



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Chairpersons' Liaison Group

Minutes of Proceedings

24 February 2026

Room 30, Parliament Buildings

Present: Nick Mathison (Deputy Chairperson)
Kellie Armstrong MLA
Paula Bradshaw MLA
Robbie Butler MLA
Cathy Mason MLA
Daniel McCrossan MLA
Matthew O'Toole MLA

Apologies: Phillip Brett MLA
Jonathan Buckley MLA
Alan Chambers MLA
Ciara Ferguson MLA
Paul Frew MLA
Colm Gildernew MLA
Peter Martin MLA
Philip McGuigan MLA

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

 Lesley Hogg (Chief Executive/Clerk to the Assembly)
 Frank Geddis (Clerk Assistant)
 Paul Gill (Clerk Assistant)
 Stephanie Mallon (Clerk Assistant)
 Shane McAteer (Clerk)
 Ashleigh Mitford (Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk)

The meeting commenced at 1:17pm in closed session with Nick Mathison (Deputy Chairperson) in the Chair.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Chairperson's Business

There was no noted Chairperson's Business.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Agreed: Chairpersons agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2025.

Kellie Armstrong joined the meeting at 1:18pm

Daniel McCrossan joined the meeting at 1:19pm

4. Matters Arising

Guidance for Members on Participation in Hybrid Committee Meetings – update

Members noted that a response was issued by Chairpersons' Liaison Group (CLG) to the Speaker on 4 December 2025, to Speaker's correspondence regarding Members' standards of dress in committee meetings; and that a copy of an updated guidance note **on Hybrid Proceedings – Committee Meetings** that was issued to all Members on 5 December 2025.

Letter from CLG to Committee on Procedures regarding request from Timothy Gaston MLA

Members noted that a response was issued by CLG to the Committee on Procedures on 28 November 2025, regarding a request from Timothy Gaston MLA as forwarded by the Committee on Procedures; and further noted a letter issued by CLG to Timothy Gaston MLA on 28 November 2025 in response to his request.

Parliamentary Excellence Programme (PEP) February – March 2026 update

Members noted an update memo from Pamela Carson (Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk, PEP) and noted the updated PEP programme for February – March 2026.

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

Members noted the proposed updates to the **Guide for Witnesses appearing before Assembly Committees**, agreed by the Committee on Standards and Privileges (CSP).

Paul Gill (Clerk Assistant), Shane McAteer (Clerk to the CSP) and Ashleigh Mitford (Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk, CSP) briefed Chairpersons and answered questions about the proposed updates to the guide.

Following discussion, Chairpersons agreed the following:

Agreed: Members were content with the proposed updates to the **Guide for Witnesses appearing before Assembly Committees**, subject to a minor amendment to the wording of a proposed new paragraph (para 34.)

Agreed: Members were content to circulate the final version of the updated **Guide to Witnesses appearing before Assembly Committees** to Committees and all Members.

Agreed: Members were content to note the CSP's recommendations that it may be appropriate for CLG to review the guidance on the **Role of Chairpersons**.

Agreed: Members were content that officials prepare a draft of updated guidance on the **Role of Chairpersons** based on CSP's recommendations, for consideration at a future meeting of CLG.

The Deputy Chairperson thanked Paul Gill, Shane McAteer and Ashleigh Mitford for briefing Members.

Shane McAteer left the meeting at 1:51pm

Ashleigh Mitford left the meeting at 1:51pm

6. Strengthening Committee Scrutiny

The Deputy Chairperson asked the Clerk to provide an update on the strengthening of committee scrutiny of delegated legislation.

The Clerk briefed Members on the updates to the Guidance for Departments on Delegated Legislation and the revised SL1 template, agreed at the November meeting of CLG, and reminded Members that the new arrangements went live on 5 January 2026.

Members noted the letter issued from CLG to the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (FMdFM) on 24 November 2025 containing the updated Guidance for Departments on Delegated Legislation and the revised SL1 template.

Members noted the draft press release publicising the new scrutiny arrangements.

7. Correspondence

Letter from Clerk to the Committee for Communities to CLG regarding Management of Committee Legislative Workloads

Members noted correspondence from the Committee for Communities, dated 14 January 2026, expressing its wish that CLG place on its agenda a discussion of how Committees, particularly those with heavy legislative loads, propose to manage the competing pressures referred to in the correspondence, within the time remaining for this mandate and the available resources. Members also noted that the Committee for Communities had also written to the Speaker and the Clerk Assistants on this matter.

Agreed: Members were content to note the correspondence from the Committee for Communities.

Agreed: Members were content to note the Speaker's response to the related correspondence regarding management of committee legislative workloads.

Agreed: Members agreed to return to the management of committee legislative workloads at a future meeting of CLG, as required.

Matthew O'Toole left the meeting at 1:54pm

Letter from Clerk to the Committee for Communities to CLG regarding the Legislative Consent Motion - Universal Credit (Removal of Two Child Limit) Bill

Members noted correspondence from the Committee for Communities dated 16 January 2026 in which they attached a copy of a letter issued by the Chairperson of the Committee to the Minister for Communities. The letter to the Minister focuses on the requirement for the Minister to adhere to Standing Order 42A and the need for Legislative Consent Memoranda (LCMs) to be laid with adequate time for committee scrutiny.

Agreed: Members were content to note the correspondence from the Committee for Communities.

Letter from Clerks to the Committee on Procedures to CLG regarding Legislative Consent Motions – Standing Order 42A

Members noted correspondence from the Committee on Procedures to advise CLG that the Committee has begun its consideration of LCMs and Standing Order 42A and has agreed to seek legal advice on the amendments to Standing Order 42A necessary to implement the appropriate recommendations made in the previous Committee on Procedures' **Inquiry into Legislative Consent Motions Report**.

Agreed: Members were content to note the correspondence from the Clerks to the Committee on Procedures.

Letter from Clare Maguire, Deputy Head of Public Engagement to Clerk of CLG regarding arrangements for the Balmoral Show 2026.

Agreed: Members noted correspondence from the Assembly's Public Engagement Team, regarding the arrangements for the Balmoral Show 2026 and Chairpersons **agreed** to engage with the Participation and Outreach Team on potential activities for the event, as necessary.

8. Draft Forward Work Programme

Members noted the draft forward programme detailing the work completed by CLG on the priorities and subjects of shared concern, identified by CLG at its meeting in April 2025. Members also noted the suggested draft forward work programme for the coming year 2026-27.

Agreed: Members agreed that at each meeting of the CLG, one topic of shared concern may be agreed for more in-depth discussion at the subsequent meeting, subject to the availability of space on the agenda.

Agreed: The Clerk will circulate invitations for CLG meetings in 2026-27, reflecting a change in frequency of meetings to every 6-8 weeks to address pressures on Members' time as we progress into the last year of the mandate 2022-27.

9. AOB

There were no other items of business.

10. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 24 March 2026, at 1:15pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:58pm.

Paul Frew (Temporary Chairperson)

24 February 2026