

Report of the sub-Committee on Dáil Reform
regarding changes to Standing Orders

8 June 2016

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That, in accordance with the recommendation of the Sub-Committee on Dáil Reform under Standing Order 107(1)(a), the Standing Orders of Dáil Éireann relative to Public Business be amended by the adoption of the following amendments to Standing Orders:

1. BUSINESS COMMITTEE (with effect from 14 June 2016)

“Business Committee

27A. (1) There shall stand established, following the reassembly of the Dáil subsequent to a general election, a Standing Committee, to be known as the Business Committee.

(2) The Business Committee shall consist of:

(a) the Ceann Comhairle who *ex officio* shall be Chair;

(b) two members nominated by the Government;

(c) as many other members as corresponds to the number of groups in the Dáil, with each group having the right to nominate a single member to the Committee; and

(d) the Chairman of the Working Group of Committee Chairs.

Provided that the quorum of the Committee shall be five, members may be substituted as provided for under Standing Order 95(2), and the Ceann Comhairle may, in his or her absence, appoint another member of the Business Committee to act as Chair.

(3) The Business Committee shall also act as the Committee of Selection.

27B. (1) Unless it decides otherwise, the Business Committee shall meet on a weekly basis to consider the arrangements for the House and for the taking of its business in the following week.

(2) The Government shall have the prerogative to determine the business to be taken in Government time. The Opposition shall have the prerogative to determine the business to be taken in private members’ time, in accordance with the rota provided for in Standing Order 143F(3), but subject to the provisions of Standing Order 91. Both the Government and the Opposition shall provide, in good time for the meeting of the Business Committee, details of the business to be taken in the following week.

27C. (1) At its weekly meeting, the Business Committee shall consider the arrangements for the House and for the taking of its business in the following week.

(2) As part of its deliberations, the Business Committee may consider proposals in relation to—

- (a) arrangements for the taking of business, including speaking times;
- (b) the taking of legislation both in the House and in Select Committees;
- (c) the extension of the House’s sitting hours;
- (d) the taking of items of business for different time periods to those provided for in Standing Orders;
- (e) the deferral or omission of certain items of business;
- (f) the selection of a Committee report under Standing Order 91, or a Private Member’s Bill under Standing Order 140A, for consideration on alternate Thursdays;
- (g) the adjournment of the House;
- (h) any other matter that it considers necessary or expedient for the conduct of business in the House.

(3) The day following its meeting, the Business Committee shall make a report to the House containing its recommendations for the following week, each of which shall be numbered, and an indication of the business for the second following week.

(4) The report shall be laid before the Dáil the day it is made, and each member of the House shall be informed that it has been so laid.

27D. (1) The Business Committee shall aim for consensus in reaching its recommendations on proposed arrangements.

(2) The Government may propose arrangements to the Committee in relation to the taking of Government business, which the Committee may, by consensus, amend.

(3) The Ceann Comhairle shall be the judge of whether or not there is consensus in relation to any proposal before the Committee (whether it be amended or not).

(4) Where the Ceann Comhairle is of the opinion that consensus will not be reached in relation to a proposal, he or she shall request the members of Committee opposing the proposal to register their dissent.

(5) The names of the members dissenting shall be recorded against the proposal in the Committee's report.

27E. (1) The Business Committee shall, each week, appoint from amongst its members a rapporteur.

(2) At the Order of Business on the first day of a sitting week, the Ceann Comhairle shall call on the Business Committee rapporteur to announce the business to be taken that week.

(3) Following the announcement, the Business Committee rapporteur shall move the Business Committee's proposed arrangements for that week. The House shall decide on the proposed arrangements for each day *en bloc*.

(4) Any member, including a member of the Business Committee, may propose an amendment to a proposed arrangement in the Business Committee report after the arrangements for any day have been moved: Provided that when moving the proposed amendment, the member shall identify the proposal he or she wishes to amend by its number in the report, and give a short description of it.

(5) Where a proposed arrangement is opposed, or where an amendment has been proposed to it, that arrangement shall be decided separately, after the other arrangements for that day have been disposed of, and the Ceann Comhairle shall permit a short statement from the Taoiseach and the leaders or a representative of each group or party in opposition in relation to the arrangement, before putting the question on it.

(6) Provided that where a second or subsequent division is demanded on any arrangements on the Order of Business, the period for which the division bells shall ring and the interval between the ringing of the bells and the locking of the doors shall be not less than two minutes and not less than one minute respectively.

(7) Where, for whatever reason, the Business Committee has not made a report to the House on the arrangements for any sitting day, the Taoiseach may propose to the House arrangements for the day, and for the taking of business on that day.

(8) The Government Chief Whip, having consulted, where practicable, with the Business Committee, may propose to the House on any given sitting day the taking of an item or items of business where an urgent necessity to do so has arisen suddenly.

27F. When acting as the Committee of Selection, the Business Committee shall nominate members to serve on Select, Special or Standing Committees and shall have the power to discharge members of such Committees from time to time and to appoint others to serve in substitution for those discharged. The Business Committee, when acting as the Committee of Selection, shall also administer the allocation of Committee Chair posts according to the d'Hondt system under Standing Order 93(2).”.

