



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

OFFICE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**PROPOSAL FOR "STUDY TRAVEL" BY NON-EXECUTIVE MEMBER**

The Remuneration Tribunal has determined that non-Executive members are entitled to financial assistance with travel for the purposes of undertaking studies or investigations of matters related to his or her duties and responsibilities as a Member ("study travel").

Chapter 15 of the Members' Guide sets out procedures for members to access this entitlement that the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure has endorsed. The process involves:

1. the member completing a "study travel proposal" and lodging that proposal with the Secretariat's Corporate Services Office; and
2. the Corporate Services Office providing advice to the Speaker on the proposal and on the member's available entitlement.

**Members should note that approval to utilise this entitlement cannot be sought retrospectively.**

**The following information must be provided:**

Brief description of the proposed activity (must include the purpose of the journey/activity and/or details of any conferences to be attended or training to be undertaken):

Visit to London UK to attend CPA Westminster Seminar on Parliamentary Practice and Procedure 17-21 June 2013

Detailed itinerary (including dates and times) of the places to be visited/activity to be undertaken:

Travel to UK on QF1 via Dubai on 14 June 2013; returning from London (Heathrow) on QF2 on 23 June. Attendance at conference

Estimated Cost of Activity \$11,000.....  
(cost should include fares, travelling allowances, conference fees and other training expenses)

I acknowledge that:

- within **eight weeks** of completing this activity, I am required to submit a written report detailing: the travel undertaken and the costs incurred (including any reimbursement received for nominee accompanied travel); the names and area of responsibility of persons contacted; a summary of business undertaken; and, in relation to any approved training undertaken, a report on that training; and
- details of this proposal and the study travel report will be published on the Assembly's internet site.

Member's Name STEVE JOSPOT MLA Signature [Signature] 21/3/2013

\*APPROVED / NOT APPROVED [Signature]  
Speaker 21/3/13

\*Delete as applicable

## REPORTS ON MEMBER'S STUDY TRIPS

A study trip report must be submitted within eight weeks of completing any travel made under the Member's study entitlement. The report, together with the original study travel proposal, will be published on the Assembly's website.

The following format may be used by Members or may act as a guideline for Members in preparing reports.

### STUDY TRIP REPORT

Name: **Steve Doszpot MLA**

Purpose of Visit: **Attend 62<sup>nd</sup> Westminster Seminar on Parliamentary Practice & Procedure**

Places visited and dates of visit:  
**London, UK 17 – 21 June 2013**


Expenses incurred (including any reimbursement received for spouse accompanied travel):  
**\$12936.71 Spouse did not travel**

Organisation(s) and individuals visited:  
**Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) UK**

Area of responsibility of persons contacted:  
**Members of Parliament from 29 Commonwealth countries**

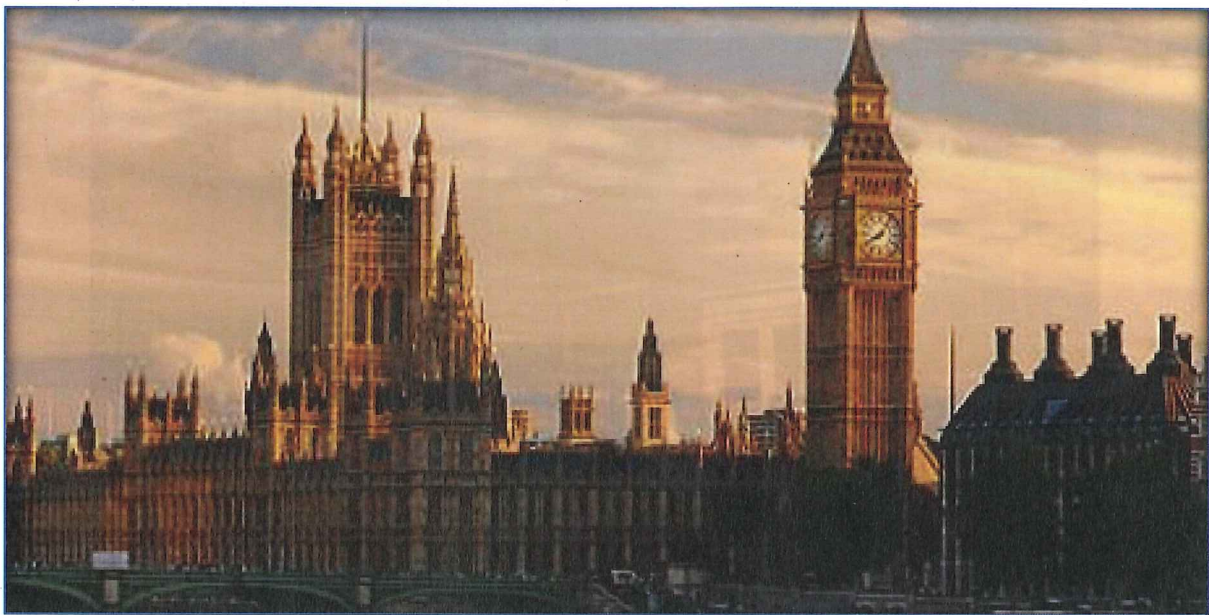
Business undertaken:  
**Attend seminar**

