

## MEMBERS PRIVILEGES SUB-COMMITTEE

31 January 2012

**Minutes of the meeting of the MEMBERS PRIVILEGES SUB-COMMITTEE held at Guildhall, EC2 on WEDNESDAY, 31 JANUARY 2012 at 3.00 pm.**

### **Present**

#### **Members:**

Deputy Richard Regan, Chairman	Oliver Lodge
Deputy Ken Ayers	Edward Lord
Deputy John Barker	Barbara Newman
Mark Boleat	Deputy Janet Owen
Deputy Anthony Eskenzi	

#### **Officers:**

Peter Nelson	- Assistant Town Clerk
Gregory Moore	- Town Clerk's Department

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Stuart Fraser and Deputy The Revd Stephen Haines.

### **2. DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF PERSONAL OR PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THIS MEETING**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **3. MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

The Sub-Committee considered a verbal item of the Town Clerk concerning the position of the Member Development Steering Group and its relationship to the Members Privileges Sub-Committee, and how Member training and development issues should be taken forward henceforth.

The Assistant Town Clerk explained the background and circumstances in which the Member Development Steering Group had been established, clarifying that it was never formally established by a Grand Committee but rather was an informal group set up by the Chief Commoner of the day in order to address growing issues which were then arising with regards the development needs of Members. Over the past several years, the work of the Group had gathered momentum and had been successful in improving the developmental and training provision afforded to Members, for example briefings for new Members to a Committee by Chief Officers, Chairmanship training sessions, and so on.

However, with the Governance Review granting responsibility for the area of Member development to the Members Privileges Sub-Committee, and the

burgeoning importance of the issue with the upcoming 2013 elections and a possible influx of new Members, a decision needed to be made as to the formalisation of the relationship between the two bodies and the remit which would be afforded to the Steering Group, should the wish be that it should continue to exist.

Members were satisfied that the Steering Group had worked successfully to date and that it should continue to operate; however, it was agreed that formal countenance for the Group was desirable, with an agreed remit and membership. It was decided that the present Membership with the inclusion of the Chief Commoner Elect would be suitable, and that the formal remit of the Steering Group should entail the continuation of a development programme. The Assistant Town Clerk was accordingly asked to liaise with the Member Development Steering Group after the meeting to devise suitable wording for this remit, and communicate this to Members of the Privileges Sub-Committee for final approval, in order that the situation was resolved satisfactorily as swiftly as possible.

It was further agreed that the Members Privileges Sub-Committee should meet every six months henceforth in order to oversee the work of the Member Development Steering Group, which was to provide a progress report of the work to date on each occasion.

RESOLVED: That:-

- The current Membership of the Member Development Steering Group be ratified, subject to the inclusion of the Chief Commoner Elect;
- The Town Clerk be authorised to agree the final remit of the Member Development Steering Group, in consultation with the Members of the Steering Group and the Members Privileges Sub-Committee; and,
- The Steering Group be asked to report their progress back to the Sub-Committee on a six-monthly basis

#### **4. QUESTIONS IS Difficulties**

A Member made reference to difficulties encountered with the Corporation IS equipment, with certain useful websites being inaccessible. Members were urged to contact the IS Helpdesk should they encounter any difficulties, and were advised that it would be more appropriate to leave IS-related issues for discussion by the Information Systems Sub-Committee in order to avoid duplicitous or conflicting resolutions.

#### **Banquets at Mansion House**

The issue of ticket allocation for banquets at Mansion House was discussed, and dissatisfaction expressed with the current rota system used. It was suggested that the annual letter providing the dates of forthcoming banquets be circulated earlier and ask Members to indicate their preferences, which would allow those with particular interests to have a greater chance of attending an appropriate event. A variety of methods which could be employed to avoid any difficulties caused by over-subscription and which would ensure the system was fair were suggested. Reference was also made to software which would

perform most of the work thus saving officer time, and it was advised that these suggestions and others would be considered as part of the joined-up review.

## 5. URGENT ITEMS

### Order of Seniority

A note was circulated outlining the way in which the order of seniority amongst Common Councilmen was calculated, and an inaccuracy in the current Members' Pocket Book was noted.

The Assistant Town Clerk commented that the note was helpful in accurately reflecting the way in which seniority had, historically, been calculated.

A query was raised as to what would happen if a Common Councilman become an Alderman and, following a period of service, resigned and returned to being a Common Councilman. The opinion was expressed that, as it was unbroken service and Aldermen were part of the Court of Common Council, it should be considered to be continuous service for the purposes of calculating seniority, and this was agreed. It was also clarified that Aldermen had their own method for calculating seniority within that Court.

Some Members expressed dissatisfaction at the way in which seniority governed seating plans at some luncheons or dinners, such that Members may not be seated next to the most appropriate individuals in terms of networking and benefit to the Corporation.

The Assistant Town Clerk referred to a lot of work that has been done by this Committee's predecessor, which had considered seating at functions on an almost monthly basis. The result, with functions in Guildhall, had been to break away from and introduce flexibility into what had been a rather rigid system and an acknowledgement that some of the functions in Mansion House recognised other protocols but still enabled a degree of 'flex'.

The Chief Commoner commented that the issue of seating plans was being discussed as part of the 'joining-up review', but that he had ensured that, until the work was complete, he was given sight of seating plans in advance of dinners to assist in ensuring that Members were seated as appropriately as possible within the limits available.

### **RESOLVED:** That:-

- 1) Mr Lord be thanked for producing the notes submitted this day.
- 2) The principles for calculating the Order of Seniority in the Pocket Book be agreed as set out in the note provided by Mr Lord, viz:-
  - i) The Order of Civic Seniority amongst the Commoners is calculated principally according to the date of election and their total period of service.
  - ii) The following rules apply:

- a) Where a number of Members are elected on the same day, seniority amongst them be calculated:
- alphabetically by Ward (Aldersgate being first, Walbrook being last); and
  - if there were more than one new Member elected for the same Ward on the same day, then seniority be alphabetically between those Members
- b) Where a Member has a period away from the Court and then is re-elected, their seniority is calculated by totalling their number of years' service and deducting it from the year on which they were re-elected to the Court (and then being placed after other Members in that 'year').
- c) Aldermen, whether former Common Councilmen or not, who are elected to serve as Common Councilmen after their service on the Aldermanic Court, would take their seniority according to their total length of service on Common Council, including as an Alderman.
- 3) The broad guidance in Mr Lord's note encouraging flexibility in the seating arrangements at functions be referred to the events co-ordination group.

**The meeting closed at 3.55pm**

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**CHAIRMAN**

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