

**MINUTES OF THE THIRD MEETING OF  
THE ETHICS AND INTEGRITY COMMISSION**

**10:00 - 12:00; THURSDAY 18TH DECEMBER 2025**

Present:

Members

Doug Chalmers CB DSO OBE (Chair)

Rt Hon Lady Arden DBE

Rt Hon Ian Blackford

Councillor Ruth Dombey OBE

Ewen Fergusson

Professor Gillian Peele

EIC Secretariat

Stuart Sterling OBE, Chief Executive

Nicola Iles MBE, Chief of Staff

Nicola Richardson, Senior Policy Adviser

Peter Kelleher, Head of Corporate Support

Hannah O'Donoghue, Office Manager

Hemant Acharya MBE, Corporate Support Officer

External Advisers

Professor Mark Philp, Senior Academic Adviser

Maggie O'Boyle, Press Officer

**1. APOLOGIES**

None.

**2. REGISTERS**

The Chair invited Members to review the Register of Interests and consider if any additional individual interests require declaration.

**3. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2025 were agreed.

**4. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS AND CHAIR'S UPDATE**

The Chair welcomed Hannah O'Donoghue (Office Manager and Diary Secretary) and Hemant Acharya (Corporate Support Officer) to the EIC.

The Chair shared that Michael Tomlinson KC had been appointed by the Prime Minister as the Conservative member of the EIC.

The Chair highlighted the formal establishment of the Network of Standards Bodies and confirmed that its inaugural meeting had already been held.

The Chair noted that a meeting between Members is scheduled for February at 1 Horse Guards Road, preceding the fifth meeting of the EIC.

The Chair shared that the public appointments process to recruit additional Independent members is ongoing, with interviews due to take place in the first quarter of 2026. Members discussed the importance of diversity and board composition.

The Chair informed members that the EIC had recently published a blog, introducing Stuart Sterling as the EIC's new Chief Executive. Members were invited to suggest topics for future blogs.

The Chair provided an update on recent and forthcoming engagements.

#### **5. CEO UPDATE ON RECRUITMENT FOR EIC OFFICIALS**

The CEO gave a progress report on the ongoing recruitment of new staff.

#### **6. WORKSTREAM DISCUSSION: ANNUAL LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER**

The Commission discussed the scope for the Chair's first annual letter to the Prime Minister this autumn.

#### **7. WORKSTREAM DISCUSSION: EIC REVIEW**

The Chair provided an informal progress report on the EIC's first Review. The Secretariat is working on the draft Terms of Reference and a project timeline.

#### **8. WORKSTREAM DISCUSSION: CODES OF CONDUCT**

The Chair shared that discussions with the Cabinet Office Policy team are underway. The CEO set out the proposed approach to delivering the upcoming workstream.

EIC members discussed how to embed a Code of Conduct. It was agreed that this would be an important element of the work.

#### **9. WORKSTREAM DISCUSSION: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

The Chair outlined the aim of the public engagement workstream. Working in partnership with other Networks and Standards Bodies will be a crucial part of this workstream.

Ruth Dombey and Gillian Peele agreed to lead this workstream.

**9. CURRENT STANDARDS ISSUES**

Members discussed a number of current issues.

**10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Members agreed on the date of the next meeting.