

# Constitution Unit

## Monitor 82 / November 2022



### Achieving a new normal for the constitution?

Recent months have seen unprecedented turbulence in UK politics. This issue of *Monitor* covers developments over just four months, yet reports on a change of monarch and two changes of Prime Minister, plus remarkable churn in ministerial positions, and much else.

As reported in the [previous issue of Monitor](#), in early July Prime Minister Boris Johnson was forced to announce his departure following a wave of ministerial resignations. Concerns about [propriety and integrity](#) were central to his removal. Yet these topics played disappointingly little part in the leadership contest which unfolded over the summer, including in a series of hustings meetings for Conservative Party members between Rishi Sunak and Liz Truss. The primary focus of the contest was understandably the cost of living, with contention between the candidates over their economic approaches – Sunak [warned](#) against the dangers of Truss's proposed unfunded tax cuts.

Truss won the contest (see page 13), becoming Conservative Party leader on Monday 5 September, and she was [appointed](#) Prime Minister the following day by Queen Elizabeth. Cabinet positions began to be filled the day after that. But on 8 September, the day of the new government's first major statement on the energy crisis, news emerged that the Queen was unwell.

King Charles III and (in background) PM Rishi Sunak (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0) by UK Government.

Her death was [announced](#) that evening. The end of a reign lasting over 70 years was a major moment for the United Kingdom's national and constitutional self-understanding. The country entered a period of national mourning during which the funeral was held. Prince Charles immediately became King. Within days, he delivered a [televised address](#), gave an oath at [the Accession Council](#), [addressed MPs and peers](#) in Westminster Hall, and spoke at the [Scottish Parliament](#), the [Senedd](#), and [Hillsborough Castle](#) (see page 11).

This delayed the new government's activities, but a shock of a different kind occurred on 23 September, when Chancellor of the Exchequer Kwasi Kwarteng [announced](#) his so-called 'mini budget' to the House of Commons (see page 9). Including ambitious tax cuts beyond those that Truss had pledged during the campaign, it resulted in grave instability for the financial markets. Ultimately [Truss sacked Kwarteng](#) on 14 October, but was forced to [announce her own resignation](#) just six days later. This triggered a further Conservative leadership contest, which saw Sunak [appointed](#) to the role of party leader and Prime Minister (see page 9).

These events returned matters of constitutional propriety to the fore. Kwarteng's [sacking](#) of the most senior Treasury civil servant (see page 9), and refusal to submit his plans to the Office for Budget Responsibility, illustrated vividly – and at great political and economic cost – [the dangers of evading expert advice and independent scrutiny](#). Following Truss's decision to

#### In this edition

[Parliament 2–6](#)

[Elections, referendums and democratic engagement 6–8](#)

[Executive 9–10](#)

[Monarchy, church and state 11–12](#)

[Courts and the judiciary 12–13](#)

[Parties and Politicians 13–14](#)

[Nations and regions 14–17](#)

[Public attitudes to the Constitution 17–18](#)

[People on the move 18–19](#)

[Constitution Unit news 19–21](#)

[Bulletin Board 21–23](#)



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resign, the [prospect emerged](#) of Boris Johnson returning as Prime Minister (see page 13), reminding many Conservative MPs of the propriety problems that had dogged him in the role. The party's leadership election rules raised the prospect that he could be imposed on unwilling MPs by the grassroots membership, with [deeply destabilising effects](#). Ultimately Johnson, who apparently reached the nomination threshold, but [withdrew](#), may himself have recognised these risks.

Sunak assumed the premiership on a promise to restore 'integrity, professionalism and accountability'. After the widespread problems of recent years, there is a lot of work in this area to be done, and blueprints have been [offered by members of the Unit](#), the [Institute for Government](#), and others. Truss had [refused](#) to commit to appointing an Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests (often known as the Prime Minister's ethics adviser), following the resignations of the previous two officeholders under Johnson. Sunak has [pledged](#) to fill the role, but this remained undone as *Monitor* went to press, almost a month after his appointment. He has already encountered problems of his own over ministerial ethics, with the resignation of Gavin Williamson, and allegations of misconduct against both [Deputy Prime Minister Dominic Raab](#) and [Home Secretary Suella Braverman](#) (see page 10). But the challenges go wider than this, including reversing ministers' sidelining of parliament (see opposite), dealing with potential resignation honours lists from both Johnson and Truss (see page 4), restoring respectful relations with the devolved administrations (page 14), and deciding the future of the [Retained EU Law \(Revocation and Reform\) Bill](#) (see page 3), [Northern Ireland Protocol Bill](#) (see page 14) and [Bill of Rights Bill](#) (see page 12) – all of which have raised constitutional concerns. Generally, there will be rebuilding work to do with the civil service, regulators and the legal community, as well as parliamentarians. None of this will be easily achieved by Sunak given the now very visible divisions in his party.

Meanwhile, Labour has been [riding high in the polls](#) following the mini budget, at times achieving extraordinary leads over the Conservatives of more than 30 points. Critical eyes will now turn to the opposition and its own plans in these areas, where there have been some public hints (see page 13), but where much detail is still awaited.

Beyond Westminster Sunak also faces further significant challenges. He has made a point of engaging positively with foreign governments, and with the Scottish and

Welsh administrations (see page 14). But he will soon need to react to the outcome of the [Supreme Court case](#) on whether the Scottish government can unilaterally call a second independence referendum (see page 16). Meanwhile, the continued [refusal](#) of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) to facilitate creation of a Northern Ireland Executive brings additional instability, and the possibility of elections which may do little to improve the situation (see page 15).

Not only the new Prime Minister, but to a lesser extent the new head of state, King Charles, must navigate these issues with deftness to rebuild stability and faith in the UK's constitutional arrangements. Both appear enthusiastic to do so, but the road ahead may not be easy.

## Parliament



### Parliamentary scrutiny of government

The brief premiership of Liz Truss saw the recurrence of familiar concerns about limited government openness to parliamentary scrutiny. Her government oversaw several highly significant policy initiatives (and reversals), yet few of these received sustained parliamentary scrutiny. This was partly due to the adjournment of the Commons during the official mourning period for Elizabeth II, and a subsequent recess for the party conference season. Truss did not appear before the Commons Liaison Committee during her short tenure and took Prime Minister's Questions on just three occasions.

Even when parliament was sitting, ministers seemed reluctant to facilitate rigorous scrutiny. This could be seen in a familiar pattern of legislation being rushed through its parliamentary stages: the bill abolishing the Health and Social Care Levy passed its main Commons stages [in a single day](#). The so-called '[mini budget](#)' which had presaged this change likewise avoided the formal scrutiny processes which normally accompany a government budget. MPs had [very little time](#) to formally scrutinise measures which would turn out to be of seismic economic and political importance, and ultimately contributed to the end of the Truss government (see page 9). The refusal to accompany the mini budget with a forecast from the independent Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) further prevented scrutiny of the government's proposals in parliament and

beyond. This was [criticised](#) by, among others, then Chair of the Commons Treasury Select Committee Mel Stride (who subsequently joined Rishi Sunak's Cabinet). In another familiar theme, several of the Truss government's major policy announcements were made outside parliament. One example – introducing a scheme to help businesses with their energy bills – prompted Speaker Lindsay Hoyle to [rebuke](#) then Business Secretary Jacob Rees-Mogg.

A particularly extreme – and consequential – example of parliamentary mismanagement occurred over Liz Truss's attempts to whip Conservative MPs to vote against an [opposition day motion](#) on fracking on 19 October. The Conservative manifesto had pledged to retain a moratorium on fracking, but Truss sought to reverse this policy. Labour saw an opportunity to exploit divisions by inviting Conservative MPs to vote in line with their manifesto pledge.



[Prime Minister Liz Truss resigns \(CC BY-NC-ND 2.0\) by UK Prime Minister.](#)

The government declared that the vote would be [treated as a vote of confidence](#), meaning that Conservative MPs would potentially be stripped of the whip should they rebel. But with some MPs signalling their continued opposition, minister Graham Stuart announced at the dispatch box that it would not be a confidence vote after all. This led to confusion in the division lobbies, which was exacerbated by allegations that Conservative MPs were being bullied to support the government, and claims that Chief Whip Wendy Morton and Deputy Chief Whip Craig Whittaker had resigned on the spot. The chaotic scenes drove exasperated [senior backbencher Charles Walker](#) – a former vice-chair of the 1922 Committee – to call the situation a ‘shambles and a disgrace’, and claim to speak for ‘hundreds of backbenchers’ in denouncing ‘talentless people’ at

the top of the party. Less than 24 hours later, Liz Truss [announced her resignation](#).

It remains to be seen whether the Sunak government will be more receptive than its predecessor to parliamentary scrutiny and prove more adept at parliamentary management than Truss. But the dangers of mishandling the parliamentary party should now be clear.

## **Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill**

The government's long-promised ‘Brexit Freedoms Bill’ was introduced in September as the [Retained EU Law \(Revocation and Reform\) Bill](#). It proposes various changes to the legal status of the large body of [retained EU law](#), including creation of an automatic ‘sunset’ whereby such laws will expire at the end of 2023 unless explicitly exempted via delegated legislation. It seeks to give ministers wide-ranging powers to modify retained EU law, or to extend the sunset clause to 2026. In short, the bill proposes that a large number of laws will fall away at the end of 2023 unless ministers actively choose to preserve them.

The government views the bill as necessary to ensure greater post-Brexit regulatory flexibility. But the measure has been criticised on several grounds. Prominent opposition has been expressed by [environmental organisations](#), which see it as a vehicle for harmful deregulation. Lawyers have [expressed concern](#) that it will mean relitigating long-settled questions of established rights and create legal uncertainty. Others have criticised the bill on [procedural grounds](#), arguing that it excessively limits parliamentary scrutiny and oversight and risks exacerbating tensions between UK ministers and the devolved administrations. There are also [doubts](#) about the capacity of the civil service to review the entirety of retained EU law before the government's self-imposed deadline.

