

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY
BUSINESS COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 20 APRIL 2021
SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

MINUTES

The meeting began at 1.08pm.

Present:

The Speaker (Chairperson)
Ms K Armstrong
Ms C Bailey
Mr K Buchanan
Mr R Butler
Ms S Ennis
Ms D Kelly
Mr A Muir
Mr J O'Dowd

In attendance:

Dr A McGarel	Clerk of Business
Mr P Gill	Clerk Assistant
Ms L Hogg	Clerk/Chief Executive
Dr G McGrath	Director of Parliamentary Services
Mr S Kelly	Legal Advisor
Mr R Ramsey	Adviser to the Speaker
Ms F Leneghan	PS to the Speaker
Ms P Devlin	Assistant Assembly Clerk
Mr M O'Hare	Clerical Supervisor

Observers: **Mr D McCreedy** **The Executive Office**

1 Apologies

1.1 Apologies were received from junior Ministers Lyons and Kearney, Colin McGrath, John Stewart and Gary Middleton.

2 Minutes of previous meeting

2.1 The minutes of the meeting on 13 April were **agreed**.

3 **Matters Arising**

3.1 There were no matters arising.

4 **Correspondence**

4.1 Members **noted** that at a previous meeting they had agreed to write to the Committee on Procedures to ask that it would consider giving priority to a review of Public Petitions.

4.2 Members **noted** receipt of a response from the Committee advising that it would be considering a paper outlining options for petitions and e-petitions at a future meeting and would keep the Business Committee informed of its decisions.

4.3 The Speaker advised that he would be meeting with the Chair of the Procedures Committee later in the week to discuss a range of issues, and would raise this matter during those discussions.

5 **Finalisation of the Order Papers for the Plenary Meetings in Week Commencing 26 April 2021**

Monday 26 April

Public Petition

5.1 Members **noted** that Daniel McCrossan was seeking to present a Public Petition to the Speaker entitled 'Additional Parking and Traffic Calming around St. Conor's Primary School, Omagh' and that in accordance with Standing Order 22 this item would last no more than three minutes.

5.2 Members **agreed** to schedule the petition for Mr McCrossan.

Executive Committee Business

5.3 Members **noted** that the Executive had requested second stage of the Horse Racing (Amendment) Bill for the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.

5.4 Members **agreed** to schedule an untimed debate for second stage of the Bill.

Private Members' Business

5.5 Members **noted** that sufficient time was available to schedule Private Members' business.

- 5.6 Members **agreed** to schedule the following Private Members' motion with the usual timings:
- Academic Selection and the Transfer Test (Sinn Féin)
- 5.7 The TEO official indicated that the Minister was currently available.
- 5.8 Members **agreed** the Order Paper for Monday 26 April.

Tuesday 27 April

Executive Committee Business

- 5.9 Members **noted** that no Executive business had been scheduled.
- 5.10 A Member expressed disappointment at the lack of Executive Business and the absence of a legislative timetable despite the Executive having brought legislation to the Assembly, and noted that the junior Ministers had not attended Business Committee in a number of weeks.
- 5.11 The Speaker **agreed** to raise the matter again with the Executive.

Private Members' Business

- 5.12 Members **noted** that sufficient time was available to schedule Private Members' business.
- 5.13 Members **agreed** to schedule the following Private Members' motions with the usual timings:
- The Inclusion of End of Life Outcomes in the Programme for Government (All-party)
 - International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's Working Definition of Antisemitism (DUP)
- 5.14 Members **agreed** to schedule the following adjournment debate:
- Resumption, Retention and Development of Health Services at the Downe Hospital, Downpatrick (SDLP)
- 5.15 The TEO official indicated that all Ministers were currently available.
- 5.16 Members **agreed** the Order Paper for Tuesday 27 April.

6 **Provisional Arrangements for the Plenary Meetings in Week Commencing 3 May 2021**

Monday 3 May

- 6.1 Members **noted** that there would be no sitting on Monday 3 May due to the public holiday.

Tuesday 4 May

Executive Committee Business

- 6.2 Members **noted** that Question Time was scheduled for the Executive Office and Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.
- 6.3 Members **noted** that the Executive business had scheduled Consideration Stage of the Pension Schemes Bill for the Minister for Communities.
- 6.4 Members **agreed** to schedule an untimed debate for Consideration Stage of the Bill.

Committee Business

- 6.5 Members **noted** that there were no requests for Committee Business to date.

Private Members' Business

- 6.6 Members **agreed** to schedule Second Stage of the Climate Change Bill for Ms Bailey, subject to additional Executive Business being requested next week.
- 6.7 Members **agreed** to defer consideration of an adjournment debate until the next meeting.
- 6.8 Members **agreed** the Provisional Order Paper for Tuesday 4 May.

7 **Duration and Timings for Debates on Primary Legislation**

- 7.1 Members **noted** the Speaker's suggestion that parties respond to the paper in writing rather than continue to revisit the issue each week.
- 7.2 Members **agreed** to the Speaker's approach, and to respond to him in writing by Friday 30 April.

- 7.3 The representative for the smaller parties and independents sought guidance on whether she should collate the views of those whom she represents, or to ask them to respond directly and was advised that either approach would be acceptable.
- 7.4 Members **noted** that the paper would be circulated to them via email following the meeting.

8 **Any Other Business**

- 8.1 There was no other business.

9 **Date and time of next meeting**

- 9.1 Members **agreed** that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday 27 April the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The Speaker brought the meeting to a close at 1.17pm

**The Speaker
Chairperson**