Conclusions and/or recommendations:  
**Please see attached report**

Signed: 

Date: **24 - August - 2013**

# **Study Trip Report**



## **62nd Westminster Seminar on Parliamentary Practice & Procedure**

**17 June 2013 - 21 June 2013**

**Steve Dospot MLA**

## Introduction

I was privileged to be the ACT Legislative Assembly representative at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's 62nd Westminster Seminar held in London in June 2013. Australia was well represented, with State and Territory Members of Parliament from: The Australian Capital Territory; New South Wales; Northern Territory; Queensland; South Australia; Victoria; and Western Australia. There was no representation from our Federal Parliament, or Tasmania. 29 Countries attended – Australia; Bermuda; Canada; Cook Islands; Ghana; Grenada; Guyana; Hong Kong; India; Jamaica; Kenya; Kiribati; Maldives; Malta; Namibia; New Zealand; Nigeria; Rwanda; Seychelles; Sierra Leone; Somaliland; Sri Lanka; St Lucia; Tanzania; Trinidad & Tobago; Turks & Caicos; Uganda; Virgin Islands and Zambia. These countries were represented by 91 Members of Parliament.



Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's 62nd Westminster Seminar held in London in June 2013

The Westminster Seminar is the UK Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's flagship programme, and this was the 62nd year it has been held.

I am in my fifth year as an ACT MLA and this was my first opportunity to attend a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association seminar and to see first hand the benefit of mixing with the wide cross section of the unique Commonwealth Parliamentary membership. This year's seminar brought together over 90 of us serving and recently-elected parliamentarians and mid-career clerks from Commonwealth countries for a five-day programme to explore practice and procedure within the Westminster Parliamentary framework. The added bonus of this seminar being in London and conducted in Portcullis

House and the Houses of Parliament and the famed Attlee Suite, certainly underlined for me not just the practicalities of the seminar but the incredible connection to history that stretches back some 700 years.

Our programme explored subjects such as the role of an MP, the role of the Opposition, bicameralism, parliamentary administration, the committee system, and devolution. This year's programme placed a particular emphasis on topical subjects such as women in politics, the role of the media in the oversight of parliament, and the opportunity to explore general Commonwealth issues, and to explore the differences and similarities between the way each of our countries have adapted the Westminster system to our own local requirements.

## Aim

1. The aim of the seminar was to explore parliamentary practice and procedure within a Westminster-style framework in order to enhance the capacity of participating parliamentarians and clerks.

## Objectives

2. **Parliamentarians.** To explore through briefings, discussion sessions and practical observation:
  - 2.01 The role of Parliament in holding the Executive to account.
  - 2.02 The role of opposition parties and cross-party relations.
  - 2.03 Party discipline and transparency.
  - 2.04 The role of a second chamber and bicameralism.
  - 2.05 The relationship between Parliament and the media.
  - 2.06 Representation and the role of the MP in the constituency.
  - 2.07 The management and administration of Parliament including the work of the Speaker/Presiding Officer, the Commission and Members' services.
3. **Clerks.** To explore through briefings, discussion sessions and practical observation:
  - 3.01 The role of Parliament in holding the executive to account.
  - 3.02 The role of the Committee Clerk.
  - 3.03 Member/Clerk relations.
  - 3.04 The Scrutiny Unit.
  - 3.05 The Journal Office.
  - 3.06 Providing procedural and legal advice to Members.
  - 3.07 Representation and the role of the MP in the constituency.
  - 3.08 The management and administration of Parliament including the work of the Speaker/Presiding Officer, the Commission and Members' services.

