



## HOUSE OF LORDS COMMISSION

### Minutes

Monday 12 July 2021

#### Attendance

- Lord Speaker (Chairman)
- Lord Gardiner of Kimble (Deputy Chairman)
- Mathew Duncan (external member)
- Baroness Evans of Bowes Park
- Lord German
- Lord Hill of Oareford
- Lord Judge
- Lord Newby
- Nora Senior (external member)
- Baroness Smith of Basildon
- Lord Touhig
- Lord Vaux of Harrowden

Simon Burton, Clerk of the Parliaments, was in attendance. The meeting was held via Microsoft Teams.

Since the previous meeting, the minutes of the meetings of 15 June and 25 June 2021 had been approved by correspondence, and two papers had been circulated for consideration by correspondence:

#### **Ongoing Remote Participation by Members Who Cannot Attend the House on Grounds of Disability**

The Lord Speaker

C/21-22/21 with Annex; HIGHLY RESTRICTED

This paper had been agreed by correspondence with alterations to the Terms of Reference of the Additional Support Group which were reflected in the paper **Confirmation of Additional Support Group Terms of Reference (C/21-22/24** with Annex; Susannah Street, Commission Secretary; RESTRICTED).

The Commission **agreed** that the Group currently named the Additional Financial Support Group should take on the role of deciding who should be eligible for ongoing remote participation, by determining individual requests case-by-case, on the basis of assessments by the Parliamentary Health and Wellbeing Service where necessary; **agreed** to update the Group's name and terms of reference, so that it could take decisions over the eligibility of members unable physically to attend the House on grounds of long-term disability for ongoing remote participation; and **invited** the Group to report back before the end of 2021 on the operation of the eligibility scheme, and its own membership.

## Allowance Scheme

Simon Burton, Clerk of the Parliaments  
C/21-22/22; HIGHLY RESTRICTED

This paper had been agreed by correspondence. The Commission **agreed** principles relating to the allowance scheme, effective from 6 September 2021, which were embodied in the motion on allowances to be moved in the House by the Lord Privy Seal on 13 July 2021: that virtual attendance at formal committee meetings would remain eligible for the full allowance; that in the instances where the Commission agreed that virtual participation in the Chamber or Grand Committee was permissible, in the case of members with a disability, then that participation would be eligible for the full allowance; that voting would be eligible for the full allowance; and that the supplementary daily allowance introduced for certain members from 1 September 2020 would cease.

### I. Further aspects of the House's return from hybrid operations

Simon Burton, Clerk of the Parliaments  
C/21-22/23 with Annex; HIGHLY RESTRICTED

The Lord Speaker welcomed Dr Mark Salter, Consultant in Global Health and Senior Medical Advisor at Public Health England, who updated the Commission on national rates of cases and hospitalisations.

Members of the Commission discussed their views regarding the approach that should be adopted regarding social distancing in the Chamber from 19 July, and other matters about the operation of the Estate, and asked questions of Dr Salter, to which he responded. The Lord Speaker updated the Commission on the decisions made by the House of Commons Commission.

A division was called on the question that social distancing for members should be removed in the Chamber from 19 July. The Commission divided:

- Baroness Evans of Bowes Park: Content
- Lord Gardiner of Kimble (Deputy Chairman): Content
- Lord German: Not Content
- Lord Hill of Oareford: Content
- Lord Judge: Content
- Lord McFall of Alcluith (Chairman): Content
- Lord Newby: Not Content
- Baroness Smith of Basildon: Not Content
- Lord Touhig: Not Content
- Lord Vaux of Harrowden: Content

Six members of the Commission voted Content and four voted Not Content, so the Commission **agreed** that social distancing for members should be removed in the Chamber from 19 July. Members were not, however, being encouraged to return to the House at that time. The Commission **agreed** that members were still expected to wear face coverings in the Chamber, in indoor crowded spaces and when moving around the Estate.

A division was called on the question that the rule of 6 should be removed in Lords catering venues from 19 July. The Commission divided:

- Baroness Evans of Bowes Park: Content
- Lord Gardiner of Kimble (Deputy Chairman): Not Content
- Lord German: Not Content
- Lord Hill of Oareford: Content
- Lord Judge: Not Content
- Lord McFall of Alcluith (Chairman): Not Content
- Lord Newby: Not Content
- Baroness Smith of Basildon: Not Content
- Lord Touhig: Content
- Lord Vaux of Harrowden: Not Content

Three members of the Commission voted Content and seven Not Content, so the Commission **agreed** that the rule of 6 should not be removed in Lords catering venues from 19 July. It **noted** that the Clerk of the Parliaments would oversee the detailed arrangements for the gradual removal of social distancing measures across the House.

The Commission **agreed** that members' attendance would no longer be recorded in the Prince's Chamber or Peers' Lobby from 6 September, when the House returned to physical proceedings.

The Commission **agreed**, subject to the House of Commons agreeing a similar position, that from September onwards support for Parliamentary travel to amber list countries would resume, where it was considered safe for the trip to occur. Finally, it **agreed** that Ministers who returned from travel to countries on the red list, and who had received an official exemption from quarantine, should be allowed onto the Parliamentary Estate, but were asked to take the precautions set out in the paper: this provision was limited to Ministers, and others returning from red list countries were not allowed onto the Estate during the usual quarantine period.

The next meeting was scheduled for 19 July.

**Susannah Street**  
Secretary to the Commission