

**MINUTE OF PLENARY MEETING OF THE PAROLE COMMISSIONERS HELD IN THE
SIGNAL BUSINESS CENTRE ON WEDNESDAY 26TH MARCH 2009**

Commissioners:	Mr Peter Smith CBE QC Mr Brian Garrett Mr Donal McFerran Judge Derek Rodgers Prof John Jackson Dr Ruth Elliott Dr Ronald Galloway Dr Adrian Grounds Dr Damien McCullagh Dr Oliver Shanks Mr John Leckey	Mrs Elsbeth Rea OBE Mrs Mary Gilpin Mrs Anne Fenton Mrs Elaine Peel Mr Thomas Craig Dr Patrick McGrath Prof Herb Wallace OBE Prof Peter Hepper Prof Andrew Sanders Mr Nigel Stone Ms Clodach McGrory
Secretariat:	Mrs Moya Cushley Miss Karen Weir	Mrs Kerry McIlwaine
Apologies:	Mr Stephen Murphy Ms Teresa Doherty CBE	Dr Duncan Morrow
Guest Speakers:	Mr David Lennox	CJPD

1. The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.
2. Commissioners heard a presentation on Electronic Monitoring and Tagging, due to become operation on 1 April 2009 as a result of the Criminal Justice Order 2008 and the new public protection arrangements.
3. The Commissioners reviewed action points of previous minutes and received updates on the current position.
4. The Commissioners discussed Parole Commissioners Rules (Northern Ireland) 2009, which will apply to all new cases received on or after the 1st April 2009.
5. The Commissioners discussed the need for updated training to facilitate the changes under the new public protection arrangements. Two days were agreed in June to take forward the training issues.
6. The Commissioners were updated on the current position regarding the appointment of the new Parole Commissioners.
7. The Commissioners heard the detail on the appointment of a Deputy Chief Commissioner. Applications had been invited and received. The position will be filled by Secretary of State appointment and should be announced shortly.
8. The Commissioners discussed the Terms of Office for the Parole Commissioners.

9. The Chief Commissioner reported the outcome of a recent meeting with the Northern Ireland Prison Service on the issues raised in the Daniell Report over psychology reporting.
10. The issues of data handling and the security of documents were discussed. Commissioners were advised that they would be issued with secure filing cabinets to be held at their homes for the storage of documents off-site. The issue of encrypted laptops for Commissioners has been approved and is currently being explored.
11. The Legal Group reported on the items discussed during legal group meetings. The following issues were discussed:
 - The policy on the release and disclosure of audio discs;
 - Typing services for Commissioners; and
 - Confidential Information.
12. Commissioners heard a report from the Rehabilitation group meeting. The following issues were discussed:
 - Consultation documents and the need to centralise all consultations received;
 - The forthcoming visits to Extern and Magilligan; and
 - Membership of the working groups.
13. The Psychology/Psychiatry Group reported on the items discussed meetings. The following issues were discussed:
 - Current complement of psychology staff within Prisons, Probation and Youth Justice;
 - The role of trainee and assistant psychologists; and
 - Membership of the working groups
14. The Commissioners discussed Pre-Tariff Reviews. It was agreed that the Rehabilitation Group would carry out a review of the current process.
15. The Commissioners heard a report on a Personality Disorder Workshop that had been attended. They discussed the alarming figures of personality disorder rates in prisons.
16. Commissioners hear details of the current caseload including the outcome of judicial review proceeding in two cases.
17. Commissioners heard a report on the work in train within the Secretariat.
18. Commissioners discussed the following topics under the heading Any Other Business:
 - Cases referred under Article 9 (1);
 - Changes to Commissioners Expenses; and
 - Criminal Justice Week – Engaging the Community.
19. The next meeting will take place during the training event on 10th and 11th June 2009.

