



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Official Report

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

Thursday 8 November 2012

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

20th Meeting 2012, Session 4

CONVENER

*Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Marco Biagi (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)

Annabel Goldie (West Scotland) (Con)

*John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)

*Siobhan McMahon (Central Scotland) (Lab)

*Dennis Robertson (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)

*attended

THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:

Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con) (Committee Substitute)

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Douglas Thornton

LOCATION

Committee Room 4

Scottish Parliament

Equal Opportunities Committee

Thursday 8 November 2012

[The Convener *opened the meeting at 09:00*]

Decision on Taking Business in Private

The Convener (Mary Fee): Good morning and welcome to the Equal Opportunities Committee's 20th meeting of 2012. I remind everyone to either set their mobile phones to silent or switch them off completely.

Agenda item 1 is a decision on taking business in private. As item 4 will include discussion of potential witnesses, we have been asked to agree to hold that discussion in private at this meeting and at future meetings. Do we agree to do that?

Members *indicated agreement.*

Interests

09:00

The Convener: Agenda item 2 is a declaration of interests. In accordance with section 3 of the code of conduct, I invite John Mason to declare any interests that are relevant to the committee's remit. I welcome you to the Equal Opportunities Committee, John.

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP): Thank you, convener. I was trying to think what I could say in my declaration of interests. One relevant thing is that when I was at Westminster, I was a member of the public bill committee for the Equality Act 2010. I do not take responsibility for the whole act, but I think that most of it is very good.

As noted in my entry in the register of interests, I am a member of Easterhouse Baptist church, which is relevant for me. Because of that and because of my faith, I believe that every person is of equal value. Going on from that, I hope that I can make a contribution to the committee.

I am the deputy convener of the Finance Committee. From reading some reports in the papers, I can see that the Equal Opportunities Committee might take a slightly different line on things from that which is taken by the Finance Committee, but we will see how that goes.

The Convener: I also welcome Alex Johnstone, who is Annabel Goldie's substitute and will be with us for the foreseeable future while Annabel is on the Referendum (Scotland) Bill Committee. I invite him to declare any interests.

Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con): Thank you, convener. I have looked at my entry in the register of interests and I have no relevant interests to declare. However, having heard John Mason's list of interests, I will keep that under review and get back to you.

The Convener: Thank you.

Before we move on, I record my thanks and appreciation to Jean Urquhart, who was my deputy convener, for the work and commitment that she put in during the short time that she was on the committee.

Deputy Convener

09:02

The Convener: Agenda item 3 is a choice of deputy convener. On 1 June 2011, the Parliament agreed that only Scottish National Party members are eligible to be chosen as deputy convener of the Equal Opportunities Committee. I ask members for nominations for that position.

John Mason: I nominate Marco Biagi.

Dennis Robertson (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP): I second that nomination.

Marco Biagi was chosen as deputy convener.

The Convener: I welcome Marco Biagi as my deputy convener. Congratulations.

Marco Biagi (Edinburgh Central) (SNP): Thank you.

09:03

Meeting continued in private until 11:11.

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e-format first available
ISBN 978-1-4061-9915-4

Revised e-format available
ISBN 978-1-4061-9916-1

Printed in Scotland by APS Group Scotland
