

Parliamentary Parties Panel minutes: 4 June 2019 | Electoral Commission Search
Parliamentary Parties Panel minutes: 4 June 2019 You are in the Party panels
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updated: 15 July 2020 Who was at the meeting Who was at the meeting Scottish National
Party: Scott Martin (SM) Chair of the meeting Conservative Party: Andrew Steadman
(AS) Liberal Democrats: Natalia Villazan (NV) Darren Briddock (DB) Labour Party:
Andrew Whyte (AW) Change UK: Sian Green (SG) Electoral Commission: Craig Westwood,
Director of Communications & Research (CW) Ailsa Irvine, Director of Electoral
Administration and Guidance (AI) Laura McLeod, Public Affairs Manager (LM) Minutes of
the last meeting and actions arising (PPP 21/02/2019) The minutes were agreed. SM
asked for an update on whether the Commission had been consulted on the change of
wording on the nomination forms for standing as a candidate, from 'witness' to
'attest'. AI confirmed the Commission was consulted on the draft legislation last
autumn and did not highlight any issues with the change of wording. AS noted that the
tone of language being used by the Commission in some regulatory correspondence had
not changed since discussions at the February PPP meeting. CW agreed to feed back to
colleagues. SM asked when the Commission will consult on its Enforcement Policy. CW
explained the Commission is due to publicly consult in the autumn. On the subject of
holding a PPP meeting with commissioner representatives, CW confirmed the Commission
is happy to explore the possibility for the December meeting if parties are similarly
willing to be represented at a more senior level of chair and/or treasurers. Parties
agreed to consider this and report back. Members asked about the membership of the
Commission's Parliamentary Advisory Group (PAG), particularly with a view to mapping
interested peers within parties. LM offered to share the PAG membership list. SM and
DM explained that one year of rolling minutes was unsuitable. SM gave the example of
minutes from the PPP meeting, following the 2014 European Parliamentary election in
2014, showed discussion at the meeting on UC1 forms for EU citizens. DB suggested
five years as a suitable period for minutes to be available on the website. SM asked
the Commission's policy on limiting the availability of PPP minutes on the website.
CW explained this is in line with migration to a new website. LM restated her offer
to share copies of older minutes on request. AW asked for an update on the
Commission's PFR online and modern guidance projects. CW explained work on PFR online
had been delayed by the elections. AI explained the modern guidance system is lined
up with the Commission's website project and transfer over to the new system will be
coordinated in a way that coordinated with the electoral cycle. Post-election review
– May 2019 local elections AI gave an outline of the Commission's public awareness
work for the elections and explained that during our campaign, 570,000 applications
to register were submitted online across England and Northern Ireland. AS
complimented the Commission's campaign and asked when data on duplicate applications
to register would be available. CW confirmed this would follow in the autumn and be
shared with the PPP. CW asked the PPP for any observations or comments on how the new
advertiser verification/registration rules , Google and Twitter worked for the
parties. AW explained they had internal discussions on how to meet the requirements
and didn't have any problems meeting them. Other attendees noted that they had not
had feedback from campaigns/marketing colleagues. pilots and evaluation SM asked how
the pilots had gone and DB highlighted his concerns over voters being turned away at
polling stations. CW outlined the Commission was collecting data from a range of
sources to feed into its statutory evaluation report. He explained that over 170
charities and organisations had been contacted and the Commission would welcome any
feedback from the parties. AW and AS agreed to encourage agents or party staff to

send over any relevant examples. Post-election review –European Parliamentary elections (EPEs) AI explained that the poll being delivered at short notice was testament to the work of Electoral Registration Officers, Returning Officers and their teams across the UK. AI noted the issues with EU citizens resident in the UK and by UK overseas voters, who found they were unable to vote at this poll when they wished to do so. NV asked if the Commission can quantify the number who were unable to vote. AI explained we are unlikely to be able to quantify precisely how many of them were unable to vote on polling day itself. AI highlighted the Commission's post poll reporting would consider in particular the experiences of EU citizens who were unable to correctly register to vote. She explained it will look at what happened in the months leading up to the elections, on where responsibilities lay for enabling EU citizens to vote and what actions were taken. AI welcomed any feedback from the PPP. SM asked if the Commission will be able to identify how many EU citizens registered for the 2019 EPEs compared with 2014 figures. AI confirmed that it would. SM noted the straight forward process in some other Member States and asked about the Commission's recommendations following the 2014 European Parliamentary elections. CW said that the Commission had made the case for making the process easier for EU citizens and met with the Cabinet Office, adding that following the EU referendum the Government was clear that the UK would not participate in the EPEs in 2019 so no changes to the process were introduced. DB asked if the Commission conducted a review of seats for this election, as it normally does. CW agreed to consult with colleagues and update accordingly. SM asked if the problems with overseas voters receiving postal ballot packs too late was due to the late confirmation of the UK taking part in the EPEs. AI detailed this was not an issue which related solely to these most recent elections as at any election postal votes cannot be sent out until the close of nominations for candidates and then need to be sent overseas. CW detailed the recommendations the Commission has previously made to the Government to improve access to the voting process for overseas electors. CW reiterated the Commission's offer of support and help to the parties if needed in preparing their spending returns, particularly with regard to the retrospective regulatory period. Progress update from Parties on joint code of conduct on intimidatory behaviour The Commission proposed the agenda item and invited an update from the PPP on the joint code of conduct. AW explained the parties had met in late March and agreed to work towards a statement of principles. NV explained the Jo Cox Foundation had recently been appointed to act as independent support to the group in to agree a cross-party approach and this work is ongoing. Commission Update Report CW highlighted the Commission submitted evidence to the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee's inquiry on electoral law reform and is due to give oral evidence before summer recess. Any other business No item was raised. Action Status CW to feed back regarding the tone of language still being used by the Commission in regulatory correspondence Complete: Louise Edwards to write to the PPP LM to circulate membership of the Commission's Parliamentary Advisory Group Complete: circulated with minutes CW to update on whether the Commission conducted a review of the allocation of seats for European Parliamentary election. Complete: The Commission did not as the requirement for it to do the statutory review was removed by the Government in legislation.(European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 Sch.9 para.1) Commission to share data breakdown on registrations from the May 2019 local elections Ongoing: LM to share with PPP when breakdown is available Party representatives to advise whether they would be able to be represented by chair and/or treasurer at the 3 December meeting, alongside commissioner representatives. Ongoing: Pending confirmation from

parties. Conservative Treasurer confirmed To be discussed at September meeting.