



*Minutes of the Commission
Tuesday, 17th July, 2012*

1. The seventh meeting of the Commission of 2012 took place at 12.00 p.m. in Room 2, Leinster House.

2. **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Deputy Seán Barrett, Ceann Comhairle (Chairperson), Senator Paddy Burke, Cathaoirleach of the Seanad (Deputy Chairperson), Deputy John Browne, Deputy Catherine Byrne, Mr. Kieran Coughlan, Secretary General, Deputy Frank Feighan, Senator Marc MacSharry, Deputy Dan Neville, Senator Tom Sheahan, Deputy Jack Wall and Senator John Whelan.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting of 12th June, 2012, were agreed by the Commission.

4. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

- (i) **Parliamentary Channel**

The Commission noted that an interim report was received from the consultants and presented to the sub-Committee on Communications on 21 June. A number of outstanding issues arising from the report are being progressed and the final report will be brought before the Commission when available.

- (ii) **Restaurants in Agriculture House, National Library and National Museum**

The Commission noted that arrangements are in place to facilitate visiting groups in the restaurants in the National Library and the National Gallery to avoid over congestion in the Leinster Houses restaurants at peak times. The Superintendent's Section will circulate the details to members shortly. The Commission also noted that the catering facilities in Agriculture House may be used by members and staff only.

- (iii) **JobBridge Initiative**

The Commission noted the JobBridge Steering Group met at the end of June and discussed the issue of political parties taking on interns through the Initiative. No decision was made at the meeting however a decision is expected following the Group's next meeting at the end of July or the first week in August and the Commission will be advised of their decision when known.

(iv) Update on contacts with former members regarding the return of pre-paid envelopes

The Commission noted that 20,535 envelopes have now been returned, with a value of €12,584.90. Contact with former members is on-going and it was agreed that current members would be asked to return any surplus envelopes they have and desist from drawing down further supplies if they do not require them.

(v) Use of the Print Facility and the McKenna judgement

The Commission noted the Dáil Committee on Procedure and Privilege has agreed to engage Senior Counsel to examine the impact of the McKenna and Coughlan judgements on members with a view to addressing concerns in an appropriate way, including legislation.

5. UPDATE ON WORKS TO THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF IRELAND

The Commission noted that the Phase 1 and Phase 2 works to the National Gallery are expected to be completed within the two-year timeframe as previously indicated [07-01-12]. Mr. John McMahon, Commissioner for Public Works, advised the Commission that the OPW wish to carry out Phase 3 restorative works to the National Gallery over a further period of two years from early 2013 which would necessitate the retention of the compound in the Merrion Street car park of Leinster House up to 2015 approximately.

The Commission noted that this was not envisaged when the original permission for the compound was granted in 2010. As the compound is posing car parking issues around Merrion Lawn, the Commission advised the OPW to make a new submission to the Commission detailing the exact works to take place and timeline and the need for the compound to be located on its current site. The Commission would consider the request on foot of that submission.

6. PROPOSALS RE: CATERING MANAGER AND CATERING FACILITIES

It was agreed to proceed with the recruitment of a catering manager and that a member of the Commission should be a member of the interview board. It was further agreed to establish a sub-Committee to consider proposals in relation to the future operation of the catering facilities.

7. BUSINESS CASE REGARDING THE PURCHASE OF MEDIA TABLET DEVICES

The Commission agreed a business case [07-03-12] for the purchase of media tablet devices as part of the suite of equipment for members. This is a necessary element of cost saving measures as the Houses of the Oireachtas Service moves towards paperless operations.

8. INTERIM REPORT ON THE RESOURCING OF COMMITTEE SECRETARIAT

The Commission noted an update provided on the review of the staff resources of the Committee Secretariat [07-04-12].

9. INFORMATION ITEMS FOR NOTING

The Commission noted the Revised Statement of Service from the Library & Research Service [07-05-12].

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Commission agreed that additional resources would be considered for a partially sighted member to assist the member in carrying out their parliamentary functions.

SEÁN BARRETT, T.D.,
Ceann Comhairle and Chairperson of the Commission.

Dated: