



**Coimisiún Thithe
an Oireachtais
Houses of the
Oireachtas Commission**

*Minutes of Commission Meeting
Monday 31 May 2021*

The sixth meeting of the Commission of 2021 took place at 11.00 a.m. via MS Teams.

1. MEMBERS PRESENT

Deputy Seán Ó Fearghaíl, Ceann Comhairle (Chairperson), Senator Mark Daly, Cathaoirleach of the Seanad (Deputy Chairperson), Deputy Joe Carey; Senator Seán Kyne; Deputy Jennifer Murnane O'Connor; Deputy Louise O'Reilly; Senator Ned O'Sullivan; Deputy Duncan Smith; and Senator Mark Wall.

Apologies were received from Deputy Francis Noel Duffy and Mr. Peter Finnegan (Secretary General).

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the meeting of 26 April 2021 were agreed by the Commission.

3. REPORT FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Senator Mark Daly, Cathaoirleach and Chair of the Finance Committee, presented the following reports from the Finance Committee:

(i) Financial and Output Report: January - March 2021

The Commission noted the report.

(ii) Recommendation on the Hosting of Interparliamentary Meetings by the Houses

The Commission approved the recommendation from the Finance Committee that the Houses host a programme of interparliamentary meetings and conferences over the period 2022 – 2024 with an estimated overall funding of €1.2 million.

4. ICT Strategy Implementation

Digital Transformation: ICT Projects Status and Expenditure Report (May 2021)

The Commission noted the 2021 ICT Digital Transformation Projects Status and Expenditure Report (May 2021).

5. SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT FOR THE PRINT FACILITY

The Commission noted a legal opinion from the Chief Parliamentary Legal Adviser in relation to the Service Level Agreement for the Print Facility and agreed to refer it to the Print Users' Council for consideration having regard to the Council's role in overseeing the operation of the SLA.

The Commission also agreed to provide the legal opinion to the Seanad Committee on Parliamentary Privileges and Oversight.

6. MEMBERS' PUBLIC REPRESENTATION ALLOWANCE

Revised audit guidelines on expenditure under the Public Representation Allowance (PRA)

The Commission had before it revised guidelines for members of the Houses on expenditure under the Public Representation Allowance (PRA).

The Commission:

- (i) approved the proposed amendments to the Guidelines, and agreed that the Guidelines, as amended, would be circulated to members;
- (ii) approved the draft letter from the Chairperson of the Commission to be circulated with the Guidelines;
- (iii) approved a one-year extension to the external auditor's contract in accordance with the extension option under the terms of the current contract.

7. PROTOCOL FOR FORMER MEMBERS' ACCESS TO LEINSTER HOUSE

The Commission approved a *Protocol for Former Members' Access to Leinster House*. It noted that the Former Members' Association was consulted in the development of the Protocol.

8. PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE LEINSTER HOUSE PRECINCT

Mr. John McMahon, OPW Commissioner, briefed the Commission on progress of work planned for the Leinster House Campus.

The Commission requested that progress be made on the installation of covered bicycle parking spaces in the Leinster House campus and agreed that the matter would be considered again at its next meeting.

It was also agreed that the OPW Art Adviser would bring a proposal to the Commission on the commissioning of a public art project for Leinster House, funded through the *Per Cent for Art Scheme* allocation included in the OPW budget for the Georgian Leinster House structural project.

The Commission thanked Mr. McMahon for his assistance to the Commission and wished him well on his forthcoming retirement.

9. ADVISORY WORKING GROUP ON PORTRAITURE AND OTHER ART WORKS

The Commission agreed to establish an Advisory Working Group on Portraiture and other Art to consider matters related to the selection and commissioning of portraits and the acquisition of art works for the Leinster House complex, and to make recommendations on these matters to the Commission for final approval.

It also agreed that membership of the Advisory Working Group would consist of the following persons:

- five members of Dáil Éireann, including the Ceann Comhairle;
- three members of Seanad Éireann, including the Cathaoirleach who shall be the Chairperson of the Advisory Working Group;
- the Art Advisor, Office of Public Works;
- the Superintendent of the Houses of the Oireachtas;
- the Head of Communications, Houses of the Oireachtas Service;
- the Head of Facilities, Houses of the Oireachtas Service.

The Commission agreed the guidelines for the Advisory Working Group subject to inclusion of the following:

- (i) The Advisory Working Group should strive to achieve gender balance in the commissioning and display of all portraits and the acquisition of art works.
- (ii) Responsibility for the selection of art works for display in the private offices of office holders (the Ceann Comhairle, Cathaoirleach, Leas-Cheann Comhairle and Leas-Chathaoirleach) will lie with the relevant office holder.
- (iii) Responsibility for the selection of art works for display in the Dáil and Seanad Chambers will lie with the respective office holder in consultation with the OPW Art Adviser and the Committee on Parliamentary Privileges and Oversight of the relevant House.
- (iv) The Advisory Working Group should advise on a suitable location within the precincts of Leinster House for the display of the flag presented by President Kennedy to the Irish people.

