



House of Commons
Committee on Members'
Allowances

Minutes of Proceedings

Session 2008–09

Committee on Members' Allowances

The Committee on Members' Allowances is appointed by the House of Commons to advise the Members Estimate Committee on the exercise of its functions (which relate to charges on the Members Estimate), to advise the Speaker, the Members Estimate Committee and the Leader of the House on the potential development of the arrangements for Members' allowances, and to approve Practice Notes to be used in administering Members' allowances.

Current membership

Mr Don Touhig MP (*Labour Co-op, Islwyn*) (*Chairman*)
Liz Blackman MP (*Labour, Erewash*)
Mr Alistair Carmichael MP (*Liberal Democrat, Orkney and Shetlands*)
Mr Nigel Dodds MP (*Democratic Unionist, Belfast North*)
Mr Michael Jack MP (*Conservative, Fylde*)
Mr Thomas McAvoy MP (*Labour Co-op, Rutherglen and Hamilton West*)
Dan Norris MP (*Labour, Wansdyke*)
Mr John Randall MP (*Conservative, Uxbridge*)

Powers

The Committee's powers are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No 152G. These are available at www.parliament.uk.

Further information

Further information about the Committee is available at www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/cma.cfm.

Committee staff

The staff of the Committee are Dorian Gerhold (Clerk), Judy Goodall (Inquiry Manager), Rowena Macdonald (Committee Assistant).

Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Committee on Members' Allowances, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 3318.

Proceedings of the Committee

Tuesday 10 February 2009

Members present:

Mr Thomas McAvoy
Liz Blackman
Mr Alistair Carmichael

Dan Norris
Mr John Randall
Mr Don Touhig

1. Declaration of interests

Members declared their interests, in accordance with the Resolution of the House of 13 July 1992 (see Appendix).

2. Election of Chairman

Mr Don Touhig was called to the Chair.

3. Confidentiality of Committee proceedings

Resolved, That the Committee takes note of the Liaison Committee's note on the confidentiality of Committee proceedings.

4. Dates of meetings

Resolved, That the Committee's meetings will normally be on the first Tuesday in the month at 11 am, and that the Committee meet on 3 March, 31 March, 5 May, 2 June and 7 July.

5. Practice Notes

The Committee considered this matter.

6. Appeals concerning allowances

The Committee considered this matter.

7. Constituency offices

The Committee considered this matter.

[Adjourned to Tuesday 3 March at 11 am.]

APPENDIX

Interests declared on 10 February 2009

BLACKMAN, Liz (Erewash)

Nil.

CARMICHAEL, Alistair (Orkney and Shetland)

6. Overseas visits

24-27 September 2008, to Oslo and Stavanger, Norway, with members of the All-Party British-Norwegian Group, as a guest of the Norwegian Government who met the costs of the visit. (*Registered 29 October 2008*)

DODDS, Nigel (Belfast North)

2. Remunerated employment, office, profession etc

Member of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Minister of Finance and Personnel in the Northern Ireland Executive.

Member of Belfast City Council.

JACK, Rt. Hon. Michael (Fylde)

1. Remunerated directorships

Topps Tiles PLC (non-executive).

McAVOY, Thomas (Rutherglen and Hamilton West)

1. Remunerated directorships

County Pub Company Limited, trading as The County Inn Public House.

8. Land and Property

Land in Cambuslang on which County Inn is situated (see Category 1).

Residential flat in London, from which rental income is received.

9. Registrable shareholdings

(a) County Pub Company Ltd.

NORRIS, Dan (Wansdyke)

6. Overseas visits

7-12 September 2008, to Beijing, China, to attend the second UK-China Leadership of the Future Forum. The visit was arranged and paid for by the UK-China Forum with sponsorship from Barclays Capital, BP and Rolls-Royce, and the International Department of the Chinese Communist Party. (*Registered 29 October 2008*)

8. Land and Property

A bungalow in South Gloucestershire.

RANDALL, John (Uxbridge)

1. Remunerated directorships

Randalls of Uxbridge Ltd.; family retail business.

2. Remunerated employment, office, profession etc

Consultancy fee from Randalls of Uxbridge Ltd (1984) Retirement Benefit Scheme.

