

AGENDA ITEM 3 – AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Members will be aware that the House of Commons Committee on Standards recently conducted an enquiry into All-Party Parliamentary Groups, publishing its report on 29th November 2013. The report was debated and approved by the House of Commons on Tuesday 13th May. The recommendations in the report include the following:

The abolition of Associate Parliamentary Groups;

A requirement that at least two officers be from the House of Commons – and that the group has a Commons chair.

The Parliamentary and Scientific Committee is currently an Associate Parliamentary Group; changes to the Constitution are required to convert the Committee from an Associate Parliamentary Group to an All-Party Parliamentary Group, and to meet other requirements in the report. The fundamental difference between the two types of group is that, whereas non-parliamentary members of an Associate Parliamentary Group may vote, only Parliamentary members have voting rights in an All-Party Parliamentary Group.

A summary of the proposed amendments is below; a copy of the Constitution with the amendments marked in blue follows:

Preamble, line 3 – delete Associate

1. Objects, paragraph 1, line 1 – insert All-Party

2. The Committee, line 8 – change Industrial to Commercial
line 13, Honorary Members – delete (with no voting rights)

3. Presidents, Officers and Appointees – redraft the first section of 3.1 to read:

3.1 The Honorary Officers of The Committee shall consist only of members of either House of Parliament, two of which must be members of the House of Commons. They shall be elected annually in accordance with these rules and the election shall be announced in advance in All-Party Notices. The Honorary Officers shall consist of:

a) A President

b) A Chairman (who must be a member of the House of Commons)

4. Membership

4.2 Parliamentary Members

At end insert: Only Members of either House of Parliament shall have voting rights.

5. Qualifications for Membership

5.2 Industrial Members – change to Commercial Members; consequential changes in lines 1,2,3,4 and 5.

8.1 Powers – re-draft first paragraph to read:

In pursuance of The Committee's Objects the Council shall advise The Committee on:

8.2 Rules – delete sub-head and introductory paragraph; continue list.

9. Finance

paragraph 2, line 1 – re-draft to read: The Treasurer shall ensure that up to date financial records are kept and make interim financial reports to Council

11. THE PARLIAMENTARY SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY INFORMATION FOUNDATION (PSTIF)

Paragraph 2, line 1 – insert be after only

12. Amendments to the Constitution

Re-draft first paragraph to read:

Amendments to the Constitution must be ratified at an Annual General Meeting or at a General Meeting called for that purpose.

13. Dissolution – delete entire section

THE PARLIAMENTARY AND SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

THE CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

Founded in 1939 amid the perils of the threat of war, the Parliamentary & Scientific Committee came into being to guide Parliament and the Government on the role of science and technology. It was the first All-Party [\(delete Associate\)](#) Parliamentary Group.

After the war, it was responsible for securing a number of innovative changes in the relations between science, Government and Parliament. It was this Committee which started the process that eventually led to the formation of POST – the Parliamentary Office for Science and Technology. It also was very influential in the establishment of the Science and Technology Select Committees in both Houses of Parliament – Committees which have a vital role in holding Ministers to account, and helping to ensure that MPs and Peers – and Ministers – are kept aware of trends and discoveries in Science and Technology. The Committee has been described by Prime Ministers as ‘a unique British Institution’.

Successive Officers and Councils have successfully ensured that we continue to have an important role. We are a focus and think-tank for Science and Technology. We are an influential bridge between scientists, engineers and technologists in industry, academia, the professions, and Members of both Houses. We are a platform for those able to put forward new ideas which need consideration in Parliament; for those who have new scientific advances to report, and for those seeking to influence the research policies of Departments.

The P&SC continues today its tradition of forward-looking and innovative approaches to ensure proper and effective communication of science and engineering in Parliamentary and public affairs. Long may it continue!

