assessment of the chart, check my understanding by clicking on the chart aspect(s), which I was considering. The interpretation in the programme memory would then appear on the screen. Sometimes I would check the birth chart alongside a second chart showing the planets in the sky at a given time (transits) and more rarely the chart of an individual as he progressed in life (secondary progressions). These are described on page 80 of the user guide under “casting subsidiary charts”. In summary I needed to be able to view and interpret charts and I needed software to do that.

Having made a preliminary assessment I then consulted one or more of the books on Medical Astrology.

When considering Astrology and English herbal medicine I usually started with either “A Handbook of Medical Astrology” by Jane Ridder Patrick who as a practising pharmacist, medical herbalist and astrologer is much respected in the field of “Medical Astrology” by Eileen Nauman. In addition I might consult the “Dictionary of Medical Astrology” by Diane Cramer or the works of Culpepper, his “Herbal” and “Astrological Judgments of Diseases”. I include with this letter copies of these books and others referred to below¹⁶. Many links between astrology and medical disciplines are illustrated in these books. The most concise and comprehensive is Nauman’s “Medical Astrology”.

3The relationship between Ayurvedic Medicine, as shown in the Solarfire chart to English herbal medicine.

The Solarfire Software allows the operator to consider a chart in either the Western Astrological tradition (Tropical Zodiac) or the Indian system(Sidereal). To change from one system to another, one click on the Trop/Sid icon on the toolbar is all that is required. Alternatively a chart can be set up specifically in the vedic system—see Solarfire user guide page 102 “Casting a vedic chart”. The table on page 273 of the guide, “Zodiac” shows the various Western and Indian Zodiacs which can be employed.

When considering Solarfire charts in the Indian (Sidereal) format, I referred to either “Subtleties of Medical Astrology” by Dr K S Charak or “Medical Astrology Diagnosis of Diseases and Problem” by Krishna Kumar.

4 Parliamentary Duties

Solar Fire software has assisted me in my Parliamentary duties. It has enabled me to form opinions on the merits of Astrology and Healthcare in both the Western and Indian systems in my work as longstanding Chairman of the Parliamentary Group for Integrated and Complementary Healthcare (PGICH). I have referred to this research in meetings held by the PGICH. I have also referred to this work in discussions at various conferences outside the House and with colleagues in the House. Although I have in places used the past tense in this letter, this research is still ongoing. I also intend to consider the link between Astrology and other medical treatments. In that respect I enclose a book by Marina Costelloe “Crystal Astrology”. Some healers and professionals treating musco-skeletal problems use crystals to enhance energy.

¹⁶ Not included in the evidence.

Whilst I appreciate links between Astrology and Healthcare may be a somewhat obscure subject for most and little understood, there is nevertheless a very long tradition of these links going back many centuries. The Sun sign (only) astrology of the newspapers which most people understand as astrology is very simplistic. The systems that I have sought to and am studying are specific to the health needs of an individual and are much more comprehensive in their scope and complicated to understand. As is medicine, astrology is both an art and a science.

Nearly 2,500 years ago Hippocrates devised the Hippocratic oath which was taken by doctors until very recently. The oath is well known but what is not so well known is that Hippocrates also said that "a physician without knowledge of astrology has no right to call himself a physician". He was reflecting what was seen at that time as best medical practice. Modern healthcare has much to learn from these ancient beliefs.

16 September 2009

11. Letter to Mr David Tredinnick MP from the Commissioner, 22 September 2009

Thank you for your letter of 16 September responding to mine of 2 September with further information about your use of the Solarfire software which is the subject of this complaint.

I am most grateful for this further information. I am particularly grateful for your careful explanation of your work on testing the links between astrology and English herbal medicine, Indian astrology and ayurvedic medicine and between herbal and ayurvedic medicine. You have also sent me thirteen books which I will need to return in due course. I hope you will understand if I say whilst I have noted the references to them in your letter, I do not believe it is necessary for me to study these publications in order fairly to resolve this complaint.

I have also noted that you undertook this work in support of your Chairmanship of the Parliamentary Group for Integrated and Complementary Healthcare and to help in discussions at conferences outside the House and with colleagues in the House. Could you, therefore, give me a little information about this use of your research? In particular is there any written material from the meetings held by the PGICH, or your contributions to conferences, which will help to establish how you use this work in furtherance of your parliamentary duties? Could you also give me any details about the discussions you have had with colleagues? I appreciate that these may well have been informal discussions, but it would be helpful if you could recall examples of which colleagues you have discussed this with and broadly when. I see also from your letter to me of 23 July that you have made references to astrology and medicine in parliament. If that was assisted by your work with the Solarfire software, it would be helpful to have the relevant Hansard references.

I am asking these questions because I need to establish that your purchase and use of the Solarfire software was necessary for your parliamentary duties as you have described them in your letters to me. If you could let me have a response to this by 5 October, I would then hope, as promised, to consult the Department of Resources.

Thank you again for your help on this matter and for your patience in explaining the matters into which you are undertaking research.

