

EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE

Tuesday 4 September 2001
(*Afternoon*)

Session 1

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EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE **22nd Meeting 2001, Session 1**

CONVENER

*Karen Gillon (Clydesdale) (Lab)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Cathy Peattie (Falkirk East) (Lab)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Ian Jenkins (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)

*Mr Frank McAveety (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)

*Irene McGugan (North-East Scotland) (SNP)

*Mr Brian Monteith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

*Michael Russell (South of Scotland) (SNP)

*attended

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Martin Verity

SENIOR ASSISTANT CLERK

Judith Evans

ASSISTANT CLERK

Ian Cowan

LOCATION

Committee Room 2

Scottish Parliament

Education, Culture and Sport Committee

Tuesday 4 September 2001

(Afternoon)

[THE DEPUTY CONVENER *opened the meeting at 14:32*]

The Deputy Convener (Cathy Peattie): Good afternoon. I welcome everyone to the first meeting of the new term. I hope that you had a good break. Mike Russell and Karen Gillon will be late but we expect them to be here in half an hour. It will be obvious to members that we are being used as guinea pigs—this room is being televised for the first time. We will see how that goes.

Item in Private

The Deputy Convener: I suggest that we take the next item in private, because it concerns the discussion of a draft report. Is that agreed?

Members *indicated agreement.*

14:33

Meeting continued in private.

14:35

Meeting continued in public.

Procedures Committee Inquiry

The Deputy Convener: Before the recess, we discussed our response to the Procedures Committee inquiry into the application of the consultative steering group principles. Do members have any thoughts on how we can take that forward? What is the time scale for this item, Martin?

Martin Verity (Clerk): The deadline would have been yesterday but the committee agreed at its last meeting that it would deal with the item today. That will enable the clerks to submit the committee's comments to the Procedures Committee by Friday.

The Deputy Convener: Shall we go through the paper item by item or do members want to raise particular issues?

Ian Jenkins (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD): We have been asked to make comments as individuals about the CSG principles, so the committee should not need to go through every question. By and large, the committee's views will be reflected in the views of others.

The committee could perhaps raise the issue of whether we have enough time. We feel that we need to have a meeting every week but the guidelines suggest that meetings should take place once a fortnight—the Parliament's schedule, in a sense, does not allow enough time. We could perhaps record that we have found it impossible to do our business using fortnightly meetings.

Mr Brian Monteith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): Like Ian Jenkins, I believe that individual contributions would be more appropriate. The committee should respond only if we can come to a consensus about an issue. Given that our views on the implementation of the CSG principles will probably be predicated on political differences, it will be better if we make individual contributions, which the Procedures Committee can evaluate. That would be better than spending time disagreeing and not having a result.

Irene McGugan (North-East Scotland) (SNP): It might be useful for us to consider some of the elements that we have just considered in our draft report. For instance, the fact that such a high proportion of our meetings—28 of our past 40—were held either in private or partly in private might lead to some questions about whether the committee is truly open and accessible.

The number of times that we have met outwith Edinburgh could be considered fairly low. Perhaps we need to consider whether that makes the committee as accessible as it might be.

The paper asks whether the Parliament has been able to encourage the participation of schools and young people in its work. How often has the committee managed to do that?

Some elements of the questions may be particular to individual committees. We may be able to comment on those from our experience and statistics.

The Deputy Convener: Perhaps those are not areas on which we would need consensus but simply matters that the committee has come across.

Irene McGugan: They would be statements of fact for analysis.

Mr Monteith: There is a danger that statements of fact would be interpreted differently by another committee. Of course we have had many meetings in private: that is because the committee has undertaken many reports and inquiries. Many of those inquiries have been large and we have required a considerable amount of time to deliberate the evidence. For good reason, such deliberation has been in private. Were we to have fewer inquiries next year, for instance, I would expect that there would be a lot less private business.

For us to present the facts is all very well but, if we are going to do that, we will probably have to include at least some explanation of those facts. We would then end up spending a great deal of time discussing the CSG principles rather than education matters.

Mr Frank McAveety (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab): The dilemma that faced the committee was that the nature of the issues that were being examined required us to take account of confidentiality and to recognise the sensitivity of how the information from the Scottish Qualifications Authority or for the Hampden inquiry was obtained. That does not reflect the broader range of inquiries that the committee will undertake over the next period.

