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Our ref:

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Thank you for your letter of 12 March concerning Fergus Ewing's comments on the felling of trees at the Carrbridge Hotel.

I have carefully considered the points that you have raised. As you will know, the Scottish Ministerial Code provides that Ministers may represent the views of their constituents, so long as they make it clear that the views they put forward are ones expressed in their capacity as the MSP representing a particular electorate. I am satisfied that Fergus Ewing was clear that the comments he made about this matter were being made as the constituency MSP and not as a Minister. Furthermore, no aspects of this matter have been referred to Ministers for decision. As is normal practice, arrangements will be in place to ensure that decisions on this particular matter will fall to be taken by another Minister and that Fergus Ewing will have no locus in the matter given his constituency interests.

On that basis, I am clear that Fergus Ewing has at all times acted in accordance with the requirements of the Ministerial Code.

NICOLA STURGEON