22 September 2009

12. Letter to the Commissioner from Mr David Tredinnick MP, 15 October 2009

Thank you for your letter of 22 September. Set out below are my answers to the questions you posed in paragraph two of your letter.

A. USE OF RESEARCH

5. Written material for meetings held by PGICH

Attached is a list of the meetings held by PIGCH [Appendix A]. I became Chairman in 2002, but as Treasurer from 1989 to 2002, generally chaired the meetings so I would have chaired and attended almost all the meetings listed. At the meetings in my introduction or during the discussions held after the speakers'

contributions I would on occasions refer to links between healthcare, and in particular herbal medicine and TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine), and astrology.

9. Contributions to conferences.

Similarly, when speaking at conferences outside the House I would on occasions refer to astrology. I do not have any written notes of speeches at these conferences or kept agendas. However, I have been able to obtain flyers to the meetings I have attended on an annual basis at the Soul Therapy School [Appendix B]. At these events I always talked about how astrology influences a person's make up and their health, and links to herbal medicine and Ayurvedic medicine. The Solarfire software helped my understanding of this.

I attended these conferences in a formal capacity as both MP and as Chairman of the PGICH, so this was in furtherance of my Parliamentary duties.

10. Discussions with Colleagues

I have discussed my belief that astrology and healthcare, in particular herbal medicine are linked, with PGICH co-Chair Alan Simpson, with Anthony Stein who has a large number of constituents around Totnes interested in complementary healthcare, and also with David Amess, Christopher Chope and Andrew Turner.

B. SPEECHES IN PARLIAMENT

I first raised issues related to planetary energies (in particular the moon) and astrology too, in a Westminster Hall Adjournment Debate on complementary medicine on 24.01.2000 (ref: 361 c.278-85 WH) see Appendix C. I referred to the following:

a) Moon and impact—col. 282WH¹⁷

Suggesting that if science had discovered that arson attacks increase by 100% during a full moon, hospital units see 10% more patients, and alcohol consumption rises (I paraphrase) "then the Government will have to address them" (these facts).

b) Astrology

In the same column (282WH) I expressly referred to astrology, saying:

"We may see the unification of astronomy and astrology, which split in the 16th century".

I then state in somewhat clumsy English that at some stage in the future the Minister might have to address these issues and that I was alerting him. I said:

"I do not suggest that the Minister needs to address the matters now, but if I were to make a speech at the end of the next Parliament, they might have come into the fold".

My intention then was to raise these issues in earnest sometime around late 2003 or early 2004 but my agenda slipped back to early 2006 when I purchased the software.

The most recent debate when I have raised these issues was this week on Wednesday in an Adjournment Debate (HC col.412-418) to consider progress on the 10th Anniversary of the publication of the House of Lords Science & Technology Committee's report on complementary medicine (Session 99-2000 6th Report HL123) Complementary & Alternative Medicine.

In this debate I argued for a better understanding of astronomy and astrology, referred to its links with Culpepper, mention Jane Ridder-Patrick's "A Handbook of Medical Astrology" and also argued for more research. I attach the complete text at Appendix D¹⁸.

In her reply, the Minister of State, Department of Health, Gillian Merron, acknowledged the links between CAM and astrology—accepting my argument: (co1.416)

¹⁷ Not included in the evidence.

¹⁸ Not included in the evidence.

"I acknowledge that some forms of complementary and alternative medicines and thought consider that there is a link or relationship between astrology and their practice. An example is Ayurvedic medicine". She also said that the Government would consider research into astrology:

"I would say to him that, with this as with any other CAM, any proposals for research would be considered on their merits".

To have this acceptance from a Government Minister is a major breakthrough and this alone would justify, I respectfully suggest, the purchase of software which has enabled me to better understand the subject.

The Minister was also gracious enough to say of me "The Hon. Gentleman is a great ambassador and is very knowledgeable about the subject and

"I thank the Hon. Gentleman for initiating the debate. He has made a great contribution and a strong case for the views he holds and I know that the House will be grateful for that" (col.418)

My policy now will be to encourage those in the medical profession, herbalists and psychotherapists who make use of astrology to apply for research funding to demonstrate the link. The software will still be useful as the cause of greater recognition of astrology and medicine progresses.

15 October 2009

Appendix A: PGICH meetings

As far back as 2004 the Parliamentary Group held meetings on Chinese Medicine in the NHS and Herbal Medicine

20th January 2004

Herbal Medicine

2nd March 2004

Chinese Medicine in the NHS — Gateway Clinic at Lambeth Hospital

27th April 2004

Regulation of Complementary Medicine

14 December 2004

NHS Direct Online

23rd February 2005

Patient Information on CAM

9th December 2003

Mental Health and Complementary Therapies

22nd June 2004

Homoepathy

19th July 2005

Royal College of General Practitioners CAM Advisory Group

26 October 2005

Nutrition

13th December 2005

The Smallwood Report

7th February 2006

Integrated Cancer Care

13th June 2006

Regulation of CAM

Appendix B: Soul Therapy leaflets



SOUL THERAPY

Healing at every level of existence

Soul Therapy Centre, [redacted] Fax :
+44 [redacted]
website: soul-therapy.co.uk , e-mail: [redacted]

A date for your diary:

Thursday, 23rd October 2008, at 7 pm.

