



## SERVICES COMMITTEE

### Minutes

Thursday 29 October at 1pm on Microsoft Teams

#### Present:

Lord Laming (Chair)  
Lord Ashton of Hyde  
Lord Borwick  
Lord Campbell-Savours  
Lord Judge  
Baroness Morris of Bolton  
Lord Touhig

Together with the Clerk of the Parliaments.

Fehintola Akinlose (Director of Finance and Procurement) and Carl Woodall (Director of Facilities) were also in attendance. Anne Mossop (Head of Parliamentary Health and Wellbeing Service) attended for item 4; and Chris Johnson (SRO, Cast Iron Roofs Programme), Carolina Filippini (Assistant Director, In House Services and Strategic Estates) and David Johnstone (Senior Facilities Manager) attended for item 6.

#### 1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Lord Clement-Jones, Lord Stoneham of Droxford and Baroness Wheeler.

#### 2. Minutes of the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting, and matters arising

The Committee agreed the minutes of the previous meeting.

#### 3. COVID-19: Operational Information and Member-facing Services (S/19-21/42) [RESTRICTED]

The Committee was provided with an update on two confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the House of Lords.

[INFORMATION REDACTED]

Since the Committee had last met the Commission had strongly encouraged the use of face coverings when moving between areas of the Estate. The House of Commons Commission had taken the same decision.

Communications to staff were clear and continued to state that anyone with symptoms should not attend the Estate, House staff continued to be paid as normal and had not been furloughed.

A member questioned whether the Administration had explored the possibility of increased testing in Parliament including the use of the '12 minute test'. The Administration continued to follow the guidance of Public Health England, as endorsed by the Commission; social distancing measures and handwashing remained the best way to prevent the spread of the virus.

The Committee noted the update and agreed to receive further updates at future meetings.

**4. Parliamentary Health and Wellbeing Service: 2020 Review (S/19-21/43) [RESTRICTED]**

The paper provided the Committee with an update on the work of the Parliamentary Health and Wellbeing Service (PHWS) since April 2019. The PHWS had continued to provide services throughout the pandemic, the team was largely working remotely with the exception of the on-site Nurse. The flu vaccine had been made available to members and staff of both Houses through a series of flu clinics, five further clinics would be taking place in November. It was suggested it would be helpful for the jabs to be publicised more widely and offered earlier in the flu season next year.

A trial was taking place in the Commons providing an on-site GP service to MPs, their staff and staff of the House of Commons and the Parliamentary Digital Service. Peers continued to be able to access GP services through the Victoria Medical Centre on referral from the on-site Nurse. Take up of the on-site service had been lower than expected as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It was suggested that the Parliamentary Health and Wellbeing Service could be better signposted on the Parliamentary intranet. The Head of the Service agreed to take this away and consider possible improvements.

**5. Mindfulness Service for Members (S/19-21/44) [RESTRICTED]**

The Chair introduced the paper, which set out a request from a member of the House for the Committee to consider whether the Administration should provide a mindfulness service to members of the House.

The House of Commons was currently undertaking a procurement exercise to formally engage a provider to deliver mindfulness classes for MPs and staff in the House of Commons.

Members of the Committee expressed reservations about the appropriateness of this service being provided to members free of charge, particularly given the current economic uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Committee agreed that members who wished to access mindfulness services should do so at their own expense in line with other similar services on the Estate such as the gym. The Committee would review the decision in due course.

**6. COVID-19: Impact on the Cast Iron Roofs Programme and removal of scaffolding (S/10-21/45) [HIGHLY RESTRICTED]**

An update was provided on the impact of COVID-19 on the Cast Iron Roofs Programme, including the impact on the schedule for the removal of the scaffolding currently in place along the West Front. The Committee took note of the update.

**7. Fire Safety Improvement Works: Intrusive Testing Period (S/19-21/46) [RESTRICTED]**

The Committee endorsed the intrusive testing period taking place in 2021.

**8. AOB**

Further information on the Catering Accounts Scheme was provided for the Committee's information.

The next meeting will be on 26 November at 1pm. The need for a December meeting would be kept under review.

*Small sections of these minutes have been redacted, usually for reasons such as commercial confidentiality and sensitive management information.*

Gabby Longdin  
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