**MINUTE OF PAROLE COMMISSIONER'S PLENARY HELD AT THE SIGNAL
BUSINESS CENTRE ON 11th June 2009**

Present Commissioners:	Mr Peter Smith CBE QC Mr Brian Garrett Mr Donal McFerran Mrs Anne Fenton Prof John Jackson Dr Ruth Elliott Dr Ron Galloway Dr Adrian Grounds Dr Damien McCullagh Mr Nigel Stone	Mrs Elsbeth Rea OBE Mrs Mary Gilpin Mrs Elaine Peel Mr Tom Craig Prof Herb Wallace OBE Ms Clodach McGrory Prof Andrew Sanders Mr John Leckey Dr Patrick McGrath
Secretariat:	Mrs Moya Cushley Miss Karen Weir	Mrs Kerry McIlwaine
Apologies:	Mr Stephen Murphy CBE Dr Oliver Shanks Prof Peter Hepper	Ms Teresa Doherty CBE Judge Derek Rodgers Dr Duncan Morrow

1. The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.
2. The Commissioners reviewed the matters arising from the previous minutes and received updates on the current position.
3. The Commissioners discussed the review of policies and the progress to date.
4. The Commissioners were updated on the progress of the new training and induction programme for Commissioners.
5. The Commissioners discussed a recent report detailing a recent release case on compassionate grounds. The report identified some points which could be raised with Prisons regarding future referrals.
6. The Commissioners were updated on the Parole Commissioners rules. New rules for Determinate Custody Sentence prisoners released under Article 17 are currently being developed.

7. The Chief Commissioner provided an update on the recruitment of the new Parole Commissioners. The complement of Commissioners will be three judges and eleven other Commissioners who will be appointed shortly.
8. The Chief Commissioner congratulated the new Deputy Chief Commissioner and wished her every success in her new role.
9. The Commissioners have agreed to write an interim policy on data handling. This policy should be completed for endorsement at the December plenary.
10. The Commissioners were advised that a meeting was organised for 25th June to review pre-tariff interview reports with a view to developing best practice.
11. The Legal Group reported on the items discussed during the last legal group meeting. The following issues were discussed:
 - Typing Services for the Chief and Deputy Chief Commissioner; and
 - Re-opening of panel findings.
12. Commissioners heard a report from the Rehabilitation Group meeting. The following issues were discussed:
 - Visit to Magilligan; and
 - Informative reports for perusal by Commissioners.
13. The Psychology/Psychiatry Group reported on the items discussed during their recent meetings. The following issues were highlighted:
 - Dossier Review; and
 - Report on "An Evaluation of Offending Behaviour Programmes in Northern Ireland.
14. The Commissioners discussed the issue of Confidential Information and the payment of Special Advocates.
15. The Commissioners were advised that the Annual Report will be laid in Parliament on 9th July 2009.
16. The Commissioners discussed the issue of Corporate Governance and were advised that the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland will be inspecting the Corporate Governance arrangements during July/August.
17. The Commissioners discussed the need to review the internal structures of the Parole Commissioners for Northern Ireland.

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 10th December 2009.

23 June 2009

Plenary meeting of Parole Commissioners 10 December 2009

Present Commissioners:	Mr Peter Smith CBE QC	Mrs Elsbeth Rea OBE
	Ms Christine Glenn	Mr Paul Mageean
	Mr Jeremy Mills	Mr Emmet Murray
	Dr Adrian East	Mrs Deborah McQueirns
	Dr Shelagh Mary Rea	Dr Micaela McGinley
	Mr Stephen Leach	Mrs Ruth Laird
	Ms Mollie Weatheritt	Miss Linda McHugh
	Mrs Alexandra Delimata	Judge Kevin Finnegan
	Judge Patrick Lynch	Judge Ben Stephens
	Dr Oliver Shanks	Mr Tom Craig
	Mrs Anne Fenton	Ms Clodach McGrory
	Mrs Elaine Peel	Dr Damian McCullagh
	Dr Ruth Elliott	Dr Adrian Grounds
	Mr John Leckey	Mr Donal McFerran
	Prof Andrew Sanders	Mr Nigel Stone
	Prof Herb Wallace OBE	Dr Patrick McGrath

Secretariat:	Mrs Moya Cushley	Mrs Kerry McIlwaine
	Mrs Joanne Williams	Mrs Karen Weir

Apologies	Mr Brian Garrett	Prof Peter Hepper
	Mr Stephen Murphy	Dr Duncan Morrow
	Judge Derek Rodgers	Prof John Jackson

The following is a summary record of the Plenary of the Parole Commissioners covered on 10 December 2009.

Item 1: Chairman's Introductions.

The Chief Commissioner welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance. All present introduced themselves.