Though the bill was introduced during the Truss government, it seems likely to proceed under her successor; it received its [Commons second reading](#) on the day that Rishi Sunak became Prime Minister. However, the new Business Secretary, Grant Shapps, has notably not been given his predecessor's additional title of Minister for Brexit Opportunities, which appears to have lapsed. During his first leadership bid, [Sunak suggested](#) that the government should review all retained EU law within 100 days of his taking office. However, [reports](#) now indicate that he may be



considering a more cautious approach, which might include moving the sunset deadline to a later date than the current bill envisages.

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## House of Lords controversies

Concerns have continued rumbling about [appointments to the Lords](#), particularly in the context of two changes of Prime Minister within a very short period. As reported in [Monitor 81](#) (page 4), rumours had circulated that Boris Johnson would propose a large and controversial resignation honours list. By early November this had yet to appear, though some names [had been leaked](#). But a [list of 26 Johnson nominees](#) of a more ‘standard’ kind was announced on 14 October. They comprised 13 Conservative names, eight Labour, and one DUP, plus two Crossbenchers and two non-affiliated peers. Added to the chamber’s existing membership, these will take its total size to around 820, with Conservatives far outnumbering Labour at around 285 to 175.

The appointments attracted minimal attention, as they appeared on the day that Chancellor of the Exchequer Kwasi Kwarteng resigned (see page 9). [Constitution Unit research results](#) released concurrently showed strong public support for controlling the chamber’s size and removing appointment power from the Prime Minister. On the day before the appointments were announced, House of Lords Appointments Commission chair Lord (Paul) Bew [wrote to the Prime Minister](#) indicating that ‘the Commission is increasingly uncomfortable about the limits of its role’ and urging all party leaders to have regard to the Seven Principles of Public Life (‘Nolan principles’) in their choice of nominees.

Upon taking office, Liz Truss had put three new members into the Lords to serve as ministers. Ironically Truss will now be recorded as having the most excessive peerage creation rate in modern times, having approved 29 peerages during a tenure of just 49 days. Following her departure, there have been questions over whether she will propose her own resignation honours list – on top of Johnson’s, which is still awaited – though there are clear [pressures to minimise this at best](#).

Johnson also raised eyebrows by [appointing Harry Mount](#) – a long-time ally – as an independent member of the House of Lords Appointments Commission. It [was questionable](#) whether any appointment at all conformed to Johnson’s pledge to be a ‘caretaker’ Prime Minister. Any concern about the individual selected was alleviated when Mount [resigned](#) less than a month later.

No replacement had been confirmed when *Monitor* went to press. Labour nominated Baroness (Ann) Taylor of Bolton to its vacant seat on the Commission.

In [September](#), and [November](#), multiple stories appeared suggesting that in government Labour might ‘abolish’ the House of Lords, based on ‘leaks’ from the constitutional commission being chaired for Keir Starmer by former Prime Minister Gordon Brown (see page 14). In fact, the stories pointed to radical reform of the second chamber, rather than outright abolition, towards some kind of unspecified ‘second chamber of the nations and regions’. These were draft proposals, also including other ideas for reform of UK territorial governance, which remain unpublished.

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## Committee of Privileges inquiry into Boris Johnson

The [inquiry](#) by the Committee of Privileges into allegations that Boris Johnson misled the House of Commons over partygate is ongoing. The committee, chaired by Harriet Harman, saw a change to its composition over the summer, with Conservative MP Laura Farris [resigning](#). A motion nominating backbencher Christopher Chope – [a controversial choice](#) – as her replacement appeared on the [Commons order paper](#) towards the end of the Johnson premiership, but was not moved. Charles Walker, who chairs the Administration Committee, was subsequently appointed instead.

In response to the committee’s [call for evidence](#), the Johnson government published a [legal opinion](#) by barristers Lord (David) Pannick and Jason Pobjoy. The committee later [called](#) this direct publication of evidence – evidence is usually submitted to the committee first – ‘highly irregular’. The opinion alleged that there were flaws in the committee’s procedure and argued that it would need to be convinced that any misleading of the House had been intentional. The committee issued a [firm rebuttal](#), stating that the opinion misunderstood the Commons’ rules on contempt, the remit the House of Commons had established for the committee, and various aspects of the committee’s procedure.

Further controversy followed when it emerged that the opinion, submitted to the committee by Johnson as a ‘formal representation on [his] behalf’, [had been paid for using public funds](#). Then Cabinet Office minister Edward Argar argued in a [written answer](#) to a parliamentary question on 5 September, a day before the appointment of Liz Truss, that this was justified because Johnson had been speaking from the despatch box as a minister

at the time of the alleged infraction. Chris Philp, who briefly held the same ministerial brief under Truss, gave a [similar answer](#) on 24 October.

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## Speaker's conference on MPs' staff

The [Speaker's conference on the employment conditions of members' staff](#), which was established in June (see [Monitor 81](#), page 6), finalised its [membership](#) after a delay caused by the resignations of Boris Johnson and Liz Truss, and the death of the Queen. Chaired by Speaker Lindsay Hoyle, it will 'consider the employment conditions of [MPs'] staff in order to ensure a more inclusive and respectful working environment'. It will operate in the style of a select committee, with the ability to call for evidence and appoint specialist advisers, including legal advisers crucial for understanding the complex legal status of MPs as employers. The committee will consider a range of options relating to the employment arrangements for MPs' staff.

One option, which is perhaps the most radical, is for the House of Commons to employ such staff directly. The House of Commons Commission last [considered this proposal](#) in 2009 – before the creation of the [Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority](#) (IPSA) and the Members Services Team – when the landscape was very different. It did not recommend the change on the grounds that it would be expensive, that there was a perceived absence of clear benefits, and that it would reduce the ability of MPs to flexibly manage their staff.

The [first report](#) of the committee outlined five key principles, agreed to by its members, that will underpin its work. These principles, which include recognising the valuable role of staff and that MPs should retain involvement with recruitment, highlight the central tension underpinning its work: that MPs will not easily give up control of their staff and there is a limit to what the House and IPSA can do to improve the lot of staff while MPs remain the legal employers.

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## Select committee elections

Upheavals in the executive have resulted in change at the top of several Conservative-chaired select committees in the House of Commons, after their chairs were appointed to the Johnson, Truss, or Sunak governments.

The rules for select committee chair elections were established as part of the [Wright reforms](#) of 2010.

Chair positions are distributed among the parties at the start of each new parliament, based on the composition of the Commons. The positions are then elected, with only MPs of the relevant party able to stand, but all MPs eligible to vote.

Three vacancies were filled following the appointment of ministers to the Truss government. Alicia Kearns became the first woman [elected](#) to chair the Foreign Affairs Committee, after Tom Tugendhat was appointed Minister for Security by Truss. Steve Brine, a former health minister, succeeded Jeremy Hunt at the Health and Social Care Committee following Hunt's appointment as Chancellor of the Exchequer in the wake of Kwasi Kwarteng's resignation (see page 9). A degree of continuity was provided by Greg Clark, who was [re-elected](#) unopposed to chair the Science and Technology Select Committee, having stood down to serve as Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in the final weeks of the Johnson premiership.



[Alicia Kearns](#) (CC BY 3.0).

An additional three vacancies were created by the formation of Rishi Sunak's government. Treasury Select Committee chair Mel Stride was appointed Secretary of State for Work and Pensions by Sunak, while the chairs of the Education and Transport committees, Robert Halfon and Huw Merriman, were appointed to ministerial roles in the departments they had previously been overseeing. Harriett Baldwin, who served as a Treasury minister under David Cameron, [defeated](#) two former Cabinet ministers to win election as Chair of the Treasury Committee. Robin Walker, who briefly served as a Minister of State at the relevant department under Boris Johnson, was [elected](#) to chair the Education Committee. Iain Stewart, who served as a junior minister under Boris Johnson and Theresa May, [won](#) the Transport Committee election.

## Restoration and Renewal

It has been a relatively quiet time for the Restoration and Renewal (R&R) of the Palace of Westminster. The new governance structure has been created, with the [R&R Client Board](#) meeting for the first time on 17 October. The Client Board is made up of members of the Commissions of each House, including the new leaders of the Commons and Lords, Penny Mordaunt and Lord (Nicholas) True, who were appointed by Liz Truss and kept in post by Rishi Sunak. In her first [comments](#) on R&R since becoming Leader of the Commons, Mordaunt promoted the idea of moving out of 'one part of the building for a short period of time, rather than a very expensive programme to recreate a Chamber'. A partial decant has long been [accepted](#) to be more expensive and riskier than moving out of the Palace of Westminster entirely, so may not align with her statement in the same interview that she is 'very conscious that we have the restoration and renewal programme against the backdrop of [the] cost of living [crisis]'.

Elections, referendums and democratic engagement



## Electoral Commission reports on May 2022 elections

In September, the Electoral Commission published reports on the various elections that took place in May: local elections throughout [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#) and in many parts of [England](#), and Assembly elections in [Northern Ireland](#). The reports noted that, in most respects, the elections had gone well, and the polls had

been conducted effectively. Public opinion research indicated satisfaction with most aspects of the process and candidates generally felt they had been able to get their views across effectively. But the Commission also highlighted points of concern.

While most voters agreed that they had enough information about the candidates to make an informed choice, substantial minorities – 32% in England, 26% in Scotland, and 12% in Northern Ireland – disagreed. The proportion disagreeing was particularly high among younger people. In Wales, where just one in five eligible 16- and 17-year-olds registered to vote, the Commission highlighted the need for better political education and additional resources 'to increase registration rates and support participation amongst newly enfranchised and under-registered groups'. The Commission also reported a success story in Scotland, where access to information on election results had been made easier.