2. SITTING TIMES

NEW SITTING TIMES (with effect from 14 June 2016)

With effect from 14 June 2016, the substitution of the following for Standing Order 23:

“23. (1) Unless it shall otherwise resolve the Dáil shall meet every Tuesday at 2.00 p.m. and every Wednesday and Thursday at 12 noon, and the proceedings on any business under consideration shall be interrupted (or if the Dáil be in Committee, progress shall be reported and leave asked to sit again) and the Dáil shall adjourn—

(a) every Tuesday and Wednesday at 10 p.m., and

(b) every Thursday at 5.48 p.m.:

Provided that if an Order shall have been made under Standing Order 24, that the hour at which business is to be interrupted be other than that specified in this paragraph, the provisions of this Standing Order with such substitution shall otherwise apply.

(2) If, at the time appointed for the interruption of business as provided in paragraph (1) of this Standing Order, the closure is moved or proceedings under the closure are in progress, the Ceann Comhairle will not effect such interruption until the proceedings under the closure, and on any such further motion as is specified in the Standing Order as to closure [S.O. 68] have been completed.

(3) If, at the time appointed for the interruption of business as aforesaid,

(a) a division is in progress or has been ordered to be taken, or

(b) the debate on an item of business has concluded,

the interruption shall not take place until after the decision has been declared from the Chair. If the decision is on an amendment, or on an amendment to the amendment, after such declaration the Ceann Comhairle shall proceed to put in proper sequence the Questions necessary to bring proceedings to a conclusion.”.

CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS TO OTHER STANDING ORDERS re SITTING TIMES

SUSPENSION OF SITTING (with effect from 14 June 2016)

In Standing Order 25, with effect from 14 June 2016, the deletion of paragraph (1) and the substitution of the following:

“(1) On Wednesdays the sitting shall be suspended on the conclusion of topical issues until 4.30 p.m.”.

ORDER PAPER, ORDER OF BUSINESS (with effect from 14 June 2016)

With effect from 14 June 2016, to delete Standing Order 28 and substitute the following:

“28. (1) Every sitting of the Dáil shall be governed by a printed Order Paper which shall be prepared under the direction of the Ceann Comhairle.

- (2) (a) Subject to Standing Order 27B, the Business Committee shall have the right to determine the order in which Government and Private Members' business shall appear on the Order Paper and, by announcement, the order in which it shall be taken each week.
- (b) Any announcement or proposals made by a member of the Business Committee under Standing Order 27E shall be made on Tuesdays (or on a Wednesday where the Dáil does not sit on the Tuesday of that week), immediately following Leaders' Questions, and the proceedings on the matters comprehended by that Standing Order shall not exceed 30 minutes.
- (3) On Wednesdays and Thursdays, immediately following Leaders' Questions, the Ceann Comhairle may permit, at his or her discretion, but for a period not exceeding 15 minutes, questions to the Taoiseach about the taking of business which has been promised, including legislation promised either within or outside the Dáil; about the making of secondary legislation; and as to when Bills or other documents on the Order Paper needed in the House will be circulated: Provided that the time allowed for questions from (i) Party and Group leaders shall not exceed 2 minutes each, and (ii) all other members shall not exceed 1 minute each: Further provided that the Taoiseach may defer replying to a question relating to the making of secondary legislation to another day.
- (4) For the purposes of paragraph (3), a member of the Government or the Government Chief Whip may on Wednesdays and shall on Thursdays respond to questions in the Taoiseach's stead."

DIVISIONS ON SUSPENSION OF MEMBER (with effect from 14 June 2016)

With effect from 14 June 2016, in Standing Order 64:

- (a) in paragraph (1) to delete all words from "at the discretion of the Ceann Comhairle" down to and including "decision of the House." and substitute "immediately, and the member shall be entitled to vote in any such division.", and
- (b) in paragraph (3)(b), to delete "before the Order of Business" and substitute "at the commencement of Public Business".

TIME FOR PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS TO BE TAKEN (with effect from 14 June 2016)

With effect from 14 June 2016, to delete Standing Order 140 and substitute the following:

“140. (1) Government business or Private business, as the case may be, shall be interrupted to take private members' business—

- (a) on Tuesdays between 8 p.m. and 10 p.m., and
- (b) on Wednesdays between 4.30 p.m. and 6.30 p.m.: Provided that the Business Committee may, where divisions on the Government Business are likely to occur, decide that the Government Business will be taken at 4.30 p.m. and the Private Members' Business deferred until 8 p.m.:

Provided that, where leave has been given to make a motion under Standing Order 34, such motion shall have priority.

(2) On Thursdays, immediately following topical issues, the second stage of a Bill initiated by a private member or, on alternate weeks, a debate on a Committee report, either of which having been selected by the Business Committee pursuant to Standing Orders 91 and 140A for consideration, shall be taken for not more than two hours.

