



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# Committee on Standards and Privileges

## Minutes of Proceedings

**11 September 2024**

**Meeting Location:** Room 106, Parliament Buildings

**Present:**

Paul Frew MLA

Connie Egan MLA

Harry Harvey MLA

Brian Kingston MLA

Cathy Mason MLA

**Present by video or teleconference:**

Stewart Dickson MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Jemma Dolan MLA

**Apologies:**

Carál Ní Chuilín MLA (Chairperson)

Colin McGrath MLA

**In Attendance:**

Shane McAteer, Committee Clerk

Nick Mitford, Senior Assistant Clerk

Elaine Farrell, Assistant Clerk

Laura Gourley, Clerical Supervisor

Alison Ferguson, Clerical Officer

The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. in closed session

**1. Apologies**

As noted above.

**2. Declaration of interests**

The Chairperson advised Members of the ongoing requirement to declare relevant financial or other interests as and when they arise and before taking part in any Assembly proceedings, including Committee proceedings, relating to that matter.

Mr Kingston declared an interest that he is a member of the proposed All-Party Group (APG) on Football.

**3. Minutes**

**Noted:** The Committee noted that minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2024 had previously been agreed by the Chairperson following the delegation of authority by the Committee to do so, in order to publish Committee reports on 5 July 2024.

**4. Matters Arising**

Correspondence from a member of the public

The Committee considered correspondence from a member of the public regarding the use of gender specific pronouns, in terms of the anonymisation of certain personal data, in a recent report on a complaint case.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the draft response to the correspondent to advise that the decision to retain gender specific pronouns in the report was taken in accordance with legal advice received by the Committee.

Connie Egan MLA joined the meeting at 10.04 a.m.

#### Installation of software on devices to prevent screenshots

The Committee was updated on its previous request for advice from the Information Systems Office on the availability of technology for preventing screen shots from being taken of restricted papers that are viewed when shared on screen during Committee meetings or in the virtual reading rooms in advance of such meetings.

**Agreed:** The Committee noted the possibility of software to prevent screenshots being installed on new Assembly devices (which are due to be rolled out in the coming weeks) and agreed to await the outcome of the ongoing investigation by the Commissioner for Standards into the alleged unauthorised disclosure of information before considering the issue further.

### **5. Legacy issue: Review of Standing Order 70**

The Clerk briefed the Committee on the legacy issue from the previous Committee recommending a review of Standing Order 70.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content to progress a review of Standing order 70.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to request legal advice on a range of issues relevant to the review of Standing Order 70 and to give the review further consideration upon receipt of the legal advice.

## **6. Legacy issue: Digitisation of the process for registering Members' Interests**

The Clerk briefed the Committee on the legacy issue from the previous Committee on the proposed digitisation of the process for registering Members' interests.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it is content to progress the project for the digitisation of the process for registering Members' interests and to request that the Assembly's Information Systems Office gives the project a high priority.

## **7. Proposed APG**

The Assistant Clerk briefed the Committee on the proposal for an APG on Football.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to approve the establishment of an APG on Football.

**Noted:** The Committee noted that, following previous correspondence with the APG on Fairtrade, the Group has been removed from the Register of APGs.

## **8. Correspondence**

**Noted:** The Committee noted the correspondence from a member of the public on Cubbies.

## **9. AOB**

None.

## **10. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee on Standards and Privileges will take place on Wednesday 25 September 2024 at 10.00 a.m. in Room 106.

The meeting was adjourned at 10.36 a.m.

**Stewart Dickson MLA**

**Deputy Chairperson, Committee on Standards and Privileges**

**25 September 2024**