Many candidates – 40% in each of England and Wales, 44% in Scotland, and 71% in Northern Ireland – reported experiencing some form of abuse or intimidation. The Commission concluded, 'Urgent action is needed to tackle and prevent abuse and intimidation of candidates and campaigners at elections.' It went on, 'Tackling these problems will require coordinated action from a range of partners, including central and local government, police forces, social media companies and political parties and campaigners themselves.'

Citing research by the accredited election observer organisation Democracy Volunteers, the Commission noted that there were problems in some places with 'family voting', where one family member attempts to 'affect, direct, or oversee the vote of another'. The [Democracy Volunteers report](#) said that such family

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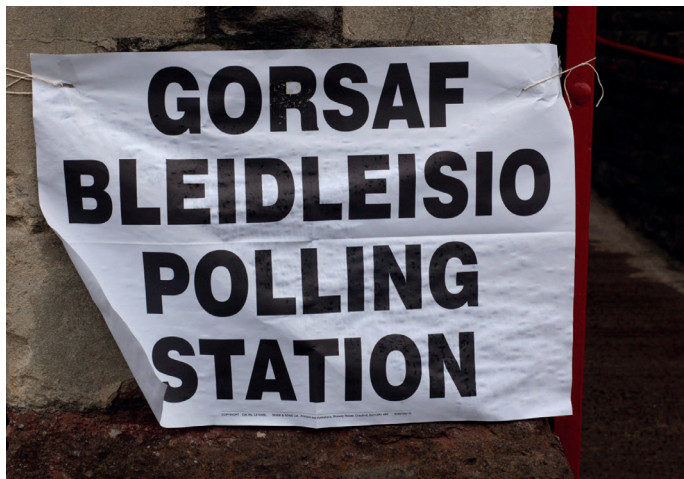
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voting had been seen at 25% of the polling stations monitored, adding, ‘Our observers saw Family Voting across all parts of the UK, and it was not limited to any one ethnic group or another.’

All four reports expressed concerns about the resilience of electoral administration, not least over increasing difficulties in recruiting staff and securing buildings for use as polling stations. The Commission noted that late changes in legislation had caused added difficulties in Wales. It highlighted worries that the [Elections Act 2022](#) (which applies to all elections in England and Westminster elections elsewhere) introduced additional demands – particularly around checking voter ID at polling stations – that will cause further strain. It said, ‘we are concerned about whether the voter ID requirement can be delivered in a way which is secure, accessible and workable, ahead of the next scheduled elections in May 2023 as planned’. The Association of Electoral Administrations has [repeatedly expressed similar concerns](#).



[A polling station in Wales, which held advance voting pilots on Wednesday \(CC BY-NC-ND 2.0\) by Walt Jabsco.](#)

The Commission also published a separate report on an [advance voting pilot in Wales](#). Four local authority areas had piloted different arrangements that allowed voters to cast their ballot in person ahead of election day. Uptake of this opportunity was, however, very low. Three local authorities provided a single location for advance voting; just 0.2–0.3% of eligible voters made use of the facility. One local authority opened several of the usual polling stations; even here, however, uptake stood at only 1.5%.

## Government publishes draft strategy and policy statement

Following the Elections Act, which received royal assent in April, ministers can prepare a ‘strategy and policy statement’ for the Electoral Commission, guiding how

it should carry out its functions. As previous editions of *Monitor* have noted, the move was highly controversial.

The government published a [draft of the statement](#) in August. This sought to set out ‘the government’s view of the Electoral Commission’s priorities and functions that support the government’s priorities’. It highlighted the Commission’s responsibilities in supporting election administrators, informing the public about electoral systems, regulating political finance, guiding political parties and other campaigners, and running various aspects of national referendums. It then particularly emphasised the Commission’s role in helping to tackle electoral fraud.

The draft statement is now subject to statutory consultation. One of the consultees, the House of Commons Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee, initiated a [short inquiry](#). Though this had not reported when *Monitor* went to press, two oral evidence sessions had been held: first with [external experts](#), and then with [Commission representatives and the responsible minister](#).

In line with their [written response](#) to the consultation, the Commission representatives were quietly withering in their critique of the draft. Commission Chair John Pullinger pointed out that there were some tensions between the priorities stated by government and those worked out in the Commission’s own published plan. That plan, he noted, had been ‘developed by taking on board the position of the Government, other parties, campaigners more generally, electoral administrators and feedback from voters’, and had been scrutinised by the Speaker’s Committee on the Electoral Commission. For the Commission to follow the draft statement instead would amount to ‘giving the incumbent Government an opportunity to set the priorities rather than the broader community’, which he said would be illegitimate and undermine public confidence. He advised that the government should not proceed with the statement. The expert panellists took a similar view. Professor Justin Fisher, for example, called the statement ‘unnecessary’ and ‘misguided’.

Under challenging questioning from all sides, the then minister – Andrew Stephenson – insisted that the statement would ‘not undermine the Electoral Commission’s operational independence’. He repeatedly said that it was not for ministers to judge the Commission’s conduct, though he had said in his opening remarks, ‘It is clear that the Electoral Commission needed to change’.

The consultation period will end on 5 December. Whether the Sunak government chooses to proceed with the statement, which was drafted during the Johnson premiership, remains to be seen. If it does, the statement will have to be approved by resolutions in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords before it can come into effect.

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## PACAC report on the Electoral Commission

The House of Commons Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC) published a report in October on [The Work of the Electoral Commission](#). This said that the Commission ‘plays a fundamental role in overseeing free and fair elections and referendums and regulating political finance, and should continue to do so’.

Indeed, the report’s headline recommendations were directed, notably, towards the government rather than the Commission. It said, ‘There is a consensus that the law is in urgent need of rationalisation and simplification, and the Government missed an opportunity with the Elections Act to build an elections framework fit for the modern day’; it urged ministers to ‘prioritise implementing the Law Commission’s recommendations to rationalise electoral law’. It also called for greater clarity on the timetable for implementing the Act. It agreed with previous proposals that the Electoral Commission should be able to levy fines of up to £500,000 (compared with £20,000 today) and that rules on campaign spending declarations should be modernised to provide greater transparency. And it said that Ofcom ‘should be given a power to set minimum standards for advert libraries and advert labelling’.

The report did also call for changes at the Electoral Commission. The Commission, it said, should recognise the unique characteristics of referendums, improve its guidance to parties and other campaigners, shorten its response times to enquiries from campaigners, and agree to a time limit on investigations into misconduct.

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## Boundary Commissions publish revised proposals

The [Boundary Commission for Wales](#) published revised proposals for new Westminster constituency boundaries in October, and the Commissions for [England](#), [Scotland](#), and [Northern Ireland](#) followed suit in November.

These proposals form part of the periodic review that began in January 2021. Initial proposals were presented in the summer and autumn 2021 and then subject to extensive consultations, during which submissions were made by MPs, political parties, local representative bodies, and members of the public. The new proposals incorporate adjustments following those consultations.

Most of the revised proposals involve only small shifts from the initial recommendations, moving individual wards or changing a proposed constituency name. But others – including around Dundee and Perth, Hull, and Newcastle – are larger. Longstanding constituencies that were to be dismembered but are now due to survive with much less change include those of former Chief Whip Wendy Morton, former Lib Dem leader Tim Farron, and former Health Secretary Matt Hancock. The Cities of London and Westminster will remain united too.

The revised proposals are subject to a further consultation period of four weeks (which has concluded in Wales and is ongoing elsewhere), after which final proposals will be published no later than 1 July 2023.

Given that the further consultation is short, it is likely that any remaining adjustments will be small. In contrast to previous boundary reviews, which could be implemented only after being voted through parliament, the conclusions of this review will, under the terms of the [Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020](#), have to be brought directly into effect within four months of their publication.

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## Online Safety Bill

The future of the Online Safety Bill, which was published in May (see [Monitor 81](#), page 9) is uncertain. During the summer Conservative leadership election, both Liz Truss and Rishi Sunak [voiced concerns](#) that the bill’s provisions on ‘legal but harmful’ online content might unduly limit free speech. Parliamentary scrutiny of the bill was paused when Truss came to power, and the new Culture Secretary, Michelle Donelan, [indicated](#) that the ‘legal but harmful’ provisions would be changed.

Though Donelan remained in post when Sunak took over, the bill’s progress was again [put on hold](#). The likelihood of government amendments watering down the bill was [sharply criticised](#) by Donelan’s predecessor, Nadine Dorries, who said the provisions were needed to protect vulnerable children.



# Executive



## New Prime Ministers, new Cabinets

Queen Elizabeth II appointed Liz Truss as Prime Minister on 6 September, but sadly died two days later (see page 11). The 10 days of official mourning and preparations for her funeral on 19 September disrupted formation of the new government, the last stages of which were not fully completed until 2 October. Kwasi Kwarteng was immediately appointed Chancellor, James Cleverly became Foreign Secretary and Suella Braverman was named Home Secretary. With Truss as Prime Minister, this meant that, for the first time – if only briefly – none of the four great offices of state was held by a white man. Thérèse Coffey was made Deputy Prime Minister, Brandon Lewis became Lord Chancellor, and Michael Ellis was appointed as Attorney General. Alister Jack and Robert Buckland stayed on as Scotland Secretary and Wales Secretary respectively, but there was a change at the Northern Ireland Office, where Chris Heaton-Harris became the Secretary of State. Several changes were also made at the Cabinet Office (see page 18).

These appointments rewarded Truss loyalists: 18 out of the 23 Cabinet ministers had supported Truss in her leadership campaign. It also involved [massive churn](#). Three quarters of ministers appointed by Truss – 93 out of 121 – were new in post. Big departments like Health and Social Care, or International Trade, had wholly new ministerial teams. Almost a dozen departments had 80% or more of their ministers in new jobs.



Prime Minister Liz Truss Cabinet meeting (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0) by [UK Prime Minister](#).

