# Police clear Nicola Sturgeon and Colin Beattie of wrongdoing in SNP investigation



Police Scotland has officially concluded its investigation into former Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon and former SNP treasurer Colin Beattie, clearing them of any alleged wrongdoing in the Operation Branchform inquiry concerning the financial dealings of the Scottish National Party (SNP). This development was announced on Thursday, with the police stating that both individuals, arrested in 2023, will not face charges and are no longer under investigation.

Speaking to journalists outside her residence near Glasgow, Sturgeon expressed relief at being cleared after a tumultuous two years that she described as "difficult" and "frustrating." She emphasised, “I have done nothing wrong and I don’t think there was a scrap of evidence that I had done anything wrong”. Sturgeon, who served as First Minister for nearly a decade, conveyed respect for the police and prosecution authorities, affirming her confidence in the outcome. She stated, “I am completely in the clear, that is the outcome I would always have expected”.

Police Scotland’s announcement indicated that the inquiry was prompted by concerns regarding the funding and finances of the SNP. The police noted that the investigation had been concluded at the direction of the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service.

The investigation had cast a shadow over Sturgeon and Beattie but came amid separate legal troubles for Peter Murrell, Sturgeon’s estranged husband and the former SNP chief executive. Murrell appeared at Edinburgh Sheriff Court on the same day, facing charges of embezzling party funds. He did not enter a plea and was released on bail, with no additional court dates confirmed at this time. Murrell was initially arrested in connection with Operation Branchform shortly after Sturgeon announced her resignation in February 2023 and has since been re-arrested and charged.

In a statement regarding Murrell's court appearance, a spokesperson from the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service elaborated on the independence of Scotland's prosecutors, stating that the current case is being managed without political influence. They underscored that matters relating to active cases are protected under the Contempt of Court Act 1981 which aims to preserve the integrity of judicial proceedings.

Meanwhile, the spokesperson highlighted the importance of trust in public institutions and the responsibilities of authorities to conduct thorough investigations into alleged wrongdoing. However, due to the confidential nature of the inquiry, the Crown Office noted it could not release further details, reflecting on the sensitivity surrounding the investigation as it affects individuals who are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

As the legal proceedings regarding Murrell continue, Sturgeon’s public stance remains one of confidence and clarity concerning her own situation, as she moves forward following the conclusion of the police investigation.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.holyrood.com/news/view,operation-branchform-nicola-sturgeon-cleared-in-snp-finance-probe> - This article confirms that Nicola Sturgeon and Colin Beattie have been cleared in the Operation Branchform investigation into SNP finances, and it mentions Peter Murrell's court appearance related to the same inquiry.
* <https://www.the-independent.com/news/uk/crime/nicola-sturgeon-snp-finances-peter-murrell-b2718740.html> - This article provides details about Nicola Sturgeon and Colin Beattie being cleared in the Operation Branchform investigation and mentions Peter Murrell's embezzlement charges.
* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/scotland> - Although not directly linked, this URL could provide general news coverage on Nicola Sturgeon and the SNP, potentially including updates on Operation Branchform.
* <https://www.gov.scot/publications/crown-office-and-procurator-fiscal-service/> - This URL provides information about the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, which directed the conclusion of the investigation into Sturgeon and Beattie.
* <https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/our-organisation/> - This URL offers information about Police Scotland, the agency responsible for conducting the Operation Branchform investigation.