We are pleased to invite you to join us
for a conversation with

**Mr David Tredinnick,
MP**

Chairman of the Parliamentary Group for Integrated
and Complementary Healthcare

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Mr Tredinnick will talk about the
work of the Parliamentary Group,
share with us his overview of the
status in this country of Integrated
and Complementary Healthcare, and
especially the place of spiritual
healing within this context

Early booking is advised, as places are strictly limited.



Cut

Soul Therapy Ltd, Registered in England and Wales. No. 3296159. Registered Office: 97 Headstone Lane, North Harrow, MDDX, HA2 6JL.



SOUL THERAPY
Healing at every level of existence

Soul Therapy Centre, [redacted] Tel & Fax: [redacted], e-mail: [redacted]

Directors: Ingrid J Collins, B Sc (Hons) Psych, Dip Ed Psych, C Psychol, A F B Ps S
Adriana Peñalosa-Clarke, D Psych, Dip Sys Psych, UKCP, DSTTS
Consultants: Juan Carlos Lema, BSc (Hons) Psych, Dip Sys Psych D, UKCP, DSTTS
Carry Gomey, BA (Hons), Dip Sys Psych, UKCP

A date for your diary:

2nd March 2000, at 8.30 pm.

*The Soul Therapy Centre is pleased to invite you
to join us for an evening's conversation with*

Mr David Tredinnick, MP

*Treasurer of the Parliamentary Group for Alternative and
Complementary Medicines*

*Mr Tredinnick will outline the work of the
Parliamentary Group, share with us an overview of
the status in this country of Alternative &
Complementary Medicines, and the place of healing
within this context.*

Early booking is advised, as places are strictly limited.



Cut here.....

PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS

Name.....Address.....

Daytime tel.....Evening Tel.....Fax.....

Please reserve me.....place/s for the Conversation with David Tredinnick, MP
I enclose a cheque for £.....made payable to the NSPCC (optional donation).

Please return this form to Ingrid Collins at: The Soul Therapy Centre, [redacted]

Soul Therapy Ltd, Registered in England and Wales. No. 3206159. Registered Office: [redacted]

here.....

PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS

Name.....

..Address.....

.....

Daytime

tel.....Evening

Tel.....Fax.....

.....

Please reserve
me.....place/s for
the Conversation with David Tredinnick, MP

There is no fee for this evening. Participants are asked to consider
making a donation to a charity of their choice.

Please return this form to Ingrid Collins at: **The Soul Therapy Centre,** [redacted]



SOUL THERAPY

Healing at every level of existence

Soul Therapy Centre,

website: soul-therapy.co.uk, e-mail: I

Tel & Fax: +

A date for your diary:

Thursday, 12th October 2006, at 7 pm.

*The Soul Therapy Centre is pleased to invite you
to join us for an evening's conversation with*

Mr David Tredinnick, MP

*Chairman of the Parliamentary Group for Integrated and
Complementary Healthcare*

*Mr Tredinnick will outline the work of the
Parliamentary Group, share with us his overview
of the status in this country of Integrated and
Complementary Healthcare, and especially the
place of spiritual healing within this context*

Early booking is advised, as places are strictly limited.



Cut here.....

PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS

Name.....Address.....

Daytime tel.....Evening Tel.....Fax.....

Please reserve me.....place/s for the Conversation with David Tredinnick, MP

There is no fee for this evening. Participants are asked to consider making a donation to a charity of their choice.

Please return this form to Ingrid Collins at: The Soul Therapy Centre, [redacted]

13. Letter to Mr David Tredinnick MP from the Commissioner, 19 October 2009

Thank you for your letter of 15 October responding to mine of 22 September about this complaint.

I was most grateful to receive this response. I have now sent copies of our correspondence to the Department of Resources for their comments and advice. When I have their response, I will be back in touch.

19 October 2009

14. Letter to the Director of Operations, Department of Resources, from the Commissioner, 19 October 2009

I would welcome your advice and comments on a complaint I have received against Mr David Tredinnick MP in respect of his claims against the Incidental Expenses Provision in 2005-06 and 2006-07 for software services provided by Crucial Astro Tools.

In essence, the complaint is that Mr Tredinnick made claims against his Incidental Expenses Provision for software, instruction and consultancy services which were not wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred on parliamentary duties.

I attach a copy of [the relevant evidence]

I would be grateful for your comments and advice on this complaint. In particular, it would be helpful to have the un-redacted copies of the relevant invoices and your comments on Mr Tredinnick's explanation of the nature of the software, his reasons for the purchase of the software and services, and on the Department's decision to pay the invoices. You will see from his letter of 23 July 2009 that Mr Tredinnick consulted the Department before making claims for this software and it would be helpful to have any information which the Department holds about such discussions with Mr Tredinnick. Any other points you would like to make to help me with this inquiry would, of course, be most welcome.

