

EMBARGO: IMMEDIATE

26.03.09

NEW APPOINTMENTS AT PCC

- **LIEUTENANT GENERAL SIR MICHAEL WILLCOCKS TO BE NEW CHARTER COMMISSIONER**
- **DR. ELIZABETH VALLANCE TO JOIN APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION**

Sir Christopher Meyer, Chairman of the Press Complaints Commission, has announced that Lieutenant General Sir Michael Willcocks – currently serving as ‘Black Rod’ – has been appointed the PCC’s 2nd Charter Commissioner. He will take over from Sir Brian Cubbon on his retirement in May. The Charter Commissioner is an independent figure who investigates complaints about the way in which the Commission has handled cases, reports findings and recommendations to the board of the PCC, and publishes an annual report.

Announcing the appointment, Sir Christopher said:

“It is absolutely essential that people who complain to us have confidence that the PCC system is fair and rigorous. The office of the Charter Commissioner adds an important layer of accountability that helps keep our standards of service high by offering independent reviews of the manner in which we have handled complaints. I am delighted that a man of such renowned independence as Sir Michael Willcocks will be the PCC’s next Charter Commissioner. He takes over from Sir Brian Cubbon, who has executed the role with great distinction, and to whom I am enormously grateful for quickly making the Charter Commissioner system work so well in the interests of complainants.”

Sir Christopher has also announced that Dr. Elizabeth Vallance (Lady Vallance of Tummel) has been appointed to the PCC’s Appointments Commission, replacing Sir David Clementi, who retired from it at the end of 2008. The Appointments Commission is an unremunerated body that meets twice a year to make appointments to the board of the Press Complaints Commission and the Charter Compliance Panel, and to appoint the Charter Commissioner.

ENDS

Notes

1. Lieutenant General Sir Michael Willcocks has been Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, Secretary to the Lord Great Chamberlain and Serjeant at Arms of the House of Lords (Black Rod) since 2001. Between 2000-2001 he was the UK military representative to NATO and the EU. Between 1999-2000 he was Deputy Commander (Operations) Stabilisation force for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and before that had a number of senior roles in the Army, including Assistant Chief of the General Staff (1996-1999).
2. He has been appointed to a 3 year term as the PCC’s Charter Commissioner, and will take office from 11 May 2009.
3. Dr Elizabeth Vallance has a number of responsibilities including membership of the Committee on Standards of Public Life and several charity trusteeships. She is a JP; author; Chairman of me too (an anti-violence charity); and Chairman of I CAN, the children’s communication charity.
4. There are four other members of the PCC Appointments Commission. They are: the Chairman of the PCC (currently Sir Christopher Meyer; from 06.04.09 it will be Baroness Buscombe); Tim Bowdler CBE (Chairman of the Press Standards Board of Finance); Andrew Phillips (Lord Phillips of Sudbury); and Lord Evans of Temple Guiting.

5. The Charter Compliance Panel is an independent audit committee charged with overseeing the work of the PCC. Its task is to examine cases selected at random to ensure that the PCC is meeting its service commitments to complainants. The panel publishes an annual report with recommendations to the Commission.

6. For more information, contact Tim Toulmin on 020 7831 0022.

26 March 2009