

## An Ceann Comhairle

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## The Speaker

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**To: All Members**

**9 May 2022**

### Initial Steps in Establishing the New Assembly

Firstly, I would like to congratulate you on being returned in last week's election and I wish you well for the significant workload that lies ahead of the new Assembly.

I want to provide clarity on some initial procedural issues as the new Assembly is established.

Under Standing Order 2, the Clerk/ Chief Executive has today issued a notice for the first sitting of the new Assembly at noon on Friday 13 May 2022. At this sitting, arrangements will be in place for new Members to take their seats.

Under the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Assembly is required to elect a Speaker and Deputy Speakers as its first business. Until the Assembly has done so, it cannot proceed to any further matters.

I will be meeting representatives of the five largest parties on Wednesday morning to determine the extent of the business which will be scheduled for the Assembly to undertake on its first sitting day. I will issue an Order Paper for Friday's sitting by Wednesday afternoon.

On another issue, there is currently a vacancy in the office of Minister for Infrastructure. I have written to the nominating officer of the SDLP formally inviting that party to nominate a new Minister. The SDLP has until 23:59 on Friday 13 May 2022 to nominate a new Minister. Once that deadline passes, if a nomination has not been received, the next party entitled to a Ministerial office under d'Hondt will be invited to nominate a Minister to be in place until a new Executive is formed. That party will be Sinn Féin.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely

**ALEX MASKEY**