There is an awkwardness in the paper—I say that as a member of the Procedures Committee. This committee has not discussed whether there is consensus—I concede what Brian Monteith said—on some of the broader issues, irrespective of our individual or party stance on the role of the CSG, the CSG principles and how we put those principles into practice.

Perhaps we should identify broad issues within the CSG principles that we can consider. I am not convinced that going round the country necessarily makes us more accountable to the public whom we serve. It assists in some matters, but sometimes how we handle and process information is more important than whether we are

in the right place for a brief moment in time.

We might want to reflect on such issues. The critical issue for the Education, Culture and Sport Committee is Irene McGugan's point about the role of young people, who are the consumers of education. What are their rights and roles? How are they able to influence some of the decision making?

The Deputy Convener: Are you suggesting that we consider the issues as a committee? Ian Jenkins, Brian Monteith and I suggested that we respond individually. Irene McGugan suggested that we state facts about, for example, meetings in private and meetings outwith Edinburgh.

Do members have a preference? Can we do both? We do not have a lot of time. Brian Monteith made the point that we would need to work through each principle and arrive at a firm consensus if the response is to be from the committee. I am looking for a steer from members.

Mr McAveety: It is like everything else. Some of the words used, whether by the CSG or not, are equivocal. Your definition of how we share power, of how we engage with citizens and of participation might differ from mine. Those are endless debates that probably need a major philosophical treatise.

We should respond individually because of the time that we have. On one or two issues, we should say in general terms that the committee would like to endeavour to move in the direction of the CSG principles. If we said that, it would be a reasonable response to the Procedures Committee's requests. I do not know whether other members feel that, but it is what I suggest.

The Deputy Convener: That is what Irene McGugan said.

Irene McGugan: Yes, it would be a compromise.

The Deputy Convener: Is that okay?

Members indicated agreement.

The Deputy Convener: Let us work through the CSG principles. The first one is sharing of power. Are there any comments on that?

Ian Jenkins: As Frank McAveety said, the CSG principles are difficult concepts to sum up in single sentences. The paper asks:

"Has the Parliament shared power effectively with civic society?"

What do we mean by "effectively"? I would say that it has been more effective in sharing power than the Westminster Parliament has, but it is not as effective as it should be or could be; we are moving in the right direction. If we spent 10 minutes or an hour more talking about it, we would

not reach any different conclusions.

The Deputy Convener: I think that we are agreeing that it will be difficult for us to agree on certain areas. Therefore, we should pick up on the issues that relate directly to the committee's work. Do members have any comments on the principle of accountability?

14:45

Mr Monteith: I have a view on how accountable it is possible to make the Executive in light of our SQA inquiry, although that may fall into a difficult area. We could not reach agreement about the role of the Executive and therefore we could not include anything about its role in the report other than what was the consensus view. As the report was so important, we did not want to produce a minority report about the role of the Executive, which we left to the side.

However, there is an issue about holding the Executive to account, given party-political differences. That is my personal view and I do not expect the committee to agree with it. That is the difficulty that I was trying to point out—I am flagging it up without inviting response and I am certainly not seeking the committee's endorsement of it.

Ian Jenkins: Nevertheless, it is a step forward that ministers, civil servants and members of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education have come to speak to the committee. Although we do not think that we went as far as we might have gone, we have still gone further than people were able to go before. We are on a course that is taking us in the direction of being able to make the Executive and civil servants more accountable. Some of us would like to go further, but I think that we are on track and that we are doing valuable work.

As for the financial systems and audit arrangements, I am not a financial expert and I never feel comfortable that I am effective when I deal with financial matters. However, the structures are in place and members are using them in the way that the CSG would have wanted.

The Deputy Convener: As the committee reporter on the budget process, I recall that we found it difficult to scrutinise the budget, especially in relation to our consideration of mainstreaming and of the different budget headings. The committee agreed that the budget process was not as clear as it might be. Perhaps we should feed back that view.