8. Land and Property

Residential rented property in Uxbridge, from which rental income is received.

9. Registrable shareholdings

(a) Randalls of Uxbridge Ltd.

TOUHIG, Don (Islwyn)

Nil.

Tuesday 3 March 2009

Members present:

Mr Don Touhig, in the Chair

Mr Thomas McAvoy
Liz Blackman
Mr Michael Jack

Dan Norris
Mr John Randall

1. Appeal process

The Committee agreed a Practice Note on how the appeal process will operate.

2. Practice Notes

The Committee considered this matter.

3. Constituency offices

Ordered, That the Chairman write to the Members Estimate Committee on this matter.

4. Proposed Practice Note on subsistence

The Committee considered this matter.

5. Communications Allowance

The Committee considered this matter.

[Adjourned to Tuesday 31 March at 11 am.

Tuesday 31 March 2009

Members present:

Mr Don Touhig, in the Chair

Liz Blackman
Mr Thomas McAvoy
Mr Michael Jack

Dan Norris
Mr John Randall

1. Publishing of Practice Notes

The Committee approved a process for communicating Practice Notes to Members and publishing them on the internet.

2. Draft Practice Notes on Communications Expenditure and Stationery

The Committee considered this matter.

3. Possible Practice Note on Authorisation of Extended and European Travel

The Committee considered this matter.

4. Draft Practice Note on Definition of Working Wholly or Substantially for an All-Party Group

The Committee agreed a Practice Note on the definition of working wholly or substantially for an all-party group.

5. Practice Notes

The Committee considered this matter.

6. Chairman's report

The Committee considered this matter.

[Adjourned to Tuesday 5 May at 11 am.

Tuesday 5 May 2009

Members present:

Mr Don Touhig, in the Chair

Liz Blackman
Mr Thomas McAvoy

Dan Norris
Mr John Randall

1. Constituency Offices

The Committee considered this matter.

2. Draft Practice Notes on Communications Expenditure

The Committee agreed two Practice Notes on Communications Expenditure.

3. Draft Practice Note on authorisation of extended and European travel

The Committee agreed a Practice Note on the authorisation of extended and European travel.

4. Resolution of disputes over further editing of scanned receipts relating to Members' allowances 2004/05-2007/08

The Committee agreed a process for the resolution of any disputes over further editing of scanned receipts relating to Members' allowances 2004/05-2007/08.

5. Dissolution arrangements.

The Committee considered this matter.

6. Governance of Members' allowances.

The Committee considered this matter.

7. Chairman's report

The Committee considered this matter.

[Adjourned to Tuesday 12 May at 6 pm.]

Tuesday 12 May 2009

Members present:

Mr Don Touhig, in the Chair

Liz Blackman
Mr Michael Jack
Dan Norris

Mr Alistair Carmichael
Mr Thomas McAvoy

1. Governance of Members' allowances

The Committee considered this matter.

2. Proposals from the Leader of the House

The Committee agreed a proposal to establish a system for re-assessing payments made for the Additional Costs Allowance.

The Committee agreed a proposal for new guidance on the nomination of second homes.

The Committee agreed a proposal for a restriction on the list of items claimable under the second home allowance until the Committee on Standards in Public Life has reported.

3. Chairman's Report

The Committee considered this matter.

[Adjourned to Wednesday 13 May at 7pm.]

Wednesday 13 May 2009

Members present:

Mr Don Touhig, in the Chair

Liz Blackman
Mr Michael Jack
Dan Norris

Mr Alistair Carmichael
Mr Thomas McAvoy
Mr John Randall

1. Proposals from the Leader of the House

The Committee considered this matter.

[Adjourned to Tuesday 19 May at 11 am.]

Tuesday 19 May 2009

Members present:

Mr Don Touhig, in the Chair

Mr Alistair Carmichael
Mr Thomas McAvoy
Mr John Randall

Mr Michael Jack
Dan Norris

1. Proposals from the Leader of the House

The Committee considered this matter.

[Adjourned to Tuesday 2 June at 11 am.]