(3) A member of the Business Committee may move on behalf of the Committee and without notice, on the Order of Business on any Tuesday or at the commencement of public business on any Wednesday or Thursday that, on that day or during the period specified in the motion, specified Government business or Private business, as the case may be, shall not be interrupted if under consideration at the time fixed for taking private members' business. Such motion shall be decided without amendment.”.

ROTA FOR PMB

The substitution of the following for paragraph (3) of Standing Order 143F:

“143F. (3) (i) The order in which the right under paragraph (2) may be exercised by the various groups shall be determined on the basis of the numbers of members in the groups, a larger group having precedence over a smaller one. In the case of an equality of numbers, precedence shall be determined by lot: Provided that a group which consists only of a single party shall have precedence over a technical group.

(ii) Until further notice in the 32nd Dáil, the sequence in which the groups may exercise this right shall be as follows:

First occasion on which private members' business is to be taken: Fianna Fáil

Next available occasion: Sinn Féin

Next available occasion: Fianna Fáil

Next available occasion: Sinn Féin

Next available occasion: Labour Party

Next available occasion: Fianna Fáil

Next available occasion: AAA-PBP

Next available occasion: Fianna Fáil

Next available occasion: Sinn Féin

Next available occasion: Independents 4 Change

Next available occasion: Fianna Fáil

Next available occasion: Rural Alliance group

Next available occasion: Fianna Fáil

Next available occasion: Social Democrats-Green party group

Next available occasion: sequence to recommence

(iii) The sequence set out above shall continue where it left off on the resumption of Dáil Éireann following any adjournment for a Summer Recess.

Provided that, from 14 June 2016, until the summer recess 2016, the sequence in which the groups may exercise this right shall be as follows:

Sinn Féin

Fianna Fáil

AAA-PBP

Fianna Fáil

Labour

Independents4Change

Sinn Féin

Rural Alliance group

Social Democrats-Green Party group

Fianna Fáil.”.

TIME LIMITS TO DEBATE ON PMB (with effect from 14 June 2016)

With effect from 14 June 2016, in Standing Order 144—

- (a) in paragraph (1), to delete “three hours” and substitute “two hours”, and
- (b) in paragraph (2) to delete “six hours in the aggregate” and substitute “four hours in the aggregate, other than a Bill selected for consideration on an alternate Thursday”.

BREAKDOWN OF SPEAKING TIME ON PMB (with effect from 14 June 2016 and until further notice in the 32nd Dáil)

Until further notice in the 32nd Dáil, the deletion of paragraph (4) and the substitution of the following:

“(4) The speech of a member proposing a motion to which any time limit applies shall not exceed 20 minutes and the member proposing, or such other member who has not already spoken as he or she may authorise in that behalf, shall be entitled to not less than 10 minutes for a speech in reply; the speech of any other member in the course of the debate shall not exceed 20 minutes.

Provided that the following time limits and sequence of speakers shall apply on the debate on a

motion proposed by a private member which is limited to two hours:

Proposer	20 minutes
Government	10 minutes
Opposition time	60 minutes
Proposer	10 minutes
Government	10 minutes
Proposer (to reply)	10 minutes

Provided further that the Opposition time shall be allocated as follows:

where Fianna Fáil is the proposer–

- Sinn Féin – 15 minutes;
- the other groups* – 9 minutes each;

where Sinn Féin is the proposer–

- Fianna Fáil – 20 minutes;
- the other groups* – 8 minutes each;

where the proposer is a group which is neither Fianna Fáil nor Sinn Féin–

- Fianna Fáil – 20 minutes;
- Sinn Féin – 10 minutes;
- the other groups* (not including the proposer group) – 7.5 minutes each;

Provided further that a group which consists only of a single party shall have precedence over a technical group.

[For the purposes of this Standing Order, the ‘other groups’ are the Labour Party, AAA-PBP, Independents 4 Change, the Rural Alliance group, and the Social Democrats-Green Party group.]”.*

3. QUESTIONS

MEMBER MAY SEEK INFORMATION RE DISALLOWANCE OF QUESTION (with effect from 14 June 2016)

In Standing Order 37, with effect from 14 June 2016, the deletion of paragraph (1) and the substitution of the following:

“(1)(a) The Ceann Comhairle shall examine every Question in order to ensure that it conforms with the provisions of this Standing Order. The Ceann Comhairle shall rule out of order any Question which does not comply with Standing Orders: Provided that the Ceann Comhairle, or the Clerk under his or her authority, may amend any Question, after consultation with the member responsible for the Question, to secure its compliance with Standing Orders.

(b) Where the Ceann Comhairle has ruled a Question out of order, the member in whose name the Question was put down may, subject to the requirement to accept that ruling, request further information from the Ceann Comhairle regarding the reasons for his or her ruling.”.

REPEAT AND ANTICIPATION RULES (with effect from 14 June 2016)

In Standing Order 37, with effect from 14 June 2016,—

- (a) the deletion of “four months” and the substitution of “two months” in paragraph (3), and
- (b) the deletion of paragraph (6).

