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published: 21 September 2022 Last updated: 21 September 2022 Who was at the meeting
Who was at the meeting Scottish National Party: Scott Martin (SM), chair of meeting
Conservative Party: Alan Mabbutt (AM) Jonathan Burkitt Megan Tucker Labour Party:
Andrew Whyte (AW) Liberal Democrats: Kerry Buist (KB) Plaid Cymru: Carl Harris (CH)
Electoral Commission: Shaun McNally, Chief Executive (SMcN) Craig Westwood, Director
of Communications, Policy and Research (CW) Louise Edwards, Director of Regulation
(LE) Ryan McCullough, Public Affairs Manager Alex White, Senior Communications
Officer Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: Paul Docker (PD)
Introduction to Shaun McNally, Chief Executive of the Electoral Commission SM
welcomed SMcN to his first Westminster PPP meeting. SMcN welcomed the opportunity to
join the first PPP meeting and said he was looking forward to building a relationship
with the PPP built on trust. He highlighted his priorities for the Commission, noting
that the aim was to maintain trust and confidence in the integrity, accessibility and
security of elections. He also highlighted the Commission's work to support political
parties to campaign with confidence within the regulatory framework. He offered to
meet PPP members on an individual basis. Minutes of the last meeting and actions
arising (PPP 2/2/2022) The minutes were approved without any changes. CH noted an
action from the previous meeting regarding PEF Online was now resolved. Post-election
review – May 2022 elections CW said that the Commission's initial assessment was that
the polls were delivered successfully with no significant issues, and noted the hard
work of electoral administrators to ensure the smooth-running of the polls. He added
that the Commission was now gathering information from the electoral community ahead
of publishing post-poll reports in the autumn. PD also noted DLUHC's assessment that
the polls were delivered successfully without major trouble, thanks to the efforts of
those involved in their delivery. KB welcomed the Commission's online advice
surgeries for candidates and agents ahead of the elections, which SM also noted were
helpful in the context of the Scotland-focused surgeries. KB raised inconsistency
between advice given on the call, and written guidance, in relation to a query on
declaring posters. LE noted she would welcome further feedback on the advice
surgeries, and that the Commission recognised the importance of consistency of
guidance and advice, which it was working to improve. CH raised concerns from police
SPOCs that the number of complaints against independent candidates in Wales had been
higher than usual. He asked whether the Commission was aware of this, and whether it
was related to the guidance and support independent candidates receive. LE explained
that the Commission was conducting a post-poll survey of police SPOCs where it may
come up. PD confirmed this issue had been raised at the Wales Electoral Coordination
Board (WECB), and that some independent candidates had been unaware of their
responsibilities. SMcN confirmed the Commission's Wales office had picked this up
from WECB and would be looking into it. Local election (England) nominations – DLUHC
PD noted his comments at the December 2021 meeting of the PPP regarding proposals to
reduce the number of subscribers needed at local elections in England from 10 to 2.
He explained that while the proposal was not taken forward in the Elections Act, the
Minister was now minded to make the change. He asked whether the PPP members were
supportive. AM, KB and AW – as representatives of parties which stand candidates in

local elections – were all in favour, noting the temporary change introduced in May 2021 for Covid-secure elections had not had a negative impact. PD noted he would report back to the Minister that the proposal had cross-party support, and that he would be happy to have further conversations on this at a later date. Elections Act – DLUHC PD provided an update on the Elections Act, noting it had received Royal Assent in May, and that DLUHC was now focused on preparing the necessary secondary legislation for implementation, and was working closely with the Commission on this. PD explained that DLUHC were reviewing implementation timelines and while he could not give exact timings for implementation, measures would be phased in, with some in force for May 2023, some later in 2023, and some in 2024. He added that he was happy to provide further updates on timings when available. AW asked where the introduction of digital imprints fits into the phased approach, noting the need for early preparation as this was likely to have a significant impact on how parties campaign. PD agreed to update the PPP on this, and wider timescales, via email following DLUHC's review. SM noted the differences in digital imprints regimes in Scotland and the rest of the UK, and asked whether conversations were taking place to ensure these worked together. PD confirmed conversations were taking place with devolved governments. KB asked when the overseas voter provisions were expected to come into force. PD confirmed this was likely to be from May 2024. CW noted that the Lib Dems Overseas group had been in touch with the Commission, and offered the same to other parties with overseas representative groups, to establish contacts ahead of work on this measure commencing in due course. CW provided an update on the Commission's work preparing for the implementation of the Elections Act, and that it was waiting to see draft secondary legislation from DLUHC. He explained the Commission was emphasising the need for phased introduction of the Act's measures, and being clear about the risks created by a lack of timely information on implementation from the Government, so that the electoral community could be well-prepared. Electoral Commission update report AM asked about the Commission's digital imprints roundtables. LE confirmed that details would be sent to all who had signed up, and that those unable to attend could contribute outside the roundtable. SM asked about the Political Finance Online project. LE said the Commission was still on track for the new system to go live later in the financial year for political parties, but that it was conducting a review on timings. She noted the Commission was working on training opportunities for parties and would be in touch in due course. She confirmed there would be opportunities for parties to be shown the reporting part of the new system following previous demonstrations of the registration part. Format and date of future meetings SM asked whether the PPP should move to hybrid or in-person meetings from September. Members discussed the pros and cons of hybrid meetings, but agreed that the Commission and DLUHC should work on a proposal for September's meeting. SM asked about the proposal from before Covid for a meeting including Commissioners and party treasurers. CW agreed to take the issue away and consider an appropriate time. Any other business PD said that he would be emailing PP members to request information on support candidates with disabilities needed to stand at elections. The date of the next meeting was confirmed, Tuesday 6 September 2022. Commission actions Status Consider best timing for a meeting with Commissioners and party treasurers. Work with DLUHC on options for hybrid or in-person meeting in September. DLUHC actions Status Email PPP members for information on candidates with disabilities.