

COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURES

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**TUESDAY 21 OCTOBER 2014
ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Gerry Kelly MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Jim Allister MLA
Ms Paula Bradley MLA
Mr Samuel Gardiner MLA
Mr Kieran McCarthy MLA
Mr Barry McElduff MLA
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA
Mr George Robinson MLA

In attendance: Alison Ross (Clerk)
Neil Currie (Assistant Clerk)
Dee Papacosta (Clerical Officer)

1.06pm The meeting began in closed session.

1. Apologies

Mr Trevor Clarke MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Alban Maginness MLA

2. Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2014

Agreed: Members agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2014.

3. Standing Order 71 – Oath

The Committee considered advice from the Legal Services Office in relation to the wording for affirmations as set out in Standing Order 71.

The Committee considered a draft amendment to Standing Order 71 and a draft motion for the plenary debate.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the amendment and the motion to amend Standing Order 71.

1.10pm The meeting moved into public session.

4. Inquiry into the extent to which Standing Orders should permit the Attorney General to participate in proceedings of the Assembly

The Committee considered an options paper for managing the draft affirmative Statutory Rule to be laid by the Attorney General for Northern Ireland (AGNI), which seeks to add the PSNI to the list of organisations to which guidance is issued by the AGNI.

1.18pm Mr Robinson joined the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Option 1 should be used, which would require the establishment of an ad hoc committee to deal with the item of business. It was agreed that the process for this particular Statutory Rule will be treated as a pilot, to test the viability of the procedure for consideration in the wider inquiry.

Agreed: It was agreed to write to the AGNI, the Deputy Speakers, the Business Committee and the Committee for Justice to inform them of the Committee's decision.

5. Review of Topical Questions

The Committee considered a briefing paper summarising the decisions taken in respect of the Review of Topical Questions.

Agreed: The Committee agreed all of the recommendations in the briefing paper.

Agreed: It was agreed that the Clerk should prepare a draft report for consideration at the next meeting.

6. Review of Public Petitions Procedures

Agreed: The Committee agreed:

- a) The Terms of Reference for the review.
- b) The programme of work and timeframe for the review.
- c) The list of stakeholders to be invited to submit written evidence.
- d) The draft letter to stakeholders.
- e) The draft signposting ad to be placed in the newspapers.

The Clerk was asked to check if it was possible to enlarge the size of the signposting ad.

Agreed: It was agreed that the Chairperson could approve any increase in costs for an enlarged signposting ad.

7. Forward Work Programme

The Committee was content with the Forward Work Programme.

8. Correspondence

(a) The Committee considered correspondence from the former Speaker, notifying the Principal Deputy Speaker of his intention to retire. The letter stated that there were gaps in Standing Orders around how a Speaker resigns and how an election is handled when an outgoing Speaker is in office during a mandate.

Agreed: It was agreed that the Clerk should prepare a briefing paper on this issue for consideration at the next meeting.

(b) The Committee noted correspondence from Business in the Community inviting the Chairperson to a conference.

9. Any other Business

None.

10. Date, time and place of next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on 25 November 2014 at 1.00pm in Room 21, Parliament Buildings.

1.26pm The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.

Gerry Kelly
Chairperson, Committee on Procedures

25 November 2014