**CSPL (21) 81**

**COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE**

**294th MEETING**

**HELD AT 10.00 ON THURSDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2021**

**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

Rt Hon Lord Stunell OBE

Rt Hon Jeremy Wright MP

Professor Mark Philp, Chair, Research Advisory Board

Maggie O’Boyle, Press Secretary

Lesley Bainsfair, Secretary

Nicola Richardson, Senior Policy Adviser

Aaron Simons, Senior Policy Adviser

Lesley Glanz, Executive Assistant

The meeting was held online.

**1. APOLOGIES**

Dame Shirley Pearce DBE

**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 meetings held on 21 October 2021 were agreed.

**Chair’s update**

Members noted:

* **Recruitment for an independent member of CSPL.**  Members emphasised again the importance of seeking candidates from a wide variety of backgrounds - ethnicity, occupation and regional. There was also a case for considering increasing the numbers of members on the Committee. The Chair and Secretariat would follow this up.
* **Constitution Unit draft report on Parliament’s watchdogs:** Gillian Peele and Mark Philp reported that they had attended the Constitution Unit’s seminar looking at the first draft. A revised report was expected early in 2022.

**4. STANDARDS MATTER 2, UPHOLDING STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE**

The report had been successfully launched and very well received. The Chair noted special thanks to Dr Jane Martin, Dame Shirley Pearce, Aaron Simons and Maggie O’Boyle.

The timing of the launch had coincided with the standards crisis in the Commons which had amplified media coverage of the Chair's speech at the Institute for Government.[[1]](#footnote-0) The coverage had continued with the public debate about MPs’ second jobs, bringing to media and government attention the Committee’s 2018 report on MPs’ outside interests.

The Commons Committee on Standards was due to report before Christmas on revisions to the standards process in the Commons and on MPs’ second jobs.

Members agreed it was important for the Committee to contribute meaningfully to any consultation process. A number of work streams were identified for the Secretariat to take forward.

**5. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME**

Members agreed that the next review would be on best practice on embedding a strong ethical culture in the public sector. The Chair and Ewen Fergusson would jointly lead the review.

The Committee also prioritised a close watching brief on events in the House of Commons in relation to the standards investigation process and MPs’ second jobs.

It was also important to follow up *Upholding Standards in Public Life* where the focus was on standards in government .

**6. RISK REGISTER**

The Committee approved the amended risk register.

**7. STANDARDS CHECK**

The Committee noted the standards checks for November 2021 which had been circulated daily to members.

**8. FORWARD AGENDA**

The Committee noted the forward agenda.

**9. AOB**

**Forward work programme**

The forward work programme was noted

**Communications Update**

The Committee noted the communications update for October 2021.

**Local Government**

Members noted that, despite regular reminders, the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities had not agreed to a meeting to discuss the lack of a government response to *Ethical Standards in Local Government*, published in 2019.

It was agreed that the Chair should write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

**Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 16 December 2021 at 10.00.

CSPL Secretariat

November 2021

1. Government’s decision on 3 November 2021 to halt consideration of the Standards Committee report on Owen Paterson, by reviewing the standards process. The government subsequently reversed this decision. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)