

From the Chair



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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You asked for the Committee's advice about accepting an appointment with the Scottish Book Trust (the Trust) as a member of the Board of Trustees. Your role will be part-time and unpaid, advising and supporting the governance of the organisation.

Scottish Book Trust is a charity that promotes literacy, reading and writing in Scotland and believes this can improve employment opportunities and improve mental health and wellbeing in children.

When considering this application the Committee noted that as a Chartered librarian, you have an interest and expertise related to the work of the Trust. The Committee also noted that you whilst you were a Minister, you took an interest in, and were involved with, several organisations who promote literacy.

The Committee took into account that whilst the Trust is actively involved with the Scottish Government in the delivery of certain projects (such as BookBug and The First Minister's Reading Challenge), you had no direct involvement in any contractual arrangements with the organisation whilst you were Acting Minister for Children and Young People.

The Committee also sought the views of the Permanent Secretary to the Scottish Government and noted she has no concerns about this appointment.

Taking into account the specific facts in this case, in accordance with the Government's Business Appointment Rules, the Committee advises the appointment be subject to the following conditions::

- you should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of yourself or the organisation to which this advice refers) any privileged information available to you from your time in ministerial office; and
- for two years from your last day in ministerial office you should not become personally involved in lobbying the Scottish Government on behalf of the Scottish

Book Trust , or make use, directly or indirectly, of your contacts in Government to influence policy or secure funding on behalf of the Scottish Book Trust.

The Business Appointment Rules explain that the restriction on lobbying means that former Ministers should not engage in communication with Government – including Ministers, special advisers and officials – with a view to influencing a Government decision or policy [including applications for awards or grants] in relation to their own interests, or the interests of the organisation by which they are employed, or to whom they are contracted.

I should be grateful if you would inform us as soon as you take up this appointment, or if it is announced that you will do so, either by returning the enclosed form or by emailing the office at the above address. We shall otherwise not be able to deal with any enquiries, since we do not release information about appointments that have not been taken up or announced. This could lead to a false assumption being made about whether you had complied with the Ministerial Code. Similarly, I should be grateful if you would inform us if you propose to extend or otherwise change your role with the Trust as depending on the circumstances, it might be necessary for you to seek fresh advice.

Once this appointment has been publicly announced or taken up, we will publish this letter on the Committee's website and include the main details of the application, together with the Advisory Committee's advice, in the regularly updated consolidated list on our website and in the next annual report

The Baroness Browning

Ms Fiona McLeod