The Rt Hon the Lord Jenkin of Roding
President

1. OBJECTS

There shall be a Parliamentary and Scientific Committee (hereinafter called “The Committee”). The objects of The Committee shall be:

to maintain its status as a Registered [\(insert All-Party\)](#) Parliamentary Group comprising Members of both Houses of Parliament, British Members of the European Parliament and representatives of scientific, engineering and technical organisations, industrial organisations, universities, and affiliated organisations;

to provide a long-term liaison between Parliament, Scientific & Engineering Bodies, Science & Engineering based Industry, the Academic World and those affected by science and engineering;

to ensure that Parliament should have proper regard for the importance of scientific methods in relation to public affairs;

to provide Members of both Houses of Parliament through meetings and other activities with authoritative scientific information from time to time in connection with Parliamentary business;

to take appropriate action through Parliamentary channels wherever necessary to reinforce the views expressed by members on matters of public interest and legislation, especially for financing scientific, engineering and technological research, education and development, and to ensure that proper regard is had for the scientific point of view;

to provide its members and other approved subscribers with a regular summary of scientific, engineering and technological matters dealt with in Parliament.

2. THE COMMITTEE

The Committee shall consist of:-

- the Officers of The Committee as defined in Clause 3.1;
- the members of the Advisory Panel as defined in Clause 3.2;
- the Vice Presidents of The Committee as defined in Clause 3.3;
- Members of both Houses of Parliament including those hereditary peers in membership of the Committee on 8th November 1999 who have elected to join The Committee;
- British Members of the European Parliament who have elected to join The Committee;
- the Scientific and Technical Organisations elected as satisfying Clause 5.1;
- the ~~Industrial-Commercial~~ Members elected as satisfying Clause 5.2;
- the Universities elected as satisfying Clause 5.3;
- Associate Members elected as satisfying Clause 5.4;
- Life Members elected as satisfying Clause 5.5;
- Individual Members elected as satisfying Clause 5.6;
- Honorary Members ~~delete (with no voting rights)~~ to a maximum of 5 who shall be nominated by the Chairman and co-opted on an annual basis by The Committee as persons of special qualifications for assisting The Committee's work;
- certain persons up to a maximum of 10, by virtue of their posts, invited by the Chairman, with the agreement of the Council.

There shall be a Council as defined in Clause 8 which shall be responsible for the general direction, management and operations of The Committee.

3. PRESIDENTS, OFFICERS AND APPOINTEES

3.1 The Honorary Officers of The Committee shall consist only of members of either House of Parliament, (insert two of which must be members of the House of Commons). (They who shall be elected annually in accordance with these rules and (delete in respect of whom) the election shall be announced in advance in All-Party Notices. The Honorary Officers shall consist of:

- a) A President
- b) A Chairman (insert, who must be a member of the House of Commons)
- c) Two Deputy Chairmen
- d) Two Secretaries
- e) A Treasurer

3.2 There shall be an Advisory Panel comprising three non-Parliamentary Members who shall have seats on the Council in accordance with Clause 8. Their function shall be to advise and assist and undertake such duties as may be assigned by the Honorary Officers. The Advisory Panel shall consist of one member to be known as vice-chairman and two as special advisors.

3.3 There shall be a maximum of ten Vice Presidents who shall not be Officers of The Committee but who shall have seats on the Council in accordance with Clause 8. The function of the Vice Presidents is to support The Chairman and The President in the active promotion of the Objects and activities of the Committee and in this role each Vice President shall have responsibility for a particular area which shall be assigned by the Chairman which may include, but not be restricted to, scientific and engineering disciplines or subject matters, matters of Governance, Membership and Recruitment, Fund Raising, Media and Publicity, International Relations, Building Partnerships and/or to raise the profile of specific matters such as Science Education, Innovation, Science Communication.

3.4 The Officers and Advisory Panel and Vice Presidents enumerated above shall be elected or re-elected at the Annual General Meeting of The Committee but no Officer or member of the Advisory Panel or Vice President shall be eligible for re-election to any Office or as a member of the Advisory Panel or as a Vice President where that person occupied the post for three consecutive years but subject to this three-year rule being waived in respect of any Officer or member of the Advisory Panel or Vice President if The Committee recommends that special circumstances justify such a course.

4. MEMBERSHIP

4.1 The Committee shall consist of a minimum of ten Members from the Government Party or Parties together with ten from Parties, Independent Members and Cross Benchers in opposition (including at least six from the main Opposition Party) and those numbers may include Members of the House of Lords.

