



THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE
HOUSE OF COMMONS, LONDON SW1A 0AA

13 November 2018

John B. Speaker,

I write to inform you that I have indicated to Her Majesty The Queen that I intend to surrender my Patent as Clerk of the House on 1 March next year. I shall then have served the House for over 43 years, for the last 16 years at the Table. In March 2019 it will be 4 years since I was appointed as the 50th Clerk of the House. You have long known of my plans to retire in the first quarter of 2019, and I am grateful to you and the House of Commons Commission for agreeing in July of this year to all the detailed arrangements for selecting my successor, which can now be activated.

It has been a turbulent 4 years, covering three governments, two general elections and two referendums: the murders of Jo Cox MP and PC Palmer: threats to our physical and cyber-security; and the ebb and flow of launching Restoration and Renewal. It has seen the establishment of the new Parliamentary Digital Service and the Parliamentary Security Department: as well as new governance structures. And it hardly needs saying there may be more turbulence over the next few weeks and months.

The last 12 months have also of course seen the surfacing in various ways of the complex issue of bullying and harassment and sexual misconduct in the parliamentary community. I am confident that we can deal with it if we all acknowledge past failings – as I readily do - and move beyond concerns about process to reach a place where, quite simply, everybody in the community treats everybody else with respect and dignity. And where, if they do not, they are called out and if necessary sanctioned.

It has been a privilege if not always a positive pleasure to do this job and the other 14 jobs I have done here, in all of them sustained by the loyalty and friendship of my colleagues across the House of Commons Service, and in the

House of Lords. I could not have been prouder than when I was appointed as the Head of the House of Commons service four years ago. The House of Commons service are a remarkably talented, diverse and dedicated group of public servants and I will miss them.

I will also miss the support and friendship of Members on all sides of the House. I do not think the public appreciate the work of Members, or their staff, as they should; and perhaps they never will.

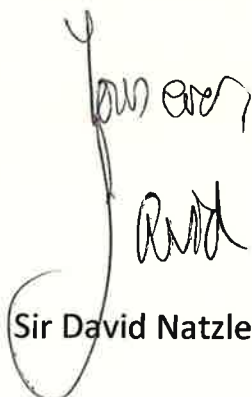
Members demonstrate the best of public service in so many ways: in scrutiny and debate and inquiry here and in representing their constituents. I have found the House at its best to be a kind and generous place.

I am also glad over the past 4 years to have been able to visit a number of constituency offices around the country and see at first hand the public service provided by Members staff. Members and their staff carry out their work in the face of spiteful abuse and threat and vilification. They deserve better.

Finally, I would like to thank you, all the Deputy Speakers with whom I have worked, and the chairs and members of the select committees I have served, for their friendship, collegiality and good humour, especially in times of tension or difficulty.

The ten years since the expenses scandal and the Wright Report have seen the House of Commons come back from a very low place to being as open and vibrant and independent and outward-looking as at any time in modern history. I am proud to have played a small part in that journey. Whatever happens over the next few months the House of Commons will be at the centre of it, and that is how it should be.

I am confident that the House will continue to thrive as the central institution of our parliamentary democracy, cherishing the old while embracing the new, and holding fast to the recognition that parliamentary service is in the truest sense a form of public service.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Natzler', written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above the printed name.

Sir David Natzler KCB