



# Northern Ireland Assembly

## COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNITIES

### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**Thursday 29 September 2016  
Room 29, Parliament Buildings**

Present: Colum Eastwood MLA (Chairperson)  
Michelle Gildernew MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Steven Agnew MLA  
Andy Allen MLA  
Jonathan Bell MLA  
Naomi Long MLA  
Nichola Mallon MLA  
Fra McCann MLA  
Carál Ní Chuilín MLA  
Christopher Stalford MLA

In Attendance: Kevin Pelan (Assembly Clerk)  
Ashleigh Mitford (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Stewart Kennedy (Clerical Supervisor)  
Ciarán Brannigan (Clerical Officer)  
  
Eleanor Murphy (Assembly Researcher)

Apologies: Adrian McQuillan MLA

*The meeting commenced in open session at 10:15 am*

*The Chairperson declared an interest the agenda item: the Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill. The Chairperson has family interests in licensed premises.*

## **1. Apologies**

Apologies are recorded above

## **2. Draft Minutes**

*Agreed:* The draft minutes of the meeting of 22 September 2016 were agreed.

## **3. Chairperson's Business**

The Chairperson advised members that he is meeting with a representative of Comhaltas after the Committee meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> October and will report back to the Committee on the matters discussed. This was a commitment made over the Summer period before the Committee had begun to discuss strategic priorities. The Deputy Chairperson indicated that she would join the Chairperson at the meeting.

*Christopher Stalford joined the meeting at 10:16 am*

The Chairperson informed members that he has been invited by Building Change Trust to the *Launch of Research into the independence of the Northern Ireland Third Sector* on 28 November in Parliament Buildings.

## **4. Matters Arising**

The Chairperson reminded members that at its first meeting on 9 June 2016, the Committee agreed that training on the process that underpins the Committee's statutory role in scrutinising secondary legislation should be delivered by Committee staff. Members were reminded that this session would be delivered informally after the conclusion of Committee Business.

—

The Chairperson advised members that The Examiner of Statutory Rules has not identified any issues with SRs under the remit of the Department for Communities in her report which was published on Friday 23 September 2016.

—

The Chairperson reminded the Committee that the Clerk emailed members on Friday asking for indications of attendance the NILGA conference in the Everglades Hotel and/or the Committee meeting at the Nerve Centre in Derry/Londonderry on the 6<sup>th</sup> October 2016. The Chairperson asked members to formally indicate their attendance at the conference and the meeting.

The following members indicated that they would attend the Committee meeting and the meeting is therefore expected to have a decision making quorum:

Colum Eastwood MLA (Chairperson)

Michelle Gildernew MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Steven Agnew MLA

Andy Allen MLA

Jonathan Bell MLA

Naomi Long MLA

Nichola Mallon MLA

Fra McCann MLA

Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

Christopher Stalford MLA

Committee staff noted those members hoping to attend the NILGA conference and Committee Staff will notify NILGA.

The Committee noted the itinerary for the day.

#### **5. Department for Communities - Local Government Role and Responsibilities in Relation to the Community Planning Process**

The Committee noted briefing papers from the Clerk and the Department.

The following officials joined the meeting at 10:18 am

- Nichola Creagh, Principle, Department for Communities
- Simon Sloan, Deputy Principle, Department for Communities

The officials briefed the Committee and this was followed by questions from members.

*Fra McCann joined the meeting at 10:27 am*

*Andy Allen left the meeting at 10:59 am*

The officials left the meeting at 11:28 am

#### **6. Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill - Briefing by Research and Information Services**

The committee noted a research paper

The following researcher joined the meeting at 11:28 am

- Eleanor Murphy

The researcher briefed the committee and this was followed by questions from members.

Eleanor Murphy left the meeting at 11:50 am

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to seek further information on a number of issues to assist in the consideration of the Bill.

## **7. Correspondence**

The committee noted a correspondence memo.

The Committee noted tabled correspondence and a Written Statement from the Minister in relation to the Consultation on the Exemption under Articles 85(8) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 for listed places of worship from the requirement to obtain listed building consent.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to return to the matter next week.

The Committee also expressed a general concern in relation to the timeliness of information and papers coming from the Department, particularly from Working Age.

The Committee noted a reply from the Minister to its letter of 16 September 2016 regarding HMRC's decision not to renew its contract with Concentrix in 2017.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to HMRC, the Treasury Select Committee and the Minister of Finance on the matter. The Committee wishes to be satisfied that the issues lie with the current provider and not the contract itself. The Committee had also previously expressed concern around on-going issues with claims and how the announcement was handled from an employee point of view.

The committee noted correspondence from the Speaker advising it that a Public Petition titled 'Implementation of the 1995 and 2011 Pension Acts' was laid in the Assembly on 26 September 2016 by Mr Colin McGrath MLA.

The Committee noted a written update provided by the Department in relation to the potential reclassification of Housing Associations. The Committee had requested this written briefing ahead of the oral briefing that has been scheduled for 13 October 2016.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Economy regarding representations it has received from CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale).

*The Chairperson declared an interest having family interests in licensed premises*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that it will be important to gather evidence from the micro-brewery sector to inform its consideration of the clauses of the Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted correspondence from Shean Dickson Merrick Solicitors regarding the Licensing Bill and agreed to forward this to the Department for Communities for a response.

The Committee noted the Minister's invitation to attend a reception to celebrate the success of the Northern Ireland Football Team in Parliament Buildings on 6 October 2016.

The Committee noted correspondence from the BBC Trust expressing its views on the BBC Charter. The Trust has also offered to meet with the Chair/Committee to discuss the Charter.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that a briefing is not necessary at this time, given the fulsome debate that took place in the Chamber on Tuesday 27 September 2016.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to action all other correspondence as outlined on the correspondence memo

#### **8. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee noted its draft Forward Work programme.

*Agreed:* The committee agreed the draft Forward Work Programme.

#### **9. AOB**

Michelle Gildernew updated the Committee on her attendance at the Positive Futures event in the Senate on Monday 26 September 2016.

*Agreed:* The Clerk will follow up on the Commitments made at the event.

#### **10. Date, time and location of the next meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee for Communities will take place on Thursday 29 September 2016 at 10.00 am in room 29, Parliament Buildings.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12:25 pm*

**Colum Eastwood MLA**

**Chairperson, Committee for Communities**

**6 October 2016**