The amended Guidelines are set out in the Appendix to these minutes.

10. UPDATE FROM FACILITIES MANAGEMENT SERVICES

The Commission received a verbal update from the Head of Facilities Management.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (i) *Information items*

The Commission noted:

- (a) an update on the SIPTU pay claim submitted for staff employed under the Scheme for Secretarial Assistance for Members;
- (b) copy of a letter issued to members of the Commission by the Assistant Secretary, Corporate and Members' Services, in relation to the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (Amendment) Bill 2021.

(ii) *Correspondence*

The Commission noted the following correspondence:

- (a) letter from the Seanad Committee on Parliamentary Privileges and Oversight in relation to the Working Group on the Oireachtas Commemorative Programme for the 2021-2023 phase of the Decade of Centenaries;
- (b) email from the Women's Parliamentary Caucus regarding support for the work of the Caucus;
- (c) letter from the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform acknowledging receipt of the Report of the Independent Review of the System for Recording Members' Attendance at Leinster House.
- (d) letter from the Seanad Committee on Parliamentary Privileges and Oversight in relation to the Service Level Agreement for the Print Facility.
- (e) Email from the Senator Mark Daly, Cathaoirleach, in relation to the business of the meeting.
- (f) Email from Senator Seán Kyne in relation to the Public Representation Allowance for Members.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 21 June 2021



SEÁN Ó FEARGHAÍL, T.D.

Ceann Comhairle and Chairperson of the Commission

Dated:

APPENDIX

Oireachtas Advisory Working Group on Portraiture and other Art Works

(approved by the Commission on 31 May 2021)

Guidelines

1. Responsibility for recommending the authorisation and placement of all future portraits and art works (in whatever medium) lies with the Oireachtas Advisory Working Group on Portraiture and other Art. The Advisory Working Group will make recommendations to the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission which will have the final say in such matters.
2. The OPW Art Adviser will advise and assist the above Advisory Working Group in the selection and commissioning of all portraits and the acquisition of art works.
3. The Government decision of 1959 to display painted portraits of all Taoisigh in Leinster House after they retire from the Oireachtas should continue to be implemented.
4. Portraits of former Tánaistí should be displayed in Leinster House. Posthumous portraits are not as successful artistically as portraits of living sitters. For this reason, photographic portraits of Tánaistí are recommended. This series of photographic portraits could be advantageously grouped in one location in Leinster House. Installation of these portraits will adhere to the same principle as portraits of Taoisigh and Cinn Comhairle.
5. The current practice of commissioning mixed media portraits of all Cinn Comhairle shall continue.
6. The current practice of displaying framed photographs of Cathaoirligh and Leaders of the Seanad shall continue.
7. Historic portraits of fine artistic quality or special political significance should be acquired when opportunities arise if approved by the Advisory Working Group on Portraiture and Other Art Works. The Advisory Working Group will make recommendations to the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission.
8. The current practice of displaying the portrait of the serving President should be continued, subject to the prior consent of that President.
9. The installation of small framed photographic portraits of Party Members in the modern wing of the Houses of the Oireachtas, Leinster House 2000, should have the prior approval of the Advisory Working Group.
10. Proposed loans and donations of art works to the Houses of Oireachtas should first be submitted to the Advisory Working Group who will seek the opinion of the OPW Art Adviser before a recommendation is made to accept or decline. Responsibility for the installation of art works in private offices should lie with the Office-holders.

11. The Advisory Working Group should consider some modern art works other than portraits for installation in Leinster House in appropriate locations, such as the Dining Rooms. These art works could be rotated by OPW on a five year basis.
12. The Advisory Working Group should advise on a suitable location within the precincts of Leinster House for the display of the flag presented by President Kennedy to the Irish people.
13. The highest artistic standards should be aimed for in all art works situated in the Houses of the Oireachtas. Installation of all art works should be as harmonious as possible given the limited spaces available in Leinster House.
14. Responsibility for the display of historic documents, artefacts and records should lie with the Head of Facilities of the Houses of the Oireachtas.
15. The Advisory Working Group should strive to achieve gender balance in the commissioning and display of all portraits and the acquisition of art works.
16. Responsibility for the selection of art works for display in the private offices of office holders (the Ceann Comhairle, Cathaoirleach, Leas-Cheann Comhairle and Leas-Chathaoirleach) will lie with the relevant office holder.
17. Responsibility for the selection of art works for display in the Dáil and Seanad Chambers will lie with the respective office holder in consultation with the OPW Art Adviser and the Committee on Parliamentary Privileges and Oversight of the relevant House.
18. The handling of all art works in the Houses of the Oireachtas should be undertaken only on the instruction of the Head of Facilities in consultation with the OPW Art Management Office.
19. An up-to-date inventory of art works located in the Houses of the Oireachtas should be maintained by the OPW Art Management Office in consultation with the Head of Facilities.