



House of Commons

House of Commons Reform  
Committee

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# **Minutes of Proceedings**

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**Session 2008–09**



## Select Committee on Reform of the House of Commons

The Select Committee on Reform of the House of Commons was appointed by the House of Commons on 20 July 2009 to consider and report by 13 November 2009 on four specified matters:

- the appointment of members and chairmen of select committees;
- the appointment of the Chairman and Deputy Chairmen of Ways and Means;
- scheduling business in the House;
- enabling the public to initiate debates and proceedings in the House

and closely connected matters.

The Committee, which lasts until the end of the Parliament, may also consider other matters referred to it by the House.

### Current membership

Dr Tony Wright MP (*Labour, Cannock Chase*) (Chairman)  
 Mr Graham Allen MP (*Labour, Nottingham North*)  
 Mr Peter Atkinson MP (*Conservative, Hexham*)  
 Mr Clive Betts MP (*Labour, Sheffield, Attercliffe*)  
 Mr Graham Brady MP (*Conservative, Altrincham & Sale West*)  
 Mr David Clelland MP (*Labour, Tyne Bridge*)  
 Mr David Drew MP (*Labour Co-op, Stroud*)  
 Natascha Engel MP (*Labour, North East Derbyshire*)  
 Dr Evan Harris MP (*Liberal Democrats, Oxford West and Abingdon*)  
 David Howarth MP (*Liberal Democrats, Cambridge*)  
 Rt Hon Michael Jack MP (*Conservative, Fylde*)  
 Rt Hon Greg Knight MP (*Conservative, East Yorkshire*)  
 Mr Elfyn Llwyd MP (*Plaid Cymru, Meirionnydd Nant Conwy*)  
 Mr Chris Mullin MP (*Labour, Sunderland South*)  
 Dr Nick Palmer MP (*Labour, Broxtowe*)  
 Martin Salter MP (*Labour, Reading West*)  
 Dr Phyllis Starkey MP (*Labour, Milton Keynes South West*)  
 Mr Andrew Tyrie MP (*Conservative, Chichester*)

The following member was also a member of the committee during the parliament.

Sir George Young MP (*Conservative, North West Hampshire*)

### Publication

The Reports and evidence of the Committee are published by The Stationery Office by Order of the House. All publications of the Committee (including press notices) are on the Internet at [www.parliament.uk/parliamentary\\_committees/reform\\_committee.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/reform_committee.cfm).

### Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are David Natzler (Clerk), Lucinda Maer (Senior Research Clerk) and Rowena Macdonald (Committee Assistant).

### Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the House of Commons Reform Committee, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 3255; the Committee's email address is [reformcom@parliament.uk](mailto:reformcom@parliament.uk)

# Proceedings of the Committee

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**Tuesday 21 July 2009**

Members present:

Dr Tony Wright, in the Chair

Clive Betts  
Graham Brady  
David Clelland  
David Drew  
Natascha Engel  
Dr Evan Harris

David Howarth  
Michael Jack  
Greg Knight  
Martin Salter  
Andrew Tyrie  
Sir George Young

## 1. Confidentiality

*Resolved*, That the Committee notes the rules of confidentiality of committee proceedings.

## 2. Specialist adviser

*Ordered*, That Dr Meg Russell, Constitution Unit, University College London, be appointed a Specialist Adviser to assist the Committee on the matters on which it is directed to report by 13 November.

## 3. Meetings

*Resolved*, That the Committee hold a private seminar with invited participants on Thursday 17 September and thereafter a meeting of the Committee; that it meet at noon on 15, 22 and 29 October and 5 and 12 November; and that it do not hear oral evidence.

## 4. Evidence

*Resolved*, That the Chairman be authorised to send a message to all Members of the House and to issue a general press release.

*Ordered*, That those submitting written evidence to the Committee be authorised to publish it, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 135.

## 5. Visit in a representative capacity

*Resolved*, That Martin Salter have leave to visit Canberra from Sydney, New South Wales, for the purposes of the Committee inquiry.