## **Session 1: The Legislative Process (Day 1 - Monday 17 June)**

Chair: Mr Gavin Williamson MP (Conservative)  
Panellists: Ms Phillipa Helm – Principal Clerk of Select Committee (House of Commons)  
Mr Andrew Percy MP (Conservative)

This session introduced delegates to Westminster, gave us an overview of the structure of the Parliament including its history, defining features, recent reforms and debates, and current issues.

## **Session 2: The Legislative Process (Day 1 - Monday 17 June)**

Chair: Mr Jacob Rees – Mogg MP (Conservative)  
Panellists: Ms Jacky Sharpe – Clerk of Legislation (House of Commons)  
Ms Kate Emms – Clerk of Private Members Bills (House of Commons)

This session concentrated on parliamentarians' role as legislators, and provided interesting insights and discussion on the passage of bills through Parliament. Where do bills originate? How are they drafted? How do they become law? What is the purpose of secondary legislation? What is pre-legislative scrutiny? Areas of particular interest were in relation to standing orders 14 and 57 which dealt with bringing order to 440 private members wanting to present bills – but 20 only are able at each sitting on 13 Fridays drawn by ballot. Also standing order 42 which deals with: relevance, tedious, repetitious amendments presented in mocking fashion.

## **Session 3: Running Parliament (Day 1 - Monday 17 June)**

Chair: Mr John Thurso MP (Liberal Democrats) Member of House of Commons  
Commission & Chair of the Finance and Services Committee.  
Panellists: Sir Robert Rogers KCB - Clerk of the House of Commons  
Mr David Beamish, Clerk of the Parliaments, House of Lords

This session provided unique insights about the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Parliaments have a form of Parliamentary Commission to administer and manage themselves, some do not and some are introducing such a body. It was interesting how the parliament at Westminster is administered and managed including what are the roles of the House of Commons Commission and House of Lords House Committee. How do these bodies interact with the two management boards and the interaction between the two Houses.



Sir Robert Rogers - Mr John Thurso MP - Mr David Beamish, Clerk of the Parliaments

#### **Session 4: Bicameralism - the work of a Second Chamber (Day 1 - Monday 17 June)**

Chair: Rt Hon. Baroness Prasher. CBE - (Crossbencher)

Panellists: Rt Hon. Lord (Bruce) Grocott (Labour)

Baroness Stern of Vauxhall CBE - appointed to the House of Lords

Many parliaments have two chambers and some who have just one are setting up a second chamber. This session examined the advantages and disadvantages of a bicameral system. Using the Westminster vehicle, what work does the Upper House, the House of Lords, undertake and what is its relationship with the Lower House, the House of Commons? What might future reforms of the House of Lords look like? Note: Currently in the House of Lords, the Government holds a majority – (very unusual).

## **Session 5: Parliamentary Questions (PQ) and motions (Day 1 - Monday 17 June)**

Chair: Mr Thomas Docherty MP (Labour)

Panellist: Mr Paul Evans - Principal Clerk of Table Office, House of Commons

Parliamentary questions are dealt with differently in different jurisdictions, this session explored the different types of questions (written, oral and urgent) asked in parliament and the ways in which questions are tabled, answered and traced. What rules govern parliamentary question (PQs)? How do questions enable MPs to hold the Government to account – and how effective is the summoning of Ministers to parliament to answer an urgent question? What is the interaction between PQs and Freedom of Information (FOI)?



**Mr Paul Evans, Principal Clerk of Table Office, House of Commons, and Mr Thomas Docherty MP**



## Session 5a: Depart Attlee Suite for Reception at No 3 Parliament Street



No 3 Parliament Street

## Session 6: The Role of a Member of Parliament - MP (Day 2 - Tuesday 18 June)

Chair: Ms Shabana Mahmood MP (Labour)  
Panellists: Sir Peter Bottomley MP (Conservative)  
Dr Roberta Blackman – Woods MP (Labour)

This session looked at the role of an MP in his/her constituency? What is the relationship between the Party and the MP? What are the differences between a list MP and a constituency MP? Is constituency work increasing? Interestingly the Constituent Office of an MP is called – surgery.