TIMES FOR QUESTIONS (with effect from 14 June 2016)

With effect from 14 June 2016, the substitution of the following for Standing Order 38:

“**38.** (1) Unless the Dáil shall otherwise order on motion made by a member of the Government or Minister of State—

- (a) Questions for oral answer to the Taoiseach shall be taken for a period not exceeding forty-five minutes, immediately following—
 - (i) the Order of Business on Tuesday, and
 - (ii) Questions on Promised Legislation on Wednesday,
- (b) Questions for oral answer to other members of the Government shall be taken immediately following—
 - (i) Questions to the Taoiseach on Tuesday and Wednesday, and
 - (ii) the weekly division time on Thursday:

Provided that Questions asked on private notice may be taken by permission of the Ceann Comhairle and shall be asked immediately following topical issues on any day.

(2) The time allowed for Questions, other than Questions to the Taoiseach¹ but including Questions nominated for priority², shall not exceed ninety minutes.”.

QUESTIONS TO THE TAOISEACH (with effect from 14 June 2016)

With effect from 14 June 2016, in Standing Order 39, the deletion of paragraph (1) and the substitution of the following:

- “(1) (a) Questions addressed to the Taoiseach may be asked only on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and shall be placed on the Order Paper before Questions to other members of the Government to be asked on the same day.
- (b) No member may put down more than three Questions to the Taoiseach for oral answer on any one day.
- (c) The time allowed for Taoiseach’s Questions shall not exceed forty-five minutes each day: Provided that the time allowed for each question or group of questions, including any supplementary questions and replies thereto, shall not exceed 15 minutes.
- (d) Any Question to the Taoiseach which appears on the Order Paper and which is not disposed of on the day it first appears shall be placed on the Order Paper for the following and subsequent days before Questions to the Taoiseach to be asked on that day, save that a Question to be taken by the Taoiseach may be placed before Questions to be taken by a Minister of State at his or her Department.
- (e) Where any Question to the Taoiseach is not disposed of in the same week on which it first appears on the Order Paper, the Taoiseach shall cause an answer to be provided in the Official Report of the Debates: Provided that such written answer shall not prejudice the right of the member in whose name the Question appears on the Order Paper to request, within thirty minutes of the conclusion of Question Time on that day, that the Question be addressed again to the Taoiseach on the next day on which he or she is to answer Questions for oral answer.”.

ORDINARY ORAL QUESTIONS (with effect from 14 June 2016)

With effect from 14 June 2016

1. In Standing Order 40,

- (a) In paragraph (1), the deletion of sub-paragraph (ii) and the substitution of the following:
- “(ii) No member may put down Questions in the name of another member. No member may put down more than two Questions to each member of the Government for answer on any one day: Provided that a single relevant spokesperson of a group may put down a maximum of five Questions.”,

¹ S.O. 39.

² S.O. 41.

- (b) the insertion of the following new paragraph:
- “(1A) A Question shall be put by the member in whose name the Question appears on the Order Paper rising in his or her place, indicating the number of the Question on the Order Paper and giving a brief introduction of no more than 30 seconds to the Question, otherwise the Question will not be answered orally: Provided that any member may, on giving 24 hours’ notice, in writing, to the Ceann Comhairle, nominate a substitute to ask the question on his or her behalf. Where Questions put down for oral answer are grouped for reply, the introduction to the group of Questions shall be given by one member only, that being the member with the first Question in the group, or if that member is not available, by the second member, and so on.”,

and

- (c) In paragraph (2)(a), the deletion of “six minutes” and the substitution of “six and a half minutes” and, in sub-paragraph (i) the insertion of “following the 30 second introduction,” before “the time allowed”.

and

2. The deletion of Standing Order 43.

PRIORITY QUESTIONS (with effect from 14 June 2016)

With effect from 14 June 2016, in Standing Order 41(1)-

- (a) In sub-paragraph (i), the deletion of “Standing Order 143(1)” and the substitution of “Standing Order 143”, and
- (b) Until further notice in the 32nd Dáil, the deletion of sub-paragraph (iv) and the substitution of the following:
- “(iv) The sequence in which Questions for answer on any one day shall be placed on the Order Paper shall be so as to rotate between groups, with preference being given to the larger group (preference being decided by lot in any case of equality between groups), provided that a group which consists only of a single party shall have precedence over a technical group, and in accordance with the following rota (over two weeks/six sitting days):

Day	Group	Question No.
Day 1	Fianna Fáil	1.
	Sinn Féin	2.
	Fianna Fáil	3.
	Labour	4.
	Fianna Fáil	5.
Day 2	Fianna Fáil	1.
	Sinn Féin	2.
	Fianna Fáil	3.

	AAA-PBP	4.
	Independents4Change	5.
Day 3	Fianna Fáil	1.
	Sinn Féin	2.
	Fianna Fáil	3.
	Rural Alliance group	4.
	Social Democrats - Green Party group	5.
Day 4	Fianna Fáil	1.
	Sinn Féin	2.
	Fianna Fáil	3.
	Sinn Féin	4.
	Labour	5.
Day 5	Fianna Fáil	1.
	Sinn Féin	2.
	Fianna Fáil	3.
	AAA-PBP	4.
	Independents4Change	5.
Day 6	Fianna Fáil	1.
	Sinn Féin	2.
	Fianna Fáil	3.
	Rural Alliance group	4.
	Social Democrats - Green Party group	5.

