



OFFICIAL REPORT
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

Justice Sub-Committee on Policing

Thursday 27 October 2016

Session 5



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Thursday 27 October 2016

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JUSTICE SUB-COMMITTEE ON POLICING

1st Meeting 2016, Session 5

CONVENER

*Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Margaret Mitchell (Central Scotland) (Con)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) (Green)

*Rona Mackay (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)

*Ben Macpherson (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)

*Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD)

*Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)

*attended

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Diane Barr

LOCATION

The Sir Alexander Fleming Room (CR3)

Scottish Parliament

Justice Sub-Committee on Policing

Thursday 27 October 2016

[Stewart Stevenson opened the meeting at 13:05]

Interests

Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP): As the oldest committee member, I welcome everybody to the first meeting of the Justice Sub-Committee on Policing in session 5. No apologies have been received.

I invite every member who is present to declare any interests. I have no relevant interests to declare.

Ben Macpherson (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP): I have no relevant interests to declare. However, I refer members to my voluntary entry in the register of members' interests as a non-practising member of the Law Society of Scotland, in case that ever becomes relevant.

Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab): I have no relevant interests to declare.

John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) (Green): As a former police officer, I am in receipt of a police pension, and police pensions may feature in the committee's work. I am also a member of the Highlands and Islands branch of the Retired Police Officers Association Scotland.

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD): I have no relevant interests to declare.

Stewart Stevenson: Thank you very much, colleagues. If any other members join us, I will ensure that they are invited to make a similar declaration.

Convener

13:06

Stewart Stevenson: The next item on the agenda is the choosing of a convener. I ask for nominations.

Ben Macpherson: I nominate Mary Fee.

Stewart Stevenson: Mary, are you willing to serve as convener?

Mary Fee: Yes.

Stewart Stevenson: Are there any other nominations?

John Finnie: Yes, convener. I nominate Margaret Mitchell, who has indicated that she is interested. I will say a few words on the nomination, if I may.

Stewart Stevenson: I am content to allow that. I will, however, allow Mary Fee to say a few words if she wishes to do so.

John Finnie: I am speaking more as a proposer.

Stewart Stevenson: Speak ahead.

John Finnie: We are fortunate in having two very good candidates. I was a member of a committee that Mary Fee chaired and I had every confidence in her ability to perform the role. Likewise, if she is the successful candidate today, she will have my full and unqualified support. However, in the letter that was sent from this sub-committee to the Presiding Officer, which we all undertook to go along with—it was circulated—part of the proposal on the membership was that the convener of the Justice Committee should convene the sub-committee. That was qualified by saying that the decision was for the sub-committee itself. Nowhere did the letter say that the convener would be the subject of an arrangement between the business managers of the Scottish National Party and the Scottish Labour Party. It is disappointing if that is a feature of it. Nevertheless, whatever the decision, the convener will enjoy my full and unqualified support.

Stewart Stevenson: Those are helpful remarks. Without further ado, we will move to the vote.

Members voted.

Votes for Mary Fee

Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)
Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)

Votes for Margaret Mitchell

Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)

Mary Fee was chosen as convener.

The Convener (Mary Fee): Thank you for choosing me to be the convener of the Justice Sub-Committee on Policing. I look forward to working with you all over the coming session.

Before we move on to the rest of the agenda for today, I invite Rona Mackay, who has just joined us, to make any declaration of interests.

Rona Mackay (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP): I have no interests to declare.

The Convener: It is for the committee to decide whether it wishes to choose a deputy convener. There is no obligation on us to do so, and an alternative might be to appoint a temporary convener if the convener is unavailable. Do members wish to appoint a deputy convener?

Liam McArthur: I associate myself entirely with John Finnie's earlier comments and offer my congratulations on your appointment as convener. In the circumstances, I am keen to nominate Margaret Mitchell for deputy convener. I think that that would help to ensure the continuity that was referred to in the committee's letter to the Parliamentary Bureau.

The Convener: Thank you very much. Do we agree to choose Margaret Mitchell as deputy convener?

Stewart Stevenson: Convener, I think that, procedurally, we need to agree to choose a deputy convener first.

The Convener: Thank you. Do we agree to choose a deputy convener?

Members indicated agreement.

The Convener: As Margaret Mitchell has been nominated, do we agree to appoint her as deputy convener?

Members indicated agreement.

Margaret Mitchell was chosen as deputy convener.

Stewart Stevenson: I add the caveat that, although I am content that she agreed to serve as convener, she has the right to inform us subsequently if she would not be content to serve as deputy convener. Nonetheless, I am content that we take that decision today. I do not think that we should hang our hats on procedure.

The Convener: No. We have made that decision today. If Margaret Mitchell chooses not to serve as deputy convener, we can revisit the matter at a future meeting.

Decision on Taking Business in Private

13:11

The Convener: Agenda item 3 is a decision on taking business in private. Is the committee content to take items 4 and 5 in private? They involve discussion of working practices and the sub-committee's work programme.

Members indicated agreement.

13:11

Meeting continued in private until 13:28.

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