## Session 7: The Role of the Opposition (Day 2 - Tuesday 18 June)

Chair: The Rt Hon. Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top (Labour)

Panellists: The Rt Hon. Elfyn Llwyd MP ( Plaid Cymru)

Rt Hon Jack Straw MP (Labour)

Foreign Secretary in former Labor Govt - in his 35th year as MP was in opposition 22 years.

This session looked at life in Opposition and cooperation with MPs from other parties. What is the role of Opposition parties in scrutinising the Executive? What is understood by the term “loyal Opposition”? Why do some parliaments use the terms, Majority Party and Minority Party? How are Opposition parties financed? What is the role of the Shadow Cabinet?



The Rt Hon Jack Straw MP (Labour) on The Role of the Opposition

## **Session 8: The Role of the Opposition (Day 2 - Tuesday 18 June)**

- Chair: Lord Newby OBE (Liberal Democrat) Deputy Chief Whip and Captain of the Queen's Bodyguard of the Yeoman of the Guard.
- Panellists: The Rt Hon. Greg Knight MP (Conservative) Govt Whip, Vice Chamberlain Royal Household Rt Hon. Rosie Winterton MP (Labour) Shadow Chief Whip.

This session provided interesting observations and discussions on party discipline and the role of Whips in parliament. How do Whips operate as a channel of communication between the front and back benches? How is party discipline maintained? How do Government and Opposition interact to deliver parliamentary business? How are Whips offices organised? How do Whips interact with Members who take the major decision to vote against their party line?

## **Session 9: The Role of the Leader of the House (Day 2 - Tuesday 18 June)**

- Chair: The Rt Hon. David Hanson MP (Labour)
- Panellists: The Rt Hon. Andrew Lansley CBE MP (Conservative) Leader of the House of Commons.  
Ms Angela Eagle MP (Labour) Shadow Leader of the House of Commons.

This session dealt with the way that the Leader of the House organises Government business and the Leader's role in enhancing parliament / government relations.

## **Session 10: The Role of the Media in the oversight of Parliament (Day 2 - Tuesday 18 June)**

- Chair: Dr Tristram Hunt MP (Labour)
- Panellists: Lord Black of Brentwood. Former Press Secretary to the Leader of Opposition now sits in the House of Lords and works for the Telegraph Group.  
Hon. Fiona Simpson MP Speaker of the Legislative Assembly Queensland, (National Party) She is a Former journalist and has been in Politics for over 20 years.

This session looked at media issues in the UK and also had a contribution from Australia (Queensland) on a case study from the Queensland Parliament on managing media access to parliament. Whilst in the UK, "MP bashing" is a frequent occurrence in the national media, in local (Constituency) media that is often not the case. In each country the

parliamentarian / media relationship is different. This session provided opportunities for Commonwealth wide discussion on what relationship (where possible) parliamentarians should seek to have with the media, what media training is on offer for parliamentarians and how MPs can maximise their use of modern technology and social media.

### **Session 11: The Committee System (Day 3 – Wednesday 19 June)**

Chair: Ms Fiona O'Donnell MP (Labour)

Panellists: Rt Hon. Sir Malcolm Bruce. MP (Liberal Democrat)

Dr David Harrison, Clerk. International Development Select Committee House of Commons

The select or departmental committee system can be a powerful parliamentary tool to scrutinize the Executive, yet in some jurisdictions the system is weak. This session focused on the scrutiny role of select committees. How are committees structured and how they function? What are the conditions and success factors that make for an effective committee? What benchmarks can be used to measure committee performance? Note: I will seek out copies of the UK Wright Committee and Short Committee Reports to examine relevance for Canberra and the ACT committee systems.

### **Session 12: Workshop session on The Committee System (Day 3 – Wednesday 19 June)**

Workshop was conducted in smaller groups using hypothetical case study exercises.