The new government quickly ran into trouble, with two of the most senior ministers in the Cabinet forced to resign within a week of each other. On 23 September Chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng announced his [mini budget](#), a programme of unfunded tax cuts which caused [turmoil in the markets](#) that was so severe that he was [sacked](#) on 14 October and replaced by Jeremy Hunt. The new Chancellor [reversed](#) most of the cuts in a bid to restore market confidence and was soon [seen by some](#) as the ‘de facto Prime Minister’. On 19 October Home Secretary Suella Braverman was [dismissed](#) for leaking official information from her personal email (see page 10) and replaced by Grant Shapps. Braverman was highly critical of the direction of the government in her [resignation letter](#), claiming it was not committed to honouring the Conservatives’ 2019 manifesto commitments. The fact and tone of her departure further weakened an already wounded Prime Minister.

Truss rapidly lost support among Conservative MPs and [announced her resignation](#) on 20 October. In the ensuing election for a new party leader, Rishi Sunak – who had been rejected by the membership less than two months previously – was elected unopposed (see page 13). His new government is a broader coalition: former Cabinet ministers Michael Gove and Dominic Raab returned to the posts they had held under Boris Johnson, but Sunak also kept a significant number of other senior ministers in the positions to which Truss had appointed them, including former leadership contenders Penny Mordaunt, Kemi Badenoch and Tom Tugendhat. Robert Buckland was, however, replaced by David T C Davies as Wales Secretary, and Oliver Dowden returned to the Cabinet Office to replace Nadhim Zahawi – now Chairman of the Conservative Party – as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. Controversially, Sunak also [reappointed Suella Braverman as Home Secretary](#), a mere six days after her departure (see below). Sunak’s Cabinet has more experience than that of his predecessor, which had been [described](#) as ‘the least experienced in modern history’.

## Government staff

On his first day as Chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng [sacked](#) Tom Scholar, the widely respected Permanent Secretary to the Treasury. The decision was heavily criticised by many, including [two former Cabinet Secretaries](#). Kwarteng also [ignored](#) the need for advice from the Office for Budgetary Responsibility before his mini budget on 23 September, which further spooked the

markets. Scholar was later [replaced by James Bowler](#), formerly the Permanent Secretary at the Department for International Trade, who previously worked at the Treasury for two decades. Cat Little and Beth Russell were appointed as Second Permanent Secretaries.

There was controversy at Number 10 when it [emerged](#) that Mark Fullbrook, Chief of Staff to Liz Truss, was to be paid through his lobbying company Fullbrook Strategies, rather than as a temporary civil servant or special adviser – an arrangement that was [reportedly approved](#) by the Cabinet Office's propriety and ethics team. Reporting of the news was negative, and Fullbrook soon [agreed](#) to be directly employed as a special adviser instead. It was also [reported](#) that two other members of staff – Alice Robinson, who ran the Prime Minister's private office, and Mac Chapwell, a special adviser – were also being paid through Fullbrook's firm. All three left Downing Street when Rishi Sunak took office as Prime Minister.

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## Standards in government

Rishi Sunak [promised](#) during his leadership campaign in October to lead the government with 'integrity, professionalism and accountability'. In his [first speech as Prime Minister](#), he repeated this pledge. An early test will be [whether he appoints a new Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests](#), something Liz Truss [regarded](#) as unnecessary. Deputy Prime Minister Dominic Raab [told the Commons](#) on 16 November that the process to appoint one was 'taking place at pace', but no appointment had been announced before *Monitor* went to press.

The continued failure to replace Lord (Christopher) Geidt, five months after his resignation, has caused significant delays to the investigation of a complaint made in January by Nus Ghani, who [alleged](#) that she was told by a whip that she was sacked as a minister because she was a Muslim. Cabinet Secretary Simon Case confirmed in a [letter](#) to the Commons Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC) on 4 October that the investigation 'remains outstanding', and that no decision had been made on how to conclude it. It seems likely that the investigation will not resume until a new Independent Adviser is appointed.

Sunak's stated commitment to integrity did not prevent him appointing Gavin Williamson as a Minister

without Portfolio despite having been made aware by then Conservative Party Chairman Jake Berry – who was not retained by Sunak – of allegations that, as a backbencher, Williamson had [sent a series of bullying and abusive texts](#) to then Chief Whip Wendy Morton. The week after the Morton texts were reported in the press a former civil servant who had worked at the Ministry of Defence during Williamson's time as Secretary of State [told the Guardian](#) that Williamson had bullied them consistently and over a long period of time. Williamson denied the latter claim, but following these allegations and others – some of which related to his [time as Chief Whip](#) – he ultimately [resigned](#) on 8 November, shortly after the Prime Minister [expressed 'full confidence'](#) in him.

Bullying allegations were also made in relation to another Sunak appointee. Dominic Raab was sacked as Deputy Prime Minister and Justice Secretary by Liz Truss but returned to both roles under Sunak. Multiple sources [told the Guardian](#) that he had created a 'culture of fear' during his previous stint in charge of the Ministry of Justice and had acted in a manner that was 'demeaning' to those who worked for him. Allegations then emerged of [bullying within his private office](#) during his time as Foreign Secretary, and an independent investigation was [announced](#) into his conduct on 16 November.

Sunak's appointment of Suella Braverman as Home Secretary, just six days after she had been [forced to resign](#) from the same post for using her personal email account to send an official government document to a person who was not authorised to see it, also attracted widespread criticism. Braverman [admitted](#) after her reappointment that she had used her personal email for official business on six occasions. Shadow Home Secretary Yvette Cooper tabled an [Urgent Question](#) – which Braverman did not respond to personally – and [wrote to the Cabinet Secretary](#) to ask for a full investigation. PACAC sent a [letter to the Cabinet Secretary](#) to ask for details of the processes for investigating ministerial security breaches. Since Braverman returned to the Home Office, she has also been [accused of misleading parliament](#) in relation to legal advice she received about whether people detained at the Manston asylum centre were being held illegally. Climate minister Graham Stuart has [stated publicly](#) that many of the detentions at Manston were unlawful, and [at least one judicial review application](#) is expected.

# Monarchy, church and state



## The death of Elizabeth II and accession of Charles III

Queen Elizabeth II died at Balmoral on 8 September. Her coffin was initially taken from there to Edinburgh to lie at rest in St Giles' Cathedral. The public were allowed to file past for 24 hours, and there was a [Vigil of the Princes](#), which included Princess Anne, the first woman to participate since the ceremony was instituted in 1936. On 13 September the coffin was flown to London for five days of [lying in state](#) at Westminster Hall, where [an estimated 250,000 members of the public](#) paid their final respects and [another](#) vigil took place. The Queen's [state funeral](#) was held in Westminster Abbey on 19 September, with a congregation of 2000 guests, followed by a [committal service](#) at Windsor Castle, where she was interred in the George VI Memorial Chapel alongside her father, King George VI, her mother, and her husband, Prince Philip.



[King Charles III and Princess Anne during the Vigil of the Princes](#) (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0) by [ukhouseoflords](#).

On 9 September the new King – now known as Charles III – paid tribute to the Queen in a [televised address to the nation](#). He announced that Prince William, who had automatically succeeded him as Duke of Cornwall, would also be created Prince of Wales. On 10 September an [Accession Council](#) was held, with approximately 200 Privy Counsellors present. King Charles was formally proclaimed as the new monarch; he then made a personal declaration and swore a statutory oath to uphold the Presbyterian church in Scotland. The

proclamation was repeated by the Garter King of Arms from the roof of St James's Palace, and in subsequent ceremonies at the Royal Exchange, and in Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast.

During the first week of his reign, King Charles embarked on a whistle-stop tour of the country, visiting Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland within days of his accession. Known as [Operation 'Spring Tide'](#), it was intended to emphasise recognition of the importance of all the nations within the UK. The new monarch [responded to MSPs' tributes](#) to his mother in the Scottish Parliament, spoke Welsh during [an address to the Senedd](#), and [received the condolences](#) of the Northern Ireland Assembly at Hillsborough Castle.

The new monarch's tour of the nations and his actions in his first week on the throne were a huge contrast to the Queen's accession in 1952. On the day after the Queen died, he gave a televised [address to the nation](#), whereas the Queen's first broadcast in 1952 was her Christmas message, 10 months after her accession. On the next day, at the [Accession Council](#) which proclaimed him King, the proceedings were televised; in 1952 it had met behind closed doors. Two days later, the new King [came to Westminster Hall](#) to receive messages of condolence from both Houses; in 1952, those messages were delivered to the Palace, rather than the monarch coming to parliament. This demonstrated that the monarchy's relationship with the public and parliament was different to that of 1952.

## Counsellors of State

On 14 November the King sent a [message to parliament](#) requesting that Princess Anne and Prince Edward be made [Counsellors of State](#), an office held by members of the royal family which enables them to carry out official duties when the monarch is abroad or otherwise temporarily incapable of doing so. The rules on who can be a Counsellor are set out in the [Regency Act 1937](#), which states that only the monarch's spouse and the first four adults (over the age of 21) in the line of succession can be Counsellors. This means that there are currently five Counsellors of State: the Queen Consort, the Prince of Wales, Prince Andrew, Prince Harry, and Princess Beatrice. It also means that parliament needs to pass legislation if it is to give effect to the King's request.

The government introduced the [Counsellors of State Bill](#) the day after the message was read out in parliament. Lord (Nicholas) True, Leader of the House of Lords,



[told peers](#) that it was expected to have an ‘expedited’ passage through parliament, and it had its [second reading](#) less than week later, on 21 November.

Almost all speakers expressed support for the bill, although Crossbencher [Lord \(David\) Pannick](#) and other peers argued that several related issues – including the status of the Dukes of York and Sussex – mean that wider reform of the Regency Act would also be welcome. Committee stage commenced on 23 November and was underway as *Monitor* went to press.

