

## MINUTES OF MEETING

**Date:** Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2000  
**Time:** 8.30am  
**Venue:** Presiding Officer's room (A3.13)

**Present:** William Graham, Conservative Party Business Manager, Chair  
Presiding Officer  
Minister for Assembly Business  
Jocelyn Davies, Plaid Cymru Party Business Manager  
David Melding, Conservative group  
Jenny Randerson, Liberal Democrat Party Business Manager  
John Lloyd, Clerk to the Assembly  
David Lambert, OPO Legal Adviser  
Sherry Rees, Clerk to the Business Committee  
Andrew George, Clerk to the Business Committee (designate)  
Marion Stapleton, PS/Minister for Assembly Business  
Craig Stephenson, Chamber Secretariat  
Alun Gruffudd, PS/Deputy Presiding Officer

**1. Apologies**

1.1 None.

1.2 Jocelyn Davies attended as the Business Manager for the Plaid Cymru group. Until she was elected in the afternoon's plenary session she would be attending as a substitute for Ieuan Wyn Jones under Standing Order 13.3. David Melding was also attending under Standing Order 13.3 to replace William Graham who had been asked by the Presiding Officer to Chair the meeting in the absence of a Deputy Presiding Officer and in accordance with Standing Order 13.4.

1.3 The Committee recorded its thanks to Sherry Rees, the outgoing Clerk to the Business Committee who was attending her final meeting. Andrew George, her replacement, was welcomed.

**2. Minutes of the previous meeting****BC273-00 (draft)**

2.1 Some amendments were suggested. They would be incorporated and resubmitted to the Committee as the final version for publication. **Action:**  
**Chamber Secretariat**

**3. Matters arising**

3.1 **Paragraph 3.2** - The proposal that Cabinet financial briefs could be shared with Members proposing to submit amendments to motions that could affect the forward work programmes of Committees would be considered at the next meeting of the full Cabinet. The Minister for Assembly Business

would report back at the next meeting. **Action: Minister for Assembly Business**

3.2 **Paragraph 3.4** - The Minister for Assembly Business would bring forward the views of the First Minister on altering the format of his question time to the next meeting. **Action: The Minister for Assembly Business**

3.3 **Paragraph 3.5** - It was understood that Jane Davidson, former Chair of the Committee, had written to J Barry Jones of the Welsh Governance Centre. The Committee agreed that until a new Deputy Presiding Officer and Chair to the Business Committee was elected and had settled in, it would be inappropriate for this proposal to be pursued. This position would be indicated to Mr Jones when he responded. **Action: Alun Gruffudd**

3.4 **Paragraph 7.7** - The Table Office would be submitting a paper relating to its functions and publishing deadlines for the next meeting of the Business Committee. **Action: Table Office**

#### **4. Matters referred from plenary**

4.1 None.

#### **5. Advice to Assembly on procedures**

5.1 Business Managers had been requested to consider paper BC262-00 on tying the end time of Thursday morning plenary sessions to Standing Orders by the meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> October.

5.2 The Committee had been asked to reconsider options for Christmas constituency weeks with their groups and report back (BC258-00, BC185-00 and BC157-00). The Minister for Assembly Business said that the Labour group was considering the issue at its group meeting later in the day. Jocelyn Davies said that the Plaid Cymru group was also considering the issue at its group meeting. Jenny Randerson said that her group maintained its previous view that it preferred option two in paper BC157-00. However, her group would adhere to the previous agreement made in Business Committee and would not criticise it. William Graham had provided the Conservative group view by Email that we should uphold the previous decision of the Committee - namely 4 weeks. The Presiding Officer said that he preferred the four week option since it gave staff an opportunity to take leave during the middle two weeks. It was agreed that Business Managers would discuss the issue outside Committee so that agreement could be reached as soon as possible. **Action: Business Managers**

5.3 The Committee had considered paper BC272-00 on proposed constituency weeks in 2001. Since then a further paper (BC275-00) providing details of the House of Commons, Scottish Parliament and National Assembly for Wales recess dates had been circulated. Business Managers were asked to provide a view at next week's meeting. **Action: Business Managers to consider**

## 6. Committees

6.1 Marie Knox had proposed that Business Managers might wish to consider a "quick fix" re-election of the existing subject committees with amended portfolios (viz the two 'education' committees) and titles. This would provide a legal basis for committees to work during the time it would take for groups to consider subject committee membership and chairs. It was agreed that the proposal would provide a useful temporary solution if there was a hiatus in agreeing revised committee memberships. The Minister for Assembly Business advised that he would be unable to bring forward any re-election proposals until Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> October.

6.2 The Minister for Assembly Business said that groups would also be looking a wholesale review of committee membership. David Melding added that the assignment of subject committee Chairs would also need to be looked at. It was noted that the number of Chairs per party was allocated proportionally in line with party balance in accordance with the Act. It would not be possible, therefore, for the proportion of Chairs per party to alter.

## 7. Forthcoming business

7.1 The Committee considered the draft business statement (BC276-00). The Minister for Assembly Business detailed some amendments.

### Proposed business for the weeks commencing 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> October and 6<sup>th</sup> November 2000

7.2 The Committee's advice to the Minister for Assembly Business on his proposed statement about the organisation of the Assembly's business for the weeks commencing 23<sup>rd</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> October and 6<sup>th</sup> November was that it should proceed as outlined in the amended draft business statement.

### This week's business

7.3 The Minister for Assembly Business said that the Liberal Democrat minority party debate had been withdrawn. Jocelyn Davies confirmed that Plaid Cymru did not wish to extend its hour to take up the additional hour. Craig Stephenson distributed paper BC277-00 on the allocation of minority party debates which Business Managers agreed to consider. **Action: Business Managers**

7.4 The Minister for Assembly Business said that the First Minister would be making a statement on the Cabinet re-shuffle in the afternoon's plenary session. This would be followed by a statement from the Economic Development Minister on job losses at Sony, Pencoed.

7.5 The Presiding Officer noted the statutory basis of the terms First Secretary and Assembly Secretary and indicated his willingness to use the new terms of First Minister and Ministers at plenary sessions. The Minister for Assembly Business thanked him for that and noted that legal documents would use the term First Secretary and Assembly Secretary as designated in the

Government of Wales Act. It was agreed that consideration should be given to amending the interpretation section of the Standing Orders. Chamber Secretariat would circulate a proposed form of words to Business Managers.

**Action: Chamber Secretariat**

7.6 David Melding said that his group would be opposing the proposed nomination of Rosemary Butler as Deputy Presiding Officer since it was being seen as an extension of a Cabinet re-shuffle and her election might bring into question the future impartiality of the post. Jocelyn Davies said that she agreed to the view put forward by David Melding.

7.7 Jocelyn Davies was concerned that the debate on the Standard Spending Assessment had been withdrawn. The Minister for Assembly Business apologised for not letting party Business Managers know earlier and would try to avoid any such delay in future. However, he thought that it would have been inappropriate to hold the debate prior to the debate on the Assembly's budget.

7.8 The Minister for Assembly Business said that the Minister for Finance and Communities would be answering questions previously tabled for answer by Peter Law on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> October. He added that he would also be looking at the allocation of time slots for questions to Cabinet Ministers.

## **8. Subordinate legislation**

8.1 None.

## **9. Revisions to Standing Orders**

9.1 None.

## **10. Presiding Officer rulings**

10.1 None.

## **11. Any other business**

11.1 None.

**CHAMBER SECRETARIAT**