**THE BETTER GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE**

**Executive Committee**

**Minutes of the Meeting held at the Institute for Government on 20th May 2014**

**Present:** Richard Mottram (Chair)

 Penny Boys

 Paul Britton

 Robin Butler

 Geoffrey Chipperfield

 Christopher Foster

 Tom Legg

 Peter Owen

 Martin Stanley

 Phillip Ward

 Aaron Ritchie (Secretary)

**Apologies:** Roger Dawe

 Leigh Lewis

 Peter Makeham

 Adam Sharples

**Minutes of the meeting on 9th May 2014**

Leigh Lewis and Paul Britton had also presented their apologies. Christopher Hood had been incorrectly described as Christopher Hall.

**Matters arising**

Phillip Ward had emailed David Lammy about attendance at Ditchley but no reply had yet been received.

**Updates**

Patrick Diamond had now accepted an invitation to Ditchley and would attend on Thursday 19th June.

**Ditchley attendance update**

It was agreed that the list of non-BGI members was now reasonably well balanced, though it remained thin on politicians with ministerial experience. In a brief discussion on possible additions it was agreed that an invitation should be issued to Dan Corry, John Healy should be prompted for a response to his invitation and Robin Butler would explore the possibility of Stephen Dorrell’s attendance.

**Ditchley Programme**

It was agreed that the structure of the programme should be altered by combining the sections on Parliament and on constitutional issues into a single session. The after-dinner discussion would then focus on the future shape of the process of government.

Decisions on the individual sessions were as follows:

**Session 1**. Agreed.

**Session 2.** Amend the first bullet point to “Policy making” and the fourth to “Relations with the civil service”

**Session 3.** Expand into a broader discussion of accountability in new models of delivery. Lead speakers to be Ursula Brennan, Richard Bacon MP, and Alan Downey

**Session 4.** David Howarth to chair. Lead speakers to be Alan Beith, Bernard Jenkin and Richard Gordon.

**Session 5.** Tom Legg to chair. Lead speaker to be Geoff Mulgan.

**Session 6.** Paul Britton to chair. Lead speakers to be Nick Herbert and Oliver Robbins.

**Session 7.** Amend the final sentence of the introductory paragraph to “The King/Crewe analysis shows that failures of political judgement were also a major factor”.

**Session 8** Agreed

**Work Programme**

In discussion of the individual items in EC0520n4 the following were agreed:

* John Elvidge’s views should be sought on the continuing relevance and timing of a report on coalition processes.
* Hugh Taylor was exceptionally busy at present, but a report on training and accreditation of top civil servants would be very valuable. Martin Stanley would be prepared to help with research and drafting.
* The form and content of a pre-Party Conference report and a pre-election report would be considered after Ditchley.
* The manifesto for the civil service should form part of the pre-election report.
* Paul Britton’s note prepared for Labour should be re-circulated for further consideration of whether it might be published as a free-standing document or form part of the pre-election report.
* It would be helpful if Leigh Lewis could produce brief discussion documents on a part-time head of the civil service and the training of ministers and civil servants as the basis for a discussion on what might be published.
* No further action was required on meetings with Ed Miliband and Bernard Jenkin.
* Aaron Ritchie would continue to explore possibilities for collecting data on website traffic.
* Adam Sharples should be asked to consider whether it was still necessary to develop a standard procedure for publications.
* Peter Owen should suggest a pattern of member responsibility for following and reporting on the activities’ of Parliamentary Committees.
* The case for a dinner with key contacts would be reviewed following Ditchley.
* The information items had now been overtaken.

In further discussion, Phillip Ward pointed out that it was important to keep the wider audience aware of the group’s presence through regular production of new material, including relatively narrow topics as well as major reports.

**Other business**

It was agreed that Peter Owen should suggest a provisional list of minute takers for the Ditchley sessions.

There had been an interesting debate in the House of Lords on 13th May on the Constitution Committee report on coalition government.

Civil Service World had interviewed Robin Butler about the possible coverage of an inquiry into the civil service.

**Next meeting**

The next meeting will be held at the Institute for Government at 10.15 am on Tuesday 3rd June.

PFO

21st May 2014