**CSPL (23) 25**

**COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE**

**311th MEETING HELD**

**AT 10.00 ON THURSDAY 20 APRIL 2023**

**MINUTES**

Present: Lord Evans of Weardale KCB DL, Chair

Lady Mary Arden DBE (joined the meeting remotely)

Ewen Fergusson

Professor Gillian Peele

Rt Hon Dame Margaret Beckett DBE MP

Baroness Finn

Lesley Bainsfair, Secretary

Nicola Richardson, Senior Policy Adviser

Elliot Ammar, Senior Policy Adviser

Amy Austin, Policy Adviser

Maggie O’Boyle, Press Officer[[1]](#footnote-0)

*Daniel Greenberg CB, Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, joined the meeting ahead of the start of formal business.*

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair welcomed Daniel Greenberg CB, Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards.

The Commissioner explained his overarching approach to the role: he thought it was important that his office enabled all MPs to feel supported by and to be served by the Commissioner. He wanted his office to be an advocate for MPs and to demonstrate what good parliamentary behaviour looks like. To this end, the Commissioner’s office planned to do more outreach and engagement. The Commissioner had instigated the issuing of advice notes on the website, in order to help support good behaviour. The Commissioner’s office was planning to run seminars for Members’ staff on what the application of the Principles of Public Life looks like in practice. It was also intended to publish MPs’ case studies of enacting the Principles in daily life on the Commission’s website in due course so as to provide a space for members to articulate what good practice looks like.

In terms of investigating possible breaches of standards, the Commissioner would of course undertake rigorous, impartial and objective investigations.

In discussion, Daniel confirmed the investigation process: he, the Commissioner, investigated independently and came to conclusions for the Committee on Standards to consider as the decision-maker on individual cases; the Independent Expert Panel was the appeal body.

Committee members welcomed the encouraging, positive approach that the Commissioner was adopting. The Chair thanked Daniel in particular for the invitation for a representative of the CSPL to observe one of the future planned seminars, and more generally for a very helpful and thoughtful conversation.

*(Daniel Greenberg left the meeting.)*

**1. APOLOGIES**

No apologies were received from Committee members.

Professor Mark Philp (Chair, Research Advisory Board) sent apologies.

**2. REGISTERS**

Members were asked to let the Secretariat know of any changes to their register of interests which had been circulated.

**3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2023 were agreed.

**Chair’s update**

The Committee noted:

**Ethical regulation in government**

 Members noted that the Chair and Professor Gillian Peele had attended an academic seminar to discuss ethical regulation in government, considering largely the recommendations of recent reports including CSPL’s Upholding Standards in Public Life, published November 2021. The seminar was organised by Professor Robert Hazell (Constitution Unit, King's College London) and Sir Peter Riddell.

**Meeting with Chairs of Independent Offices**

 The Chair hosted a meeting of the Chairs of Independent Offices which took place on 28 March. This was one of the regular, informal catch ups with stakeholders in the standards world.

Those attending were Lord Bew, House of Lords Appointment Commission; Sir Laurie Magnus, Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests; Richard Lloyd, Chair Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority; and Sir Robert Chote, UK Statistics Authority.

**Leading in Practice**

The Chair reported that invitations were still being received to speak on *Leading in Practice,* report published January 2023.

**4. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee discussed options for its future work programme.

**5. REGULATING ELECTION FINANCE: STOCKTAKE OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee noted the state of play on our recommendations in Regulating Election Finance. The Chair would write to the Secretary of State for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, requesting an update on our report.

**6. ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23**

The Committee commented on the first draft of the 2022/23 Annual Report. A second draft would be considered at the May Committee meeting.

**7. STANDARDS CHECK**

The Committee noted the media coverage of standards issues which are circulated daily to members.

Members were invited to let the Secretariat know if there were any issues they particularly wanted to discuss.

**8. FORWARD AGENDA**

The Committee noted the forward agenda.

**9. AOB**

 **Communications Update**

The Committee noted the Press Officer’s comms brief and the communications updates for March 2023.

**Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 18 May 2023 at 10.00.

CSPL Secretariat

April 2023

1. Maggie O’Boyle provides part-time press support to the Civil Service Commission, the House of Lords Appointments Commission, the Office for the Commissioner for Public Appointments and the Committee on Standards in Public Life. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)