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11 Jan 2019



Nicola Sturgeon must answer intensifying questions over her involvement in the Alex Salmond probe – specifically why she chose to meet the former First Minister just weeks before the case against him was made public.

No clarification has yet been given as to why this meeting took place, nor what was discussed.

Interim leader of the Scottish Conservatives Jackson Carlaw said today that the total lack of transparency surrounding the five contacts Ms Sturgeon had with her predecessor only demonstrated why a Holyrood inquiry was necessary.

And he added the “Saturday summit” between the two at Nicola Sturgeon’s home in Glasgow was of particular suspicion.

Scottish Conservative interim leader Jackson Carlaw said:

“As we have seen this week, Nicola Sturgeon’s case simply doesn’t stack up.

“She claims she told Mr Salmond in April last year that she would not get involved in this matter.

“If that was the case, why did she carry on taking phone calls and having meetings with him to discuss the matter?

“In particular, the First Minister needs to come clean on her bizarre decision to hold a Saturday summit with Mr Salmond at her home in July.

“This took place only weeks before the investigation was completed.

“She can’t claim she was ambushed by Mr Salmond. They’d already spoken three times at this point. So why did she hold this meeting?”

“What did Mr Salmond tell Ms Sturgeon about the investigation?

“What involvement did she, or any of her aides, have at this time?

“Why did the First Minister follow it up with a phone call four days later? Were discussions held about ways to bury this whole sordid affair and keep it under wraps?

“Failure to answer these questions make a Holyrood inquiry inevitable.

“The SNP cannot continue to sweep this matter under the carpet and patronise the public by claiming it’s all a matter for the SNP.

“It isn’t. Two Scottish Government employees have been let down, £500,000 of taxpayers’ money has been wasted, and the SNP administration’s competence is up for question.

“We need to know what has gone on – the First Minister must front up immediately.”