### **Session 13: Holding the Prime Minister to account through PMQ's (Day 3 - Wednesday 19 June)**

Chair: Mr Liam Laurence Smyth, Clerk of the Journals, House of Commons

At Westminster the Prime Minister appears in Parliament once a week to answer questions. Some other parliaments have a similar process. We looked at the the purpose and procedure of Prime Minister's Questions (PMQ), the effectiveness of members during PMQ in holding the Prime Minister to account. We also heard what other ways the Prime Minister can be held to account. Following this discussion delegates had the opportunity to view PMQ live via a video stream in the Attlee Suite. Because of the large number of delegates we were not able to observe the PMQ live from the visitor's gallery. We were also told that: [parliamentrevealed.com](http://parliamentrevealed.com) is available for further information and that it is also seeking film footage from other parliaments.



Delegates view PMQ live via a video stream

Mr Liam Laurence Smyth - Clerk of the Journals

## **Session 14: Standards, Privileges and the role of an Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) (Day 3 - Wednesday 19 June)**

Chair: Mr Greg Hands MP (Conservative)

Panellists: Ms Katherine Hudson, Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards,  
The Rt Hon. Kevin Barron MP (Labor) Chair of Standards & the Privileges  
Committees  
Ms Eve Samson, Clerk to the Standards and Privileges Committees, House of  
Commons

The Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards was set up by the House of Commons in 1995. We looked at the roles of: the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards; the Committee on Standards and the Committee of Privileges; the Code of Conduct; the role of IPSA.

## **Session 15: The Working Parliament (Day 3 - Wednesday 19 June)**

We were given a running commentary on what was actually in happening in Parliament, this session provided an opportunity for delegates to observe parliament 'live' through viewing Ministerial Questions in the House of Commons chamber, viewing a select committee in session, I also chose a limited opportunity to observe and view the House of Lords in session.

## Session 16: Devolution (Day 3 - Wednesday 19 June)

- Chair: Mr Peter Wishart MP (SNP)
- Panellists: Lord German OBE (Liberal Democrat)  
The Hon. Ian Paisley Jnr MP (DUP)  
Mr David T C Davies MP (Conservative) Welsh – Married to a Hungarian.

Devolution is a sensitive issue in many countries. This session looked at how devolution is structured, and what roles and powers can be held by devolved legislatures. What are the recent and anticipated developments to devolved structures in Commonwealth countries? What are the issues around the independence referenda – such as Quebec, and Scotland in 2014? Some panelists were clearly in favour, others spoke of split loyalties - the sense of belonging, proud to be Welsh, but also proud to be British. Most expressed some concern about the effects of devolution on the United Kingdom, also spoke in glowing terms about 2015 being the 800th Anniversary of Magna Carta.

## Session 17: Electoral Systems (Day 3 - Wednesday 19 June)

- Chair: Miss Anne McIntosh MP (Conservative)
- Panellists: Lord Kennedy of Southwark (Labour)  
Rt Hon. Lord McConnell of Glenscorrodale (Labour)  
Lord Harrison (Labour)

In the UK members of the European Parliament, House of Commons, and devolved legislatures are all elected using different voting systems. Using the UK as a case-study, this session gave an overview of the different electoral systems operating at a national and regional level:

- **First-past-the-post**, used to elect MPs to the House of Commons and for local elections in England and Wales
- **Single Transferable Vote (STV)**, used for electing the Northern Ireland Assembly, local elections in Scotland and Northern Ireland, and European Parliament elections in Northern Ireland
- **Additional Member System (AMS)**, used to elect the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales, and the London Assembly
- **Closed Party List**, used to elect Members of the European Parliament, with the exception of Northern Ireland which uses Single Transferable Vote. What are the arguments for electoral reform? How does the UK electoral system compare with other systems in the Commonwealth?

## **Session 18: Working supper in the CPA Room (Day 3 - Wednesday 19 June)**

Chair: Mr Nigel Evans MP (Conservative) Deputy Speaker & First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means.

This session proved very informative and popular as it gave all of us parliamentarians the opportunity to network together, as well as with our UK hosts. The exchange of ideas and experiences proved very useful. This informal working supper was designed to facilitate these opportunities.

## **Session 19: Broadcasting Parliament (Day 4 - Thursday 20 June)**

Chair: Mr Alun Cairns MP (Conservative)

Panellists: Mr John Angeli, Director of Parliamentary Broadcasting  
Mr Peter Knowles, Controller BBC Parliament.

