



HOUSE OF LORDS

Refreshment Committee

1st Report of Session 2005–06

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The Refreshment Committee

The Refreshment Committee is appointed each session to advise on the refreshment services provided for the House, within financial limits approved by the House Committee.

Current Membership

The members of the Refreshment Committee are:

Lord Borrie
Baroness Darcy de Knayth
Lord Davies of Oldham
Lord Denham
Baroness Emerton
Baroness Fookes (*Chairman*)
Baroness Gould of Potternewton
Baroness Harris of Richmond
The Countess of Mar
Baroness Pitkeathley
Lord Redesdale
Lord Wade of Chorlton

General Information

General information about the House of Lords and its Committees is on the internet at http://www.parliament.uk/about_lords/about_lords.cfm

Contacts for the Refreshment Committee

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Refreshment Committee, House of Lords, London, SW1A 0PW

The telephone number for enquiries regarding the Committee's work is 020 7219 3186.

FIRST REPORT OF SESSION 2005–06 FROM THE REFRESHMENT COMMITTEE

THE KITCHEN REFURBISHMENT PROJECT

Introduction

1. Most members of the House will be aware that work has been undertaken over the past three years in connection with the major refurbishment of the House of Lords kitchen and support facilities. As we have previously reported, the growth in catering in the House of Lords has exceeded the capacity of the kitchens and so the three-year refurbishment project now underway is essential in order to improve working conditions for staff and to comply with health and safety regulations and food hygiene legislation.
2. The purpose of this report is to inform the House of the progress which has been made so far, and to set out the expected timetable for the opening of the new facilities.

The expected timetable for the opening of the new facilities

3. Members are reminded that during this final stage of the project the main kitchen area is being extended into the area previously used as the Staff Restaurant. This new larger area will be divided according to workflow. It will provide improved separation of food preparation and cooking areas and will also provide a much needed dedicated stores area. At the same time, the Restaurant is being moved to the area previously used for offices on the River Front, next to the Lords Bar. The Committee has agreed that the new facility should be called the Lords Bar and River Restaurant.
4. In our report to the House in March 2005 we estimated that during the final phase of the works the main kitchen would be closed from the rise of the House in July 2005 to March 2006. Whilst every effort has been made to keep disruption to a minimum, including 24 hour working at weekends, the impact of this final stage of the project has been considerable and we now expect the contractors to hand back the area several weeks later than we had originally hoped. No additional financial cost to the House is expected as a result of this delay.
5. The delay means that it will not now be possible to open the new facilities until the autumn. In the meantime some services will continue to be restricted. If possible, however, a cold drinks service will be provided to members and their guests on the limited space available on the Terrace after the Whitsun recess.
6. Until the new facilities open some continuing disruption to peers and their guests and to House of Lords staff is, regrettably, inevitable. But we are aware that the brunt of the disruption will continue to be borne by the staff of the Refreshment Department, to whom we are very grateful for their cooperation throughout the works.

Further information

7. Further information about this project is available from the Head of Catering Services or from the Committee Clerk.