



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

The Presiding Officer
Tricia Marwick MSP

To: All Members

31 August 2012

Dear Member

I hope you had a good recess and I look forward to welcoming you back when Parliament resumes next week.

This term will of course see the introduction of the Parliament's new sitting arrangements. Committees will meet on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings with plenary meetings following on each of those afternoons. Together with the wider package of reforms Members agreed last June, this represents the biggest single change to the Parliament's working practices since 1999.

The new pattern to the week will now provide the specific opportunity, at the start of each chamber session, for MSPs to question Ministers on topical issues. I hope this will enable our Parliament to be more responsive and agile in responding to the major issues of the day and holding the Government to account. To help with the new arrangements, the Chamber Desk has just issued revised guidance, including the deadlines for submission of motions and questions. They also stand ready to answer questions from you or your staff.

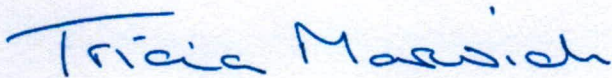
Further initiatives to reform our processes clearly remain however. More than twelve years into devolution, it is crucial that the culture and working practices of the Parliament evolve and keep pace with new developments as we strive to be the responsive, relevant body that the public expects. For example, I am keen for Members to consider how the work of committees can be improved and I am already working with the Conveners Group on ways to enable committees to be more reactive and topical.

We all have a part to play in ensuring that the changes we propose and implement are successful. Over the past year I have been very grateful for your direct feedback in a number of areas. In recent months I have particularly enjoyed the specific opportunity of meeting with new Members, to listen and learn from their views to date. I look forward to continued engagement from experienced individuals and new voices alike.

Finally, following a number of requests from Members themselves, I am attaching to this letter a brief reminder about courtesy in the Chamber. I hope that this will be useful and helps outline the expectations that I and my deputies have for maintaining consistent conduct across the chamber.

Can I finish simply by saying I am immensely grateful to you for your support so far and that I look forward to working with you further this term.

Yours sincerely



TRICIA MARWICK