



**The Commissioner for
Public Appointments**

Rt Hon Peter Riddell CBE
Commissioner for Public Appointments
G/07, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ
Telephone 020 7271 0835

E-Mail publicappointments@csc.gov.uk

Hon Bernard Jenkin MP
Chair of PACAC

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Bernard Jenkin

In my letter of 7th March, I promised to let you know the result of my review of the appointment of Baroness Stowell to the Chair of the Charity Commission after receiving the relevant papers from DCMS. I have also written to Damian Collins, Chair of the DCMS committee.

I enclose the formal findings which, as usual, are being put up on my website. In summary, my conclusion is that the selection process was carried out in accordance with the Government's Governance Code for public appointments.

Baroness Stowell had been suggested as a candidate by ministers, as is specifically permitted under clause 3.1 of the Code. She was then considered on a fair and open basis along with other candidates and was recommended as one of three appointable candidates by the advisory interview panel. No preference between the three was expressed by the panel. There was then a lengthy series of exchanges between ministers in DCMS and 10 Downing Street over the merits of candidates. The process was prolonged by the Christmas and New Year holiday and the Cabinet reshuffle on 8th January, leading to the appointment of a new Secretary of State, and then the nomination of Baroness Stowell. These exchanges and the decision were all within the terms of the Code.

I stress that I am making no comment on the merits of whether to appoint Baroness Stowell or dealing with the criticisms made by the DCMS committee about her suitability. Similarly, my remit does not cover pre-appointment hearings and what happens, as in this case, if a candidate is rejected by a Select Committee. In both cases, these are matters for Parliament and for ministers.

As I previously wrote, and we have discussed, I strongly believe in the importance of parliamentary backing for those chairing or serving on public bodies in order to sustain wider trust in public appointments. That involves not just pre-appointment hearings but also a continuing relationship with the relevant Select Committee.

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I would be happy to discuss my report and any of these points further with you and your committee.

All best wishes
y sincerely
Peter

Peter Riddell
Commissioner for Public Appointments

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