

HOUSE OF LORDS APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION

**MINUTES OF THE 69th MEETING HELD ON 23 NOVEMBER
2011**

Present: Lord Jay (Chairman)
Lord Hart
Prof Dame Joan Higgins
Lord Howard
Dr John Low
Baroness Scott

Geraldine Alexander (secretariat)
Kate Campbell (secretariat)
Richard Jarvis (secretariat)
Maggie O'Boyle (press officer)
Beth Watson (secretariat)

Apologies

1. Apologies were received from Baroness Campbell.

Minutes of 68th meeting (paper 1)

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2011 were agreed.

Chairman's update

3. The Commission had vetted Sir Gus O'Donnell at the request of the Prime Minister who wished to put Sir Gus forward as one of his ten "exceptions". The Commission had carried out its vetting checks to a very tight timetable and Sir Gus's peerage was announced on 11 October.
4. The Chairman had a meeting with the new Convenor of the Crossbenches, Lord Laming, and it was agreed that they would stay in touch on matters of mutual interest.
5. The Chairman had given evidence to the Joint Committee on House of Lords Reform, of which Baroness Scott is a member. He had also been invited to give his annual evidence to the Lords Constitution Committee in January 2012.

Consideration of HoLAC nominations (paper 2)

6. The Commission considered 32 nominations. It was noted that [REDACTED] was known in a professional capacity by Dr John Low and that Lord Howard had met [REDACTED] once. Dame Joan Higgins knew [REDACTED] in a professional capacity.

7.



8. It was also agreed that two nominees would be invited to interview [REDACTED] one nominee would be retained for further consideration [REDACTED] and the remaining nominees would be informed that their nomination was not successful.

Vetting

9. The Commission noted that the Committee for Standards in Public Life in its recent report on party political funding had recommended that political parties should publish the citations of party-political nominees to the House of Lords, including the reasons for the nomination. It was agreed that the Chairman would write to the Prime Minister stating the Commission's support for this recommendation. (The Chairman wrote the following day.)
10. It was also noted that the Committee's report commented that the Commission's vetting processes had been tightened in recent years.

Communications

11. The secretariat updated the Commission on general communications issues, such as improvements to the website and information pack. The press officer updated the Commission on recent press enquiries.

Annual Report

12. It was agreed that the Commission's annual report would be published in January and would cover an 18 month reporting period.
13. It was suggested that the Commission consider holding an information-sharing meeting with Peers and MPs in the House following the publication of the annual report. The secretariat was invited to investigate the options for such an event.

Freedom of information

14. The Commission was updated on recent FOI and DPA requests.

Any other business

15. The proposed dates for four of the Commission meetings in January, March, July and September 2012 were confirmed. There would be a final attempt to identify a date in May and November that all members could attend.

Commission Secretariat
November 2011