



HOUSE OF LORDS COMMISSION

Minutes

Monday 2 November 2020

Attendance

- Lord Speaker (Chairman)
- Lord McFall of Alcluith (Deputy Chairman)
- Baroness Doocey
- Mathew Duncan (external member)
- Baroness Evans of Bowes Park
- Liz Hewitt (external member)
- Lord Judge
- Lord Laming
- Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall
- Lord Newby
- Baroness Smith of Basildon
- Lord Wakeham

Ed Ollard, Clerk of the Parliaments, was in attendance. The meeting was held via Microsoft Teams.

I. **New COVID-19 Restrictions: Operation of the House**

Ed Ollard, Clerk of the Parliaments
C/19-21/68 HIGHLY RESTRICTED

The Clerk of the Parliaments introduced his paper and explained that the House of Commons Commission had met earlier in the day to discuss their response to the new COVID-19 measures for England which would come into force on Thursday 5 November, subject to Parliamentary approval.

After discussion the Commission **agreed** the following:

- **Members' staff:** Members' staff should work from home and should not come on to the Parliamentary estate from Thursday 5 November until further notice, but that this would not apply to those supporting members carrying out front bench duties and that there would be a small number of exemptions, for example if an individual needed to support members with disabilities on the estate.
- **Face coverings:** Clear messaging should be issued explaining that everyone should wear face coverings when moving around the estate and when spending time in communal areas and it is expected that, where possible, they do so. This includes wearing a face covering when entering, leaving or moving around the Chamber and Grand Committee Room. The messaging should acknowledge that some people are exempt from wearing face coverings for health or other reasons.

- Alcohol: The sale or service of alcohol in House of Lords outlets would cease on Thursday 5 November until further notice.

The Commission **noted** that:

- most procedural services were being provided remotely and this would continue;
- construction projects would continue; the chapel of St Mary Undercroft would be open for private prayer but no services would take place;
- the House of Lords shop would close; and
- save for the service of alcohol, no changes to the operation of workplace catering outlets were proposed.

The Lord Speaker suggested that a pass reader should be installed at Peers' Entrance. He also suggested that the installation should be expedited, and that clear signage be displayed to explain the benefits it could deliver. After discussion, Lord McFall of Alcluith said that he would explore the options and return to the Commission with proposals at the next meeting.

Baroness Smith of Basildon asked for an update on the testing provision in Parliament. *[Restricted Access – More Information]*.

On the operating model for the House, the Lord Speaker suggested that the Commission should keep the hybrid model, with members able to take part remotely in the business of the Chamber and Grand Committee and Committees, including remote voting, under review.

2. Next meeting

The Lord Speaker informed Commission members that the next meeting would take place via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday 10 November at 4pm.

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