

HOUSE OF LORDS APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE 30TH MEETING HELD ON 18TH MAY 2005

Present: Lord Stevenson (Chairman)
Mrs Angela Sarkis
Lord Dholakia
Dame Deirdre Hine
Lord Hurd
Mrs Felicity Huston

Mr Jim Barron - Secretariat
Ms Geraldine Alexander - Secretariat
Mr Ekpe Attah – Secretariat

Apologies

1. Apologies were received from Baroness Dean.

Minutes of the twenty-ninth meeting of the Commission

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 1st February 2005 were agreed.

Chairman's update

3. The unsuccessful nominee who had sought permission to apply for Judicial Review had had his application refused, but had requested the decision be reconsidered at an oral hearing. The date for this had not yet been set. On advice from the Treasury Solicitor the Commission would not be represented at it.
4. A Life Peers list for former Members of Parliament had been announced on 13th May.
5. Following her resignation, the Chairman thanked Dame Deirdre for her contribution to the work of the Commission.
6. The Queen's Speech had made little reference to House of Lords reform, merely stating that the Government would bring forward proposals to continue the reform.
7. The Commission expected to receive imminently any names the Prime Minister wished to add to the Birthday Honours list for vetting. Once it had done so it would need to respond quickly, given the tight timescale involved.

Honours scrutiny

8. The Commission agreed the approach set out in the paper, except that other members of the Commission would have the opportunity to comment on the sub-committee's decisions before they were relayed to the Prime Minister's office.

Financial report

9. The Commission noted the report.

Freedom of Information update

10. The BBC had appealed against the Commission's decision to withhold sections of its minutes and an internal review was currently taking place. The Commission had also responded to a request for its Code of Practice and a request about the vetting of party-political nominations was being dealt with.

Nominations from women and ethnic minorities

11. The Commission considered the paper and noted the parallels between the challenge of attracting nominations from women and from ethnic minorities.
12. It was agreed to set up two sub-committees of the Commission to consider both issues. Subject to its overriding brief to nominate outstanding people on merit, it needed to take steps to increase the number of outstanding nominations from these two groups in particular.

Nominations of former members of the Commission

13. The Commission considered the paper and agreed that it would not define a minimum waiting period for former members to submit nominations but would make decisions on a case-by-case basis.

Discussion of names, numbers and timing

14. The Commission agreed to continue with its policy of making small numbers of recommendations at regular intervals.
15. The Commission considered a number of nominees. The Chairman would circulate a note setting out some options for the next set of recommendations.

Commission Secretariat
May 2005