Scottish Parliament Fact sheet
Presiding Officer and Deputy Presiding Officers:
Session 4

This fact sheet provides information about the posts of Presiding Officer and Deputy Presiding Officers and includes links to other sources of information on the Scottish Parliament website.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Party</th>
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<td>Con</td>
<td>Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>Scottish Labour</td>
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Presiding Officer: roles and responsibilities

The Presiding Officer is elected by other Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) within 14 days following an election and normally continues to serve in post throughout the session, during dissolution and until the election of the next Presiding Officer in a new session. The Parliament must elect the Presiding Officer before it conducts any other proceedings, with the exception of MSPs taking the oath or affirmation.

The current Presiding Officer is Tricia Marwick MSP, who was elected on 11 May 2011. She remains politically impartial in everything she does.

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/abouttheparliament/22008.aspx

Parliamentary Business

The Presiding Officer chairs plenary sessions of Parliament in the Debating Chamber. She is in charge of ensuring that the business of the Parliament is conducted effectively, on time, fairly, within the rules and in an orderly manner.

She is also responsible for other aspects of parliamentary business:

- Selecting which amendments to motions will be taken in the Chamber.
- Selecting questions for Topical Question Time and First Minister’s Question Time and deciding whether to allow supplementary questions.
- Indicating whether she thinks a Bill is within the legislative competence of the Parliament.
- Deciding whether a financial resolution is required for a Bill.
- Selecting the amendments which are to be taken in the Chamber at Stage 3 of a Bill.

In the event of a tied vote in the Chamber, she exercises a casting vote.

Parliamentary Bureau

The Presiding Officer chairs meetings of the Parliamentary Bureau. As well as the Presiding Officer, the Parliamentary Bureau consists of representatives of each political party or group in the Parliament which has five or more members. The representatives are nominated by the leader of each party. The main functions of the Parliamentary Bureau are:

- To propose the business programme.
- To propose alterations to the Daily Business List in the Business Bulletin if there should be changes in the advance programme.
- To propose the establishment, remit, membership and duration of any committee or sub-committee.
- To determine any question regarding the competence of a committee to deal with a matter, and, if two or more committees are competent to deal with a matter, to determine which of those committees is to be the lead committee responsible for that matter.

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/ParliamentaryBureau.aspx
Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

The Presiding Officer chairs meetings of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB). As well as the Presiding Officer, the SPCB is made up of at least four members elected by Parliament from its MSPs. It is responsible for ensuring that the Scottish Parliament is provided with the property, staff and services it requires. The SPCB considers and makes decisions on a wide range of issues concerning the running of the Parliament including the financing of the Parliament and allocation of the budget, the staffing of the Parliament, accommodation and the use and the security of parliamentary facilities.

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/abouttheparliament/16231.aspx

Representing the Parliament at home and abroad

The Presiding Officer is responsible for representing the Scottish Parliament at home and abroad. This covers a wide range of duties and takes up a significant part of her time. The representative role can range from attending Royal functions, receiving delegations from across the world, leading outward Scottish Parliament delegations, and delivering speeches at events within the parliament and across Scotland, as well as at international conferences.

The Scottish Parliament website has an image gallery of the Presiding Officer representing the Parliament at home and abroad:

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/abouttheparliament/17960.aspx

One of the innovations this session has been the introduction of Parliament Days. Parliament Days aim to take the Parliament out of Edinburgh and into communities around Scotland. This allows people to see the Parliament at work and to engage directly in the work of the Parliament. During Parliament Days, the Presiding Officer visits community groups and projects to learn more about them and to meet local people and talk about the work of the Parliament.

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/gettinginvolved/55307.aspx

Conduct of MSPs

The Code of Conduct for Members of the Scottish Parliament “sets out the principles and standards of conduct for members of the Scottish Parliament in relation to their Parliamentary duties.” (Please note that this means the Code excludes the activities of Members in relation to their private or family life or in relation to reserved matters).

For the most part, complaints under the Code of Conduct are initially investigated by the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland.

However, there are two types of complaints relating to an MSP’s parliamentary duties which should be referred to the Presiding Officer. These are:

- Complaints about an MSP’s conduct at a meeting of the Parliament, including an MSP’s treatment of another MSP. Any complaints about a committee convener’s conduct (including the convener’s treatment of another committee member) should also be referred to the Presiding Officer.
Reference: FS1-21

- Complaints made under Section 8 of the Code of Conduct (engagement and liaison with constituents)

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/msps/12446.aspx

Biography of Tricia Marwick MSP

Tricia Marwick MSP was first elected to the Scottish Parliament in May 1999 and has served as an MSP ever since then. In the first 2 sessions of the Scottish Parliament (1999-2003 and 2003-2007), she served as a regional member for Mid Scotland and Fife. In 2007, she was elected as a constituency MSP for Central Fife; and in 2011, she became the constituency MSP for Mid Fife and Glenrothes.

In each case, she represented the Scottish National Party but she currently has no party affiliation because of her role as Presiding Officer.

She made her first speech on 8 June 1999 on allowances and you can view her key speeches in Session 4 on the Scottish Parliament website:


She has had several parliamentary posts prior to becoming Presiding Officer:

- Appointed Member of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (2007-2011)

She has served as Deputy Convener of the Standards Committee (2000-2003) and a Convener of the Waverley Railway (Scotland) Bill Committee (2004-2006). She has been a member of a number of committees during her time in the Parliament:

- Communities Committee
- Equal Opportunities Committee
- Justice and Home Affairs Committee
- Local Government Committee
- Public Petitions Committee
- Scotland Bill Committee
- Standards Committee

Before becoming an MSP, she was a Public Affairs Officer for Shelter Scotland.
Deputy Presiding Officers

Two Deputy Presiding Officers are elected by other MSPs within 14 days following an election and normally continue to serve in post throughout the session, during dissolution and until the election of the next Deputy Presiding Officer in a new session. The Parliament must elect the Deputy Presiding Officers before it conducts any other proceedings, with the exception of MSPs taking the oath or affirmation and the election of the Presiding Officer.

The Parliament may also elect an additional Deputy Presiding Officer during the course of a session if appropriate, for example if a Presiding Officer or Deputy Presiding Officer is ill. The additional Deputy Presiding Officer may serve for a shorter time period than those elected following an election.

The Deputy Presiding Officers have the same range of responsibilities when acting in place of the Presiding Officer, but both retain their party allegiance and will vote in the Chamber unless they are chairing proceedings. This means that they also support the Presiding Officer in her representation of the Scottish Parliament at home and abroad.

The current Deputy Presiding Officers are Elaine Smith (Lab) and John Scott (Con), both of whom were elected on 11 May 2011.

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/abouttheparliament/17886.aspx
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