Election of the Deputy Speakers

CANDIDATES 28 JUNE 2017
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Introduction

This booklet lists all the candidates for the election of the three Deputy Speakers.

The election will take place on Wednesday 28 June 2017. The election is governed by Standing Order No. 2A.

The candidates are listed in alphabetical order. Each entry gives the candidate’s name and the side of the House they come from.

All candidates are required to sign a statement indicating willingness to stand for election. Each candidate’s entry in the booklet prints any further personal statement that has been submitted by that candidate.

Constraints will be applied to the count so that of those elected:

- two candidates shall come from the opposite side of the House to that from which the Speaker was drawn. So the first candidate from the present Opposition side will be Chairman of Ways and Means and the second, Second Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means;

- one candidate shall come from the same side of the House as that from which the Speaker was drawn and shall be First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means; and

- at least one man and at least one woman shall be elected across the four posts of Speaker and Deputy Speakers.

Mrs Eleanor Laing is the sole candidate from the same side of the House as that from which the Speaker was drawn, and will be elected First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means. Her name will not appear on the ballot paper [on 28 June].
I am standing as a candidate for Deputy Speaker. In addition to having very good chairing skills, I was closely involved in getting modern working practices in place after 2010. I very much want to use the role of Deputy Speaker to continue the process of modernising and diversifying Parliament, and ensuring the Chamber works well for everyone, as follows:

• To ensure that parliament is able to effectively scrutinise the executive

• Promote diversity within parliament

• Have a modernisation agenda at the heart of what we do

• Be available and accessible to members

• Work with other Deputy Speakers in other countries to promote better governance globally

• Support the backbench voice in parliament
Statement

It has been a privilege to have been elected as Chairman of Ways and Means in the past by colleagues on all sides of the chamber and I am asking you to allow me to continue with the important work that lies ahead.

The Chairman of Ways and Means requires the confidence of the whole House in order to allow debates and votes to proceed but there is also a lot more to the role that takes place away from the chamber. The Chairman also oversees Westminster Hall, Private Members Ballots and I have also taken on the chairmanship of the Joint Parliamentary panel on security.

Over the last year Parliament has faced a number of significant challenges; the security situation is volatile and it is clear that Members, our staff, families and Parliamentary employees face an all too real and sustained threat. Tragically this was brought home to us all following the brutal murder of our colleague Jo Cox and once again, in March when our community here at Westminster was attacked.

We have made huge progress and I am proud of the work done by the police and the Parliamentary Security Directorate but there is much more to do. I will continue to be a strong advocate for Members when dealing with IPSA in relation to our operational costs and security works.

The Repeal Bill will be the biggest aspect of the new legislative programme and I know, having selected the Amendments to earlier Brexit votes, that this will require understanding of the Bill’s content; along with a willingness and ability to listen to all parties as we move forward together.

Given my experience I believe that I am the best placed candidate to help guide the chamber and Members through an intense period of legislating.

If you re-elect me I pledge to continue:

- Championing the rights of Backbenchers
- Protecting Parliamentarians, families and staff from emerging security threats
- Strengthening the role of Parliamentary scrutiny
- Chairing the Commons with fairness and independence
- Working with colleagues from all political parties
- Reforming the House to the benefit of Members and to allow us to meet the needs of our constituents
- Ensuring all members can access the estate regardless of disability of individual needs

It has been a privilege to hold the office of Chairman of Ways and Means and I assure you I will not let you down.

Sponsored by

Mrs Eleanor Laing  Sir Greg Knight
Mr Charles Walker  Lady Hermon
Thangam Debbonaire  Susan Elan Jones
Julie Cooper  Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi
Mhairi Black  Dame Rosie Winterton
Statement

Having had the privilege of being elected to serve the House as Deputy Speaker in 2013, it would be an honour to be re-elected to continue in that role. I am –

• Experienced – having served as Deputy Speaker for almost four years. During my twenty years in the House of Commons I have also had a wide range of experience in many roles such as chairing APPGs, in Shadow Ministerial posts, in the Opposition Whips Office and on Select and Joint Committees.

• Passionate – about the primacy of the House of Commons. I believe strongly in freedom through democracy. The Chamber should be the central forum for national debate. We have to reverse the trend whereby, for decades, the Executive has exerted too much power at the expense of Parliament. I have a proven record of standing up to overbearing governments – of all political colours!

• Impartial – towards all colleagues who seek to speak in the Chamber. I have approached the role of Deputy Speaker with a determination that the voice of the backbenches, the elected representatives of the people, should be heard – fairly and equally.

• Effective – at keeping order in the Chamber while upholding the rights of backbenchers and the dignity of the House.

I have been greatly encouraged by the kind words of very many colleagues, from all parties, who have pledged me their support. I sincerely hope that you will give me the opportunity to continue to serve the House as Deputy Speaker.
The current Parliament, as well as dealing with the everyday business of legislation, will also be dealing with the outcome of Brexit negotiations, most obviously with the Great Repeal Bill. This will be a considerable challenge. Parliament will become more important than ever and the role of the Deputy Speakers in delivering fair, inclusive debate will be vital.

I believe I can bring to the role of Deputy Speaker attributes which would help deliver this because I have:

• Experience of Parliament
  Over twenty years I have been a backbencher and a frontbencher in Government and in Opposition. I know how vital it is for Executive to be accountable to all sides of the House and for backbenchers’ rights to be heavily guarded. I would be a champion for backbenchers’ rights.

• Worked Across Parties
  I have worked with colleagues across the House, both as a frontbencher and a backbencher, and I like to think that I have worked with the great majority of colleagues in a positive and collegiate way.

• Been Fair, Supportive and Impartial with Colleagues
  I understand fully the pressures that Members of Parliament are under and have, through my work on the House of Commons Commission and in dealings with IPSA always tried to ensure that Members are properly supported to carry out their responsibilities both in Parliament and in their constituencies. In that regard, I have always believed it important to work on behalf of all colleagues across the House, regardless of Party affiliation.