

COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURES

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**TUESDAY 23 APRIL 2013
ROOM 144, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Gerry Kelly MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Trevor Clarke MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Jim Allister MLA
Mr Samuel Gardiner MLA
Mr Chris Lyttle MLA
Mr Barry McElduff MLA
Mr George Robinson MLA

In attendance: Alison Ross (Clerk)
Neil Currie (Assistant Clerk)
Jonathan Watson (Clerical Supervisor)

1.00pm The meeting opened in closed session.

1. Apologies

Mr Alban Maginness MLA
Lord Morrow MLA

2. Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2013

Agreed : Members agreed the draft minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2013.

3. Standing Order 32(2) – Reasoned Amendments to Bills

1.03pm Jonathan McMillen from Assembly Legal Services joined the meeting and assisted Members in their consideration of the legal advice he had provided on the proposal to amend Standing Orders to state a period during which a Bill that has been rejected during its passage through the Assembly cannot be reintroduced.

Agreed: It was agreed that Standing Orders should be drafted to include an exclusion period of six months, prohibiting the re-introduction of a Bill that has fallen at any stage during its passage through the Assembly.

Agreed: It was agreed that there should be provision to waive or shorten the exclusion period in exceptional circumstances.

1.15pm The Chairperson thanked Mr McMillen for his assistance and he left the meeting.

1.15pm The meeting moved into public session.

4. Standing Order 60 – Establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee on Conformity with Equality Requirements

The Committee considered the response from the Clerk to the Assembly and Executive Review Committee (AERC) advising that the AERC considered the issues surrounding Standing Order 60 and Petitions of Concern relevant to its ongoing Review of D'Hondt, Community Designation and Provisions for Opposition, and that it would be appropriate to include this as part of its Review.

Agreed : It was agreed that the AERC should take this matter forward as part of its Review, and that the Chairperson should write to the Chairperson of the AERC to confirm this.

5. Inquiry into the Attorney General participation in proceedings of the Assembly

The Committee noted some written submissions and correspondence that had been received for the inquiry.

The Committee considered the response from the Chairperson of the Committee on Standards and Privileges in relation to the Attorney General for Northern Ireland (AGNI) and requirements in respect of Members' interests.

Agreed: It was agreed that the letter had addressed item (g) in the inquiry Terms of Reference regarding Members' interests and how these should apply to the AGNI.

1.19pm Mr Lyttle joined the meeting.

Agreed: It was agreed that the Attorney General for Northern Ireland should be invited to give oral evidence at the meeting scheduled for 28 May 2013.

6. Standing Orders for Topical Questions

Agreed: It was agreed that the external legislative draftsman should be used for the drafting of the Standing Orders for Topical Questions.

Agreed: It was agreed that, unlike Oral Questions, the first Topical Question may be from a member of the same party as the Minister to whom it is addressed.

7. Printing of Standing Orders

The Chairperson advised Members that stocks of Standing Orders were low, and explained why it was recommended that a reprint of Standing Orders should be undertaken. The Committee considered estimates for the cost of ordering either 250 or 300 sets of Standing Orders.

Agreed: It was agreed that a reprint of Standing Orders should be undertaken and that 300 sets of Standing Orders should be printed. It was also agreed that the timing of the reprint should coincide with Assembly approval of the amendments to Standing Orders for Topical Questions.

8. Forward Work Programme

The Committee was content with the Forward Work Programme.

9. Correspondence

There was no other correspondence.

10. Any other Business

None.

11. Date, time and place of next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on 28 May 2013 at 1.00pm in Room 144, Parliament Buildings.

1.28pm The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.

Gerry Kelly
Chairperson, Committee on Procedures

28 May 2013