Mr McAveety: As a partial outsider to the SQA inquiry—I became a member of the committee later—it strikes me that its main lesson was that the committee produced a report that identified the key areas, irrespective of where members wanted

to apportion responsibility. The report was a perfect exemplar of an effective committee operation, whether or not there was broad consensus in relation to members' concerns about the SQA. The report's outcome was that ministers took up a series of recommendations. The report is a good model and perhaps we should draw attention to it, as it dealt with a difficult and unexpected issue in Scottish education.

On the financial systems, the core issue, which Cathy Peattie identified in her report to the committee, was that it can be incredibly difficult to break down where resources lie, who is responsible for them and how accountable ministers are, particularly if there is shared ministerial responsibility or if the Executive hands the money over to other bodies to deliver the outcomes. That issue came through the Finance Committee's review of the budget process and I am sure that the Education, Culture and Sport Committee made a submission about it.

The committee's role in respect of those issues was commendable. Without the report on the role of the SQA, our work would not have been as effective as it seems to have been.

The Deputy Convener: Okay. What are the committee's views on the way in which we have satisfied the principle of accessibility, openness and responsiveness?

Ian Jenkins: Our role as inquirers, legislators and scrutinisers of legislation would come under that heading. I hope that the members of civic Scotland who have come to speak to us and have taken part in our meetings have felt that we have facilitated their appropriate participation in the committee system and that, through taking witnesses' statements and undertaking visits, we have been accessible, open and responsive.

I admit that we have been most open and responsive to those who have been willing and able to come to us first and that we need to involve more people rather than approach the usual suspects every time. Nevertheless, the people who have knowledge and interest in, and commitment to, the subjects have been able to contact us to discuss things with us and to help to shape the legislation.

Irene McGugan: This is the principle on which we have done quite well. We have held an enormous number of evidence sessions and we have spoken to a great many people. That is largely attributable to the nature of the work that we have undertaken and the inquiries that we have conducted.

I mentioned earlier the fact that the participation of schools and young people in the committee system could be better; nevertheless, we have probably done more than any other committee to

involve and engage with schools and young people—as we should have, as the education committee. The issue is the degree to which we feel comfortable about progress.

We have also been astute in our visits outside the Parliament. For instance, visiting Stornoway to consider Gaelic broadcasting seemed sensible. We should undertake more such visits.

We could also do more to use communications technology. Videoconferencing and other means would allow us to talk to and engage with people outside Edinburgh. We must think about ways in which we can do that.

It is important that we make progress on this principle. We have done so to an extent, but we must be innovative and do even better. It is the area that impacts most on people outside the Parliament and in which we can best engage with civic Scotland.

Mr McAveety: I agree with virtually everything that Irene McGugan has said. However, the issue of using new technology raises additional questions about whether people in all parts of Scotland have access to up-to-date technology and the resource implications of that. If we want to engage in videoconferencing—which I think is a good idea—with people in Scotland or, on bigger issues, from other educational authorities in Europe or beyond, we must recognise the cost element. Has anyone presented us with the cost implications of that or suggested whether it would provide value for money? It would be a bit rich of us to ask to use that technology before we had been presented with the cost implications.

The Deputy Convener: It is difficult for people to come and listen to what is happening in the committee. If several groups wanted to attend a meeting, there would not be enough room. We struggle because of the size of our committee rooms—that can be a barrier, too.

Do members have any comments on the principle of providing equal opportunities? This year, there has been evidence of better mainstreaming in the committees' budgets.

Mr McAveety: I agree. However, it would be helpful for us to get feedback on where people are, either in terms of committees or in general terms of the role of self-assessment, monitoring and review.

The Deputy Convener: We will include our suggestions with the committee's submission. If they have not done so already, members will also submit individual responses.

Ian Jenkins: I have filled in so many questionnaires from the Procedures Committee that I cannot remember which ones I have returned and which ones I have not returned.

The Deputy Convener: Or what you have said.

Ian Jenkins: I suspect that I have not sent back any of them because I thought that I had sent them before.

Mr McAveety: We need a good auditing system.

Ian Jenkins: Yes. That is what we need.

School Closures

The Deputy Convener: Item 4 relates to the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities guidance on school closures. Members will recall that this item arose out of a petition from Argyll and Bute Council and a report on school closures that I prepared. The committee agreed that national guidelines on school closures were needed, which we asked COSLA to prepare. We waited for some time, but COSLA issued its report at the end of June and it was circulated to committee members. Members may want to air their views on that report if they have not already done so.

