

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

HOUSE OF COMMONS
OFFICIAL REPORT

Fifteenth Delegated Legislation Committee

SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE FOR THE INDEPENDENT
PARLIAMENTARY STANDARDS AUTHORITY

Monday 25 February 2019

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Friday 1 March 2019

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The Committee consisted of the following Members:

Chair: SIR ROGER GALE

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| † Aldous, Peter (<i>Waveney</i>) (Con) | † Maynard, Paul (<i>Lord Commissioner of Her Majesty's Treasury</i>) |
| † Bebb, Guto (<i>Aberconwy</i>) (Con) | † Pawsey, Mark (<i>Rugby</i>) (Con) |
| † Bradshaw, Mr Ben (<i>Exeter</i>) (Lab) | † Prentis, Victoria (<i>Banbury</i>) (Con) |
| † Campbell, Sir Alan (<i>Tynemouth</i>) (Lab) | † Spelman, Dame Caroline (<i>Second Church Estates Commissioner</i>) |
| † Flint, Caroline (<i>Don Valley</i>) (Lab) | † Stevenson, John (<i>Carlisle</i>) (Con) |
| † Hill, Mike (<i>Hartlepool</i>) (Lab) | † Vaz, Valerie (<i>Walsall South</i>) (Lab) |
| † Law, Chris (<i>Dundee West</i>) (SNP) | |
| † Leadsom, Andrea (<i>Leader of the House of Commons</i>) | Ben Sneddon, <i>Committee Clerk</i> |
| † Lefroy, Jeremy (<i>Stafford</i>) (Con) | |
| † McMorris, Anna (<i>Cardiff North</i>) (Lab) | |
| Malhotra, Seema (<i>Feltham and Heston</i>) (Lab/Co-op) | † attended the Committee |

Fifteenth Delegated Legislation Committee

Monday 25 February 2019

[SIR ROGER GALE *in the Chair*]

Speaker's Committee for the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority

4.30 pm

The Chair: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. It may not be worth hon. Members' while to take their jackets off, but if they wish to do so, they may.

The Leader of the House of Commons (Andrea Leadsom): I beg to move,

That the Committee has considered the motion, That, in pursuance of paragraph 2A of Schedule 3 of the Parliamentary Standards Act 2009, Ms Cindy Butts be appointed as a lay member of the Speaker's Committee for the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority for a period of five years from 1 March 2019 to 29 February 2024.

The motion seeks the appointment of a new lay member to the Speaker's Committee for the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority, which is not a conventional Committee of this House but a statutory Committee. Its establishment, role and membership are determined by the Parliamentary Standards Act 2009, as amended by the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010. The Committee has two key responsibilities: to consider the candidates proposed by the Speaker following fair and open competition for the posts of chair and members of IPSA, and to approve IPSA's annual estimate of resources. The legislation sets out the membership of the Committee, which comprises the Speaker, the Leader of the House and the chair of the Standards Committee, by virtue of their offices, as well as five Back-Bench Members and three lay members.

The appointment of lay members to the Speaker's Committee was recommended by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in its report on Members' expenses and allowances in November 2009. The CSPL recommended that three lay members with full voting rights should be added to the Committee to bring an external view and to provide greater transparency and independence in the exercise of its statutory functions. That recommendation was implemented by the 2010 Act.

The motion before the Committee seeks to appoint Ms Cindy Butts as a lay member to succeed Mr Ken Batty. Mr Batty has served the Committee and the House diligently, and I know that Mr Speaker and the other members of SCIPSA would wish to place on record their gratitude for his advice and service.

The motion seeks approval for the appointment of Ms Cindy Butts, to take effect from 1 March 2019 for a period of five years. The periods of lay members' appointments to the Speaker's Committee are staggered to ensure a degree of continuity in the lay membership. Under the legislation, the lay members may not be reappointed. The proposal of the candidate named in the motion resulted from a fair and open recruitment competition, as is required by statute. At Mr Speaker's request, the recruitment panel was chaired by the Clerk Assistant, Dr John Benger. The other panel members were Sir Hugh Bayley, who is a former MP for York Central; Michelle Barnes, who is an independent human resources consultant;

and Mike Page, who is an HR business partner in the House of Commons Service. The board was assisted by a specialist recruitment agency to ensure that a wide and diverse range of candidates applied for the role. The recruitment process involved stages of advertisement, longlisting, shortlisting and interview.

The candidate named in the motion, Ms Cindy Butts, has held a number of non-executive positions; she worked in Parliament between 1997 and 2000 as a researcher to a former MP and Government Minister; and she is a former deputy chair of the Metropolitan Police Authority. The interview panel felt that in addition to possessing the requisite scrutiny and recruiting experience needed for SCIPSA's role, Ms Butts would bring a strong independent view, impartiality and diversity of thought to the work of the Committee and that she would sensitively represent public interests in a way that would help to build public confidence. It is vital in such appointments that political impartiality is maintained, so I am pleased to hear that that was a key consideration of the board.

The statute requires the motion to be tabled with the agreement of the Speaker, and I confirm that Mr Speaker has signified his consent. I am also happy to confirm to the House that I have been assured that the competition met the requirements of the statute. Should the Committee, and ultimately the House, support the appointment of Ms Butts, I wish her well in the role. I commend the motion to the Committee.

4.34 pm

Valerie Vaz (Walsall South) (Lab): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Sir Roger. I thank the Leader of the House for moving the motion and for what she has said about it. I, too, place on record my thanks to the Clerk Assistant, Dr John Benger, who chaired the board, and to its other members—Sir Hugh Bayley, Michelle Barnes and Mike Page—for their work in identifying all the candidates. Our thanks also go to the outgoing lay member, Ken Batty, whose appointment ended on 26 January 2019. I have been at SCIPSA meetings with Ken and he has provided excellent accountability.

Cindy Butts was selected following a fair and transparent competition. The board was assisted by a specialist recruitment agency, and the recruitment process included an advertisement, shortlisting and interview. Ms Butts has had a distinguished career with the criminal justice and policing sector, and with the Government, and she has held several non-executive positions, so she has extensive public service and understands the nature of holding people to account in her work. I reiterate what was said in the Committee's report: she has scrutiny and recruiting experience that will serve her well in the role. The interview panel felt that Ms Butts would bring a strong independent view, impartiality and diversity of thought to the work of the Committee, and that she would sensitively represent public interests in a way that would help to build public confidence.

Her Majesty's Opposition welcome and endorse the appointment of Cindy Butts as a lay member of the Speaker's Committee for the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority for a period of five years from 1 March 2019 to 29 February 2024. We, too, wish her well in her work.

Question put and agreed to.

4.36 pm

Committee rose.