## Future of the Commonwealth realms

The Queen’s death inevitably revived speculation about which of the realms (the 14 Commonwealth countries where Charles is now also head of state) might now become republics. The Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, Gaston Browne, [announced](#) within days of the Queen’s death that he would hold a referendum on becoming a republic in the next three years. Shortly afterwards, Andrew Holness, Prime Minister of Jamaica, [said](#) ‘There is no question that Jamaica has to become a republic’. Successive Jamaican Prime Ministers have been saying something similar for years: the obstacle is that it requires a two-thirds vote in both Houses of the Jamaican parliament, followed by a referendum. Australia faces a similarly high threshold to change the constitution. Although the new Prime Minister, Labor’s Anthony Albanese, has appointed Matt Thistlethwaite as Assistant Minister for the Republic, he has also [said](#) that a referendum on the issue was not something he would consider in his government’s first term.

## Prince Philip’s will

Last year Andrew McFarlane, President of the Family Division of the High Court, held a private hearing where he approved a confidential application to seal Prince Philip’s will, which otherwise would have been open to public inspection. The decision was taken in secret and then published shortly after. Since 1911 the courts have granted private applications to keep confidential 33 wills belonging to members of the royal family.

The *Guardian* appealed the decision to hold the hearing in secret without giving media organisations the opportunity to attend. In late July, the Court of Appeal [dismissed the appeal](#), concluding that ‘The two critically important things to protect were... the public interest in a) protecting the dignity, and b) protecting

the private rights of the sovereign and close members of her family’. Lady Justice King wrote in a concurring judgment that had she decided the matter at first instance, she would have tried to find a way to facilitate media access, but that the original decision was a matter of discretion, which judicial norms prevented her from second guessing. She therefore joined her fellow judges in dismissing the appeal, citing the attendance of the Attorney General as ‘guardian of the public interest’ as an important factor.



## The Bill of Rights Bill

When Liz Truss took office as Prime Minister in September, she sacked Justice Secretary Dominic Raab and replaced him with former Northern Ireland Secretary Brandon Lewis. Within 24 hours, it was reported that Truss had [decided](#) not to proceed with passage of the Bill of Rights Bill, which had been introduced to the Commons by Raab in June (see [Monitor 81](#), page 12). Lewis [said](#) of the decision that ‘the principles and objectives’ of the bill had not been discarded, and that the government was rethinking how to put them into law.



[Former Cabinet minister Robert Buckland](#) (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0) by [UK Government](#).

When Rishi Sunak became Prime Minister less than two months later, he reappointed Raab to run the Ministry of Justice. Raab soon [stated](#) his intention to proceed with the bill. Labour is [staunchly against the legislation](#), and the government cannot necessarily rely on unanimous support from its backbenchers. For example, former

Justice Secretary Robert Buckland – who served as Wales Secretary over the summer and under Truss – [spoke negatively](#) of the bill during the summer leadership contest and was [credited](#) with helping to convince Truss to pause it. In November he [described](#) the bill as ‘worse than useless’ and – not for the first time – expressed concern that it could be amended to include [an express right to abortion](#) and create other new freestanding rights which the government and his party might not approve of.

It is too early to tell whether this sort of opposition will translate into a Commons rebellion of significance, but even if MPs allow it to pass smoothly, the bill can expect a rough ride in the House of Lords, which [defeated the government numerous times](#) in the previous parliamentary session in relation to legislation with negative human rights implications.

## Parties and politicians



### Conservative leadership elections

Recent months have seen not one but two Conservative leadership contests – the first ending with the election of Liz Truss on 5 September, and then, following her 20 October indication of her resignation, the second selecting Rishi Sunak just four days later.

As noted in [Monitor 81](#) (page 14), Truss had come second and received fewer than a third of votes [in the fifth and final round of MPs’ voting in July](#), Penny Mordaunt having taken second place in every previous round. Truss’s and Sunak’s names were put to members, and, after a busy summer of hustings meetings, she beat him in the member ballot by 57% to 43% (distinctly less than [previous polls of members](#) had suggested). Sunak had led at every round of MP voting, which fuelled attention during the contest on the merits of a system which gave around [150,000 Conservative members](#) the choice of the next Prime Minister. [Various figures](#), including [senior Conservatives](#), raised questions about the suitability of the process. Most strikingly, [William Hague](#) – who as party leader had originally ushered in the member ballot – suggested in October that this should be reconsidered. It clearly had the potential to leave Conservative MPs with a leader they did not support.

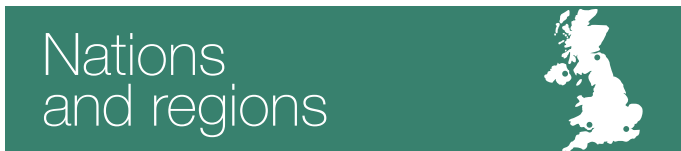
When the Truss premiership dramatically fell apart (see page 9), the party was faced with the prospect of another contest. The backbench 1922 committee, responsible for deciding the rules for the initial stages, [set a barrier of 100 MP nominations](#) to enter the ballot, compared to the threshold of 20 in the summer contest. With 357 Conservative MPs, this ensured a maximum of three candidates would be put to a vote. The member ballot was officially to be retained, electronically and on an expedited timetable, but with MPs allowed a run-off between the final two candidates to indicate parliamentary support – unlike in July. Sunak again led from the outset, eventually attracting [193 MP supporters](#) – well over half the parliamentary party. Over a tense weekend, 58 MPs publicly backed the return of former Prime Minister Boris Johnson, [who claimed](#) to have exceeded the threshold of 100, but ultimately withdrew. Penny Mordaunt gained 26 public backers, and [claimed to have far more](#) before dropping out just before the close of nominations on 24 October. Sunak was hence the last person standing and declared the winner without grassroots members being consulted. MPs seemingly narrowly escaped having a leader thrust upon them by members whom they transparently did not support – perhaps even one whom they had effectively driven out of office earlier this year. As Unit Director Meg Russell [pointed out in Prospect](#), this illustrated just how much instability member ballots can introduce to a system of parliamentary democracy, which centres around leaders having the support of their party’s MPs. Parties may well now rethink these processes.

### Labour and the constitution

Amidst widespread concerns over the Truss government’s [disregard for checks and balances](#), Labour [reiterated](#) its earlier pledge to [strengthen the standards system](#).

At least some within the party were meanwhile pushing for much more sweeping constitutional reforms. Motions calling for the introduction of a proportional voting system for Westminster elections [were supported](#) by at least 140 constituency parties ahead of the party conference in September, making this the most widely endorsed proposal for debate. The move was [strongly backed](#) at the conference itself, gaining support on a show of hands from key unions as well as most constituency delegates. Keir Starmer [made clear](#), however, that he had no intention of including such a change in Labour’s next manifesto.

By contrast, Starmer was responsible for creating another source of pressure for constitutional change, in the form of a review led by former Prime Minister Gordon Brown. Little has been said in public about the so-called Brown Commission since Starmer [announced](#) it in December 2020, and the group has no official public presence. A [draft of its proposals](#) was leaked in September, however, including plans for a new wave of bottom-up devolution within England, replacement of the House of Lords with a chamber of nations and regions, and a much tougher system for enforcing standards among MPs and ministers. But whether the recommendations will receive frontbench support – indeed, whether the report will ever see the light of day – remains unclear.



## The future of the Union

In the last two months, the UK has experienced the first royal accession in 70 years and two changes of Prime Minister, all of which will have – as yet unclear – ramifications for the future of the Union.

The late Queen was widely held in high regard; whether King Charles can be seen as uniting the nation as effectively remains to be seen. The decision to immediately name Prince William as the new Prince of Wales was not universally popular. A [petition](#) calling for the title to be retired – on the basis that it ‘undermines Wales’s status as a nation and a country’ and serves no constitutional purpose – had been signed by almost 40,000 people when *Monitor* went to press. When asked about the petition during the national mourning period, First Minister Mark Drakeford [said](#) that he thought the debate was worth having, but that it should not take place until after the Queen’s funeral. He also confirmed that he had not been consulted or informed about the King’s decision before it was announced.

On the other hand, the King’s tour of the UK in the week following his accession (see page 11) manifested a desire to respect and celebrate the diverse identities and traditions of the country’s component parts. This approach to the Union appeared to contrast markedly with that adopted by both Boris Johnson and Liz Truss.

During her brief premiership, Truss seemed to continue her predecessor’s centralising tendencies and dismissive

attitude towards the devolved administrations, a strategy sometimes referred to as ‘[muscular unionism](#)’. Rishi Sunak has sought to project a different tone. Unlike Truss, he found time to [speak](#) to the Scottish and Welsh first ministers on his first day in office. On 10 November, he became the [first Prime Minister since Gordon Brown in 2007](#) to attend a meeting of the [British-Irish Council](#), where he also held bilaterals with the Scottish and Welsh First Ministers and the Taoiseach. Michael Gove’s return to the Department for Levelling Up, regaining also his former role of minister for intergovernmental relations, might likewise restore sensitivity to devolved sensibilities – though how big a shift there will be in the frequency and effectiveness of interactions between Westminster and the other governments remains to be seen. Alister Jack as Scottish Secretary is likely to maintain the government’s refusal to countenance a second independence referendum; in the summer he [dismissed](#) the Scottish government’s suite of papers, [Building a new Scotland](#), as a ‘wheeze’. New Wales Secretary David T C Davies can be expected, as a former campaigner against the creation of the Welsh Assembly, to oppose further devolution in Wales.



[Rishi Sunak and Nicola Sturgeon at the British-Irish Council](#)  
(CC BY-NC-ND 2.0) by [UK Prime Minister](#).