Tuesday 2 June 2009

Members present:

Mr Don Touhig, in the Chair

Mr Alistair Carmichael
Mr Thomas McAvoy
Mr John Randall

Mr Michael Jack
Dan Norris

1. Mr Speaker's statement of 19 May

The Committee considered this matter.

2. Evidence for the Inquiry by the Committee on Standards in Public Life

The Committee considered this matter.

3. Resolution of disputes over further editing of scanned receipts

The Committee considered this matter.

4. Constituency offices

Ordered, That the Chairman write to the Members Estimate Committee on this matter.

5. Receipts for claims

The Committee considered this matter.

6. Record of meetings

The Committee considered this matter.

7. Chairman's report

The Committee considered this matter.

[Adjourned to Monday 8 June at 3 pm.]

Monday 8 June 2009

Members present:

Mr Don Touhig, in the Chair

Mr Michael Jack
Dan Norris

Mr Thomas McAvoy
Mr John Randall

1. Reassessment process for past claims

The Committee considered this matter.

[Adjourned to Tuesday 9 June at 11 am.]

Tuesday 9 June 2009

Members present:

Mr Don Touhig, in the Chair

Mr Michael Jack
Dan Norris

Mr Thomas McAvoy

1. Reassessment process for past ACA claims

The Committee considered this matter.

2. Dissolution arrangements

The Committee considered this matter.

3. Record of meetings

The Committee considered this matter.

4. Redaction appeals

The Committee agreed to meet at 6pm on 9 June to deal with appeals relating to further editing of the scanned receipts.

5. Chairman's Report

The Committee considered this matter.

[Adjourned to Tuesday 9 June at 6 pm.]

Tuesday 9 June 2009

Members present:

Mr Don Touhig, in the Chair

Mr Alistair Carmichael
Mr Thomas McAvoy
Mr John Randall

Mr Michael Jack
Dan Norris

1. Appeals over further editing of scanned receipts

The Committee determined appeals.

[Adjourned to Wed 10 June at 5.30 pm.

Wednesday 10 June 2009

Members present:

Mr Don Touhig, in the Chair

Alistair Carmichael
Mr Thomas McAvoy

Mr Michael Jack
Mr John Randall

1. Appeals over further editing of scanned receipts

The Committee determined appeals.

[Adjourned to Tuesday 16 June at 11 am.

Tuesday 16 June 2009

Members present:

Mr Don Touhig, in the Chair

Liz Blackman
Mr Michael Jack
Mr John Randall

Mr Alistair Carmichael
Mr Thomas McAvoy

1. Reassessment of past ACA claims

The Committee considered this matter.

2. Draft White Book

The Committee agreed the revised draft of the White Book (Pay and allowances for Members who leave the House at a General Election).

3. Committee's evidence to Kelly inquiry

The Committee considered this matter.

4. Record of meetings

The Committee considered this matter.

5. Chairman's Report

The Committee considered this matter.

[Adjourned to Tuesday 7 July at 11 am.]

Tuesday 7 July 2009

Members present:

Mr Don Touhig, in the Chair

Liz Blackman
Mr Michael Jack

Mr Thomas McAvoy

1. Project to make monthly expense statements available online to Members

The Committee approved a pilot for the project to make monthly expense statements available to Members online.

2. Reassessment of past ACA claims

The Committee considered this matter.

3. Inquiry by the Committee on Standards in Public Life

The Committee considered this matter.

4. Record of meetings

The Committee considered this matter.

5. Chairman's report

The Committee considered this matter.

Thursday 9 July 2009

Members present:

Mr Don Touhig, in the Chair

Liz Blackman
Mr Michael Jack
Mr John Randall

Mr Alistair Carmichael
Mr Thomas McAvoy

1. Reassessment of past ACA payments

The Committee considered this matter.

2. List of repayments

Ordered, That the Chairman write to the Members Estimate Committee recommending that Members be able to provide clarification of the reasons for repayments for publication alongside the list.

3. Inquiry by the Committee on Standards in Public Life

The Committee agreed its written evidence to the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

4. Record of meetings

The Committee considered this matter.

5. Human resources guide for members

The Committee considered this matter.

6. Members Estimate Committee's decisions of 20 May

The Committee considered this matter.

