

PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 22 March 2022 at midday

Present:

Lord Ashton of Hyde	Lord McFall of Alcluith
Lord Bew	Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall
Lord Gardiner of Kimble (Chair)	Lord Mancroft
Baroness Evans of Bowes Park	Lord Newby
Lord Faulkner of Worcester	Baroness Quin
Baroness Humphreys	Baroness Sanderson of Welton
Lord Judge	Baroness Smith of Basildon
Lord Kennedy of Southwark	Lord Stoneham of Droxford

with the Clerk Assistant.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Lord Eames, Baroness Harris of Richmond, Lord Sherbourne of Didsbury and the Clerk of the Parliaments.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were *agreed*.

3. Companion to the Standing Orders

The Chair introduced the papers (PC/21-22/25 and PC/21-22/26).

The Committee *considered* proposed changes to Chapters 7-12 (and appendices) of the Companion. In addition to the proposed changes the Committee agreed the following:

- Chapter 7 – Divisions, para 7.09: replace the reference to “young children” with “children under school age”.
- Chapter 8 – Public Bills, para 8.198: delete the words “or Whip”.
- Chapter 11 – Select Committees, para 11.90: to amend the text to clarify that following discussion by the usual channels the membership of international delegations is announced by way of a written ministerial statement.
- Appendix K: to consult the Church of England about how it defines junior and senior bishops and add a footnote to the appendix accordingly.

Subject to the above, the Committee *agreed* to the proposed changes to Chapters 7-12 of the Companion. The Committee *noted* the letter from the Leader of the House on environmental law statements (PPC/21-22/28), and also *agreed* to recommend removing the

requirement in paragraph 8.28 of the *Companion* that the Minister who makes the human rights statement on a bill should also move the second reading.

The Committee *noted* that the changes to chapters 1-6 of the *Companion* agreed at the last meeting had been implemented. These chapters had been recirculated including some minor amendments suggested by the Government Chief Whip to better reflect current practice, and one amendment on the approach to the Lord Speaker's leave of absence.

The Committee *discussed* the proposed change to the Lord's Speaker's leave of absence and noted it was intended to reflect recent practice and introduce a limited degree of flexibility. Some members suggested that it might be more appropriate for the Lord Speaker to "notify" the House of any necessary absences. The Clerk was instructed to produce a form of words for the Committee's approval.

A report would be prepared to draw attention to the new edition of the *Companion*, and to seek the House's endorsement of the substantive changes.

4. Sitting times of the House

The Chair introduced the paper (PC/21-22/27).

The Committee *agreed* that a consultation document should be prepared setting out arguments both for and against a change in sitting times. This would provide the background to the Committee's initial proposal of a 1pm start on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, beginning with oral questions, and with an earlier target rising time. The document would also explain why an earlier 11am start time was not considered to be practical.

The Committee *agreed* that, following consultation with the usual channels, the consultation document should be agreed by correspondence. Once agreed it would be published for the House's information and socialised with party groups. If the consultation found that there was support for a change of sitting times, a report would be produced, with a firm recommendation on which the House would then decide.

5. Any Other Business

The Clerk informed the Committee that a test of the pass-reader system, with the usual channels and officials, would take place on 28 March, followed by a full rehearsal for members on 26 April. Separate briefings on the new arrangements would be arranged for the Deputy Speakers and whips. The usual channels would also be provided with an updated list of members who had not yet registered on the pass-reader system.

The Committee was scheduled to meet again on Thursday 5 May, but this may need to be rearranged depending on the timing of prorogation.

Christopher Johnson
Clerk of the Journals