## England

Progress continues on a new generation of devolution deals across England, as discussed in [Monitor 81](#) (page 15). Two deals were agreed with the [East Midlands](#) (covering Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham, and Nottinghamshire) and [York and North Yorkshire](#) in August. County Durham is believed to be [seeking to join a proposed North East regional deal](#) instead of pursuing a solo deal, and discussions are thought to be advanced with Suffolk and Greater Lincolnshire. A [possible government deal](#) with Cornwall requires the creation of



a directly elected mayor, which has proved contentious locally. Calls for a referendum on the mayoral issue have been [rejected](#) by Cornwall Council as too expensive, so it is unclear what will happen next.

The [Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill](#) has, meanwhile, completed its committee stage in the House of Commons, with no significant changes made to its devolution provisions. Michael Gove, the Secretary of State who introduced the bill before being sacked by Boris Johnson in July, resumed ownership following Rishi Sunak's appointment as Prime Minister in October.

The government has continued with work on some less-heralded commitments within February's [Levelling Up the United Kingdom white paper](#). These include developing a new accountability framework for combined authorities; simplifying the landscape of grant funding available to combined authorities; and improving the collection and publication of data on sub-national governance. In regard to the last of these, the consultancy MetroDynamics [suggested](#) the creation of 'local policy innovation observatories' to gather data and evidence of successful projects, and to undertake modelling.

The prospects for English local government are uncertain. During the Truss government, ministers [stated](#) that the Fair Funding Review, originally launched in 2016, would not progress until 2025, but the status of this policy decision is now unclear. It is also possible that there will be further reductions in local government funding due to the economic situation; and the effects of the sudden rises in inflation on local government budgeting plans have not been addressed.

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## Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland is [again governed by civil servants](#), with Assembly elections potentially looming in the spring. There has been no functioning Executive since February, and elections in May failed to lead to one being formed (see [Monitor 81](#), page 16). Under [Westminster legislation](#) passed in February 2022, there was a six-month period for the formation of an Executive during which ministers from the pre-February Executive continued with limited, caretaker functions.

That period ended on 28 October, when the caretaker ministers lost office and elections were required by law. But this was an unwelcome prospect within Northern Ireland and beyond, and London eventually [decided on](#)

[emergency legislation](#) to postpone such elections. The bill to implement this will also underpin the powers of civil servants, set a budget and empower the Secretary of State to reduce Assembly members' pay. Elections will not need to happen (and pay will not be cut) if an Executive is formed before 19 January.

Accommodating the DUP will be difficult: its supporters, and other unionists, are [well dug in on the issue](#). Implementing in full the current Protocol Bill – currently [undergoing critical scrutiny in the Lords](#) (see below) – would probably satisfy these groups. But this would risk a trade war with Europe, which would have grave implications for Northern Ireland's trading links with the EU and potentially lead to borders within the island of Ireland.

Westminster, however, has continued to take steps to implement 2020's [New Decade, New Approach](#) agreement. The [Identity and Language \(Northern Ireland\) Bill](#) completed its parliamentary stages on 26 October and was awaiting royal assent when *Monitor* went to press. The bill will give the Irish language official status in Northern Ireland, permit the use of Irish in courts and provide for the appointment of Irish and Ulster Scots/Ulster British commissioners. DUP leader Jeffrey Donaldson opposed the bill, [saying at report stage](#) that it did not adequately protect those from an Ulster Scots or Ulster British background. Sinn Féin naturally welcomed the bill, but its MPs do not take their seats, so did not participate in the relevant debates. SDLP leader Colum Eastwood [spoke in favour of the bill](#), but expressed regret that it was being passed in Westminster and not by the Assembly, sentiments which were [echoed](#) by Alliance's Stephen Farry.

Debate over the longer-term future of Northern Ireland was given impetus by [census results](#) in September showing for the first time that there are more Catholics than Protestants in the Northern Ireland population. The results were not a surprise and will have no immediate political implications, but recent events may be influencing longer term preferences; [polling shows a majority of young people favouring a united Ireland](#). The debate on unity is intensifying: there have been a succession of [public rallies](#), [an Irish parliamentary inquiry](#) and [books are being written](#) on the subject. Yet difficult practical issues, set out in the [report](#) of the Unit's Working Group on Unification Referendums on the Island of Ireland, are still being skirted.

The DUP's MP Ian Paisley, meanwhile, has introduced a [private member's bill](#) in the Commons, the effect of

which would be to increase the threshold for Irish unity, contrary to the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. There is no sign of government support, so it is unlikely to become law.

## The Northern Ireland Protocol Bill

The [Northern Ireland Protocol Bill](#) had its [second reading](#) in the Lords on 11 October. Numerous speakers – including Conservative peers and Crossbenchers – stated their opposition and – in many cases – their view that the bill would breach international law if enacted. Lord (Patrick) Cormack, a Conservative peer, [tabled a regret motion](#) that invited the government to ‘pause’ the bill for six months, but withdrew it.

The bill [completed its committee stage](#) in early November. The bill as a whole was criticised, as were many of its individual clauses, particularly those relating to what the Lords Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee [called](#) ‘inappropriate delegations of power’ to UK ministers. Crossbencher Lord (David) Pannick [claimed](#) that the Henry VIII powers in the bill ‘confound constitutional principle’, and similar criticisms came from peers on all sides of the chamber. If the bill becomes law in its current form, for example, the resulting Act of Parliament will be amendable by regulations. Pannick said this rendered scrutiny of it a ‘waste of time’, as ministers can simply amend it as they see fit later. However, the bill is not without support from other parties. Unionists such as DUP peer [Lord \(Nigel\) Dodds of Duncairn](#) and former Ulster Unionist leader [Lord \(Reg\) Empey](#) spoke in favour, and said that Northern Ireland’s representatives should be more directly involved in the Protocol negotiations. Peers have asked that information be provided on the status of the talks prior to report stage.

The government has argued that the bill will ‘fix’ the contentious parts of the Protocol, restore political stability following the recent collapse of the Stormont institutions, and protect the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, which [unionists see as under threat](#). However, the bill is [deeply opposed](#) by nationalist parties in Northern Ireland, the Alliance Party, the Irish government, the European Commission and US President Joe Biden.

Despite this, the two new senior ministers in the Northern Ireland Office, Chris Heaton-Harris and Steve Baker, have [noticeably improved relations with Dublin](#) in recent weeks. Rishi Sunak’s decision to retain these Truss appointees, despite their former status as key members

of the European Research Group (ERG), will have been better received in Dublin than might have been the case a few weeks previously. Both appear willing to [find a compromise](#) with the EU and are [engaging with all parties](#) in Northern Ireland. At the UK–EU level, [talks aimed at finding a resolution](#) to the dispute have resumed between Foreign Secretary James Cleverly and European Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič.



[Chris Heaton-Harris \(far left\)](#) and [Steve Baker \(second from left\)](#) (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0) by [UK Government](#).

There are some overlaps in priorities. Both sides have indicated that ‘express’ lanes could be created to fast-track the movement of goods between Great Britain and Northern Ireland where the origin and destination can be established with reliable traders. But wide gulfs also remain, including on the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice and the scope of UK state aid in Northern Ireland. What’s more, the other actors strongly reject the UK’s threats of unilateral action and have argued that the Protocol Bill is [poisoning the atmosphere](#). In the coming weeks and months, the fate of the talks is likely to be directly linked to that of the collapsed Stormont institutions (see above). In addition, the threat of EU trade sanctions against the UK if the bill were to pass remains.

## Scotland

The constitutional debate in Scotland remains focused on the question of independence. As outlined in [Monitor 81](#) (page 17), a [draft Independence Referendum Bill](#) was referred to the UK Supreme Court in July by Lord Advocate Dorothy Bain – the Scottish government’s chief legal officer – to determine whether the proposed legislation was within the competences of the Scottish Parliament.

At a [hearing](#) in October, the UK government argued that, as the legislation had not yet been presented to the Scottish Parliament, questions of competence were premature and the Supreme Court should not weigh in on ‘hypothetical’ matters. The Scottish government argued that the [Scotland Act 1998](#) allows the Lord Advocate to refer ‘any’ issue relating to devolution and that the existence of a draft bill is sufficient. On the matter of competence, the UK claimed that a consultative referendum ‘on whether Scotland should be an independent country’ had obvious implications for the Union, a matter reserved to Westminster under [Schedule 5](#) of the Act. The Scottish government counter-argued that, as the proposed referendum is ‘consultative’, its results would not have implications for reserved competences. The Supreme Court disagreed: as *Monitor* was going to press, it published a unanimous [judgment](#) accepting the reference, but finding that the Scottish Parliament lacks the competence to legislate for an independence referendum on reserved competence grounds.

Meanwhile the Scottish government continues to make its case for independence via the publication of a series of prospectuses. Three papers have been published to date, addressing [the economic case for independence](#), [the question of currency](#), and [the case for Scotland’s right to decide its constitutional future](#).

Beyond the long-running question of independence, the contentious [Gender Recognition Reform \(Scotland\) Bill](#) reached Stage 2 of the legislative process in the Scottish Parliament in October, despite [a government rebellion that included a ministerial resignation](#). The bill is designed to make it easier for transgender people to obtain a [gender recognition certificate](#).

Though gender recognition is a devolved matter, the legislation the bill seeks to amend is an Act of the UK Parliament that applies to Scotland by consent of the Scottish Parliament. Ministers in London have indicated in recent months that they might attempt to block it. Then Attorney General Suella Braverman [said in July](#) that she might seek advice on how to prevent what she described as the creation of a ‘two-tier system’ of recognition, and it was [widely reported](#) after the appointment of Liz Truss as Prime Minister that she would also seek to block the bill. What, if anything, the newly appointed Sunak government will choose to do remains unclear.

## Wales

A [large pro-independence rally](#) occurred in Cardiff on 1 October for the first time since the start of the COVID-19

pandemic. Perhaps 10,000 people attended, reflecting the fact that an independence-favouring political movement has taken root as a prominent but minority voice in the Welsh political landscape.