Tuesday 13 October 2009

Members present:

Mr Don Touhig, in the Chair

Liz Blackman
Mr Alistair Carmichael

Mr Thomas McAvoy
Mr John Randall

1. Requests to change designations of homes for Personal Additional Accommodation Expenditure

Resolved, That, in determining requests to change the designations of homes for the purposes of PAAE, the Committee will take account of the change in circumstances reported by the Member making the request and any other relevant information, including the PAAE claims made by the Member in the past and any past changes of designation, the potential effect on public funds, whether the Member would receive a personal benefit from changing the designation, the impact on the Capital Gains Tax position, the public preference for rent rather than mortgage interest to be paid, the public expectation that the main home will normally be in the constituency and the desirability of avoiding designations which are inconsistent with Members' actual circumstances.

Resolved, That the Committee will publish the names of Members who ask to change their designations of homes for the purposes of PAAE, together with the reasons for the Committee's decisions, whether the requests are agreed or not agreed.

Resolved, That the Committee approves the request by Jacqui Smith to make her constituency residence her main home and her London residence her second home, on the grounds that this will make her designations consistent with the views of the Committee on Standards and Privileges expressed in its Ninth Report of 2008-09 (HC 974).

Resolved, That the Committee approves the request by Dr Stephen Ladyman to make his constituency residence his main home and his London residence his second home, subject to him having completed the declaration on Capital Gains Tax required by the Members Estimate Committee, having been satisfied that the circumstances described by him constitute an exceptional case and noting that the change would be consistent with his actual current circumstances.

Resolved, That the Committee approves the request by Gerry Sutcliffe to make his constituency residence his main home and his London residence his second home, subject to him having completed the declaration on Capital Gains Tax required by the Members Estimate Committee, having been satisfied that the circumstances described by him constitute an exceptional case and noting that the change would be consistent with his actual current circumstances.

Resolved, That the Committee approves the request by Tim Loughton to make his constituency residence his main home and his London accommodation his second home, subject to him having completed the declaration on Capital Gains Tax required by the Members Estimate Committee, having been satisfied that the circumstances described by him constitute an exceptional case and noting that the change would be consistent with his actual current circumstances.

Resolved, That the Committee approves the request by Gregory Barker to make his London residence his main home and his constituency residence his second home, subject to him having completed the declaration on Capital Gains Tax required by the Members Estimate Committee, having been satisfied that the circumstances described by him constitute an exceptional case and noting that the change would be consistent with his actual current circumstances.

2. Letters about consequences of the Members Estimates Committee's decisions of 20 May

Ordered, That the Chairman write to the Members Estimate Committee forwarding letters from Members about the cap on hotel costs, about the impact of the cap on mortgage interest claims on

Members with fixed-rate mortgages and about problems in providing the declaration about CGT, and that he indicate the Committee's support for making the cap on hotel costs an annual rather than a monthly one in order to make it more comparable with the caps on mortgage interest and rent.

3. Possible changes to Communications Expenditure

The Committee considered this matter.

4. Request to be able to use AOE to set up a website

Resolved, That no action be taken on the request to be able to use AOE to set up a website.

5. Record of meetings

The Committee considered this matter.

6. Additional Costs Allowance review, Kelly inquiry and Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority

The Committee considered this matter.

Ordered, That the Chairman write to the Speaker about the possibility of the Committee being nominated by him under the Parliamentary Standards Act as a body which the IPSA must consult about allowances schemes, and about the current situation of the staff who handle allowances claims in the Department of Resources.

[Adjourned to Tuesday 3 November at 11 am.]

Tuesday 3 November 2009

Members present:

Mr Don Touhig, in the Chair

Mr Alistair Carmichael
Mr Michael Jack

Mr Thomas McAvoy
Mr John Randall

1. Requests to change designations of homes for Personal Additional Accommodation Expenditure

The Committee considered this matter.

2. Capital Gains Tax declarations

Ordered, That the Chairman write to the Members Estimate Committee about problems with the declaration on Capital Gains Tax.

3. Record of meetings

The Committee considered this matter.

4. Establishment of the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority

The Committee considered this matter.

5. Standards and Privileges Committee's report on Tony McNulty

The Committee considered this matter.

[Adjourned to Wednesday 18 November at 4.30 pm