My concern over the COSLA report, which is a weighty document, is that it is about what to do at the crisis point of school closures. It would be advantageous to have clear national guidelines for parents and stakeholders on what happens when education departments are first considering school closures in specific areas. The COSLA guidelines will be used only when a school closure is imminent; they need to go further back in the process.

My report highlighted some of the proposals in the English guidelines, which were clear, accurate and fairly brief. I believe that we need something much clearer than what we have received from COSLA, although members may disagree. I am not 100 per cent happy with the COSLA report.

Irene McGugan: What is the next step for the COSLA report? Is COSLA still taking views from all over?

The Deputy Convener: I understand that COSLA is taking views only from local authorities, and I am not sure what stage it has reached. Perhaps Martin Verity can find out.

Mr McAveety: I do not have the document with me today, for which I apologise. You are right, convener, that it is a lengthy document that does not get to the heart of the concerns that would arise at any stage of the reorganisation of schools in an area. There must be understanding about the way in which local authorities handle such issues, as they are incredibly difficult to deal with.

There have been quite a few school closures and rationalisations over the past few years and it is important to establish general guidelines and principles. The problem for anyone who undertakes a school closure programme is that people will quote an endless number of documents because there is no consistent approach.

Another concern is the way in which we arrive at school closures, because they involve more than just an audit view of school provision. For

instance, Glasgow could do with a fairly rigorous examination of the use of primary school resources. However, large-scale primary school closures would have serious consequences for communities, especially in disadvantaged areas such as the one that I represent.

The guidelines must be much sharper. There is scope for further dialogue on them with senior figures in COSLA and with the ministers; a tripartite discussion at some stage might be useful.

15:00

Mr Monteith: I sense some difficulty with the COSLA report. As the body that represents most of Scotland's local authorities, COSLA is trying to put together guidelines. We have shown an interest in that, not least because we are often presented with petitions and letters about school closures. We are not a court of appeal, although we represent people who live in those areas—the Executive has the final say.

We must establish where the Education, Culture and Sport committee fits into the process. Would it be better for us to respond to the draft document now? Or would it be better to let COSLA go through its procedures, finalise its document and then, perhaps, give evidence at a meeting of the committee? I am not sure what would be best. Our relationship with COSLA over this matter is not clear, nor is it clear how we can get a result with which everyone agrees and is happy.

The Deputy Convener: COSLA has expressed a desire to have some formal liaison with the committee. Members might want to consider that. It is clearly not the role of this committee to make a decision on school closures. If it were, we would have to meet not just once a week, as Ian Jenkins suggested, but probably three or four times a week. However, our role in the inquiry was to look at how the business of school closures is conducted, who is involved and what procedures are followed. Those procedures were found wanting because of the lack of guidelines, which is why COSLA has produced its proposed guidelines for the school closures process.

We can wait until COSLA finalises its deliberations and then ask it to appear before us. We might consider asking the Minister for Education, Europe and External Affairs for his view on guidelines for school closures. It is my view that we should do that—I do not know what his view would be.

Mr McAveety: I know that other stakeholders are being consulted about the matter. It is important that we hear the voices of people who have experienced rationalisation processes. In some parts of the country those have been difficult, but eventually fruitful. In other places, they

have left substantial sores that will last a long time. We need to hear that viewpoint also, which will help in the handling of future rationalisations.

I genuinely believe that two simple things require to be understood. One is that, having gone through a hellish school closure programme—as I did when I was in Glasgow—I do not think that it would be right for parliamentarians to go through that process. Also, I do not think that we should be seen as the final decision-making court. That would be fatal for everybody concerned. There is some uncertainty at the moment about the role of MSPs and the role of the local authority in the decision-making process—not just on school closures. Getting some guidelines out might at least give us a legal framework for decision making and—it strikes me—a legally-bound consultation period. We need to get guidelines clarified as much as possible.

Ian Jenkins: Perhaps we could have a look at the document that Cathy Peattie talked about—which describes the broad-brush guidelines in England—and draw the whole matter to the attention of the minister.

The Deputy Convener: I included most of that information in my report, but I would be happy to have the document looked at.