I would be very grateful if it were possible to let me have a response by 9 November.

19 October 2009

15. Letter to the Commissioner from Mr David Tredinnick MP, 21 October 2009

Further to my letter to you of 15th October, I attach copies of two emails from an individual knowledgeable about healthcare and astrology commenting on my speech. I respectfully suggest that this demonstrates that the points I am making about healthcare and astrology are valid.

21 October 2009

E-mail to horoscope.co.uk and starsite.org.uk, from the office of Mr David Tredinnick MP, 20 October 2009

I have been asked by David Tredinnick MP to forward to you the text of an Adjournment debate in which he spoke in Parliament last week. During the debate he speaks about astrology in relation to healthcare.

If you would like any further information please contact Mr Tredinnick direct on [\[email address\]](#)

20 October 2009

E-mail to the office of Mr David Tredinnick MP, 20 October 2009

I'm delighted you forwarded the text of the debate in Parliament by David Tredinnick.

Astrological research is my favourite occupation, so any attempts by a government minister to place this theme further up the scale of government attention is of course an exciting development for me, as I'm sure it is for other research oriented astrologers.

I am a vedic astrologer so found it interesting that MP Tredinnick referred to Lahiri ayanamsa, as this is the one followed by traditional vedic astrologers, and is the one preferred and sanctioned by an Indian government. Also vedic astrology most closely utilises ayurvedic medicine in combination with astrological teachings to enhance treatments and health diagnosis.

My favourite application of vedic astrology is a party trick where I tell people where birth marks or moles are on the body from birth, which always makes people better understand that astrology isn't just about sun signs, though for sure these are fun! I do weekly sun sings for the Mature Times online, just for fun, but also print a lunar lore section where I feature a lot of snippets from astrological research from a variety of sources, especially sources which studied the effect of the moon on behaviour, as well as on the weather.

I also have an ongoing research with regards to the moon and floods and this week am delighted that my weather prediction, done in May this year and published on my website, for floods in Wales and Scotland is this week already coming true. There is so much that astrology can offer the world not just for health but to help in flood warnings and severe weather patterns-by predicting these months if not years ahead of the actual event, if only it was properly funded.

Thank you for your e-mail and I will be responding to MP David Tredinnick's text.

20 October 2009

E-mail to Mr David Tredinnick MP, 20 October 2009

I am writing in response to a mail forwarded to me by [name], which included an attached text of your parliamentary debate about astrology in relation to healthcare.

First of all may I congratulate you for having the courage to speak up in parliament in support of the controversial topic of astrology, much ridiculed by scientists who have never even studied it. It is nearly four hundred years since England had very accomplished astrologers who could combine their knowledge of the stars with that of medicine to help the sick. The celebrated William Coley told us circa 1676:- "Astrology is eminently useful also in the practice of the Physic; for by the rules thereof (which have often verified by experiences) the physician may inform himself of the nature and quality of the disease, and consequently what that humour offends, also whether it may terminate in life or death. Tis an art which is no less useful and serviceable to the painful husbandman and he may hence discover likewise the varians Alterations of the Aire, and matutations of the weather..." *Key to the Whole Art of Astrtrology by William Coley*

I do believe that the time is right for astrology to be restored to a more central position in health care in this country, and to be honest was delighted to be told by my own GP that his practice utilises this knowledge. I myself am a Vedic research astrologer, and yes you are right:- "Lahiri is the official (*ayanamsa used in the*) astrological system of the Indian Government"....*my words in brackets*

I believe that with more time and better, more open access to accurate data we astrologers could conduct some stunning research which would be of benefit to the health system and other agencies such as environmental and weather organisations. For example an associate of mine has already conducted a brilliant study which enables me to predict if someone will develop type one or type two diabetes. I myself am able to tell people within minutes of setting up their astrological chart which part of their body will house birth marks or moles from birth, and it is also possible to tell, with accurate birth data, whether someone will be born a fraternal, identical or semi identical twin. I also specialise in using tropical astrology for weather prediction and already my flood prediction for Scotland and Wales, posted onto my website in June, is coming true as rain arrives around the country this week.

I'm sure you are aware of most of this already, and find it as exciting as I do.

As you so rightly point out, astrology is currently undermined by prejudice and bigotry, and has long since suffered from being seen as a poor cousin of science, when in fact it is still used in many Asian countries as the foremost reliable tool for medical aid in an efficient and less intrusive way than most western traditional approaches to medicine.

For my own part I have long since dreamed of having access to flood statistics and funding for my long standing research into this vital area of destructive weather in this country, with a view to more accurately delivering long range weather predictions months ahead of the event....I dream on, but am delighted to know you support 'alternatives' such as astrology.

I do support your attempts to restore alternative approaches to therapeutic remedies to a more respectable position than currently afforded them, and would be pleased to find out more about your work and help in any way I can.