.”

and

- (c) In paragraph (2)(a), the deletion of “six minutes” and the substitution of “six and a half minutes” and, in sub-paragraph (i) the insertion of “following the 30 second introduction,” before “the time allowed”.

4. TOPICAL ISSUES (with effect from 14 June 2016)

With effect from 14 June 2016, the adoption of the following new Standing Order:

“29A. (1) Any member may give notice in writing of a matter which he or she wishes to bring forward for consideration as a topical issue, and this may include matters of a national or international nature. Such matters shall be considered on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday on which the Dáil meets.

Provided that topical issues shall reach the Clerk not later than 10 a.m. on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday to be considered for selection on that day.

(2) The Ceann Comhairle shall select a maximum of four such matters for consideration on each Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and may also select one additional such matter as an alternative to be considered in the event one of the other four matters is deferred: Provided that-

- (a) the matters considered on any day shall be limited to a maximum of four,
- (b) all such matters must relate to public affairs connected with a Department of State or to matters of administration for which a member of the Government or Minister of State is officially responsible (including bodies under the aegis of a Department of State in respect of Government policy),
- (c) while the Ceann Comhairle has the ultimate discretion in selecting issues for consideration, s/he will be guided in his/her selection by, *inter alia*, the following principles:
 - (i) the balance of local, national and international issues raised;
 - (ii) the content of the Dáil schedule for that sitting week;
 - (iii) the number of groups (within the meaning of SO 143) represented;
 - (iv) the number of topical issues previously raised by the members concerned;and s/he shall have regard to any requests made pursuant to Standing Order 44A(7).
- (d) where, in exceptional circumstances, the member of the Government or Minister of State officially responsible for the matter is not available on the day, he or she shall, no later than 12 noon, so inform the Ceann Comhairle, who shall advise the member who has given notice and that member shall then be given the option to—
 - (i) defer consideration of the matter to the next day, or
 - (ii) proceed with the matter on the day with the participation of the available member of the Government or Minister of State;
- (e) the first matters to be taken on any day shall be, first, any matter deferred from the previous day and then, if not used on the previous day, the alternative matter chosen by the Ceann Comhairle on the previous day, and the number of other matters to be selected on that day shall be reduced accordingly.

(3) Topical issues selected by the Ceann Comhairle shall be considered immediately following Questions to a member or members of the Government on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

(4) Consideration of each topical issue shall consist of—

- (a) a statement by the member who has given notice which shall not exceed 4 minutes,
- (b) a statement in reply by a member of the Government or Minister of State, pursuant to paragraph (2), which shall not exceed 4 minutes,
- (c) a further statement by the member who has given notice which shall not exceed 2 minutes, and
- (d) a concluding statement by the member of the Government or Minister of State concerned which shall not exceed 2 minutes:

Provided that-

- (i) where the Ceann Comhairle has selected a matter of which valid notice has been given by more than one member and s/he is of the opinion that the number of members sharing time would result in insufficient time for each member to make an adequate contribution, s/he may, subject to paragraph (2), select fewer than four matters and aggregate the time that would ordinarily be assigned to two or more topical issues;
- (ii) the total time allowed for consideration of topical issues on any day shall not exceed 48 minutes;
- (iii) where topical issues on the same matter have been aggregated, and where the member of Government or Minister of State who is officially responsible for the matter is not available on the day, if any of the members who have been selected on the matter wish it to be deferred, then the matter shall be deferred;

(5) The Dáil shall not divide on any matter arising out of consideration of topical issues.

(6) A list of the matters in respect of which notice has been given under this Standing Order and the name of the member concerned in each case shall be printed in the Official Report of the Debates.

CONSEQUENTIAL CHANGES TO OTHER STANDING ORDERS re TOPICAL ISSUES

QUORUM (with effect from 14 June 2016)

With effect from 14 June 2016, in Standing Order 22,

- (a) The insertion of “or a Committee report under Standing Order 91” before “is under consideration”, and
- (b) the deletion of “or while a matter brought forward in accordance with Standing Order 23(3) is being discussed” and the substitution of “or while a matter brought forward in accordance with Standing Order 29A is being discussed”.

ROUTINE OF BUSINESS (with effect from 14 June 2016)

With effect from 14 June 2016, in Standing Order 30, the deletion of “1. Questions” and the substitution of “1. Leaders’ Questions, Questions and topical issues”.

MATTERS SUB JUDICE (with effect from 14 June 2016)

With effect from 14 June 2016, in Standing Order 59(4), to delete “matter raised under Standing Order 23” and substitute “matter raised under Standing Order 29A”.

5. ADEQUACY OF REPLIES TO QUESTIONS AND TOPICAL ISSUES (with effect from 14 June 2016)

With effect from 14 June 2016, the adoption of the following new Standing Order:

“44A. (1) A member of the Government shall, in replying to a Question asked on notice (whether for written or oral reply) or to a topical issue, address each and every request for information contained therein.

