

**HOUSE OF LORDS APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES OF THE 16TH MEETING HELD ON 19 MARCH 2002**

**Present:**

Lord Stevenson (Chairman)  
Baroness Dean  
Lord Dholakia  
Dame Deirdre Hine  
Lord Hurd  
Mrs Felicity Huston  
Mrs Angela Sarkis

Mr Jim Barron –Secretariat  
Mr Barry Forrester –Secretariat  
Ms Maggie O’Boyle – Press Officer

**Apologies and Opening Comments**

1. There were no apologies.
2. It was noted that [redacted] had recently given birth to a daughter, The Commission extended its best wishes.

**Minutes of the fifteenth meeting of the Commission**

3. The minutes of the meeting held on the 14 January 2002 were agreed.

**The Next Round of Appointments**

4. Introducing the paper prepared by the Secretariat, the Chairman reported on his recent exchange of correspondence with the Prime Minister’s Chief of Staff. As a result, the Prime Minister had now agreed that the Commission should process nominations on a continuous basis with the aim of making between 8 and 12 appointments each year.
5. It was agreed that the relaunch of the Commission’s work should take the form of:
  - the publication in May of the Commission’s first report under cover of a Press Release;
  - a supporting briefing session for selected journalists undertaken by at least two Commissioners, of which one should be an independent;

- a series of roadshows over the following 12 months supported by invitations to local organisations and articles in the regional and specialist press, including publications for women.

6. It was noted that raising the profile of the Commission in this way was likely to lead to enquiries from people who were unsuccessful in the first round. The line should be that such people may reapply but that they should review carefully the criteria which the Commission applies when considering nominations, and consider whether there have been any significant changes in their CVs which may have strengthened their case for recommendation. The Commission was committed to considering all nominations received on a consistent basis against the same criteria and making recommendations on the basis of merit.

7. As regards holdovers, it was agreed that they should be written to again, without commitment, at the time of the relaunch of the Commission's work with a copy of the Annual Report and given the opportunity to refresh their CVs. Their nominations would then be considered alongside new nominations with no guarantee about the outcome. Some may be recommended. Equally they could be turned down or given the opportunity to remain on the database for later consideration. A fast track approach might be appropriate for the six or so individuals who were interviewed last time but not recommended.

8. It was reaffirmed that the Commission should allow nominations by others as well as self-nominations in the future. However there was no need for a second form. Anyone wishing to nominate someone else should be encouraged to write to the Commission with details of the nominee, who would then be sent the nomination form to complete in the normal way. This would help ensure that all nominations, however initiated, were subsequently considered by the Commission on a consistent basis.

### **Supporting New Peers**

9. The Chairman reported his intention to send the first 15 successful nominees a copy of the Prime Minister's reply to the PQ and also the oral evidence that Mr Cook gave to PASC as evidence of their legitimacy to operate in the House. He also planned to send them the Commission's annual report when published. It was noted that new Peers often needed to be helped to understand the processes particularly when new legislation was being considered and Commission members could play a part in this. But it was important, too, for the Commission not to be seen to be taking any public responsibility for the performance of those it had recommended.

10. It was agreed that there was a need to continue to explore the issue of time commitment when interviewing those who are shortlisted. Whilst it was accepted that the Commission was not looking for 'working peers' and indeed many of the people it hoped to attract to the work of the House were likely to be at the peak of their careers with the time commitment that implies, nevertheless the Commission had as one of its criteria for recommendation identified the need for people to give a reasonable proportion of their time to the work of the House.

### **Draft Revised Information Pack**

11. It was agreed that the revised Information Pack should be formally signed-off at the Commission's next meeting. Meanwhile a number of changes were agreed, including:

- a preference for option 1 plus the last sentence of option 2 of the two choices given for para 7 of the covering letter;
- a need to re-write the covering letter to allow for the agreed approach to nominations of others, and to accommodate the possibility of different outcomes;
- inclusion of a reference to the House of Lords Register of Interests in the Notes.

### **Draft Annual Report**

12. It was agreed that the Annual Report should be formally signed-off at the Commission's next meeting. Meanwhile a number of points were agreed, including:

- reworking the letter to the Prime Minister to note that the Commission followed its brief and that, notwithstanding subsequent criticism, the Government subsequently endorsed the Commission's approach;
- the need to resolve the issue of the number of appointments which No 10 has retained to itself;
- the need to add to Section 4 the reason why the Commission has not actively pursued its work since the first round of appointments were announced.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

13. It was agreed that the Commission would meet again in mid April.

**Barry Forrester**  
3 April 2002