

20 May 2009



TOM WATSON MP

Associated Newspapers Limited, the publisher of the Mail on Sunday and the Daily Mail, apologised today to Tom Watson MP in a Statement in Open Court read before Mr Justice Eady.

Mr Watson complained of an article by Iain Dale, headed "Smears, glowering henchmen-like the Nixon White House" published in the Mail on Sunday on 12 April 2009 in which it was stated not only that Mr Watson was copied into emails sent by Downing Street press adviser Damian McBride to Derek Draper, but that he "encouraged" them. The emails were reported to have made serious and false allegations about the private lives of a number of Conservative Party MPs in the course of discussing proposals for a new website to be known as "Red Rag".

As the Court heard today, Associated Newspapers Limited now accepts that these allegations are entirely untrue. In fact, Mr Watson was not copied into any of the emails exchanged between Mr McBride and Mr Draper. As Mr Watson has already publicly made clear, he had no involvement in or knowledge of the "Red Rag" website and he did not condone the content of the emails and, indeed, regarded them as completely inappropriate.

Associated Newspapers Limited has unreservedly withdrawn the allegations, apologised to Mr Watson for the distress the article caused him and his family and has joined in the reading of the Statement in Open Court today. In addition, Associated Newspapers Limited has agreed to pay Mr Watson substantial damages, together with his legal costs.

For further information, please contact:

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