(2) A member who is of the opinion that, in relation to either a Question for oral reply or a topical issue put down by him or her, the member of the Government concerned has failed to comply with paragraph (1), may, during the course of proceedings, appeal to the chair, (provided either the Ceann Comhairle or Leas-Cheann Comhairle is in the chair at the time) to instruct the member of the Government to impart the information sought and, to the extent that he or she agrees with the opinion of the member concerned, the Ceann Comhairle or Leas-Cheann Comhairle shall so instruct the member of the Government.

(3) A member, who has not availed of the provisions of paragraph (2), and who is of the opinion that, in relation to either a Question (whether for written or oral reply) or a topical issue put down by him or her, the member of the Government concerned has failed to comply with paragraph (1), may communicate such opinion in writing to the Ceann Comhairle not later than four days after the Question (whether for written or oral reply) or the topical issue has been answered, not reckoning a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday, identifying the specific request or requests for information not addressed in the reply and requesting that the provisions of this Standing Order be applied in order to remedy such failure.

(4) If and to the extent that he or she agrees with the opinion of the member concerned, the Ceann Comhairle shall communicate his or her opinion that there has been a failure to comply with the provisions of paragraph (1) in writing to the member of the Government concerned.

(5) A member of the Government who has been advised in writing that the Ceann Comhairle is of opinion that there has been a failure to comply with the provisions of paragraph (1) shall, not later than 12.30 p.m. on the day following the communication of such opinion, furnish to the Ceann Comhairle a response in writing to each of the requests for information in relation to which there has been, in the opinion of the Ceann Comhairle, a failure to comply with paragraph (1).

(6) (a) Each and every response received pursuant to paragraph (5) shall be included in or otherwise be associated with the Official Report of the Debates to which it relates and shall be laid before the Dáil.

(b) If the member of the Government does not respond under paragraph (5) or the Ceann Comhairle considers the response received still does not comply with the provisions of paragraph (1), the Ceann Comhairle shall, at the end of each Dáil session, prepare and lay before the Dáil a statistical report regarding the occasions of such non-compliance.

(7) A Question in relation to which the Ceann Comhairle has formed the opinion that the member of the Government concerned has failed to comply with paragraph (1) shall not be

taken into account for the purposes of paragraphs (3) or (4) of Standing Order 37.

(8) A member who is of the opinion that a response furnished by a member of the Government in accordance with paragraph (5) has failed to comply with paragraph (1) may communicate such opinion in writing to the Ceann Comhairle not later than four days after the response has been furnished to the Ceann Comhairle, not reckoning a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday, identifying the specific request or requests for information not addressed in the response and requesting that the matter be selected for consideration as a topical issue. [See S.O. 29A]

6. LEADERS' QUESTIONS (with effect from 14 June 2016)

With effect from 14 June 2016, the substitution of the following for Standing Order 29:

- 29.** (a) Unless the Dáil shall otherwise order, the Ceann Comhairle may permit, at his or her discretion, a brief question, about a matter of topical public importance, to the Taoiseach from Leaders in Opposition, which shall be taken—
- (i) at 2 p.m. on Tuesdays, and
 - (ii) at 12 noon on Wednesdays and Thursdays, or at 2 p.m. on a Wednesday where the Dáil sits at 2 p.m.
- (b) The total time allowed for Leaders' Questions on any given day under this Standing Order shall not exceed thirty-two minutes and the number of Leaders' Questions on any day shall not exceed four.
- (c) Each Question shall not exceed three minutes, and the following arrangements shall apply:
- (i) the Taoiseach shall be called upon to reply for a period not exceeding three minutes,
 - (ii) the Leader in Opposition who asked the original question may then ask a brief supplementary question not exceeding one minute,
 - (iii) the Taoiseach shall then be called upon to reply in conclusion for a period not exceeding one minute.
- (d) Until further notice in the 32nd Dáil, the sequence in which Leaders shall be called upon to put Questions each day shall be as follows (rota over three weeks/nine sitting days):

Day	Group	Question No.
Day 1	Fianna Fáil	1.
	Sinn Féin	2.
	Labour	3.
	AAA-PBP	4.
Day 2	Fianna Fáil	1.
	Sinn Féin	2.
	Labour	3.
	Independents4Change	4.
Day 3	Fianna Fáil	1.
	Sinn Féin	2.

	Rural Alliance group	3.
	Social Democrats - Green Party group	4.
Day 4	Fianna Fáil	1.
	Sinn Féin	2.
	Labour	3.
	AAA-PBP	4.
Day 5	Fianna Fáil	1.
	Sinn Féin	2.
	Independents4Change	3.
	Rural Alliance group	4.
Day 6	Fianna Fáil	1.
	Sinn Féin	2.
	Independents4Change	3.
	Social Democrats - Green Party group	4.
Day 7	Fianna Fáil	1.
	Sinn Féin	2.
	Labour	3.
	AAA-PBP	4.
Day 8	Fianna Fáil	1.
	Sinn Féin	2.
	Independents4Change	3.
	Rural Alliance group	4.
Day 9	Fianna Fáil	1.
	Sinn Féin	2.
	Rural Alliance group	3.
	Social Democrats - Green Party group	4.

