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CONDUCT

There are going to be times during campaigns when our members will have the opportunity to contribute to the issue as members of the public putting forward their own ideas, making suggestions and responding to any questions raised.

Of course, every one is free to use their own home computer as a member of the general public to get their message across. ***Can you remind your members however, not to fall foul of Chapter 4 of the Staff Handbook particularly the section that states that they must not to use their FC computer to question politicians.***

Should you need some background information I have précised Chapter 4 for you so that you have access to the key points.

When there is political, activity that has potential implications for the Forestry Commission, it is important that everyone within the Commission understands their responsibilities as civil servants.

The Civil Service needs to serve successive Governments of different political parties. Therefore, Ministers and the public must have confidence that the personal views of any civil servant will not interfere with the performance of their duties.

The Conduct and Security policy (chapter 4 of the staff handbook) identifies the duties and responsibilities set out in the Civil Service Code. The aim is to allow the greatest possible freedom to express publicly political views without calling into question the impartiality of the Forestry Commission and its ability to serve the Government of the day whatever its political persuasion.

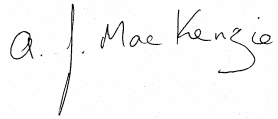
As a civil servant you need to be politically impartial however, as an individual, you will have your own views and the policy is concerned with public expression rather than privately held beliefs and opinions.

In your official capacity as a Forestry Commission employee, you must not participate in any form of political activity.

It is important to remember that corporate clothing, forestry e-mail addresses, headed notepaper, complement slips, business cards etc all identify you as a Forestry Commission employee therefore, when they are being used, require you to remain neutral towards any political agenda.

Anyone who is considering engaging in any type of political activity should be aware of their responsibilities whilst on duty and familiarise themselves with the Conduct and Security policy to note what restrictions, if any, apply to them.

If there are any questions, guidance can be obtained from line managers, or HR Policy before any activity is undertaken.



Allan MacKenzie
FCTU Departmental Secretary