Showing the general public what happens in parliament is an important element in the process of widening democracy. Should parliament be broadcast to the public? What is BBC Parliament? What is BBC Democracy Live? How has the broadcasting of parliament evolved in the UK? How does this compare with other countries?

## **Session 20: Parliament, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and Civil Society (Day 4 - Thursday 20 June)**

Chair: Mr Mr Stephen Doughty MP (Labour / Co-operative)

Panellists: Rt Hon. Andrew Mitchell MP (Conservative)  
Ms Melanie Ward, Head of Advocacy, Action AidUK  
Ms Isabella Sankey, Director of Policy, Liberty

Parliamentarians are sometimes wary of NGOs and civil society. This session will explore the relationship between parliamentarians, NGOs, and civil society organisations. How can more active mutual cooperation be achieved? How can mutual communication be encouraged?

## Session 21: Women in Parliament (Day 4 - Thursday 20 June)

Chair: Rt Hon. Baroness (Joan) Royall of Blaisdon (Labour)

Panellists: Rt Hon Baroness Hayman GBE (Crossbench) Former Lord Speaker  
Hon. Mary Macleod MP (Labour) - Parliamentary Secretary to Rt Hon Maria Miller MP

The number of women in parliament and the empowerment of women parliamentarians are big challenges in some parliaments. This session discussed how well women are represented in the UK in Parliament today. How has an increase in women's participation in politics been achieved? What are the continuing challenges faced by women in politics and how should they be addressed? According to one of the panellists, in the UK, Labour women in Parliament are 46% to 14% of Conservative women in parliament. In her opening remarks the Chair made reference to Julia Gillard, Australia's first woman Prime Minister.

The Rt Hon. Janet Anne Royall, Baroness Royall of Blaisdon, the current Leader of the Opposition in the House of Lords, was a special adviser to Neil Kinnock, the Leader of the Labour Party, in the 1980s, and has remained a close ally of his ever since. On 25 June 2004 she was created Baroness Royall of Blaisdon, in the County of Gloucestershire. In the House of Lords, she became government spokesman for Health, International Development and Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. On 24 January 2008 Baroness Royall was appointed government Chief Whip in the House of Lords, following the resignation of Lord Grocott, and was created a Privy Counsellor later in the year. On 3 October 2008, she was promoted to the cabinet by Gordon Brown, who made her Leader of the House of Lords and Lord President of the Council.

Baroness Royall of Blaisdon, voted for a 100% elected House, on the last occasion that the House of Lords voted on Reform of The House of Lords in March 2007. She has called for a national Referendum on any reforms of the chamber.





Rt Hon John Bercow MP - Speaker of House of Commons

## Session 22: The role of the Speaker - The Two Speakers session (Day 4 - Thursday 20 June)

- Chair:** Rt Hon. Sir Alan Haslehurst MP (Conservative) Chair, CPA UK & International Comm.
- Panellists:** Rt Hon John Bercow MP. Speaker of House of Commons (formerly Conservative) Resigned from the Conservative party, to contest speakership.  
Rt Hon Baroness d'Souza CMG. Speaker of House of Lords, her role is mainly ceremonial, as "Lords are not unruly like the Commons"

This session provided a unique experience for us, as we had the opportunity to listen to Rt Hon John Bercow MP Speaker (the 157th Speaker of House of Commons) and also to the Rt Hon Baroness d'Souza CMG, Speaker of House of Lords. They gave personal insights and explored the role of the Speaker. The Speaker of a Parliament is a very important appointment. What is the role of the Speaker? Should the Speaker have a role outside parliament? How is the Speaker elected – should he/she renounce party affiliation? Should the Speaker be a serving parliamentarian?

## **Session 23: Parliamentary inf services, resource, research and outreach (Day 4 - Thursday 20 June)**

Chair: Ms Meg Hillier MP (Labour / Co-operative)  
Panellists: Mr Tim Loughton MP (Conservative)  
Ms Katherine Lee, Education Visits Mngr Parlt. Education Services, House of Commons,  
Ms Vaughne Miller, Head of Section, International Affairs and Defence, House of Commons Library.

To function better, parliamentarians should have access to modern and effective information services, but the investment is large. How are Information Services structured in a modern Parliament? Taking Westminster as an example, what services are offered through the House of Commons library, research departments and the Parliamentary Office of Science & Technology (POST)? What other information services are available to Members?