- (e) The Taoiseach may nominate another member of the Government to take Leaders' Questions in his or her absence. On Thursdays the provisions of this Standing Order shall apply with the substitution of 'Tánaiste' for 'Taoiseach'.

- (f) In this Standing Order, 'Leader in Opposition' means the leader of a group as defined in Standing Order 143: Provided that the Leader of a party which is a group under Standing Order 143(3) shall have precedence over the designated Leader of a group recognised under paragraph (4) of that Standing Order.

CONSEQUENTIAL CHANGES TO OTHER STANDING ORDERS re LEADERS' QUESTIONS

ROUTINE OF BUSINESS (with effect from 14 June 2016)

With effect from 14 June 2016, in Standing Order 30, the deletion of "1. Questions" and the substitution of "1. Leaders' Questions, Questions and topical issues".

7. DIVISIONS

NEW WEEKLY DIVISION TIME (AND LIST OF ITEMS WHERE DIVISIONS WILL BE TAKEN IMMEDIATELY)
(with effect from 14 June 2016)

With effect from 14 June 2016, in Standing Order 70, to delete paragraph (2) and substitute the following:

“(2) After the Ceann Comhairle shall have declared the result, in his or her opinion, of the putting of any question, any member who dissents may demand a division upon that question, whereupon the division shall, subject to paragraph (3), be deferred until the weekly division time on the next Thursday following, at 12.47 p.m.

(3) Unless the Dáil shall otherwise order, divisions demanded on the following matters shall be taken forthwith:

- (a) election of Ceann Comhairle,
- (b) nomination of Taoiseach and members of the Government,
- (c) motion of confidence in the Government or a member of the Government,
- (d) proposals on the Order of Business,
- (e) motion to suspend a member,
- (f) questions arising on the Committee or Report stages of Bills.”.

DIVISION BELLS RUNG AND TIME FOR LOCKING DOORS (with effect from 14 June 2016)

With effect from 14 June 2016, to delete Standing Order 71 and substitute the following:

“**71.** (1) When a division is demanded on any of the matters listed in Standing Order 70(3), the Ceann Comhairle shall (subject to paragraphs (2) and (3))—

- (a) cause the division bells to be rung once for a period of not less than six minutes, and
- (b) the doors to be locked so soon after the lapse of not less than four minutes as he or she shall direct.

(2) Where the question on which the division has been demanded is put immediately after the result of an earlier division has been declared —

- (a) the period for which the division bells are rung shall be not less than three minutes and
- (b) the interval between the ringing of the bells and the locking of the doors shall be not less than two minutes.

(3) Where the division has been demanded by a member who is not a member of a group as defined in Standing Order 143(1), the interval between the ringing of the bells and the locking of the doors shall be not less than two minutes.

(4) At the weekly division time on Thursday, when the time has come to deal with any deferred divisions under Standing Order 70(2), the Ceann Comhairle shall (subject to paragraph (5))—

- (a) cause the division bells to be rung once for a period of not less than six minutes, and

- (b) the doors to be locked so soon after the lapse of not less than four minutes as he or she shall direct.

(5) Where there is more than one question in respect of which a division has been deferred to that time, in respect of the second and subsequent such divisions—

- (a) the period for which the division bells are rung shall be not less than two minutes, and
- (b) the interval between the ringing of the bells and the locking of the doors shall be not less than one minute.”.

DIVISIONS (with effect from 14 June 2016)

With effect from 14 June 2016, in Standing Order 72, to delete “Provided that after the lapse of not less than four or two minutes, as the case may be, as provided in Standing Order 71” and substitute “Provided that after the lapse of not less than four or two minutes or one minute, as the case may be, as provided in Standing Order 71”.

DIVISIONS: CONDUCT of by ELECTRONIC MEANS (with effect from 14 June 2016)

With effect from 14 June 2016, in Standing Order 73(3), the insertion of “where, in the result of that division, the difference between the “Tá” and “Níl” votes is 10 or less,” after “which has been taken by electronic means”.

8. **ABSTENTIONS** (with effect from the beginning of the Autumn session)

With effect from the beginning of the Autumn session in September 2016, the substitution of the following for Standing Order 77:

“Casting vote and abstentions.

77. (1) Questions in the Dáil or in a Committee of the whole Dáil, shall, save as otherwise provided by the Constitution, be determined by a majority of the votes of the members present and voting, other than the Ceann Comhairle, or presiding member, who shall have and exercise a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.³

(2) The phrase “members present and voting” means “members present and casting an affirmative or negative vote” and the phrase “to abstain” means “to refrain from voting either for or against the question”.

(3) Members may formally register their abstention but members who abstain from voting, whether they choose to formally register their abstention or not, shall be considered as not voting: Provided that the names of Members who formally register abstention shall be recorded as abstaining in the Journal of the Proceedings of the Dáil.”.

³ See Article 15.11 of the Constitution.

