**CSPL (20) 66**

**COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE**

**TWO HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-EIGHTH MEETING**

**HELD AT 10.00 ON THURSDAY 18 JUNE 2020**

**BY VIDEO CALL**

**MINUTES**

Present: Lord Evans KCB DL, Chair

Rt Hon Dame Margaret Beckett DBE MP

Dr Jane Martin CBE

Dame Shirley Pearce DBE

Jane Ramsey

Monisha Shah

Rt Hon Lord Stunell OBE

Rt Hon Jeremy Wright QC MP

Professor Mark Philp, Chair, Research Advisory Board

Lesley Bainsfair, Secretary

Amy Austin, Senior Policy Adviser

Lesley Glanz, Executive Assistant

 Nicola Richardson, Senior Policy Adviser

Aaron Simons, Senior Policy Adviser

Maggie O’Boyle, Press Officer

The meeting was held by conference call in view of the coronavirus and government advice to avoid unnecessary travel and to work remotely wherever possible.

**1. APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies.

**2. REGISTERS**

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

**3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2020 were agreed.

**4. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME**

 **Regulation of Election Finance Review**

The Committee noted the launch of the review on 8 June and that it had received good coverage in the media, including the Chair’s interview on Westminster Hour on 7 June. Stakeholder engagement was discussed, including the need to engage political parties.

**Second Review**

The scope of a possible second review was discussed. This would be discussed further at the July meeting.

**5. INTIMIDATION IN PUBLIC LIFE: FOLLOW UP**

 The Committee noted its close watching brief on this issue. The Committee was grateful to Dr Jane Martin for taking over the lead on this work from Jane Ramsey who was leading on the election review.

An outline plan was agreed to re-engage with political parties on the joint statement on conduct of political party members.

**6. BULLYING AND HARASSMENT IN PARLIAMENT**

 The Committee was grateful to Monisha Shah and Dame Shirley Pearce who had agreed to take over the lead on this work from Jane Ramsey, now working on the election review as noted above.

The Committee noted recent developments and discussed in particular the announcement by the Commons Commission to establish a new Independent Expert Panel to ensure that complaints relating to bullying and harassment were determined independently of MPs. This would need to be approved by the House of Commons. A motion would be put before the House of Commons on Tuesday 23 June.

 The Committee welcomed these advances but agreed it was important to continue its active watching brief in this area. In particular, the Committee expressed concern over recent media reports that the motion would include the proposal for serious sanctions of suspension or expulsion of MPs to be debated in the House of Commons. (This was against the background of the Lord Lester case where the details of the case were subject to full debate in the House of Lords. The House of Lords had since changed its procedure so that such cases were decided without debate.) The Committee would watch developments with close interest.

**7. COVID-19: WATCHING BRIEF**

The Committee was grateful to all those members that had drafted blogs for the series commenting on themes/areas of concern/challenges to the Principles during this crisis.

It was agreed to publicise the blogs and make as much use of them as possible to extend the reach of the Committee, and to continue with blogs on subjects as they arose. They were a useful body of evidence of the Committee’s thinking. It was noted the blogs were published as a collection on the Committee’s website.

**8. DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT**

Two comments were noted. The report was otherwise approved and would be published in July.

**9. STANDARDS CHECK**

The standards check for April/May was noted.

**10. FORWARD AGENDA AND FORWARD LOOK OF EVENTS**

The Committee noted the forward agenda and forward look of key events.

**11. AOB**

**Communications Update**

The Committee noted the communications update for May 2020.

**Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 16 July 2020 at 10.00 via video conference call.

CSPL Secretariat

June 2020