Ian Jenkins: I thought that your report was a valuable document, and a guideline in itself about the principles that we want embedded in the COSLA guidance—or ministerial guidance, if we end up with that.

Mr Monteith: Frank McAveety's points suggest to me that COSLA's crucial relationship is not with this committee or, indeed, with the Parliament, but with the Executive. Because of our past involvement with local issues we are being drawn in. It might be better for us to wait until COSLA finalises its process so that there is a definitive COSLA view, rather than have us playing a role in shaping that view when we have no locus. We could then invite COSLA to a meeting of the committee to discuss the matter with us and, as the deputy convener suggested, with the minister. We can help to explore the relationship between COSLA and the minister and see if there are any areas in which ministers feel that they could influence the guidelines. The relationship that the minister and the Executive have with COSLA is more important than the relationship that this committee has with COSLA.

Karen Gillon (Clydesdale) (Lab): I suggest that we ask the minister what he thinks is going to be the way forward for the Executive's relationship with COSLA. That might help us to get a better idea of whether the minister has plans to do anything, or whether the relationship with COSLA is developing—because there is a problem with

that relationship.

I do not think that the issue concerns only rural schools. School closures are becoming an issue across the board and we must consider all the criteria that concern information and the sharing of information. The next step might best be to get information from the minister and to ask him about his plans.

Ian Jenkins: We discussed participation of people other than legislators earlier. At what stage are parents' organisations being brought in, for example? If parents had a stake in how the guidelines are drawn up, and if a framework were agreed beforehand instead of being imposed, it is likely that they would find the eventual decision more acceptable.

The Deputy Convener: That is why we need something like stakeholders' guidelines, with which parents, teachers and everyone involved in education can engage.

On Karen Gillon's point, we could ask the minister for his view. In the interim, COSLA will be finalising its document and we could ask it what stage that document is at. We will then be able to review the matter.

I now invite Karen Gillon to take the chair.

The Convener (Karen Gillon): Having left Mike Russell behind on the road somewhere—he is obviously a slower driver than I am—I suggest that we move now to item 6, the technology teachers' petition, instead of item 5, given that Mike Russell has been directly involved in the Gaelic broadcasting inquiry. Is that agreed?

Members indicated agreement.

Technology Teachers Association

The Convener: Item 6 is petition PE233, from the Technology Teachers Association. Members will recall that the committee dealt with the petition some time ago and asked for further information. Members will now have received a considerable amount of information in the post. I invite members to make comments, if they have been able to get through all the information in the time available.

Cathy Peattie (Falkirk East) (Lab): I remember the previous discussion on the petition. Members were able to identify with some clear points that were made in the petition. I am still of the mind that a lot remains to be done. The papers that we have received back up the point of view with regard to technology training in schools—they highlight the lack of teaching of technical subjects in the classroom.

Members will recall the debate on the subject in Parliament. We received a report from the minister that the Executive was considering some of the issues concerned. I would like to hear what the minister's thinking is now. We should catch up with this matter quickly, as fewer kids are getting involved in technology training. In higher education, there is a whole issue surrounding kids in the fourth and fifth years who are not involved in any such training at all—that is perhaps to do with exams. We should address the matter and ask the minister to speak to us about it. There has been a response from the Executive, but it is out of date and not particularly helpful.

Mr Monteith: I agree with Cathy Peattie that we should hear from the minister. I support that idea in particular because of the widespread reports about the minister's views on liberalising the curriculum, and because of my belief that that is already happening in Lanarkshire.

As we are considering a matter that relates to the curriculum, we should be able to ask the minister what changes the curriculum might bring to the teaching of technology subjects. It would be a good idea to invite the minister to speak to the committee, as we could broaden our questioning to cover the whole curriculum.

Irene McGugan: I agree that we still have a role in the matter. The outcome of the debate that Cathy Peattie referred to was that technology studies and the like can contribute significantly to Scotland's economic growth and that they are therefore an integral part of promoting such growth.

The papers that we have seen underline our key concerns. They establish that there is a decline in

the number of pupils who are taking those subjects and in the number of teachers who are able to teach them. They also highlight the fact that there has been a lack of investment in developing the programme, as it is always fairly expensive to resource that kind of advance in technology. That has not been properly taken into account.