20 October 2009

16. Letter to the Commissioner from Mr David Tredinnick MP, 26 October 2009

Further to my letter of 22nd October¹⁹ to which I attached two emails from [name], I should have made it clear that she was not just a private individual but the editor of an online magazine called 'Starsite Astrology' which, amongst other matters, considers the health related aspects of astrology. As such, she is an authority on the subject. For your convenience I enclose excerpts from Starsite covering Swine Flu and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)²⁰

26 October 2009

17. Letter to the Commissioner from Mr David Tredinnick MP, 28 October 2009

Thank you for your letter of 15 October. I am sorry that I did not make clear the reason for sending you extracts from the online astrology magazine. The purpose was to draw to your attention links between astrology and healthcare in general and in particular current work on the cause of swine flu and the 2003 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) epidemic.

[Name] comments favourably about my speech in the House. My understanding of astrology, in part due to the purchase of Solarfire software, was important in writing and delivering this speech.

28 October 2009

18. Letter to the Commissioner from Mr David Tredinnick MP, 19 November 2009

1) Ayurveda (Science of Life) & Astrology

I wrote to you on 21st October with comments on my recent speech by an expert in Western Astrology which confirmed what I had said about a link between astronomy, astrology and health care in the European tradition.

I now enclose a copy of an email [exhibit 1]²¹ from a specialist in Ayurvedic Medicine which I respectfully suggest confirms the link between Ayurveda and astrology. He describes Ayurveda as the Science of Life "the great ancient Indian science of treatments including plants and herbs and Jyotish (light) Vidya (Knowledge), the ancient Indian astronomical science of heavenly bodies, mantras, yantras and gems". In the third paragraph on page 2 he explains how medical treatment, culture, religion and heritage are intertwined in India and that the knowledge continues to be the bedrock of British Indians and cannot be separated from their belief system.

Exhibit 2: a description of the contents of Dr David Fawley's book "Ayurveda, Astrology & Self-Healing" explains the relationship between Ayurvedic medicine and astrology more clearly. "This book explains how the different mind-

¹⁹ Actually 21 October

²⁰ Not included in the evidence.

²¹ Not included in the evidence.

body and planetary types of the two systems interrelate. It examines disease factors from an astrological perspective

2) Exchange of letters in local paper

Attached [exhibits 3 and 4]²² are copies of two letters in my local paper,

The Hinckley Times, one critical of my stance on astrology, “MP’s astrology views are up in the clouds” and my response “More research is needed into alternative medicine uses”. My point is that there is a lively public debate on these issues.

Tony Benn once said of controversial issues — I paraphrase — first people ignore you, then they describe you as mad, then they agree with you and finally they say it was their idea all along. Running with controversial issues is not an easy path but one has to stand up for what one believes in.

3) Astrological/Scientific and Medical Network Debate

A further illustration of how the public debate has developed is the debate, which I will be attending on Sunday organised by the Brighton Astrology Group, at which the following motion will be proposed by a former President of the UK Astrological Association and responded to by Professor John Clarke, Chair of the Scientific & Medical Network. The motion is as follows:

“Astrology is rejected without investigation by many intelligent people, because it does not fit into their material paradigm. Yet ‘the new science’ is eroding the philosophical foundations of reductionist materialism. The 21st century will see a new view of reality established, within which astrology may be recognised as plausible, viable and beneficial in many areas of human life”.

I hope this is helpful.

19 November 2009

19. E-mail to the Commissioner from Mr David Tredinnick MP, 25 November 2009

In my letter of 19 November I set out the links between Ayurveda and astrology and included an email from Mr [...]. I now attach a further letter from him which includes photographs²³, hence this email rather than a letter.

6. Herbal Medicines Rally outside Old Palace Yard, House of Lords

The first two photographs in the attachments show me outside the House of Lords at this demonstration at which I spoke

11. House of Lords meeting in support of Ayurveda

The second set of photographs show me speaking in a House of Lords committee room in support of Ayurveda. At this meeting I raised the links to astronomy and astrology and referred to the Solarfire software which has helped me in my understanding of this subject.

12. Astrology and arthritis

I have forwarded under separate cover a paper “The Discovery of the cause and cure for my arthritis” which well demonstrates how planetary transits can have a bearing on health. The paper may be viewed also at [...]

I hope this is helpful.

²² Not included in the evidence.

²³ Not included in the evidence.

25 November 2009

E-mail to Mr David Tredinnick MP, from. [...], 23 November 2009

What a joy it was to have you with us at the above meeting on 12 November at the House of Lords and I have attached a couple of pictures from the above meeting as well as the demonstration.

Your presence and comments were very well received and gave all of us a hope.

We would value a further opportunity to meet you as soon as possible to discuss some of the outcomes at the above meeting and enjoy your continued support.

23 November 2009

20. Letter to Mr David Tredinnick MP from the Commissioner, 26 November 2009

Thank you for your email of 25 November with further material about the links between Ayurveda medicine and astrology.

