

**HOUSE OF LORDS APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION**

**MINUTES OF THE 35<sup>TH</sup> MEETING HELD ON 7<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2006**

Present: Lord Stevenson (Chairman)  
Lord Hurd  
Lord Dholakia  
Mrs Felicity Huston  
Baroness Dean

Mr Jim Barron - Secretariat  
Mrs Paula Adshead - Secretariat  
Miss Louise Blundell – Secretariat

**Apologies**

1. Apologies were received from Angela Sarkis.

**Minutes of the last meetings**

2. The Commission agreed to postpone the approval of the minutes of the 31<sup>st</sup>, 32<sup>nd</sup>, 33<sup>rd</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> meetings. In approving the minutes, it would wish to ensure that the minutes were comprehensive and no vital points in the Commission's decision making processes had been overlooked.

**Chairman's update**

3. The Chairman reported on his recent meeting with Sir Gus O'Donnell, Cabinet Secretary, during which the PASC inquiry into the role and independence of the ethical and standards committees had been discussed. Sir Gus had explained that although PASC had not referred to the Commission in its Issues and Questions paper, the Cabinet Office had included information about the role of the Commission in its initial briefing to the Committee to provide a full picture on all the principals supported by the Independent Offices management unit in the Cabinet Office. The PASC's recommendations might have an effect on the way in which support was provided to the Commission.
4. In the light of this, the Prime Minister would be grateful if the members of the Commission would be willing to have their appointments extended until Government had had the opportunity to consider PASC's recommendations. Sir Gus would write with a formal proposal.
5. Sir Gus had confirmed that the Prime Minister had seen the Commission's letter about the party-political names.

**Previously appointed members**

6. The Chairman had spoken to [REDACTED] regarding her attendance at the Lords. She told the Chairman that she hoped to stimulate a debate about [REDACTED]. The Chairman planned to speak to other nominees regarding their attendance.

- [REDACTED]
7. It was agreed that [REDACTED] should be interviewed again soon now that HM Revenue and Customs no longer had an objection to his appointment. If he remained committed to being appointed as a peer and had the time to make a contribution, he should [REDACTED].

#### **Letter to the Prime Minister**

8. The letter to the Prime Minister had been delivered by hand on 1 February.
9. It was agreed that the nomination process could be made more efficient by asking party officials to produce well-written and consistent citations. The parties should also be encouraged to establish their own ground rules for the consideration of nominees and to carry out preliminary checks on the nominees before sending their names to the Commission. These points should be discussed with No10 officials before any letter was sent to the Prime Minister.
10. It was agreed that the Press Officer would draft a short brief for the Commissioners about the handling of questions from the press about the current list.

#### **Mohammed Rakib**

11. The Court of Appeal had not granted Mr Rakib permission to take the Commission to judicial review.

#### **Future work**

12. The non-party-political list would be announced following the publication of the party-political names. The process of sifting and interviewing would continue with a view to producing another list before the end of April or before the Commission's appointments came to an end.

#### **Annual report**

13. It was agreed that publication of the 2004/05 annual report should wait until after the party-political list had been announced; it might coincide with the announcement of the non-party-political list. However, if there were a delay in the publication of the lists so that the end of the Commission's term was in sight,

the Commission might want to produce a report which covered all of its work until the point when it stood down because it would not be an effective use of resources to issue two reports close together.

14. The Commission agreed that the annual report would be a natural vehicle in which to explain its vetting role.

**Rejecting unsuccessful nominees**

15. The Commission considered the paper *Rejecting Unsuccessful Nominees* and decided that it should be looked at again after its current work had abated.
16. It was agreed that Declarations of Knowledge would also be completed in due course.

Commission Secretariat  
March 2006