

## Minutes of the meeting of the Electoral Commission held on Wednesday 24 February 2010

Present: Jenny Watson (JW) Chair  
Max Caller (MC)  
Henrietta Campbell (HC)  
John McCormick (JMcC)  
Tony Hobman (TH)  
Ian Kelsall (IK)

In attendance Peter Wardle (PW)  
Lisa Klein (LK)  
Stephen Rooney (SR)  
Andrew Scallan (AS)  
Bob Posner (BP)  
Natalie Birtle (NB)  
Dan Adamson (DA)  
Kairen Zonena (KZ)

### 1 Apologies

None.

JW welcomed TH to his first meeting.

### 2 Declaration of Interests

JW declared that one of her referees for the post of Chair of the Commission had been Theresa May MP, whose constituency had recorded a donation from Bearwood Corporate Services Ltd. She also declared that she had spoken on a platform with Lord Ashcroft but did not know him.

MC knew Roger Pratt but he was not a close friend.

TH had met Nigel Waterson MP, Shadow Minister for Pensions, in his capacity of Chief Executive of the Pensions Regulator, although it was not known whether or not Mr Waterson's constituency was one of those which had accepted a donation. Similarly he had met Gary Streeter MP and it was not known at that point whether his constituency had accepted a donation. [Post meeting note: there is one reported

donation to Mr. Waterson's constituency from Bearwood Corporate Services Limited for £5,000 in April 2005.]

It was agreed that these declarations did not make withdrawal from decision or discussion necessary, and JW, MC and TH participated in the whole meeting. There were no other declarations of interest.

**3 Report on the investigation into donations reported by the Conservative Party from Bearwood Corporate Services Limited (EC18/10, EC 19/10, and EC20/10)**

- 3.1 An erratum sheet was tabled, making amendments to Appendix A, paragraphs 4.36 and paragraph 5.43.
- 3.2 NB presented a summary of the facts.
- 3.3 Following detailed discussion and questions, for reasons which have been subsequently published in a case summary, Commission Board reached a conclusion.

**3.4 Agreed:**

The Commission Board:

- a) Concluded that Bearwood Corporate Services (BCS) met the permissibility requirements for making political donations;
- b) Considered on the evidence before it that there was no basis to conclude that the donor was anyone other than BCS;
- c) Considered that there was insufficient evidence to conclude, on the balance of probabilities, that the party was uncertain as to the identity of the donor when accepting the donations;
- d) Instructed the Director of Party and Election Finance to meet with Conservative Party senior officials to discuss concerns; and
- e) Agreed the proposed arrangements for publishing its decision handling , including the intention to make its decision public on 4 March 2010.

The meeting ended at 3.10pm.

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Chair