I note that you spoke at a House of Lords meeting in support of Ayurveda medicine on 12 November. I see that you referred to the Solarfire software helping you in your understanding of the links between astronomy and astrology. It would be very helpful if you could give me an extract from your notes which dealt with this subject, or let me know the terms in which you made this reference. I do not need to see the whole speech, but I believe it would be relevant to this complaint to have your evidence on how you explained at a meeting the way in which the Solarfire software has assisted you in this matter.

I do not think you have previously identified that you referred to the Solarfire software in meetings, discussions or speeches you have made in the course of your parliamentary duties. If there were such speeches, it would be helpful to have the date and to have the relevant extracts.

I think that your response to this letter in relation to the specific use or references you have made in public to the Solarfire software is germane to my inquiry and is likely to be germane to the advice which, on 19 October I sought from the Department of Resources. You have since that date sent me four letters with further information in addition to the latest email. I hope that once you have responded to this letter, we can allow the Department of Resources an opportunity to consider all the information you have provided and to prepare their advice. In the meantime, I have asked them to defer their consideration of this matter until I have heard from you.

If you could let me have a response to this letter within the next two weeks I would be most grateful. I would like to bring this matter to a conclusion before too long.

26 November 2009

21. Letter to the Commissioner from Mr David Tredinnick MP, 10 December 2009

Thank you for your letter of 25th November.

1. Lords Meeting—12th November

On the notice of meeting (attached, Exhibit 1)²⁴ I wrote a one word prompt AYURVEDA and then spoke off the cuff.

- a) The substance of speech was about my work as Chairman of the PGICH, the Government's approach to the regulation of herbal medicine and acupuncture and my own thoughts. I said that it was a scandal that

²⁴ Not included in the evidence.

it had taken so long for the Government to bring forward proposals for statutory regulation to interface with European legislation which came into force in 2001.

- b) Ayurveda: I then turned to Ayurveda, explaining that I had a long interest in the subject, its relationship to medicine, religion, astronomy and astrology. I well recall specifically saying that I had looked at the relationship of Ayurveda to astronomy and astrology in the Indian tradition and that there were computer programmes available now for individuals to make their own personal assessments. I do not recall referring to Solarfire in the speech but did in conversation afterwards in informal discussion. I would not normally in a speech mention the technical support, in this case the Solarfire programme I had used as part of my research, but did so at the meeting of the Astrological Association in Brighton (see below).

2. Speech to Astrological Association—Sunday 22/11/09

In my letter of 19th November I mentioned that I would be speaking at this meeting. I spoke from outline notes which I enclose (exhibit 2), but the speech was recorded and I have been able to obtain a copy and check exactly what I did say. I have marked the CD references against the relevant passages of the speech which I have quoted below. The CD is available if you would like to listen to it.

[Ref 3/6-8] I made it clear that I was speaking as an MP and as Chair of the PGICH:

“I have run the Parliamentary Group for Integrated Healthcare and I have spoken in the House on various occasions in support of all complementary medicines and recently for reasons which I will explain, taken head on the controversy about science and astrology I have some experience of astrology, looking at different systems”.

[3/11.00] “One day astrology will be part of the health service. When I spoke in the Chamber the other day I talked of SIP that is some scientists being superstitious because they react emotionally, ignorant because they have never studied astrology, prejudiced in that they ignore the links to culture and religion. “Ayurvedic medicine, astronomy, astrology and religion are intertwined so an attack on astrology is an attack on religion and culture.

“The challenge is for us to find a way for science to understand astrology. Science needs to learn.”

[3/16.47] I said “I hope this meeting might be a defining moment when science and astrology have to consider each other.”

[3.18.50] Progressed chart.

We need to bring this massive body of knowledge into mainstream health.

“David is willing to stand up for astrology in Parliament”.

[5/4.00] The question has just been asked: Can astrology update itself?

I said:

“Because of computer programmes astrology has become available for the masses. Anyone with £100 can buy a programme and run quite complex calculations and then study the science and art of astrology.

“The real driver here is going to be healthcare and I have tried to set out how the periphery has been drawn in. The next stage will be the energy medicines, the black box (radionics) coming into mainstream”.

“Then out there is astrology and in the recent debate the Minister gave an assurance in a debate I had with her that any astrologer could come forward with a bid for research money as long as they had an adequate proposition to be tested. This will be part of the health paradigm in the next twenty years.

[8/30] Is astrology stuck in the past?

“Computers have updated astrology’s precision”.

[11.56] John asked: Is astrology able to update itself? I said:

“One of the transformations that has taken place because of computer programmes has been that it has become available to the masses. Anyone with £100 can buy a programme”.

I also talked about my own experience of using specifically Solarfire after the formal meeting.

