

Backbench Business Committee

Representations: Backbench Debates

Tuesday 17 March 2026

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Watch the meeting

Members present: Bob Blackman (Chair); Jonathan Davies; Mary Glendon; Will Stone; Martin Vickers.

Questions 1-11

Representations made

[I](#): Susan Murray

[II](#): Melanie Onn

[III](#): Baggy Shanker

Susan Murray *made representations.*

- Q1 **Chair:** Welcome to this meeting of the Backbench Business Committee which. Unusually for us, it is taking place in Committee Room 5 rather than Committee Room 16, so well done to all our applicants and to members of the Committee for finding where we are.

We will be considering applications for debates in Westminster Hall and the main Chamber. The first application is from Susan Murray on the House's commitment to the Nolan principles. This is a request for a three-hour debate in the Chamber. Susan, please present your case.

Susan Murray: Thank you to the Committee for the opportunity to present this application for a debate. We have recently marked 30 years since the Nolan principles were laid out. They were established following a number of scandals in the early 90s and were designed to set high ethical standards to ensure integrity, accountability and objectivity in public life.

It was intended that the seven principles would apply to everyone who served in public life, not just politicians. Throughout public institutions, from the police to Parliament, we have seen that these principles are too often being forgotten. That is important, because each time the public see somebody they are told they should be able to trust violate that trust, it reflects not just on the wrongdoer but on the institution, and erodes the general sense of trust required to hold society together.

It is therefore important for the public to see that we are taking action to create a culture of accountability within politics and public bodies, and to remind ourselves and our colleagues of the principles we are expected to uphold. That is why I am requesting the debate.

Chair: Thank you very much.

- Q2 **Mary Glendon:** Hi, Susan. There has already been a debate on the Nolan principles in this Session of Parliament. To have another debate on the same topic, you would need to provide a substantive motion. Are you happy to do that?

Susan Murray: Yes, I think so. Now?

Mary Glendon: No.

- Q3 **Chair:** No. If we agree to add this to our list, you would need to come forward with a motion that we would have to agree before it goes on the Order Paper.

Susan Murray: Yes, I am very comfortable with that.

- Q4 **Mary Glendon:** Thank you. On your application, you have only four Government Bank Benchers, and we need seven for a debate in the Chamber. Do you think you would be able to get the additional three names?

Susan Murray: I believe I can. I apologise for that mistake. I will go and make sure I get those names.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

- Q5 **Chair:** Any other questions? No? The application is on our list, but if you can provide the extra names and the motion, that will make it live, effectively. The Clerks will be in touch with you in due course. Thank you, Susan.

Melanie Onn *made representations.*

- Q6 **Chair:** Next up is Melanie Onn. This is an application for a debate on a subject very dear to my heart: fly-tipping in residential areas and its associated impacts. This is a request for a 90-minute Westminster Hall debate on a Tuesday or a Thursday.

Melanie Onn: Thank you very much, Mr Blackman. It is a pleasure to be here. Fly-tipping is undoubtedly a scourge on every town, village and city up and down the country. The issues are very relevant, given that we are expecting the Government to give us more information about action they are preparing to take. This would therefore be a good opportunity for Members across the House to interrogate some of those proposals and establish whether they are likely to be successful. I think a debate will draw significant attention from within the house, but also from the general public, who are fed up of seeing this kind of activity in their backyards. Hopefully, the Committee will see fit to agree.

- Q7 **Martin Vickers:** Fly-tipping is normally a DEFRA responsibility, although I understand why you might have chosen MHCLG to respond. Which would you prefer?

Melanie Onn: I would like MHCLG partly because so many duties within local government could apply to this issue. DEFRA will have some responsibilities, but at a local and practical level, local government is the frontline in dealing with it. I am sure DEFRA colleagues will be happy to provide bullets to our MHCLG colleagues.

- Q8 **Chair:** You mentioned that the Government are coming forward with proposals. Do you have any idea of the timing of that?

Melanie Onn: I don't. All I have seen, through Government communication channels, is that one of the Ministers has been talking about bringing forward new proposals around, for example, penalty points on driving licences, but I do not have any indication beyond, "This is what we intend to do." Maybe this will be an opportunity to try to pin down a bit of a timetable beyond summer and autumn.

- Q9 **Chair:** Obviously, we have a queue of debates, and it would be helpful to know if there is any time sensitivity on this subject.

Melanie Onn: I don't know at the moment. I can try to find out.

Chair: Any other questions? No? The Clerks will be in touch with you in due course. Thank you.

Baggy Shanker *made representations.*

- Q10 **Chair:** The next application is from Baggy Shanker. This is for a debate on "protecting consumers and promoting cask ale"—which is a subject very



HOUSE OF COMMONS

dear to my heart—"by recognising its production" and the fact that it is "serving as Intangible Cultural Heritage". Wow! This is a request for a debate on a Tuesday morning in Westminster Hall. Over to you, Baggy.

Baggy Shanker: Thank you, Chair. Cask ale, as you probably know, is a unique part of the beer culture and heritage that brings our communities together and boosts local economies. It was in a pub—the Brunswick Inn in Derby—where the idea for this debate first came about. There is a risk of losing that heritage and tradition because of the brewery-led idea of connecting the hand pull to keg beer to give the perception it is cask ale, when it is not. That is worrying lots of landlords and CAMRA members in Derby and across the country.

I looked into this a little more, and I thought it would be a great idea to try to preserve cask beer heritage and discuss the benefits of traditional cask ales—the history, the heritage and the linked tourism that they bring. We would debate the need to protect and promote cask ale and its production in the UK. More widely, we want to promote pubs, social clubs and taphouses, which are an integral part of local communities in Derby and across the UK. That is where the idea has come from. I have spoken to a number of Members who back this idea up, and I think this will be a well-attended and important debate.

Chair: I declare an interest: I have been a member of CAMRA for the last 50 years, and I am also a member of the all-party parliamentary beer group.

Q11 **Jonathan Davies:** I declare my interest as someone who likes beer. I have signed this application, and I am also the chair of the all-party parliamentary group on UNESCO world heritage sites. I think that this has real legs, and that cask ale can get on to the new inventory that DCMS is aspiring to create. We noted that you requested a Westminster Hall debate on a Tuesday. Which would be the responsible answering Department for the debate? To my mind, it would be DCMS. Is that what you think?

Baggy Shanker: Yes, I think it would be DCMS because of the work around cultural heritage, unless you guys advise otherwise.

Jonathan Davies: It is certainly DCMS that would answer this. Unfortunately, the Minister for this specific issue is in the Lords, so you would probably get one of the other ones, but it is a great opportunity to talk about this all the same.

Mary Glendon: I declare an interest: I am a member of the all-party parliamentary beer group.

Chair: It is one of the best subscribed all-party parliamentary groups.

Martin Vickers: I might be a member, but I can't remember. I have certainly been to some of their events.

Chair: Thank you very much, Baggy. The Clerks will be in touch with you in due course. Of course, you can help to promote cask ale by encouraging



HOUSE OF COMMONS

everyone participating in the debate to have a pint with you afterwards.

The sponsor for the final application is not with us, so I declare the public business over.