## **Session 24: Commonwealth matters (Day 4 - Thursday 20 June)**

Following the last CHOGM and the coming implementation of 85% of the recommendations of the report by the Eminent Persons Group, there is much going on to modernise the Commonwealth and the CPA. This session explored the role of the Commonwealth and the CPA and the challenges they both face. How can / should the Commonwealth be strengthened? What is the role of the CPA in strengthening parliamentary democracy and diplomacy?

Chair: Rt Hon. Lord Foulkes of Cumnock ( Labour)  
Panellists: Ms Mmasekgoa Masire – Mwamba, Dep Secretary General, Commonwealth Secretariat  
Rt Hon. Sir Alan Haslehurst MP (Conservative) Chair, CPA UK and International Executive Committees.  
Ms Caitlin Jones, Head of Commonwealth Co-ordination Team, Foreign & Commonwealth

## **Session 25: Briefings for the Constituency Visit (Day 4 - Thursday 20 June)**

Briefing by Mr Andrew Tuggey DL, Director, International and Commonwealth Relations and Secretary of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association of the UK.

Delegates were split into groups of 10 and were the guests of British MPs in their respective constituencies. It was an interesting opportunity to meet with local Councils and enabled us to get a better understanding of the interaction between Councils and their local MPs.

## **Session 26: Constituency Visits (Day 5 Friday 20 June)**

It is always interesting to learn how colleagues interact with their constituents and to know more about the way colleagues run their constituency offices, etc. This session involved visits to London MPs' constituencies and were focused on the role of the MP in the constituency. Our visiting groups were selected so that we had a broadly representative mix in each of the groups that travelled by mini vans to their locations. Our group was designated to visit - Siobhain McDonagh, Member of Parliament for Mitcham and Morden.

## **Session 27: Report back on Constituency Visits (Day 5 Friday 20 June)**

A round table discussion on points of interest from the morning's constituency visits.



**International Members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Meeting Siobhain McDonagh.**

After going to Essex University, Siobhain McDonagh worked as a clerk at the DHSS and a receptionist at Wandsworth Council's Homeless Families Unit, before becoming Development Manager at Battersea Churches Housing Trust.

Siobhain joined the Labour Party when she was 15, and in 1982 became London's youngest councillor when she was elected to Merton Council. As Chair of the Housing Committee she set about demolishing the tower blocks in Phipps Bridge, replacing them with proper homes and gardens.

Siobhain was the Labour candidate for Mitcham and Morden in the 1987 and 1992 general elections, before eventually winning in 1997.

As a local MP, she has led a variety of campaigns, including to open a new train station at Mitcham Eastfields, to improve exam results by replacing three struggling schools with brand new Academies, to introduce new community 'Safer Neighbourhood' police teams, and to tackle graffiti, abandoned cars, vandalism and other anti-social behaviour.

In particular, she has campaigned to improve local health services, leading calls to re-open the Wilson Hospital in Mitcham and save the A&E and Maternity Units at St Helier Hospital.

Siobhain is renowned as one of the country's hardest-working MPs, and regularly heads the list of MPs who have written the most letters, taking up thousands of new cases on behalf of constituents every year.

She lives in Colliers Wood with her sister Margaret, within five minutes' walk of the house where she was brought up and where her mum, a retired nurse, still lives.

## **Session 28: Young People and Parliament, Engaging the Next Generation (Day 5 - Friday 20 June)**

Over half of the Commonwealth's 2 billion people are aged 25 or under. It is important for parliamentary democracy to engage young people with politics and parliament. How can politicians reach out to young people and address their lack of political engagement? What are the arguments for and against lowering the voting age to 16?



Rt Hon. Andrew Lansley CBE MP – Leader of the House of Commons (Conservative) & Rt Hon. David Hanson MP

## Session 29: Closing Plenary and Presentation of Certificates (Day 5 - Friday 20 June)

Many parliaments have a large percentage turnover following elections. We explored what further training and advice would be helpful to assist new parliamentarians and clerks in planning their induction work. This session and the 2013 Seminar finished with the presentation of certificates.