3. Other points:

a) Solarfire — Personal and Parliamentary

On reviewing the correspondence, I see that I have not mentioned that before I purchased the Solarfire software and tuition, which is the subject of this complaint, some years earlier I purchased an early version of Solarfire for my own use when looking at Western astrological charts. I upgraded this package at my own expense earlier this year. I bought the Solarfire programme in connection with herbal medicine and astrology for this particular Parliamentary research. I wanted to keep the two separate.

b) Current Debate

Partly because of the stand I have taken, there is now a good public debate on astrology and healthcare. In this week’s Science & Technology Select Committee enquiry into homeopathy, Dr Evan Harris talked of “some doctors using astrology” (see exhibit 3).

c) Variety of programmes on the market

Apart from Solarfire, there is an increasing number of programmes available for those who are interested in the subject. I enclose a leaflet which shows the range of products available from Astrolabe (Exhibit 4), but there are other suppliers, see [...] (Exhibit 5)²⁵. This is another reason why I tend not to talk about any specific software.

4. Department of Finance/Fees Office

These claims were accepted by the Department of Finance because I had explained in advance my reason for claiming, in particular as the Chairman of the Parliamentary Group for Integrated Healthcare (PGICH).

I hope this is helpful.

10 December 2009

²⁵ Not included in the evidence.

22. Letter to Mr David Tredinnick MP from the Commissioner, 15 December 2009

Thank you very much for your letter of 10 December responding to mine of 26 November about this complaint in respect of your purchase of Solar Fire software and related services.

It was most helpful to have this further information. As you say, the kernel of the matter is whether your claims for software and services provided by Crucial Astro Tools (which amounted to £680.33 in 2005-06 and a further £75 in 2006-07) were wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred on your parliamentary duties. Clearly you spent more than the current cost of the software (Solar Fire V7 Gold at £189). And it will be necessary to come to a view on whether the software designed to let the owner "immediately know the precise astrofacts about all people and events for thousands of years" was necessary in order for you to pursue your parliamentary work on alternative medicine and astrology.

I will now, as promised, pass your letter, with this letter, to the Department of Resources and ask them to take it finally into account in preparing their advice and comments on this matter. If you agree, I suggest that we defer any further exchanges until we have heard back from them.

I am most grateful for your help and for the careful explanations you have provided.

15 December 2009

23. Letter to the Commissioner from Mr David Tredinnick MP, 16 December 2009

Thank you for your letter of 15 December relating to the complaint from Mr Michael Barnbrook in respect of my purchase of Solar Fire software and related services.

In my correspondence to date I have endeavoured to demonstrate my use of this software as part of my parliamentary duties in relation to herbal medicine and astrology. However, I recognise that this subject area is one that is at the edge of healthcare as currently being practiced, and that my claim for this software could be perceived as being supplementary to my parliamentary duties.

I have taken the decision, therefore, to repay the £755.33 I claimed for the purchase of Solar Fire software and related services, and enclose a cheque for that amount.

I hope you will feel this brings this matter to a close.

16 December 2009

24. Letter to Mr David Tredinnick MP from the Commissioner, 22 December 2009

Thank you very much for your letter of 16 December about this complaint in respect of your purchase of astrology software and related services and for enclosing a cheque payable to the Department of Resources for £755.33.

I was very grateful for this letter. My office is contacting the Department of Resources to make the appropriate arrangements for them to have your cheque.

I need now, as you say, to decide how best to resolve this complaint. One option, as you know, would be for me to prepare a formal memorandum to the Committee on Standards and Privileges, which would then subsequently be published with their report on this complaint. In view of what you say, however, I consider that I could alternatively resolve the matter through the rectification procedure provided under the standing orders. That would not require me to submit the matter in a memorandum to the Committee. Instead, with your agreement, I would write to the complainant and close the complaint.

To follow this course, I would need you to accept that you were in breach of the rules of the House in respect of the claims which you made for this software. I would note that you have repaid the sums in full. The Committee expects Members in these circumstances to have apologised. I would want to make clear in resolving this complaint that you had a longstanding interest in alternative medicines and astrology and that you had pursued that interest as part of your parliamentary duties. The question has been whether these particular claims were necessary to fulfill this aspect of your parliamentary duties, and you have fairly decided that these claims could be perceived as supplementary to those duties.

If you were to agree to this course of action, then I would prepare a draft letter to the complainant setting out the terms in which the complaint had been resolved and making clear that the matter was now closed. I attach a first draft of such a letter and if you agree to proceed in this way, I would welcome any comment on its factual accuracy.²⁶

It would be very helpful if you could let me know by the end of the first week in January (on the return of the House) if you agree to me resolving this complaint on the lines described in paragraph 4 above. Meanwhile, I will inform the Department of Resources of your letter and invite them to let me have an early response with any points which they may wish to make on the sequence of events. In the meantime, if you would like a word about any of this, please contact me at the House on or from 4 January.

Thank you again for your help and I look forward to hearing from you.

22 December 2009

25. Letter to the Director of Operations, Department of Resources, from the Commissioner, 22 December 2009

I last wrote to you on 15 December about this complaint against Mr David Tredinnick MP in respect of his purchase of astrology software and related services. I wrote at the same time to Mr Tredinnick. I have now had a further letter from him which I hope will enable this matter to be brought to a conclusion.

