



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

**The Presiding Officer**

Jenni Minto MSP  
Convener  
Standards Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

24 June 2026

Dear Convener,

**Temporary amendments to Standing Orders**

I am writing in relation to the temporary suspensions and variations to Standing Orders agreed by the Parliament to support changes to the organisation of parliamentary business and to the conduct of proceedings in the Chamber.

As you will be aware, on 26 May 2026, the Parliament agreed, on a motion (S7M-00150) of the Parliamentary Bureau under Rule 17.2.1(b) to suspend and vary certain provisions of Standing Orders in Chapters 2, 11 and 13. These changes were intended to facilitate revised arrangements for the parliamentary week including new formats for First Minister's Questions, General Questions and Portfolio Questions, together with revised timings for Decision Time. These changes took effect from 29 May 2026 and are intended to remain in place until 31 January 2027.

On 17 June 2026, the Parliament agreed, on a motion (S7M-00378) of the Parliamentary Bureau under Rule 17.2.1(b) to a further temporary suspension of Standing Orders rule 11.5.1 as a consequence of revisions I made to the Guidance on Conduct in the Chamber. This relates to remote participation in chamber proceedings and voting remotely from outside of the UK which I have indicated should occur only in exceptional circumstances and with my prior permission. This change took effect from 22 June 2026 and is intended to remain in place until 31 January 2027.

The Bureau agreed to invite the SPPA Committee to consider these temporary arrangements with a view to bringing forward recommendations on whether any permanent amendments to Standing Orders should be made.

I recognise that the Committee will wish to follow its usual processes and reflect on Members' experience of the temporary arrangements before reaching conclusions. The current provision of 31 January 2027 is intended to allow sufficient time for that work to be undertaken.

In addition, the Committee may wish to note the operation of Rule 13.7.3 in relation to Portfolio Questions. In the previous parliamentary session, it was necessary to agree temporary suspensions and variations to the rule in order to enable questions on the same or similar subject matter to be taken together. This has allowed greater flexibility in the management of Portfolio Questions and reflects established practice in the Chamber. We have continued the practice this session. The Committee may wish to consider whether provision should be made in Standing Orders to make this arrangement permanent.

I would be grateful if the Committee could consider this matter and bring forward any recommendations it considers appropriate.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Kenneth J Gibson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K'.

**Kenneth Gibson MSP**  
Presiding Officer