**CSPL (21) 66**

**COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE**

**291st MEETING**

**HELD AT 10.00 ON THURSDAY 16 SEPTEMBER 2021**

**IN CHURCH HOUSE CONFERENCE CENTRE, LONDON**

**MINUTES**

Present: Lord Evans of Weardale KCB DL, Chair

Rt Hon Dame Margaret Beckett DBE MP

Ewen Fergusson

Professor Gillian Peele

Dr Jane Martin CBE (by video link)

Dame Shirley Pearce DBE

Rt Hon Lord Stunell OBE

Rt Hon Jeremy Wright QC MP

Maggie O’Boyle, Press Secretary

Lesley Bainsfair, Secretary

**1. APOLOGIES**

Professor Mark Philp, Chair, Research Advisory Board.

**2. INTRODUCTIONS**

As it was Ewen Fergusson and Gillian Peele’s first official meeting, members were invited to introduce themselves.

Following some adverse publicity about his appointment to the Committee, Ewen Fergusson wished to correct some of the facts: he had not been asked by anyone to apply for the role; and had last seen the Prime Minister at an external event in 2008.

**3. REGISTERS**

Members were asked to let the Secretariat know of any changes to their register of interests.

**4. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2021 were agreed.

**Chair’s update**

Members noted the following:

* **2 FOIs about the appointment process of new independent members.**
* **Publication of the Chair’s letter to the then Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster about diversity of membership, and the CDL’s response.** The CDL’s letter had said that he intended to review the remit and membership of the Committee. Members agreed to discuss the diversity of the Committee’s membership further at a future Committee meeting.
* **The Chair’s meeting with Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP, the Speaker of the House of Commons on 6 September.** The meeting was heldto discuss the government’s planned changes to the Speaker’s Committee**.**
* **The Chair’s appearance at PACAC on 7 September as part of their scrutiny of the Elections Bill.** The focus of the Chair’s evidence had been on the independence of the Electoral Commission from the perception of political interference.
* **Lord Blunkett’s debate on 9 September on standards in public life.**  Members noted the positive references to the Committee during the debate; many peers taking part had expressed support for the Committee’s work. The Minister had said he understood the points made about the need to maintain and develop ethical standards in central government and beyond, though it was noted that relatively few Conservative peers had spoken in the debate.

Members discussed in general the difficult challenge of framing the Committee’s recommendations to ensure they had the most impact.

* **New appointments:** Richard Lloyd had been confirmed as Chair of IPSA; William Shawcross CVO was the government’s preferred candidate for CPA; and the search for Ian Watmore’s replacement as First Civil Service Commissioner was underway - the advert for the post had recently closed.

**5. STANDARDS MATTER 2**

Members discussed key messages and draft recommendations for the Standards Matter 2 report to be published later this year.

Members also discussed a second change to the descriptor for the Leadership Principle. Members revisited earlier discussions and concluded that the proposed change fitted better with the general tone of what was needed; that the change reflected the need for a more active commitment to challenging poor behaviour. All members agreed to the change.

An extra Committee meeting would be held on 27 September to confirm the final draft report.

**6. REGULATING ELECTION FINANCE**

The Committee noted the paper reviewing the project.

It was noted that the government response, published on 15 September, whilst welcoming the report, did not commit to taking any of the recommendations forward without further consideration.

Members agreed to take all opportunities to highlight the report’s recommendations as the Elections Bill progressed through the Lords.

**7. STANDARDS CHECK**

The Committee noted the standards check for September 2021.

**8. FORWARD AGENDA**

The Committee noted the forward agenda.

**9. AOB**

**Communications Update**

The Committee noted the communications update for July and August 2021.

**Date of Next Meetings**

* Monday 27 September 2021 at 13.00 (extra meeting)
* Thursday 21 October 2021 at 10.00.

CSPL Secretariat

September 2021