Steve Doszpot MLA presented CPA Certificate by The Rt Hon. Baroness Hooper CMG - House of Lords

## Parties Representation

Nearly all MPs are members of political parties. The list below details the current composition of the House of Commons, based on the number of MPs in each party. If an MP is not a member of a political party, they are known as an 'Independent'.

Party	Seats
Conservative	304
Labour	257
Liberal Democrat	56
Democratic Unionist	8
Scottish National	6
Sinn Fein	5
Independent	4
Plaid Cymru	3
Social Democratic & Labour Party	3
Alliance	1
Green	1
Respect	1
Speaker	1
Total number of seats	650
Current working Government Majority	77

Speaker: John Bercow. Deputy Speakers: Mr Lindsay Hoyle, Mr Nigel Evans and Dawn Primarolo

Government majority calculated as 303 Conservative and 56 Liberal Democrat MPs less 282 of all other parties. This calculation excludes the Speaker, Deputy Speakers (2 Labour, 1 Conservative) and Sinn Fein.



## House of Lords

Members of the House of Lords who can scrutinise bills, investigate government activity through committee work, and question government through oral questions and debates. These tables exclude around 50 members who are currently ineligible.

Party/group	Life peers*	Excepted hereditary peers**	Bishops	Total
<b>Bishops</b>	0	0	25	<b>25</b>
<b>Conservative</b>	159	48		<b>207</b>
<b>Crossbench</b>	151	31		<b>182</b>
<b>Labour</b>	212	4		<b>216</b>
<b>Liberal Democrat</b>	85	4		<b>89</b>
<b>Non-affiliated</b>	20	0		<b>20</b>
<b>Other parties</b>	13	1		<b>14</b>
Conservative Independent	1	0		1
Democratic Unionist	2	0		2
Independent Labour	1	0		1
Independent Liberal Democrat	1	0		1
Independent Ulster Unionist	1	0		1
Labour Independent	1	0		1
Liberal Democrat Independent	1	0		1
Plaid Cymru	2	0		2
UK Independence Party	1	1		2
Ulster Unionist Party	2	0		2
<b>Total</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>753</b>

\* Made up of life peers under the Appellate Jurisdiction Act 1876 and the Life Peerages Act 1958

\*\* Made up of hereditary peers elected by parties and groups, or by the whole House



Party/group	Men	Women	Total
<b>Bishops</b>	25	0	<b>25</b>
<b>Conservative</b>	169	38	<b>207</b>
<b>Crossbench</b>	144	38	<b>182</b>
<b>Labour</b>	153	63	<b>216</b>
<b>Liberal Democrat</b>	63	26	<b>89</b>
<b>Non-affiliated</b>	16	4	<b>20</b>
<b>Other parties</b>	13	1	<b>14</b>
Conservative Independent	1	0	1
Democratic Unionist	2	0	2
Independent Labour	1	0	1
Independent Liberal Democrat	0	1	1
Independent Ulster Unionist	1	0	1
Labour Independent	1	0	1
Liberal Democrat Independent	1	0	1
Plaid Cymru	2	0	2
UK Independence Party	2	0	2
Ulster Unionist Party	2	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>583</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>753</b>





**The current Lord Speaker - Baroness D'Souza**

The Lord Speaker is a role elected internally by Members of the House of Lords. Politically impartial, responsibilities of the Lord Speaker include chairing the Lords debating chamber, offering advice on procedure, and acting as an ambassador for the work of the Lords both at home and abroad.

#### **The current Lord Speaker - Baroness D'Souza**

Baroness D'Souza was elected by Lords members as the second Lord Speaker on 18 July 2011 and took office on 1 September 2011.

She succeeded Baroness Hayman, the first elected Lord Speaker. She took her place on the Woolsack to oversee proceedings in the Lords chamber on 5 September 2011. She entered the House of Lords in 2004.

Before taking up the post of Lord Speaker, Baroness D'Souza was Convenor of the Crossbench Peers (2007-11).

As Convenor, Baroness D'Souza was a member of the following committees: [Administration and Works Committee](#), [Liaison Committee](#), [Privileges and Conduct Committee](#), [Selection Committee](#), [Procedure Committee](#) and [House Committee](#).

She was also previously a member of [European Union Sub-Committee F](#).

Source: <http://www.parliament.uk/>