4.2 Parliamentary Members

Any member of either House of Parliament including those hereditary peers in membership of the Committee on 8th November 1999 or British Member of the European Parliament shall be eligible to be a member of The Committee.

Insert Only Members of either House of Parliament shall have voting rights.

4.3 Non-Parliamentary Members

Any Organisation or Individual shall be eligible to be elected as a member of The Committee subject to satisfying the qualifications for membership set out in Clause 5.

5. QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

5.1 Scientific and Technical Organisations

An organisation or society shall be eligible for election to The Committee as a Scientific and Technical Organisation if the Council is satisfied that it is either:-

- (i) A National Institution or Association for qualifying scientists, engineers or technologists; or
- (ii) A Research Organisation which is not of a profit-making character, or part of an individual commercial or profit-making undertaking, and which is either directly engaged in natural or social science, pure or applied, or both providing funds for research to be conducted by other bodies and also taking a direct part in determination of the programmes of such research, or
- (iii) A body, the contribution of which to the scientific life of the country makes its membership, in the opinion of the Council, desirable in order to advance the agreed objects of The Committee.

In reaching a decision with regard to eligibility regard shall be had to the extent to which the branch of science, engineering or technology represented by the applicant organisation is already adequately represented on The Committee.

Note. No organisation which had been elected to membership by The Committee prior to January 1963, shall, however, be rendered ineligible for membership under this sub-clause.

5.2 **Industrial (delete Industrial – change to Commercial) Members**

The Council may also elect to The Committee up to a maximum of 100 **Industrial – change to Commercial** Members, such maximum being subject to modification at any subsequent Annual General Meeting. Such members shall be **(delete Industrial)** Companies registered in the UK or UK nationalised Undertakings or organisations representing a sector of industry. In electing **an Industrial – change to a Commercial** Member, the Council shall have regard to the desirability of ensuring that the **(delete Industrial)** Membership as a whole is representative of as wide a range as possible of activities involving Science, Engineering and Technology. In reaching a decision as to eligibility regard shall be had to the extent to which the applicant is engaged in scientific, engineering or technological research.

5.3 Universities

Universities of the UK, Institutions in Scotland and Northern Ireland equivalent to schools and colleges of individual universities where appropriate shall be eligible for election by the Council. In reaching a decision as to eligibility regard shall be had to the extent to which the applicant is engaged in scientific, engineering or technological research.

5.4 Associate Members

The Council may elect to The Committee as Associate Members the following:

Bodies which, although not engaged in scientific research, represent the interests of those who are significantly affected by science and which, in the opinion of the Council, are in a position to contribute positively to the work of the Committee.

5.5 Life Members

The Committee may also elect up to a maximum of twenty-five life members who, on retirement from Parliament or their institution, will qualify by having served The Committee either as officers or in some other capacity and given valuable service to it. It will be the responsibility of the Council to recommend such former members for this category.

5.6 Individual Members

The Committee may also elect individual members who, on retirement from Parliament or their institution, wish to remain actively engaged in the Committee's activities. Individual membership shall have a term of five years, which shall be renewable. It will be the responsibility of the Council to recommend individuals for this category.

5.7 Honorary Members

The Committee may appoint honorary members who by virtue of their standing or their office may appropriately engage in the Committee's activities.

6. SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Rules regarding subscription fees (Clause 8.2) for membership and the fee for The Committee's journal Science in Parliament shall be determined by Council and introduced upon approval at an Annual General Meeting.

7. SERVICES

All subscribing members shall be entitled to receive free of charge agenda, minutes and publications of The Committee except Science in Parliament.

8. COUNCIL

The Council shall consist of the following members:-

- (a) The Officers, members of the Advisory Panel and Vice Presidents
- (b) Not less than ten other representatives from the Non-Parliamentary Membership
- (c) Members of either House of Parliament
- (d) UK Members of the European Parliament

Membership of the Council shall not exceed 50.

At meetings of the Council a quorum will be ten and at a quorate meeting Council may exercise all the Powers (Clause 8.1) exercisable by the Council.

Members of the Council appointed by the Chairman under sub-section (b) above shall cease to be eligible for appointment after five years consecutive service on the Council.

Council shall meet not less than twice a year.