The situation seems almost to have reached crisis point, as some parts of the country are now very poorly served. We must act quickly, as it will be difficult to turn that situation around. Once schools have committed rooms to other purposes, it becomes difficult to take them back again to provide the space required for the equipment and machinery needed to teach technological studies. In addition, the age profile of technology teachers is changing; they are getting older all the time and younger teachers are not coming in to teach the subject. There are all kinds of issues that touch on that area.

We should also question the minister about the concerns raised by John Dakers of the University of Glasgow, who is particularly concerned about the lack of a foundation level for the new qualification that is coming on stream. He asks why it is possible to have a foundation level in mathematics, physics and other seemingly difficult subjects, while we are unable to provide a foundation level in technological studies, thereby excluding around a third of school pupils from taking a subject that we all agree more pupils should take up. There are lots of issues to discuss in connection with those points.

The Convener: We shall send the information that we have to the minister, ask for his comments on all the evidence that we have received and invite him to come to a future meeting to discuss matters in more detail. It would be useful to get a written response from the minister before he comes, so that we have some idea of where his thoughts lie on the subject. We shall try to schedule that as soon as possible.

Gaelic Broadcasting

The Convener: Members will have received a paper from Alasdair Morrison, the Deputy Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning and Gaelic. He will be attending the committee on 18 September to answer questions on Gaelic broadcasting, but I felt that it was worthwhile to have a paper prior to his coming before us, so that we have an idea of his thoughts on the issue.

Cathy Peattie: Would not it be more appropriate to use the paper to suggest lines of questioning for the minister, rather than to discuss it separately? If the minister is coming to answer questions, that will give us the opportunity to raise the issues outlined in the document.

Ian Jenkins: The minister's paper is a summary of where we are, but it does not gather together all the evidence that we have taken and philosophise about it. Some of the elements that have been touched on are reserved matters, as they relate to broadcasting, and the minister's paper is therefore fairly conservative—with a small "c". It would have been a good starting point for our inquiry, rather than coming at the end.

However, our visit to Stornoway and other evidence that we have taken has given us an insight. We now have material that we can explore with the minister in a creative way. His paper gives the facts of the matter, but we need to get a sense of the political position.

15:15

Irene McGugan: Has the minister seen a copy of our draft report?

The Convener: No—the minister would not see a copy of a confidential draft committee report.

Cathy Peattie: Ah—here comes Michael.

Michael Russell (South of Scotland) (SNP): Are we finished?

Cathy Peattie: Yes—it was a good meeting.

Irene McGugan: As Ian Jenkins has suggested, the minister is obviously unaware of the volume and depth of the information that the committee has collected. That information goes far beyond what is in the minister's paper.

The Convener: For your information, Michael, the minister will be coming to the committee on 18 September to answer questions on the issue of Gaelic broadcasting. Members have indicated that the minister's paper gives a good summary of the current situation but does not consider some the evidence that we have taken in the course of our inquiry.

Michael Russell: As I said to the convener when we met this morning, initial work has been done on drafting a first report. That work will not go any further until the minister has given evidence. I hope that the report will come to the committee on 25 September for consideration. The aim is still to release the report before, or immediately after, the October recess.

We need to attend to the question of translation into Gaelic. If the convener gives permission, I think that Alex O'Henley should be invited to attend the committee on both 18 September and 25 September so that he can start work on translating the draft report. He has indicated that—even though changes will be made to the draft report—getting a head start would be helpful.

The Convener: I do not think that members would have any problems with that.

Members indicated agreement.

Michael Russell: Although the minister's summary gives a positive description of what is taking place, the current edition of *Regional Film & Video*—the magazine on film and video for everywhere except London—carries a front-page story headed "Gaelic broadcasting crisis". The story is a report on a statement by Matthew MacIver, who is the retiring chairman of Comataidh Craolaidh Gàidhlig. He says that funding for Gaelic broadcasting in particular has reached a crucial position. The report is germane to what the minister is saying and I am happy to circulate it.

The Convener: That would be helpful. If there are no other points, I will close the meeting—

Mr Monteith: There are no other points on that item of business, but—

The Convener: No, Brian, there is nothing else on the agenda.

Meeting closed at 15:17.

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