



Procedure, Petitions and Backbench Business Committees

House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

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Rt Hon. Jacob Rees-Mogg MP
Leader of the House of Commons

11 February 2021

Dear Jacob

Further to your comments at Business questions today, we write as the Chairs of three committees with an interest in the resumption of sittings in Westminster Hall. We are of a common view that Westminster Hall should resume at the earliest opportunity, subject to arrangements being COVID-secure and open to hybrid participation without qualifying criteria on Members for participation.

It is our understanding that work has been conducted to scope the potential for hybrid sittings of Westminster Hall to take place in another room on the parliamentary estate. Such hybrid sittings would lead to only a marginal increase in number of people required on the estate and come without the cost of fitting additional broadcast hardware in the Grand Committee Room.

The House Authorities should be afforded sufficient time to make and test the necessary arrangements for hybrid sittings and allow hon. and Rt hon. Members to apply for debates. In the interests of practicality and courtesy to all Members, we hope that you will give advance notice of your intention to table a motion once confirmation that the arrangements are ready has been given and that you protect a short amount of time for debate and decision.

Given your stated reluctance to bring forward the motion suspending Westminster Hall, we hope that you will now seek to bring it back in accordance with your commitment at the conclusion of the debate to do so “as soon as is possible and practical in view of the circumstances” (HC Deb 13 January 2021 col 440). Your conditions, as ours, are now satisfied.

Yours sincerely

Ian Mearns MP
Backbench Business Committee

Catherine McKinnell MP
Petitions Committee

Rt Hon. Karen Bradley MP
Procedure Committee

cc. Rt Hon Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP
Rt Hon Dame Eleanor Laing MP
Dr John Benger