

## News

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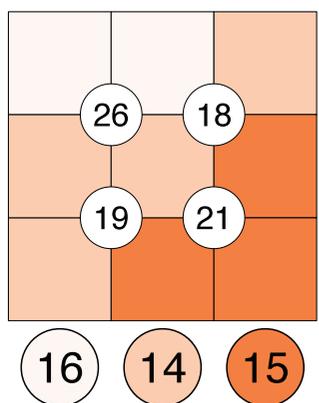


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## Sturgeon urged to discipline MP over offensive tweets

Hamish Macdonell

Nicola Sturgeon was under pressure to discipline one of her party's new MPs last night after it emerged that he had tweeted offensive remarks about Jews, the royal family and his political opponents.

Paul Monaghan, the SNP's MP for Caithness, Sutherland & Easter Ross, used Twitter to post a series of offensive remarks before he became an MP.

He has since apologised to the Jewish community and insisted that he would not be offensive again.

However, the MP's political opponents claimed last night that Dr Monaghan should be disciplined by the party.

Dr Monaghan is not the first high-profile SNP figure to come under fire for his use of social media. Just before this year's election, Neil Hay, the SNP candidate in Edinburgh South, was unmasked as an internet troll who had used a false name to insult elderly constituents and labelled unionists as quislings.

The SNP refused to drop Mr Hay as a candidate, but the voters of Edin-

burgh South rejected him anyway, making him one of only three unsuccessful SNP candidates in May.

Dr Monaghan's use of Twitter only came to light this week. He had used Twitter to accuse the "proud Jewish race" of "persecuting the people of Gaza", comments that the *Jewish Chronicle* described as antisemitic.

Dr Monaghan also referred to the Queen as "Mrs Saxe-Coburg-Gotha". He has also described Prince Harry as a "moron" and referred to the Duchess of Cambridge as "Mrs Kate Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, unemployed of London".

He described the Union Flag as "the butcher's apron" and claimed that it was "unfit to wipe the floor of a pigsty".

Dr Monaghan compared Margaret Curran, the former shadow Scottish secretary, and Johann Lamont, the former Scottish Labour leader, to the comedy drag act Hinge and Bracket.

Ian Davidson, the former Labour MP, was described as a "moron" by Dr Monaghan, while George Osborne, the chancellor, was taunted as being "thick as mince".

Lord Robertson of Port Ellen, the

former Nato secretary-general, was labelled a "fat old man with objectionable views and an ego that requires he dye his hair". Alistair Darling, who led the Better Together campaign, was derided by Dr Monaghan because he was born in London — despite the former chancellor having attended school and university in Scotland and represented a Scottish constituency for 28 years.

A spokesman for the SNP insisted that the tweets were not recent and that Dr Monaghan had made it clear that he would not use such terminology again.

The SNP spokesman said: "The tweets highlighted are dated and he accepts the language and sentiments used are not what he would adopt now."

In a statement issued to the *Jewish Chronicle*, Dr Monaghan said: "I am sorry for my comments, they were not intended to cause offence."

However, a Labour spokesman said: "To hide behind how old the tweets are is pathetic from the SNP."

"This man shouldn't have been selected as a candidate. The SNP should decide if he should keep the party whip in Westminster."

## High turnout added £2m to referendum expense

Hamish Macdonell

Last year's independence referendum cost £2 million more than expected, ministers admitted yesterday.

John Swinney, the deputy first minister, announced that the final bill for running the independence vote was £15.8 million.

He claimed the extra expense of £2.1 million was due to the high turnout — 85 per cent of Scots voted in last year's referendum, a much greater proportion of the population than normally votes in elections.

The deputy first minister acknowledged that documents before the vote had suggested that the cost would be about £13 million.

However, he said: "This additional expenditure was due to the very high turnout at the referendum. In anticipation of a high turnout, the chief counting officer provided guidance to counting officers on issues such as printing

additional ballot papers, to ensure that replacement ballot papers were available to cover for any damaged or misprinted ballot papers, and limiting the number of electors attending individual polling stations, to avoid queues.

"In addition, additional staff were employed at count centres in order to ensure a prompt result."

He emphasised that the "referendum was a triumph for democracy and participation, with the highest turnout of any UK ballot for over a century".

"The referendum also extended the right to vote to over 100,000 16 and 17-year-olds and engaged many older people to vote for the first time in their lives," Mr Swinney said.

John Curtice, of Strathclyde University, an elections expert, said that "democracy costs money", adding: "We can't do these things without it costing money, otherwise there would be an argument for not having general elections."

## BBC aims at North Korea

Kaya Burgess

The BBC is to beam a tailored radio news service into North Korea for the first time, as the corporation also looks to create its first satellite TV channel aimed specifically at Russian citizens.

The plans are part of an expansion of the World Service, which will also be aimed at the Middle East and parts of north and east Africa, in an attempt to bring impartial news coverage to areas with strong state control of the media.

The proposals will be unveiled on Monday by Lord Hall of Birkenhead, the director general.

He is expected to warn against the dangers of reducing the corporation's remit. There are fears within the corporation that the government will seek to scale it back when renewing its ten-year charter next year.

In April last year, the Foreign Office ended its funding of the World Service after 80 years, forcing the BBC to fund the service through the licence fee.



"Strictly Get Divorcing is back"  
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## Refugee charities flooded with offers of help

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taking in refugees already in Europe will simply encourage more to risk the hazardous journey.

Confronted with Europe's largest postwar migration crisis, the public mood over British military intervention is shifting, the poll suggests. In contrast to 2013, when a poll found that 60 per cent were opposed to action and 24 per cent in favour, yesterday's survey found 41 per cent in support and 38 per cent against intervention.

Liam Fox, the former defence secretary, said that fighting on the ground might be necessary to create a haven inside Syria safe from both the Assad regime and Islamic State militants. Mr Cameron moved to cool expectations. Asked whether he would ask MPs to approve military action, he said: "I will only proceed if there is genuine consensus in the UK before going back to parliament."

The prime minister dug in against calls to join a European Commission

## Views of the crisis

83% saw pictures published of the 3-year-old Syrian boy washed up on a beach while trying to get to Europe

Q Did the photograph make you more in favour of the UK accepting more refugees from Syria, more opposed, or did it make no real difference to your view?

More in favour 36%  
More opposed 17%  
No difference 47%

Q In August 2013 the House of Commons voted against Britain joining in any military action against the Syrian government. If the House of Commons were to debate the issue again now, would you support or oppose UK intervention?

Support 41%  
Oppose 38%  
Don't Know 21%

Source: Populus poll. 1,689 adults (Sept 4)

plan to distribute 160,000 people already in Europe around EU countries.

"Those images will remain with all of us for a very very long time. But the question you have to ask, not just as a father but as a prime minister, is what are the actions we can take that will really make a difference?"

Nigel Farage said that Britain must not allow compassion for refugees to "imperil our safety", as he warned of the risk of Isis terrorists travelling to Europe undetected amid an influx of migrants. The UKIP leader said that the threat from jihadists was the "more sinister and more dangerous" element of the migrant crisis.

Mr Farage said that the photograph of Aylan Kurdi was "horrible, depressing, saddening". He insisted, however: "The only way to stop the deaths is to stop the boats from coming."

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