First Minister Mark Drakeford undertook a visit to the Irish Republic in mid-October to participate in the [Ireland–Wales Forum](#), a key structure to have emerged from the growing diplomatic relationship between the two governments. During media appearances associated with the visit, Drakeford discussed [the Northern Ireland Protocol](#), in which he said Wales had a ‘direct interest’, and clarified in [an interview](#) with the *Irish Times* that he did not support independence for Wales. Using the platform to elaborate on his federalist position, Drakeford spoke of being ‘Welsh first and British next’ and described the UK Union as a ‘great insurance policy’.

Behind the scenes, the [Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales](#) continues to gather expert evidence and to carry out engagement activities. The current stage of the process appears to consist of interviews between the commissioners and academics, senior political figures and civil society organisations.

An area of renewed interest is the subject of post-Brexit powers. Welsh Counsel General Mick Antoniw [wrote to the UK government](#) in September to express concerns about the ‘constitutionally unacceptable’ [Retained EU Law \(Reform and Revocation\) Bill](#) (see page 3). He stated the Welsh government’s opposition to UK ministers being given ‘unfettered authority’ to legislate in devolved areas and complained that there had been a lack of engagement with Welsh ministers about the bill’s aims and provisions. Without changes, the bill will certainly represent a source of intense conflict between the Welsh and UK administrations.

## Public attitudes to the constitution



### Recent surveys on constitutional matters

The latest [British Social Attitudes](#) (BSA) survey, published in September, found that more people (51%) were in favour of changing the electoral system to allow ‘smaller parties to get a fair share of MPs’ than wanted to retain the current system (44%). This marks the first time that a more proportional system has been preferred since this question was first asked by the BSA in 1983, a shift primarily driven by Labour supporters. The same



survey also asked respondents whether they would prefer general elections to be held on fixed dates, or at a time of the Prime Minister's choosing. Three quarters of respondents indicated a preference for the former option, while only 23% advocated the latter.

Meanwhile a September report by the think tank Onward, entitled '[The Kids Aren't Alright](#)' described a troubling 'generational slide' towards support for authoritarianism. Polling conducted by J L Partners found that 61% of those aged between 18 and 34 agreed that 'having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections' is a good way of governing the country. The report concluded that the key drivers of such attitudes were: social isolation; overprotective parenting; work-related stress; and social media usage.

The [second survey](#) of the Unit's [Democracy in the UK after Brexit](#) project was carried out by YouGov between 26 August and 5 September (see page 20). The survey was undertaken shortly before the death of Queen Elizabeth II: when asked what should happen to the monarchy after her death, 26% favoured abolition, while 58% wanted to retain it. Polls by [YouGov](#) and [Ipsos Mori](#) suggested a slight uptick in support for the monarchy immediately following the Queen's death, and a large increase in the proportion thinking Charles would do a good job as King.



[The new King and Prince of Wales escort the coffin of Queen Elizabeth](#) (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0) by UK Government.

After Liz Truss announced her resignation, YouGov fielded a [question](#) asking how the next Conservative Party leader should be selected. Among Conservative voters, 44% favoured Conservative MPs making this choice, and 34% wanted party members to choose between two candidates proposed by Conservative MPs.

## People on the move

Upon the death of Queen Elizabeth II on 8 September, **Prince Charles** became King, taking the title of King Charles III. The **Duchess of Cornwall** became Queen Consort. **Prince William** succeeded Charles as Duke of Cornwall and Duke of Rothesay, and was made Prince of Wales the following day. The Queen Consort (as the monarch's spouse) and **Princess Beatrice** (as the fourth person in line to the throne aged over 21 years) are now Counsellors of State.

**Boris Johnson** resigned as Prime Minister on 6 September, having announced his decision to step down in July. **Liz Truss** was elected party leader on 5 September and became Prime Minister on 6 September, but announced her own departure on 20 October. **Rishi Sunak** won the consequent leadership contest and was appointed as Prime Minister on 25 October.

**Baroness (Simone) Finn** stepped down as Downing Street Chief of Staff when Boris Johnson resigned as Prime Minister. Truss appointed **Mark Fullbrook** to the role, but he left Downing Street after her resignation. Sunak appointed **Liam Booth-Smith** to replace him.

Both Truss and Sunak made fresh ministerial appointments after taking office in September and October respectively. **Brandon Lewis** briefly replaced **Dominic Raab** as Lord Chancellor in September, only for Raab to return to the role in October. Raab's title of Deputy Prime Minister was given to **Thérèse Coffey** by Liz Truss but handed back to Raab when Sunak reappointed him to the government.

**Oliver Dowden** was appointed Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster by Rishi Sunak, taking over from **Nadhim Zahawi**, whom Liz Truss had appointed to replace **Kit Malthouse** in September. Sunak made Zahawi Chairman of the Conservative Party. Zahawi's predecessor, **Jake Berry**, returned to the backbenches less than two months after Truss had appointed him to replace **Andrew Stephenson** and **Ben Elliot**, who had held the position jointly.

Truss made **Edward Argar** Minister for the Cabinet Office in September, replacing Michael Ellis. Following Kwasi Kwarteng's sacking by Truss in October, Argar swapped jobs with **Chris Philp**, becoming Chief Secretary to the Treasury. Sunak then moved Philp to the Home Office later in the month, appointing **Jeremy Quin** to the Cabinet Office role. Argar was also moved by Sunak, replacing **Rachel Maclean** as Minister of State at the Ministry of Justice.

**Michael Ellis** was moved from the Cabinet Office by Truss in September to become Attorney General. His predecessor, **Suella Braverman**, became Home Secretary. Sunak's arrival saw Ellis returned to the backbenches, while **Victoria Prentis** took over as Attorney General.

**Michael Tomlinson** was appointed Solicitor General by Truss in September and remains in post; his predecessor **Edward Timpson** returned to the backbenches.

**Penny Mordaunt** replaced **Mark Spencer** as Leader of the House of Commons when Liz Truss took office in September. **Lord (Nicholas) True** was appointed by Truss to replace **Baroness (Natalie) Evans of Bowes Park** as Leader of the House of Lords. Both remain in post.

**Peter Bone**, who had been made Deputy Leader of the Commons by Boris Johnson in July, left the government in late September. The position remained vacant when *Monitor* went to press.

**Greg Clark**, who was appointed Levelling Up Secretary by Johnson in July, was removed by Truss, who replaced him with **Simon Clarke**. Rishi Sunak reappointed **Michael Gove** – who had resigned under Johnson – to the post. Gove is also once again Minister for Intergovernmental Relations, a position that **Nadhim Zahawi** – when Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster – held under Liz Truss.

**David T C Davies** was promoted by Rishi Sunak from a junior ministerial position at the Wales Office to the position of Wales Secretary, replacing **Robert Buckland**, who returned to the backbenches.

**Shailesh Vara** stepped down as Northern Ireland Secretary in September and Liz Truss appointed **Chris Heaton-Harris** to replace him – a decision reaffirmed by Sunak. **Wendy Morton** was made Chief Whip by Truss in place of Heaton-Harris, but left the government when Sunak appointed **Simon Hart** to the role.

**Steve Baker** was appointed Minister of State for Northern Ireland in September after **Conor Burns** was made a trade minister and retains that role. Burns subsequently resigned from the government in October.

**Michelle Donelan** was appointed Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport by Truss and retained by Sunak. Her predecessor **Nadine Dorries** left the government.

All ministers in the Northern Ireland Executive left office on 28 October. Running of their departments has passed temporarily to civil servants.

**Deirdre Brock** replaced **Pete Wishart** as the SNP's Shadow Leader of the House of Commons after he was moved to shadow Defra.

**Lord (David) Lloyd-Jones** retired as Justice of the UK Supreme Court in January after reaching the mandatory retirement age of 70. Nobody was selected to replace him and he was reappointed in August after the retirement age was increased to 75. **Lord (David) Richards** was also appointed to the court in August. He replaced **Lady (Mary) Arden**.

**Professor Jeff King** became Director of Research at the Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law in September.

## Constitution Unit news

### New survey research on attitudes to democracy in the UK

The Unit's research into public attitudes to democracy continues through its [Democracy in the UK after Brexit](#) project. Following publication of the findings of a major

[survey of public opinion](#) conducted last summer and of the conclusions of the [Citizens' Assembly on Democracy in the UK](#), which met last autumn, the Unit, working with YouGov, completed a follow-up public opinion survey in August and September. The responses are now being analysed, and full results will be published in the near future. Ahead of that, however, the Unit has published initial findings on [public attitudes to reform of the House of Lords](#). This showed overwhelming support for a chamber no bigger than the House of Commons, and for appointments to be made by an independent body rather than the Prime Minister. Opinion was divided, however, over whether the Lords should have elected members, appointed members, or use some combination or alternative.

## Briefings on constitutional standards and the health of democracy

The Unit's project on constitutional standards and the health of democracy has continued to produce briefings on core questions, targeted at policymakers and a wider public. As well as appearing on the [project website](#) in printable PDF form, each briefing also appears on the [Constitution Unit blog](#). After a break over the summer, our first autumn briefing focused on [protecting constitutional principles](#). It identified and explained the importance of five such principles: institutional checks and balances; representative government and free and fair elections; rule of law; fundamental rights; and integrity and standards. Following the appointment of Rishi Sunak as Prime Minister, and his very welcome statement that he wished to restore 'integrity, professionalism and accountability' to government, a [second October briefing](#) outlined key means to achieve this goal. Further briefings will appear over the coming months. If you would like to join the mailing list to be alerted to their publication, you can sign up for this at the project website link above.

## Unit reports on accession and coronation of the monarch

On 23 October, the Unit published [two reports on the monarchy](#), which explore the process for the coronation of Charles III and the accession of his successor.