Item 2: Minutes of last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed without amendment.

Item 3: Matters Arising

The Commissioners reviewed the matters arising from the previous minutes and received updates on the current position.

Item 4: Secretariat Report

The Secretary to the Parole Commissioners updated the Commissioners on staff changes within the Secretariat.

Item 5: Expenses and Remuneration

The Chief Commissioner referred Commissioners to the paper on the Procedure for The

Scrutiny of the Parole Commissioners' Expenses And Remuneration. He explained that the claims form for expenses would now be divided into three sections: expenses; work directly relating to core functions; and work ancillary to core functions. This new layout strikes a balance to ensure transparency whilst maintaining the independence of the Commissioners. The Commissioners formally endorsed the procedure.

Item 6 Structures and Communication

The Deputy Chief Commissioner (DCC) referred Commissioners to the paper on Interim Structures and explained that the Pro Tem Executive had endorsed the arrangements outlined in the paper. She explained why and how the Pro Tem Executive had evolved. The DCC explained that the final meeting of the Pro Tem Executive Committee would be in March 2010 and there would be an election for the new Executive Committee in spring 2010. The Commissioners formally endorsed the arrangements. It was also agreed that the appointments of Commissioners to the new Executive Committee may have to be staggered. The Chief Commissioner asked the Commissioners to nominate as many candidates as possible for the election to the new Executive Committee.

Item 7 Information Security Policy

The Commissioners were referred to the paper on the Information Security Policy. The Chief Commissioner emphasised the importance of storing relevant data securely. He went on to explain the policy adopted by the Parole Commissioners is based on the NIO Information Security Framework. The DCC spoke to the paper and advised that the interim policy required further development and a section on the definition of personal usage would be included. The Commissioners endorsed the interim policy.

Item 8 Caseload Monitoring Process

The Chief Commissioner explained that caseload monitoring is linked into the appraisal system and in light of the Criminal Justice Inspection it would be prudent for the Commissioners to consider how they work to meet their statutory requirements.

Item 9 Edinburgh Conference

A Commissioner who attended a conference in Edinburgh updated the Commissioners on learning points. He said it focused on sexual violent offending in the UK. He said such training would be beneficial when assessing risk and agreed to place a copy of the material he received at the conference available in the Secretariat library.

Item 10 CJINI Inspection and Questionnaire

The Chief Commissioner updated the Commissioners on the inspection by the Criminal Justice Inspectorate.

Item 11 Rules Update

The Chief Commission advised discussions are currently ongoing with Criminal Law Branch to address errors in the Rules and produce Rules to cover Fixed Term Recalls (FTR).

Item 12 Meeting with the Attorney General

The Chief Commissioner explained the background to his meeting with the Attorney General and said he hoped the AG would move to allow the Special Advocate to instigate judicial review proceedings.

Item 13 User Group

The Chief Commissioner advised the Commissioners that the User Group was set up to consider topics of mutual interest. He asked the Commissioners to note the first meeting of the User Group would be held on 22 January 2010.

Item 14 Appointment and Reappointment of Commissioners

The Chief Commissioner updated the Commissioners on retirements and new appointments

Item 15 Removal Letter

The Chief Commissioner has contacted the sponsoring department to set in place an independent mechanism for the removal of Commissioners.

Item 16 Training update- Post Induction

The DCC reported that the three day induction training programme had been completed and its evaluation would be considered to inform a rolling development programme. Mrs Rea thanked all involved in the planning and delivery of the training programme and asked the Commissioners to note the provisional date of 3 June 2010 for a training seminar on recalls.

Item 17 Legal Paper

The Chief Commissioner reiterated his thanks and appreciation to Prof John Jackson for his paper. He reminded Commissioners that this can be used for reference purposes but the decisions made by the Commissioners must be independent.

Item 18 Prisoners' Guide

The Chief Commissioner thanked the Secretariat for all their work to date in preparing the ECS prisoner's guide. The guide will be distributed in the New Year and should prove a valuable reference guide to prisoners, their representatives and the Commissioners. The guide will be reviewed and revised on a regular basis.

Item 19 AOB

No further business discussed.

Item 20 Date of Next Plenary

Mr Smith agreed to review the date and asked the Commissioners to provisionally hold 9 December 2010 in their diaries

Karen Weir

Minute-taker