

STANDARDS AND PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

Tuesday 19 June 2007

Session 3

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STANDARDS AND PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

1st Meeting 2007, Session 3

OLDEST COMMITTEE MEMBER

*Dave Thompson (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Keith Brown (Ochil) (SNP)

*Cathie Craigie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)

*Marlyn Glen (North East Scotland) (Lab)

*Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con)

*Christina McKelvie (Central Scotland) (SNP)

*Hugh O'Donnell (Central Scotland) (LD)

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTES

Bob Doris (Glasgow) (SNP)

*attended

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Jennifer Smart

SENIOR ASSISTANT CLERK

Jane Sutherland

LOCATION

Committee Room 4

Scottish Parliament

Standards and Public Appointments Committee

Tuesday 19 June 2007

[THE OLDEST COMMITTEE MEMBER *opened the meeting at 14:19*]

Interests

Dave Thompson (Oldest Committee Member): Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I have the dubious honour of being the oldest member of the committee, so I am in the chair for the moment. Do all members know one another? I know that some of you have been introduced, and I am sure that we will soon get to know one another.

The first item on the agenda is declaration of interests. Members have a paper that explains what that means. I will start by declaring interests that I am registering on a voluntary basis. I am a member of the GMB union, An Comunn Gàidhealach, Inverness Credit Union, the Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, the Trading Standards Institute, the Church of Scotland, the Scottish Bible Society, Oxfam, Christian Aid, Marie Curie Cancer Care, Save the Children and Compassion UK.

Keith Brown (Ochil) (SNP): Until 1 June I was an employee of Stirling Council—I resigned after I was elected to the Scottish Parliament, but I worked a period of notice. I am a member of the Association of Electoral Administrators and Unison, and as from tomorrow night I will be a member of the Milnathort action group.

Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con): I have no registrable interests in relation to the work of this committee. I refer members to my entry in the register of members' interests.

Hugh O'Donnell (Central Scotland) (LD): Like Jamie McGrigor, I am not aware that I have any registrable interests in relation to the work of this committee. I refer to my entry in the register of members' interests, which will be published on the Parliament's website.

Christina McKelvie (Central Scotland) (SNP): My registered interests will also be published. I was a member of Glasgow City Council social work department until 8 May, when I resigned. I am a member of Unison.

Marlyn Glen (North East Scotland) (Lab): I have no relevant interests to declare.

Cathie Craigie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab): I have no interests that should affect the work of this committee.

Convener

14:22

Dave Thompson: Item 2 is the choice of convener. Members have a paper that notes that the Parliament resolved on 7 June that members of the Scottish National Party are eligible to be chosen as convener of the Standards and Public Appointments Committee. I invite nominations for the position of convener.

Christina McKelvie: I nominate Keith Brown.

Jamie McGrigor: Do you need a seconder?

Dave Thompson: No.

Keith Brown was chosen as convener.

Dave Thompson: I hand over the chair to Keith Brown.

Deputy Convener

14:23

The Convener (Keith Brown): I thank Dave Thompson and other members of the committee.

The next item is the choice of deputy convener. In accordance with the motion that was agreed by the Parliament, which Dave Thompson mentioned, the deputy convener will be a member of the Labour Party. I invite nominations for the position.

Marlyn Glen: I nominate Cathie Craigie.

Cathie Craigie was chosen as deputy convener.

The Convener: Congratulations, Cathie.

Work Programme

14:24

The Convener: We have finished three of the four agenda items already. We are getting on quite well.

Hugh O'Donnell: Long may it continue.

The Convener: Our final item of business today is consideration of our approach to developing a work programme. Members who have been here before will know the format for this item, but some of us are new members. Perhaps the best approach is for members to think about arrangements for an away day during the summer recess, including venues and dates when they will be available. If members let the clerk, Jennifer Smart, know when they will be available, we can discuss the matter next week and see whether we can find a date that suits everybody.

Do members agree to that approach?

Cathie Craigie: Yes. That is sensible.

Marlyn Glen: I tentatively suggest the last week in August, because then we will all be ready to come back when the Parliament resumes in September.

The Convener: That does not present a problem to me.

Dave Thompson (Highlands and Islands) (SNP): It might be a problem for me.

Hugh O'Donnell: And for me.

The Convener: Perhaps we should do what has been suggested and let the clerks know when we are available so that we can find a date that suits everybody. Marlyn Glen's suggestion suits me, but we want everyone to be involved if possible.

Jamie McGrigor: Will the away day involve an overnight stay or will it be a daytime event in Edinburgh?

The Convener: It can involve an overnight stay if the committee agrees to it. As another committee convener said to me, having an overnight stay is a way to ensure that there is good attendance. Also, people cannot escape quickly. It might be worth while for us to include an overnight stay, but we can discuss that and hear members' suggestions next week, when we will all be here for the first meeting of the Procedures Committee.

Do members agree that the best approach is to find out when members are available and to gather suggestions on where the away day should be held and whether it should involve an overnight stay?

Cathie Craigie: Perhaps the easiest way to proceed is to ask the clerks to e-mail members and find out when they will be away on holiday. The clerks can then suggest a date when most folk will be available. It might be difficult for us to come up with a suitable date, so it is best for the clerks to co-ordinate it.

The Convener: We made quick progress today, but it might take a long time for us to decide on a date because members might say, "I can't make this date and you can't make that one." Perhaps it is best to take up Cathie Craigie's suggestion. I ask members to let the clerks know when they will be away on holiday so that we can nail down some dates on which we are all available. If members have suggestions about the venue for the away day and whether it should be in Edinburgh or elsewhere, they should mention that as well. We will return to the matter next week.

Is everyone happy with that?

Members *indicated agreement.*

The Convener: I do not think that we have to cover anything else today. We do not have to discuss the substantive matter of the work programme; we will come back to it.

We might win the award for the shortest committee meeting—eight minutes is not bad. Hugh O'Donnell said that his meeting this morning also lasted eight minutes.

I thank everyone for coming and I look forward to seeing you next week.

Meeting closed at 14:27.

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