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First published: 5 June 2018 Last updated: 2 September 2019 Who was at the meeting  
Who was at the meeting Scottish National Party: Scott Martin (SM), Chair of meeting  
Conservative Party: Alan Mabbutt (AM) Andrew Stedman (AS) Labour: Monique Shockness  
(MS) Liberal Democrats: David Allworthy (DA) Darren Briddock (DB) Natalia Villazan  
(NV) The Electoral Commission: Claire Bassett, Chief Executive (CB) Craig Westwood,  
Director of Communications & Research (CW) Bob Posner, Director of Political Finance  
and Regulation & Legal Counsel (BP) Carol Sweetenham, Guidance and Strategy Leader  
(CS) Niki Nixon, Head of External Communications (NN) Minutes of the last meeting and  
actions arising There were further questions on the Codes of Practice, as covered in  
the minutes from the previous meeting. DB asked for clarity on spending when a snap  
election is called. SM raised questions about spending limits. CB explained that any  
decision on spending limits would be for the UK Government to take. AM raised  
concerns in relation to a current legal action and the impact on Commission guidance.  
CB reminded the meeting that the case was subject to reporting restrictions and that  
it was therefore not appropriate to discuss it. BP offered to pick up the issue  
separately if necessary. SM asked if there was an update on the integrity  
roundtables. CB stated that the next roundtable will take place in November/December  
and that the panel's feedback on the changes to the last roundtables will be  
considered. SM pressed the Commission on the feasibility of sharing spending returns  
in PDF format, as had been done up until 2010. BP replied that the Commission has  
investigated this but would not be taking this forward. pilots and evaluation CW  
outlined that the Commission has a statutory duty to evaluate the pilots. A briefing  
paper on the evaluation criteria was shared with parliamentarians before the pilots  
took place and many were invited to attend a briefing meeting. As part of the  
evaluation, interviews will be carried out with polling station staff, candidates and  
organisations representing the interests of specific demographic groups (such as  
Stonewall and Age UK) about evidence of their experiences of the pilots. The  
Commission intends to publish the evaluation before summer recess. CW stressed that  
the Commission is keen to hear from parties about their experience of the pilots,  
particularly in terms of candidates in the relevant areas. DA noted that the Liberal  
Democrats are still opposed to the concept of voter ID and will remain so. GW asked  
if the Commission will be sharing the evaluation findings with the Welsh government  
to ensure there is coordination. CB confirmed that the report would be shared. DB  
requested that the voter ID evaluation be brought to the next meeting in September.  
May 2018 local elections public awareness campaigns and Tower Hamlets count CW talked  
through the outcome of the Commission's registration campaign for the local  
elections, which exceeded its registration applications target by 26%. Initial  
anecdotal evidence suggests many of these applications are new registrations, though  
the Commission awaits exact numbers. CW ran through the performance of the "Your vote  
is yours alone" campaign, used to raise awareness of electoral fraud during the local  
elections. The campaign, developed with the support of local authorities and in  
partnership with Crimestoppers, was widely used by local authorities; CW noted that  
Tower Hamlets had made particularly active use of the resources available to raise  
awareness. The media coverage of the campaign was of a positive sentiment.

