



Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG *campaigns against government positions.*

M A Pattison Esq
Private Secretary to the Prime Minister
10 Downing Street

Prime Minister
Robert Armstrong
recommends firmly
against this, because
'Gingerbread' actively

*Agree that he should
Mr Rees should be asked
not to become a sponsor -*

13 January, 1981

*another Minister has already
been turned down by Sir
Robert. MAP 30/1*

Dear Mike

The Minister of State, Mr Peter Rees, has been invited to become a sponsor of Gingerbread, an association for one parent families based on the principle of self-help, which is about to receive charitable status. Mr Rees has been closely involved with the work of Gingerbread in his constituency and would like to accept. In view of the instructions in Questions of Procedure for Ministers (paragraph 76 on pressure groups), the Minister would be grateful if the Prime Minister could be consulted. If he became a sponsor, Mr Rees would, of course, confine himself to giving support to the general aims of the organisation and would not become involved in specific appeals or lobbying.

Yours ever,

Roy Warden

R WARDEN
Private Secretary

*I do not think he can -
the reasons Sir Robert
addresses are wide and
therefore prevent it. Please
tell Peter Rees that I understand
why he wants to be a sponsor -
I should like to be one myself,
but can't*

Ref. A04154

MR PATTISON

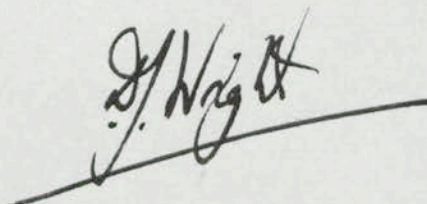
Gingerbread

In your minute of 13 January, you asked for advice on whether Mr Peter Rees, Minister of State in the Treasury, could become a sponsor of Gingerbread. I am sorry not to have been able to give you advice before but it was necessary to consult the Department of Health and Social Security.

2. I have now had confirmation from DHSS that, as well as being a self-help organisation for single-parent families, Gingerbread also acts as a pressure group to advance their interests. Gingerbread conducts campaigns for improvements in the legal and social provisions for one-parent families, including questions of taxation, social security and social services. Its representatives lobby Ministers and MPs often in conjunction with other organisations such as the Council for One Parent Families and the Child Poverty Action Group. Not unexpectedly, Gingerbread is opposed to cut-backs in Government spending because of their effect on its members' interests.

3. Gingerbread has recently been in financial difficulties, although it does receive a grant from the DHSS for its self-help, as opposed to its pressure group activities.

4. Against this background, Sir Robert Armstrong takes the view that Mr Rees, particularly as a Treasury Minister, should be advised to decline the invitation to become a sponsor of Gingerbread. This view is supported by advice given last year to another member of the Government not to accept an invitation to take an honorary post in a local Gingerbread organisation.



D J WRIGHT

30 January 1981



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

2 February 1981

Dear Roy

Thank you for your letter of 13 January, about your Minister of State's wish to accept an invitation to become a sponsor of Gingerbread.

We spoke about this last weekend. The Prime Minister has now confirmed that she does not think she can agree to Mr. Rees accepting the invitation. She entirely understands his wish to be a sponsor, and in principle would like to be one herself, but she is aware that Gingerbread functions not only as a self-help organisation for single parent families, but also as a pressure group to advance their interests. As Mr. Rees may well know, the organisation conducts campaigns for improvements in the legal and social provisions for one-parent families, including questions of taxation, social security and social services. Its representatives lobby MPs and Ministers, often in conjunction with other organisations. Gingerbread is opposed to cut-backs in Government spending because of their effect on their members' interest. Against this background, the Prime Minister does not feel that a Treasury Minister should serve as a sponsor, even on a local basis. She is sorry to take this view.

Yours ever

Mike Pattison

Roy Warden Esq
HM Treasury.

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Mr. Wright

I attach a copy of a letter recording Mr. Peter Rees' wish to become a sponsor of Gingerbread.

11 I should be grateful for your advice. I would expect the Prime Minister to raise no objection unless there is a serious expectation that Gingerbread will find itself in embarrassing conflict with Government policy.

M. A. PATTISON

13 January, 1981.

HS