



The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

The Presiding Officer

14 September 2026

Jenni Minto MSP
Convener
Standards Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

Dear Jenni,

Committee rules on remote participation by conveners

I invite the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee to consider whether the Parliament's rules provide sufficient clarity on the conduct of committee meetings where a convener participates remotely while other members attend in person.

Rule 12.5.2 states:

"Where the convener is not available for any meeting of the committee, or leaves the chair for part of any meeting, that meeting, or that part of the meeting, shall be chaired by the deputy convener."

The rule does not distinguish between attendance in person and attendance remotely. It has therefore been interpreted to mean that a convener who attends a meeting, whether physically or virtually, is available for that meeting and should chair it.

In practice, however, chairing a meeting remotely when all or most other members are present in the committee room can present difficulties. In such circumstances, it is surely preferable for the deputy convener to chair the meeting while the convener participates remotely as a committee member. Currently it appears that the rules would not allow such an arrangement.

This scenario also raises further procedural questions. For example, clarification would be required regarding the exercise of a casting vote and whether that vote would fall to the deputy convener as chair of the meeting or remain with the convener.

I would therefore welcome the Committee's consideration of whether the rules should be clarified or amended to address these circumstances.

Yours sincerely,

Kenneth J Gibson MSP
Presiding Officer

Contact: Telephone 0131 348 5324. Email PresidingOfficers@parliament.scot.