



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Chairpersons' Liaison Group

Minutes of Proceedings

24 March 2026

Room 30, Parliament Buildings

Present: Paul Frew (Temporary Chairperson)
Robbie Butler MLA
Peter Martin MLA
Daniel McCrossan MLA
Matthew O'Toole MLA

Apologies: Kellie Armstrong MLA
Paula Bradshaw MLA
Phillip Brett MLA
Jonathan Buckley MLA
Alan Chambers MLA
Ciara Ferguson MLA
Colm Gildernew MLA
Cathy Mason MLA
Nick Mathison MLA
Philip McGuigan MLA

In Attendance: Roisin Kelly (Clerk)
 Mary Kerr (Senior Assistant Clerk)
 Charmaine McBride (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
 Danielle Saunders (Clerical Supervisor)

 Frank Geddis (Clerk Assistant)
 Paul Gill (Clerk Assistant)
 Stephanie Mallon (Clerk Assistant)

The meeting commenced at 1:28pm in closed session.

The Clerk took the Chair

Members noted that as the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of Chairpersons' Liaison Group have both sent their apologies, that a temporary Chairperson will be appointed at today's meeting.

The Clerk put the question:

Do we have any nominations?

Robbie Butler proposed that Paul Frew be appointed as Temporary Chairperson for the meeting of 24 March 2026.

This was seconded by Peter Martin.

The Clerk put the question:

The Question is that Paul Frew is the temporary Chair for the meeting of the 24 March 2026.

Paul Frew took the Chair

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Chairperson's Business

Members noted that the Members' Survey issued on Monday 23 March 2026 and emphasised the importance of securing a strong response rate to inform future services and improvements. Members agreed to encourage colleagues to complete the survey.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Agreed: Chairpersons agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2026.

4. Matters Arising

Letter from the Chairpersons' Liaison Group (CLG) to the Committee on Standards and Privileges (CSP) regarding Proposed Updates to the Guide for Witnesses appearing before Assembly Committees

Members noted that a response was issued by CLG to the CSP on 26 February 2026, regarding proposed updates to the Guide for Witnesses appearing before Assembly Committees.

Letters from the Chairpersons' Liaison Group (CLG) to the Committee for Communities and to Adviser to the Speaker regarding two separate matters: management of committee workloads and Legislative Consent Motion (LCM) – Universal Credit (Removal of Two Child Limit) Bill

Members noted that a response was issued by CLG to the Committee for Communities regarding two separate matters, and further noted a letter issued by CLG to Robin Ramsey (Adviser to the Speaker) on 18 March 2026 in response to the same matters.

5. Proposed Amendments to the Guide for Witnesses appearing before Assembly Committees

Members noted the updated Guidance for Witnesses appearing before Assembly Committees with the amendment, as agreed at the CLG meeting on the 24 February 2026.

Agreed: Members decided to circulate the updated Guidance for Witnesses to Committees and all Members.

Members noted the draft updated guidance on the Role of Chairpersons reflecting the changes that ensure consistency with the Guidance for Witnesses.

Agreed: Members agreed the updated guidance on the **Role of Chairpersons** reflecting the changes discussed and agreed at today's meeting.

Agreed: Members decided to circulate the updated guidance on the **Role of Chairpersons** to Committees and all Members.

Agreed: Members decided to further review this guidance document at a future meeting and agreed to keep the Committee on Standards and Privileges informed.

6. Guidance on Standing Order 46(8)

Members noted draft guidance from Paul Gill (Clerk Assistant) clarifying the application of Standing Order 46(8).

Agreed: Members noted the draft guidance on Standing Order 46(8) which will issue to all clerks.

7. Appointment of Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson

Members noted that, as per the rules and procedures agreed on 19 March 2024, a new Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson should be appointed with effect from April 2026.

Robbie Butler proposed that Nick Mathison be appointed as Chairperson of the Chairpersons' Liaison Group with effect from April 2026.

This proposal was seconded by Peter Martin.

Agreed: Mr Nick Mathison is appointed Chairperson of CLG with effect from April 2026.

Matthew O'Toole proposed that Robbie Butler be appointed as Deputy Chairperson of the Chairpersons' Liaison Group with effect from April 2026.

This proposal was seconded by Peter Martin.

Agreed: Mr Robbie Butler is appointed Deputy Chairperson of CLG with effect from April 2026.

8. Correspondence

Letter from the Clerk to the Committee on Standards and Privileges (CSP) regarding the Proposed revision to the Guide for Witnesses appearing before Assembly Committees

Members noted that the CSP wrote to CLG on 6 March 2026, to advise that at its meeting on 4 March 2026, the Committee agreed that it is content with the minor amendment to the Guide, as suggested by CLG. The CSP requested that CLG keep the Committee informed of progress on reviewing the **Guide to the Role of Chairpersons**, as suggested by the CSP.

Agreed: Members were content to note the correspondence from the CSP.

Agreed: Members were content to keep the CSP informed of progress on the guidance for the Role of Chairpersons.

9. Draft Forward Work Programme

Policy for the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) by Northern Ireland Commission Staff

Members noted that guidance for the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) by Northern Ireland Commission staff has been circulated to all staff and has been published on the IS Office Policies SharePoint page. Members further noted that the AI Steering Group's work has completed and the future development of AI use for Assembly Commission staff will be through the AI Governance Group. Members noted that this guidance is for Assembly Commission staff and that AI training is available to Members and Members' staff through the Parliamentary Excellence Programme (PEP).

Agreed: Members were content to note the Policy for the Use of AI by Northern Ireland Commission Staff.

Agreed: Members agreed to seek an update from the Assembly's AI Governance Group at a future meeting of CLG.

Draft Forward Work Programme 2026

Members noted the draft forward programme and that the date for the next CLG meeting had been adjusted to avoid a scheduling conflict.

10. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

11. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 19 May 2026, at 1:15pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:48pm.

Robbie Butler (Deputy Chairperson)

24 March 2026