*Swearing in the new King: the Accession and Coronation Oaths* was co-authored by former Unit Director Robert Hazell and Honorary Senior Research Associate Bob Morris. It argues that the oaths must be revised to better

reflect modern society or abolished entirely. It proposes several potential replacement texts for each of the oaths but recognises that the necessary legislation to revise the coronation oath is unlikely to be forthcoming before the ceremony in May 2023. The authors therefore proposed that the oaths be amended by statute before the accession of Prince William.

*The Coronation of King Charles III*, written by Bob Morris, focuses on the coronation ceremony, comparing the likely format of May's event with the grander, larger coronation of Elizabeth II, which the UK currently lacks the capacity to match. The report's conclusion recommends removing the performance of homage by peers from the proceedings and making the event as a whole 'less overwhelmingly Anglican' than those of previous monarchs.

The conclusions of both reports are discussed in more detail in [a blogpost by the authors](#).



## The royal prerogative

Robert Hazell and former Unit volunteer Timothy Foot – now a practising barrister – have co-authored a new book on the history, current operation, and potential future reforms of the royal prerogative. [Executive Power:](#)



*The Prerogative, Past Present and Future* seeks to clarify the respective roles of government, parliament, and the courts in defining the scope of prerogative powers and regulating their use. Each of the powers has its own dedicated chapter, allowing for detailed discussion of the subject matter.

Parliamentary tussles over Brexit led to much discussion about the proper use of the prerogative and the executive's controversial use of its power to prorogue parliament in 2019 had to be decided by the UK Supreme Court. The book also therefore makes suggestions for reform of the prerogative, such as which prerogative powers should be codified by primary legislation.

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## Staff news

Office manager Rachel Cronkshaw started a period of maternity leave in August, which meant the welcome return of Edd Rowe as her maternity cover.

Research assistant Sam Anderson sadly left the Unit for an exciting new role at the House of Lords in October, having attained a Distinction in his Masters degree.

PhD student Lotte Hargrave passed her viva without corrections in October on her thesis 'The Influence of Gender Stereotypes on Politicians' Behaviour and Voter Attitudes'. She has now taken up a position as Head of Data Science at Deltapoll.

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## Research volunteers

The Unit is, as always, grateful for the excellent work done by its research volunteers. A big thank you to former volunteers Rohan Bainbridge, Andrea Dalling, Rowan Hall, Ben Matthes, Matthew Pegler and John Sheridan.

## Sign up to attend free Unit events

We continue to run free events, with contributions from experts in politics, academia and law, followed by what is usually a lively Q&A session. If you do not already receive email notifications about Unit events, [sign up now](#). Seminars are free and open to all.

# Bulletin Board

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## Events recently made available online

Recordings of all of Unit events are available online, via the Unit's [podcast](#) and [YouTube](#) pages. To sign up for future events, please visit the Unit's [events page](#). Webinars are free and open to all.

### [Planning for the Next Coronation, and the New Reign](#)

**Dr Sue Onslow**, Director of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London,  
**Catherine Pepinster**, author of *Defenders of the Faith*,  
**Dr Craig Prescott**, Lecturer in Law at Bangor University.

Chair: **Professor Robert Hazell**, Professor of Government and the Constitution at the Constitution Unit.

*Recorded on 26 October.*

### [Caretaker Conventions in British Government](#)

**Lord (Gavin) Barwell**, former Downing Street Chief of Staff, **Lord (Gus) O'Donnell**, former Cabinet Secretary, **Anne Tiernan**, Adjunct Professor at the Griffith Business School, Australia.

Chair: **Professor Meg Russell**, Director of the Constitution Unit.

*Recorded on 6 October.*

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## Unit in the news

Lisa James wrote a piece for the [UK in a Changing Europe blog](#) on the constitutional legacy of Boris Johnson's premiership (1 September).

Robert Hazell was interviewed by Sky News following the death of the Queen (8 September). He and Bob Morris also appeared numerous times on *ITV News* to discuss the same subject (8, 9 and 10 September). Robert discussed the constitutional implications of the Queen's death, the plans for her funeral and the accession and coronation of King Charles III on Bloomberg News (9 September and 19 September), the BBC World Service and LBC (both 9 September), *Times Radio* (10 September), Radio 4 and Radio Ulster (both 12 September), Zivile Raskauskaite (15 September), the

# Bulletin Board

*Evening Standard's* [The Leader](#) podcast (16 September) and the BBC World Service (18 September). Robert was also quoted in the [Express](#) (9 September), [Times](#), [BBC News](#) and [ABC Australia](#) (all 10 September), [Washington Post](#) (14 September), [USA Today](#) (30 September), and the [Mail](#) (15 October).

Bob Morris was quoted on the same subjects in the [New York Post](#) (8 September), [Observer](#) (11 September), [Folha de San Paulo](#) (12 September), [Observador](#) (13 September) and [La Tercera](#) (22 September). Quotes from Bob also appeared in articles on [CBC News](#) ([30 September](#) and [2 October](#)), the [International Business Times](#) (30 September) and [Yahoo News](#) ([10 October](#) and [11 October](#)). He was quoted on the future of the monarchy in the Commonwealth realms by [Les Echos](#) (12 September), and appeared on [GB News](#) to discuss the benefits of the UK having a constitutional monarchy (14 September).

Robert Hazell was quoted in an [article](#) on the website of the International Bar Association on the role of the Crown in appointing judges (22 September).

Alan Renwick appeared on BBC Radio Ulster's [Talkback](#) to talk about the work of the Working Group on Unification Referendums on the Island of Ireland (25 September).

Robert Hazell was quoted in the [Japan Times](#) on the role Prince Andrew will play under the new monarch (13 September). He discussed the possibility of the UK becoming a republic on the Agence France-Press podcast [Sur Le Fil](#) (16 September) and was quoted on the same subject in the [Buenos Aires Times](#) and [Time](#) magazine (both 15 September). He answered questions about the constitutional role of the monarch on the Thomson Reuters podcast [The Hearing](#) (18 October).

Meg Russell wrote an article for the [Fabian Review](#) in which she argued that the Labour Party should make clear commitments on restoring integrity and accountability to British politics (4 October).

Robert Hazell was quoted on the place of Prince Harry in the line of succession in articles published on [Geo News](#), [The News](#) and [Bol News](#) (all 9 October).

A post written by Meg Russell for the [Constitution Unit blog](#) on the September budget crisis was quoted in the [Financial Times](#) (6 October). The same piece was cited in a comment piece on the [Conversation](#) about the collapse of the Truss government (20 October).

Bob Morris and Robert Hazell were both quoted in a [Telegraph](#) article about seating arrangements for the coronation (16 October).

Meg Russell appeared on [ABC News](#) to discuss what would happen if Liz Truss was ousted as Prime Minister (18 October).

Meg Russell appeared on Sky News to discuss the possibility of Boris Johnson returning as Prime Minister following the resignation of Liz Truss (21 October).

Robert Hazell was quoted by [Yahoo News](#) in an article about the prospects of an early general election (21 October).

An [explainer](#) about the nature of the UK's constitution on the Unit website was quoted in a [YouGov](#) comment piece about whether the British public want a written constitution (21 October).

The Unit's report, [The Coronation of King Charles III](#), was quoted in a [Telegraph](#) article about the planning of the upcoming coronation ceremony (22 October).

Meg Russell authored a piece for [Prospect](#) in which she argued against party members having a decisive role in the selection of party leaders (23 October). This piece was quoted in [The Week](#) (26 October). Meg made similar points in a letter to the [Times](#) (26 October).

Tom Fleming and Lisa James appeared on UCL's [Uncovering Politics](#) podcast to discuss the role of parliament in shaping Brexit-related legislation (27 October).

Lisa James wrote a post for the [UK in a Changing Europe blog](#) on the role of members in selecting party leaders (1 November).

Meg Russell appeared on LBC's *Lewis Goodall* show to talk about appointments to the House of Lords and potential reform of the second chamber (11 November).

# Bulletin Board

## Committee appearances

Meg Russell appeared before the Commons Administration Committee to discuss processes for MPs leaving the House of Commons ([24 October](#)).

## Unit publications

Robert Hazell and Timothy Foot, [Executive Power: The Prerogative, Past Present and Future](#) (Hart Publishing, November).

Robert Hazell and Bob Morris, [Swearing in the New King: The Accession and Coronation Oaths](#) (Constitution Unit report, October).

Bob Morris, [The Coronation of King Charles III](#) (Constitution Unit report, October).

Tom Fleming, Bastian Gonzalez-Bustamante and Petra Schleiter, [Cabinet Reshuffles and Parliamentary No-Confidence Motions](#) (*Government and Opposition*, July).

## Publications to note

Peter Hennessy and Andrew Blick, [The Bonfire of the Decencies: Repairing and Restoring the British Constitution](#) (Haus Publishing, October).

Robert Jones and Richard Wyn Jones, [The Welsh Criminal Justice System: On the Jagged Edge](#) (University of Wales Press, October).

Alexander Horne, Louise Thompson and Ben Yong (editors), [Parliament and the Law \(Third Edition\)](#) (Hart Publishing, September).

## Contributors to Monitor 82

Coree Brown Swan, Dave Busfield-Birch, James Cleaver, Tom Fleming, Robert Hazell, Lisa James, Conor J. Kelly, Rebecca McKee, Alexandra Meakin, Luke Nicholas, Alan Renwick, Meg Russell, Mark Sandford and Alan Whysall.

The issue was edited by Dave Busfield-Birch.



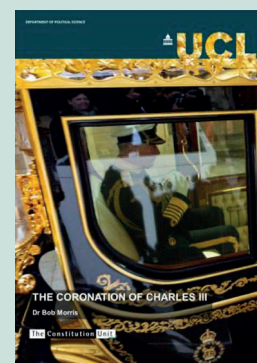
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