9. CHAIRS AND MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

D'HONDT (with immediate effect)

With immediate effect, in Standing Order 93, the deletion of paragraph (2) and the substitution of the following:

“(2) A proportion of Chairman posts shall be allocated to the party or parties in Government and each group in the Dáil (as defined in Standing Order 143). Such proportion shall be calculated according to the d'Hondt system, and under such system, the party or parties in Government and each group shall choose a particular Chairman post as the posts are allocated, excluding posts already allocated by Standing Orders or by Order of the Dáil: Provided that a Government party may not choose the Chairmanship of the Committee of Public Accounts. The House shall appoint all Chairmen, in accordance with the provisions of this Standing Order and of Standing Orders generally.”

CHOICE OF SUBSTITUTE LEFT TO MEMBER'S OWN DISCRETION (with effect from 14 June 2016)

With effect from 14 June 2016, in Standing Order 95 to delete paragraph (2) and substitute the following:

“(2) In the absence of a member nominated to serve on a Select or Special Committee, a substitute may be nominated to take part in the proceedings and shall be entitled to vote in the absent member's stead and to move motions and amendments in his or her own name: Provided that, for the purpose of this Standing Order, a substitute shall only be recognised as such where the absent member has informed the Committee Clerk, in writing, of the name of his or her substitute before the Committee meeting begins and, where the substitute intends to move motions and amendments in his or her own name, before the expiry of the relevant deadline for submission.”.

10. GROUPS

With immediate effect, in Standing Order 143D, the deletion of paragraph (2) and the substitution of the following:

“(2) Where a member leaves a party and joins another, or, in the case of a non-party member, where that member joins a party, he or she is considered part of his or her new political party for group purposes, provided that his or her membership is in compliance with the rules contained in these Standing Orders relating to membership of groups: Provided further that the addition of a member or members to a party otherwise than at a bye-election or a general election shall be disregarded when determining the precedence of a party.”.

11. BUSINESS FOR ALTERNATE THURSDAY EVENINGS

The deletion of Standing Order 91 and the substitution of the following:

“Debating of reports from Committees

91. (1) Where a Standing, Select, Special or Joint Committee, as the case may be, makes a report containing a request that the report be debated by the Dáil, a motion to consider the report shall, as soon as practicable after the adoption of the report by the Committee, be placed on the Order Paper: Provided that any such motion which is not moved within twelve months from the date on which it was first placed on the Order Paper shall be deemed to have lapsed, but without prejudice to the right to put down such motion again.

(2) The Committee Chairman may give notice that he or she wishes to bring forward for consideration on an alternate Thursday, a Committee report that has been laid before the Dáil and in respect of which a motion to consider the report is listed on the Order Paper: Provided that such notice shall be received by the Business Committee not later than 11 a.m. on the fourth day preceding the weekly meeting of the Business Committee.

(3) The Committee report to be considered on an alternate Thursdays shall be determined by the Business Committee.

(4) The time allowed for the debate on the motion to consider the report shall not exceed a period of two hours in the aggregate.

Provided that the following time limits and sequence of speakers shall apply to the debate:

- (a) the speeches of—
 - (i) the member proposing the motion who shall be the Chairman of the Committee or another member of the Committee nominated in his or her stead, and
 - (ii) a member of the Government or Minister of State, who shall outline the Government’s response to the report, including the Government’s response to any recommendations contained therein,shall not exceed 15 minutes in each case;
- (b) the speech of each other member called upon shall not exceed 10 minutes;
- (c) a member of the Government or Minister of State, who may speak twice, shall be entitled to make a speech immediately before the reply by the proposer, which shall not exceed 10 minutes;
- (d) the proposer shall be entitled to not more than 10 minutes for a speech in reply; and
- (e) all members shall be entitled to share their time.”.

and

The adoption of the following new Standing Order:

“Private Members’ Bills on alternate Thursdays

140A. (1) Any member other than a member of the Government or Minister of State may give notice that he or she wishes to bring forward for consideration, on an alternate Thursday, a Bill that has been initiated by him or her and that is listed on the Order Paper at Second Stage or order for Second Stage: Provided that such notice shall be received by the Business Committee not later than 11 a.m. on the fourth day preceding the weekly meeting of the Business Committee.

(2) The Private Members’ Bill to be considered on an alternate Thursdays shall be determined by the Business Committee.

(3) Any Bill to be considered on an alternate Thursday pursuant to this Standing Order shall be set down for Second Stage and the time allowed for the debate on the motion for second reading shall not exceed a period of two hours in the aggregate:

Provided that the following time limits and sequence of speakers shall apply to the debate:

- (a) the speeches of—
 - (i) the member proposing the motion for the second reading of the Bill, and
 - (ii) a member of the Government or Minister of State,shall not exceed 15 minutes in each case;
- (b) the speech of each other member called upon shall not exceed 10 minutes;
- (c) a member of the Government or Minister of State, who may speak twice, shall be entitled to make a speech immediately before the reply by the proposer, which shall not exceed 5 minutes;
- (d) the proposer shall be entitled to not more than 10 minutes for a speech in reply; and
- (e) all members shall be entitled to share their time.”.