



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# Chairpersons' Liaison Group

## Minutes of Proceedings

**19 March 2024**

### Room 21 Parliament Buildings

**Present:**

Cáral Ní Chuilín MLA (Chairperson)  
Deborah Erskine MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Kellie Armstrong MLA  
Paula Bradshaw MLA  
Phillip Brett MLA  
Tom Elliott MLA  
Colm Gildernew MLA  
Nick Mathison MLA  
Daniel McCrossan MLA  
Matthew O'Toole MLA

**Apologies:**

Jonathan Buckley (MLA)  
Joanne Bunting (MLA)  
Liz Kimmins (MLA)  
Philip McGuigan (MLA)

**In Attendance:**     Roisin Kelly (Assembly Clerk)  
                          Alison Belshaw (Senior Assistant Clerk)  
                          Charmaine McBride (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
                          Jenny Massey (Clerical Supervisor)  
                          Gareth McGrath (Director of Parliamentary Services)  
                          Frank Geddis (Clerk Assistant)  
                          Paul Gill (Clerk Assistant)

The meeting commenced at 1:19pm in closed session.

## **1. Apologies**

As above.

## **2. Appointment of a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson**

Roisin Kelly, Clerk to Chairpersons' Liaison Group (CLG) took the Chair until a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson were nominated.

Members noted the clerk's memo on Appointment of a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson.

**Agreed:** The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson are appointed on party strength and rotated annually.

**Agreed:** That Cáral Ní Chuilín and Deborah Erskine be appointed as Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of Chairpersons' Liaison Group respectively.

*Cáral Ní Chuilín took the Chair.*

The Chairperson briefly welcomed all to the Group and outlined some of her own thoughts about the purpose of the Group. The Chairperson advised she would be required to leave the meeting at 1:30pm.

Members discussed various current issues affecting their committees including that of protocol between committees and departments.

**Agreed:** Guidance for protocol between committees and departments will be placed on the agenda for the next meeting of the CLG.

*Cáral Ní Chuilín left the meeting at 1:29pm*

*Deborah Erskine took the Chair at 1:29pm.*

### **3. Procedures and Practices**

Members noted the clerk's memo on Procedures and Practices.

Members noted that CLG operates outside of Standing Orders and it is up to the Members of Chairpersons' Liaison Group/the Group to decide the operating procedures at the first meeting.

**Agreed:** The Group will meet on a monthly basis. Meetings will usually take place from 1pm on the first Tuesday of the month.

**Agreed:** Minutes will be made for formal meetings of CLG and a record of other CLG activities will be produced as appropriate to the nature of the event. Minutes will be circulated to Members for comment, signed off by the Chairperson and published on the website.

**Agreed:** There shall be a quorum of five for all formal CLG meetings and a quorum would not be required for informal meetings, events and professional development.

**Agreed:** All decisions are taken by simple majority and voting shall be by show of hands, unless otherwise requested.

**Agreed:** Meetings will be held in private session, unless the Group deem it necessary for an item of business to be considered in public session.

The Deputy Chairperson asked Roisin Kelly (Clerk to CLG) to speak to members on a number of rules and courtesies relevant to the Group.

Members were content to note the procedures and practices of the Group and had no views.

Members noted that there is administrative support for CLG, with there being a Clerk and dedicated team in the CAMS office located in Room 284a.

#### **4. Legacy Report 2017-2022 and Access to Legacy Papers**

The Group noted the clerk's memo and that the predecessor CLG considered a wide range of relevant issues and a number of related papers which may usefully inform the deliberations of the current group.

The Chairperson advised members that in order to access these unpublished papers, the Group should agree a formal resolution.

**Agreed:** That the Chairpersons' Liaison Group agrees to access and publish, as it considers appropriate, all unpublished papers obtained by all predecessor Groups.

Members noted the CLG Legacy Report – 2017-2022

**Agreed:** That the Chairpersons' Liaison Group agrees to note the report, and to commission more detailed briefings and updates on the issues suggested by its predecessor CLG, for consideration at a strategic planning event in June 2024.

#### **5. Interparliamentary Forum**

Members noted the Clerk's memo on the Interparliamentary Forum, which was formed in February 2022 and is the successor to the Interparliamentary Forum on Brexit.

Members noted that they will receive the agreed agenda for forthcoming Interparliamentary meetings and that a written summary note of Forum meetings will be provided to CLG following each quarterly meeting.

Members noted the summary of the Interparliamentary Forum meetings held on 28 October 2022; 24 March 2023; 27 October 2023; and 29 February 2024, and associated papers.

#### **6. Correspondence**

##### **6.1 Committee on Procedures – Strategic Planning**

The Group noted correspondence received from the Committee on Procedures regarding their Strategic Planning.

**Agreed:** The Group will respond to the Chairperson of the Committee on Procedures in the following terms: to thank the Chairperson for her correspondence; to inform her that CLG held its first meeting on 19 March at which it agreed that the Committee on Procedures may wish to consider those recommendations of the Report on Strengthening Committee Scrutiny , undertaken by the Chairpersons' Liaison Group in the 2017-2022 mandate, that were referred to the Committee on Procedures in that mandate; and that CLG is considering its own strategic priorities at a planning session in June 2024 and will, if necessary, correspond further with the Committee on Procedures.

## **7. Forward Work Programme**

Members noted the suggested Forward Work Programme drafted by the Clerk.

**Agreed:** That the Chairpersons' Liaison Group agrees to note the proposed forward work programme; and will hold a half-day member development session for Chairpersons in May and a CLG strategic planning session in June 2024.

**Agreed:** The Clerk to the CLG will circulate indicative dates for proposed training and the CLG strategic planning session.

## **8. Any Other Business**

None.

## **9. Date, Time and Place of next meeting**

The next meeting of CLG will be Tuesday 16 April 2024 at 1pm in Room 21, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:48pm.

**Cáral Ní Chuilín MLA**

**Chairperson, Chairpersons' Liaison Group**

**19 March 2024**