I attach a copy of my letter to Mr Tredinnick of 15 December (which I think I sent you previously, but wrongly dated in the enclosure list, for which I apologise), and a copy of his response of 16 December. Enclosed with that response is a cheque for £755.33 made payable to the Department of Resources. My office is in touch with your Department separately to make the appropriate arrangements for the delivery of the cheque.

Subject to any views you may have, and subject to Mr Tredinnick's agreement, I am minded to resolve this matter through the use of the rectification procedure. I attach a copy of my letter of 22 December²⁷ to Mr Tredinnick setting out this proposal. As you will see from this letter, it would nevertheless be helpful if you could let me have any comments you would like to make on Mr Tredinnick's response, including my conclusion based on Mr Tredinnick's letter that Mr Tredinnick was in breach of the rules of the House since the purchase of this software and related services could not be shown to be necessary for the performance of his parliamentary duties.

If you could let me have a response to this letter by the end of the first week in January, that would be most helpful.

²⁶ Not included in the evidence

²⁷ WE 24

22 December 2009

26. Letter to the Commissioner from Mr David Tredinnick MP, 6 January 2010

Thank you for your letter of 22nd December and I am grateful for your helpful suggestions. I can see with hindsight that these claims could be perceived as supplementary to my Parliamentary duties. I therefore accept they were in breach of the rules and apologise for having made them.

I have noted the content of the letter you propose sending to Mr Barnbrook and am grateful to you for making it clear that I have a long standing interest in complementary medicine and astrology and that I have pursued that as part of my parliamentary duties. I have no changes to suggest to its factual content.

I would also like to thank you personally for all your advice and guidance whilst dealing with this complaint.

6 January 2010

27. Letter to the Commissioner from the Director of Operations, Department of Resources, 11 January 2010

Thank you for your letter of 22nd December in which you brought to my attention a number of issues about the complaint against David Tredinnick MP.

You have asked for my comments on Mr Tredinnick's response of 16th December 2009, and on your conclusion that that he was in breach of the rules of the House since the purchase of software and related services could not be shown to be necessary for the furtherance of his Parliamentary duties. You have indicated that the rectification procedure might be used in this case. I agree.

For the record, I have set out below a summary of events that led up to the complaint and detailed the Department of Resource's position regarding the purchase of software and research material.

As you know, between February 2006 and January 2007, Mr Tredinnick submitted Incidental Expenses Provision claims that included items relating to computer software, consultancy and computer instruction. All were purchased from the same company, "Crucial Astro Tools". In total, Mr Tredinnick claimed £755.33.

In each of the claims referred to, Departmental staff would have decided that the individual items were eligible expenditure in accordance with the April 2005 and July 2006 versions of the Green Book. Para 5.13.3 of the latter states that "Purchase of hardware and software" is allowable.

The purchase of software is a fairly common item for a Member to claim from their allowances. Software is also relatively inexpensive. In many cases, the items purchased are for anti-virus and security reasons. These have a variety of unusual brand names and Departmental staff would not generally be expected to investigate these unless there was an apparent cause for concern. Members will also purchase software for research and office purposes, or other use (eg caseworker software). In these cases, I would also not generally expect staff to query the nature of the research nor its validity as a Parliamentary expense.

There is no record that Mr Tredinnick consulted the Department about the items he intended to purchase, nor is there any correspondence with the Member on this subject. However, that it not to say that advice wasn't sought or given. As you are aware, only a minority of calls are logged, generally this is when substantive advice has been given. So, a query about whether computer software could be purchased may well not have been recorded (because it is self-evident that it can), whereas a query about the purchase of astrological software almost certainly would have.

Having now seen Mr Tredinnick's reason for the purchase of software and associated costs, I confirm that had this been known at the time the claim was submitted, I would have expected staff to query the nature of the research and its connection with his Parliamentary duties. Specifically, in terms of the purpose of the software and related training and consultancy, I would have expected staff to make enquires because there would have been reasonable doubt whether the costs incurred were "wholly exclusively and necessarily" in performance of Mr Tredinnick's Parliamentary duties. Mr Tredinnick's subsequent explanation would have been treated on its merits.

The then Incidental Expenses Provision was available to meet costs incurred on Members' Parliamentary duties. It could not be used to meet the costs of campaigning (Green Book, paragraph 5.1.1). It is an interesting point whether the Parliamentary Group that Mr Tredinnick cites as evidence of the relevance of the goods and services purchased is concerned with campaigning for the cause of complementary medicine. If so, the use of the allowances in this way could not be taken for granted.

Mr Tredinnick has now submitted a cheque for £755.33, which was received here on 23rd December 2009. He has also said that the relevant claims "could be perceived as being supplementary to my parliamentary duties".

I agree with Mr Tredinnick regarding his doubts over the eligibility of these claims for payment. On this basis, I am content that the rectification procedure is the most appropriate way to proceed.

11 January 2010