8.1 Powers

~~In pursuance of The Committee's Objects the Council shall be responsible for the general direction and operations of The Committee and have the following powers advise The Committee on:~~

- Employ staff and consultants and recruit volunteers;
- Open and operate such bank and other accounts as the Council consider necessary;
- Sell, lease or otherwise dispose of all or any part of the property of the Committee;
- Establish or support any charitable trusts, associations or institutions formed for any of the charitable purposes included in the Objects;
- Receive contributions through a membership fee;
- Raise funds; in doing so, the Council must comply with Parliamentary regulations and statutory requirements;
- Set aside income as a reserve against future expenditure but only in accordance with a written policy about reserves;
- Obtain and pay for such goods and services as are necessary for carrying out the work of the Committee;
- Lease, hire or purchase property and equipment and maintain it for use;

Take out insurance;
Liaise and work in partnership with other organisations, statutory authorities and to exchange information and advice with them;
Acquire, merge with or enter into any partnership or joint venture arrangement with any other organisations formed for any of the Objects;
Establish sub groups or committees to address specific purposes or responsibilities;
Conduct public meetings;
Produce, distribute and sell publications;
Hold meetings and run events;
Promote and advertise its activities and membership;
Conduct research;
Lead, conduct and contribute to public inquiries;
Do all such other lawful things as are necessary for the achievement of the Objects.

Delete this:8.2 Rules

Council may from time to time make Rules for the conduct of The Committee's business.
The Rules may regulate the following matters but need not be restricted to them:

The admission of members of The Committee (including the admission of organisations to membership) and the rights and privileges of such members, and any entrance fees, subscriptions and other fees or payments to be made by members;
The conduct of members of The Committee in relation to one another, and to the Committee's employees and volunteers;
The procedure at general meeting and meetings of the Council in so far as such procedure is not regulated by this Constitution;
The keeping and authenticating of records.
Generally, all such matters as are commonly the subject matter of the Rules of an unincorporated association.

The Committee in general meeting has the power to alter, add to or repeal the Rules.

The Council must adopt such means as they think sufficient to bring the Rules to the notice of members of The Committee.

The Rules shall be binding on all members of The Committee. No Rule shall be inconsistent with, or shall affect or repeal anything contained in this constitution.

9. FINANCE

The Council shall ensure that all monies raised through subscriptions and other activities of The Committee will go towards furthering the Objects and activities of The Committee

The Treasurer shall keep ensure that up to date financial records are kept and make regular interim financial reports to Council and a full financial report at the Annual General Meeting

Council shall nominate at least two but no more than four authorised signatories for the Committee Bank Account(s), one of whom must be The Committee's Treasurer.

The Council may from time to time authorise an independent financial audit of The Committee's accounts; the results of which shall be presented at the Annual General Meeting.

10. MEETINGS

The purpose of meetings shall be to pursue the objectives of The Committee as set out in Clause 1.

There shall be a minimum number of three meetings per annum of The Committee.

There shall be an Annual General Meeting each calendar year.

At meetings of The Committee at which resolutions affecting participating bodies can be adopted a quorum will be 20.

11. THE PARLIAMENTARY SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY INFORMATION FOUNDATION (PSTIF)

The Parliamentary Science and Technology Information Foundation (PSTIF) is a charitable trust which liaises with The Committee. The Trust contains a provision that the Officers of The Committee have power in writing to discharge Trustees and appoint new and additional Trustees of the PSTIF. In exercising any power to appoint or discharge Trustees, the Officers of The Committee shall consult The Committee.

The funds of the PSTIF Trust may only (insert be) used with the consent of the Trustees and in accordance with the Trust Deed dated 29 July 1988.

12. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Amendments to the Constitution must be ratified **(Delete by a two thirds majority vote)** at an Annual General Meeting or at a General Meeting called ~~to address matters of the Constitution for that purpose.~~

No alteration of this Constitution or any special resolution shall have retrospective effect to invalidate any prior act of the Council.

Delete this section:

13. DISSOLUTION

The dissolution of The Committee may be achieved:

Upon dissolution of the House of Commons for a General Election or

By a motion proposing dissolution that is carried by two thirds of the membership attending a General Meeting of the Committee specifically called for this purpose.