Crimestoppers is doing its own evaluation of the campaign, focusing on calls received and engagement with digital advertising. AS raised the report he received from Cllr Peter Golds on irregularities during the local elections in Tower Hamlets. Cllr Golds reported that he was unaware that Electoral Commission representatives were present at the count to whom he could make representations. Cllr Golds' report also raised concerns about the location of polling stations. AS stated that the report quoted other stakeholders who shared some of Cllr Golds' concerns. CB noted that four Commission representatives were present at the Tower Hamlets count, herself included. While CB noted that the count was slow, she did not think this should be criticised in the circumstances. On the matter of polling station locations, CB noted that the Returning Officer (RO) for Tower Hamlets had gone above and beyond, at considerable expense, to accommodate a new location when concerns were raised about one of the polling stations. CB visited a number of polling stations in Tower Hamlets on the day and was pleased to see actively engaged polling station staff and police. A lot of thought went into policing on the day; annual leave was cancelled, police officers with specialist language skills were deployed; and there was at least one uniformed police officer in every polling station. CB confirmed that Cllr Golds' report would be considered by both the Commission and the RO. However she stated that some assertions had not been fully evidenced and that it was important not to undermine public confidence unnecessarily. AS noted that the 2018 elections were one of the better run elections in the borough. DA raised concerns about incorrect postal vote forms in Haringey. CB confirmed the Commission was aware and that the issue was rectified quickly. It was noted that printing errors on postal votes pose a recurring challenge. CB said this may be linked to the fact that there are fewer printing suppliers, coupled with a high number of electoral events in recent years. The Commission has raised this issue, as has the AEA. Reduced resources for local authorities also pose a challenge. Experienced electoral staff are leaving the profession and it is increasingly difficult to replace them. CB noted this is often discussed at the advisory board. It was confirmed that the Commission still uses a traffic light rating system for local authorities. In the run up to the May polls, any authority rated red was met face-to-face by a Commission representative, while those rated amber and green were supported by phone or in person. This level of engagement has led to a reduced number of authorities rated as red. DB raised the issue of Harborough Council, reporting that it is declining to publish the recent election results, citing Commission advice. CB said that this would be followed up. CSPL review – intimidation of candidates BP stated that the Cabinet Office is looking at the offence of intimidation. The current legislation works in so far as some prosecutions are taking place, however a review of the offences is welcome. CSPL has said that political parties should develop codes of conduct that cover intimidation. It was agreed that the topic would stay on the agenda to be revisited and be raised with Cabinet Office later in the meeting. Donation checking for bequests AS expressed disappointment that parties cannot easily check bequests against the register as EROs don't have a power to release old registers to them. BP said the Commission agrees with this concern. The Commission guidance directs parties to other sources such as the British Library. DB confirmed that the register held by the British Library cannot be copied or photographed which is problematic and that the register is not updated monthly. AS has written to Chloe Smith about this, he believes access to the register should be enabled by amending the regulations. BP indicated that the Commission would likely support access changes and asked AS to report back on the Minister's response. Commission update report CS thanked panel members for attending

the modern guidance user group and said there would be a follow up meeting in October. A new contractor has been appointed to redevelop the corporate website and an intro meeting will be arranged shortly. Prototypes of the new-style guidance will be developed over summer, rewriting of the guidance will begin in September and the first tranche of rewritten guidance should be available next spring after the May polls. SM requested that in addition to updating the format of the guidance, the content also be reviewed, for example guidance on imprints. DB requested that the relevant item of law be added to the guidance for ease of reference. CS confirmed that updates would largely affect format, rather than content, but that a content "spring clean" would take place as part of the rewriting. It was planned that legal references should be included. A contractor is now place for the delivery of the new PFR system. CS would like to introduce the panel to the contractor in the next few weeks and share progress. BP added that a key success measure for this project is the satisfaction of the panel members as end users of the system. It was agreed that a dedicated meeting would be set up to review the progress of the PFR system and that this would be held the day immediately before or after the next PPP meeting for ease. BP reminded the panel that a review of party descriptions will be carried out. Currently, new party applications are subject to tight rules around the party descriptor, which must sufficiently identify the party for the voter to know it is of that party. Otherwise it is not a description of the party name. The review of pre-existing registered party descriptions would be commencing soon. It was confirmed that this did not require a change to legislation as this falls with the Commission's role of maintaining the register. SM asked if guidance on statements of accounts would appear soon. DB stated that if the guidance on this changes, treasurers need to be notified by January. BP confirmed that the Commission is looking at this and it is a live project, however draft regulations are not imminent. Any other business NV asked if there is a timeframe to link the Commission's work to Brexit. CB confirmed this is something the Commission is already working on but that most decisions on this are for the Cabinet Office. Actions Action Owner Status evaluation to be brought to the next meeting in September. CW Complete Report back on access to the register for the purpose of checking bequests. AS AS to update on Minster's response Set up meeting to demo progress of PFR system, to immediately follow or precede the next PPP meeting. CS Complete CS will contact panel members to set up meeting. Report back on Harborough Council's decision not to publish recent election results. CB Complete Published on website Related content Our Commissioners Donations and loans Find out about donations and loans to a political party, individual or other organisation Our Executive Team Meet our Executive Team, and find out more about them Donations accepted View data about donations accepted by parties and campaigners