## 6. Terms of reference

The Committee discussed the matters referred to it in the Order of the House of 20 July 2009, and how it would deal with them.

The Committee agreed not to seek separate evidence on the matter of the election of the Chairman and deputy Chairman of Ways and Means.

[Adjourned till Thursday 17 September at 1.30 pm]

## Thursday 17 September 2009

Members present:

Dr Tony Wright, in the Chair

Graham Allen  
Graham Brady  
David Clelland  
David Drew  
Natascha Engel  
Dr Evan Harris  
David Howarth

Michael Jack  
Greg Knight  
Chris Mullin  
Dr Nick Palmer  
Martin Salter  
Dr Phyllis Starkey  
Andrew Tyrie

### 1. Reform of the House of Commons

The Committee discussed some of the matters in its terms of reference.

[Adjourned till Thursday 15 October at 12.00 pm]

## Thursday 15 October 2009

Members present:

Dr Tony Wright, in the Chair

Clive Betts  
Graham Brady  
David Drew  
Natascha Engel  
Dr Evan Harris  
David Howarth

Michael Jack  
Greg Knight  
Chris Mullin  
Dr Nick Palmer  
Andrew Tyrie

### 1. Meetings

The Committee agreed to several private meetings.

### 2. Specialist adviser

*Ordered*, That Professor Iain McLean, Oxford University, be appointed a Specialist Adviser to assist the Committee on electoral methods.

### 3. Reform of the House of Commons

The Committee discussed some of the matters in its terms of reference.

[Adjourned till Thursday 22 October at 12.00 pm]

## Thursday 22 October 2009

Members present:

Dr Tony Wright, in the Chair

Graham Allen  
Peter Atkinson  
Clive Betts  
Graham Brady  
David Clelland  
Natascha Engel  
Dr Evan Harris  
David Howarth

Greg Knight  
Elfyn Llwyd  
Chris Mullin  
Dr Nick Palmer  
Martin Salter  
Dr Phyllis Starkey  
Andrew Tyrie

### 1. Reform of the House of Commons

The Committee discussed some of the matters in its terms of reference.

[Adjourned till Thursday 29 October at 12.00 pm]

## Thursday 29 October 2009

Members present:

Dr Tony Wright, in the Chair

Graham Allen  
Peter Atkinson  
Graham Brady  
David Clelland  
David Drew  
Natascha Engel  
Dr Evan Harris

David Howarth  
Michael Jack  
Greg Knight  
Dr Nick Palmer  
Martin Salter  
Dr Phyllis Starkey  
Andrew Tyrie

### 1. Reform of the House of Commons

The Committee discussed some of the matters in its terms of reference.

[Adjourned till Thursday 5 November at 12.00 pm]



## Thursday 5 November 2009

Members present:

Dr Tony Wright, in the Chair

Graham Allen  
Peter Atkinson  
Clive Betts  
Graham Brady  
David Clelland  
David Drew  
Natascha Engel  
Dr Evan Harris  
David Howarth

Michael Jack  
Greg Knight  
Elfyn Llwyd  
Chris Mullin  
Dr Nick Palmer  
Martin Salter  
Dr Phyllis Starkey  
Andrew Tyrie

### 1. Reform of the House of Commons

The Committee discussed some of the matters in its terms of reference.

[Adjourned till Thursday 12 November at 12.00 pm]

## Thursday 12 November 2009

Members present:

Dr Tony Wright, in the Chair

Mr Graham Allen  
Mr Peter Atkinson  
Mr Clive Betts  
Mr Graham Brady  
Mr David Clelland  
Mr David Drew  
Natascha Engel  
Dr Evan Harris

David Howarth  
Mr Greg Knight  
Mr Chris Mullin  
Dr Nick Palmer  
Martin Salter  
Dr Phyllis Starkey  
Mr Andrew Tyrie

Draft Report (*Rebuilding the House*), proposed by the Chairman, brought up and read.

*The draft Report was agreed to; the Formal Minutes relating to the consideration of the Report are published in the First Report of the Committee, HC 1117.*

[Adjourned to a date and time to be determined.]