

**Minutes of the Plenary Meeting held on Thursday 19 April 2012,
Ground Floor Boardroom, Headline Building, Victoria Street, Belfast.**

Present: The Right Honourable Sir Declan Morgan, the Lord Chief
Justice of Northern Ireland (Chairman)
Mrs Sinead Burns
The Right Honourable Lord Justice Coghlin
District Judge (Magistrates' Courts) Amanda Henderson
Mrs Ruth Laird
Her Honour Judge Loughran
Mr James McNulty QC
Professor John Morison
Dr Raymond Mullan OBE
Mr Alastair Rankin
Professor Nichola Rooney
The Honourable Mr Justice Weatherup

In Attendance: Mrs Helen Anderson
Ms Adeline Frew
Miss Catherine Woods
Mr Conor Curran

Apologies None

Minutes of the Last Meeting

1. The minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2012 were agreed by the Commissioners following the amendment of the date of the next meeting at point 18.
2. The Commission confirmed there were no conflicts of interest before proceeding with the meeting.

Update on points in last minutes

Accommodation

3. Miss Woods gave an update on the accommodation of the Commission. The lease is currently with the Landlord's Solicitor; the Departmental Solicitors Office sent the lease to the Landlord's Solicitor with suggested amendments on the 22 February 2012. The Commission are assured that the Department of Finance, on behalf of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, will enter into the 15 year lease for Headline Building.

The Commission's appearance at the Committee for Justice

4. The Chairman gave an overview of his appearance in front of the Committee for Justice on 8 March 2012.

Staffing

5. The Senior Management Team confirmed they were content with the current staffing structure of the Commission. An update on the current Staffing Review was given; it was noted that it is now in the hands of the staff to get the requested information back to the consultants to enable them to meet their June deadline to complete the review.

High Court Appointments

6. The successful candidates from the High Court Scheme (advertised Nov 2011) will be sworn in on 14 May and 5 September.

2009 High Court Scheme Update

7. The Commission agreed the response to the Draft Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Ombudsman's Report.

Update on Actions/Decisions Table

8. Mrs Anderson gave an update on the table:
 - Point 1 - Professor Rooney has been appointed Complaints Commissioner for the Commission. Any Character issues are dealt with by the Nominated Commissioner for each scheme. Mr Rankin will be Complaints Commissioner for the 2009 HCJ Scheme.
 - Point 9 - The Consultee Guidance Paper will be tabled at the June Plenary.
 - Point 16 - Updated Policies will be distributed after the last policy has been revised. The strategic aim for the autumn is to look at how to slim down this suite of policies into one handbook.
 - Point 20 – The Lord Chief Justice has approached the judiciary to requesting, out of courtesy, they give 12 months notice of retirement.
 - Point 24 - A paper on the Joint Liaison Committee was discussed at Item 6 in the Agenda.
 - Point 27 – The work on the options for a secure website has been put on hold for 3-4 months awaiting the outcome of the NICS SharePoint Project. The Project Team have offered the Commission a demonstration of SharePoint.

- Point 28 - The Senior Management Team confirmed they were content with the current staffing structure of the Commission.

Review of Committee Structures

9. NIJAC Committee Structures Paper C/9/12 was discussed by the Commissioners and it was agreed to put the recommendations in place with effect from September 2012.
10. The Chairman of each Committee is to ensure they fully understand the Terms of Reference of the Committee. The Terms of Reference will be reviewed to remove any ambiguity.
11. A 12 month Plan will be set out for each Committee.
12. Chairs of all Committees should give an update at each Plenary.

Joint Liaison Committee

13. The Research Sub-Committee Paper C/10/12 on the Joint Liaison Committee was discussed and agreed by the Commissioners. The Lord Chief Justice will initially Chair the Joint Liaison Committee, and will approach the Presidents of the Bar Council and Law Society for representatives.

To Note

Report to the Business Committee

14. The report which had been before the Business Committee on 20 March 2012 was considered and approved by the Commissioners.

Updates, Signed Minutes from Committees and Appointments and Reappointments Schedules

- 15. Duly noted by the Commissioners. The Chairman noted the duplication of issues being dealt with by both the Audit and Risk Management Committee and the Business Committee, and the need to deal with items under the correct Committee.

Any Other Business

County Court Judge Reserve List

- 16. The Committee agreed to the invocation of the reserve list in the recent County Court Judge Scheme.
- 17. The next plenary meeting will be on Thursday 7 June 2012 at 1.00pm.

Signed

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The Right Honourable Sir Declan Morgan, the Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland, Chairman of the Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission

Dated

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