

Chiltern Hundreds

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(Redirected from Chiltern hundreds)

Appointment to the office of **Crown Steward and Bailiff of the three Chiltern Hundreds of Stoke, Desborough and Burnham** is a sinecure appointment which is used as a device allowing a Member of the United Kingdom Parliament (MP) to resign his or her seat. MPs cannot outright resign their seats; appointment to this position by the Chancellor of the Exchequer places the MP in a salaried position under the monarch, against the rules of Parliament. The MP's seat is therefore revoked and the MP has effectively resigned. The office is allocated in rotation with that of **Steward and Bailiff of the Manor of Northstead**.^[1]

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Crown Steward and Bailiff of the three Chiltern Hundreds of Stoke, Desborough and Burnham



Incumbent

Eric Illsley

since 8th February 2011

Appointer	George Osborne as Chancellor of the Exchequer
Website	Chiltern Hundreds and Manor of Northstead (http://www.parliament.uk/site-information/glossary/chiltern-hundreds/)

Origin of the office

A hundred is a traditional division of an English county, and the three hundreds of Stoke, Desborough, and Burnham are in Buckinghamshire. These three hundreds are situated in the hilly, wooded Chiltern Hills, which were once notorious as a hiding place for robbers. The hundreds have been Crown property since at least the 13th century and a Crown Steward and a Bailiff was appointed to maintain law and order in the area. As the area became more civilised, the position's duties ceased to be required in the 16th century, and the holder ceased to gain any benefits during the 17th century.

Usage

The position of Crown Steward and Bailiff of the Chiltern Hundreds is now used as a procedural device to effect resignation from the House of Commons, as British MPs are not permitted simply to resign their seat. This legal anomaly dates back to a resolution of the House of Commons of 2 March 1624, passed at a time when MPs were often elected to serve against their will.

As an instrument of resignation, the role is usually alternated with that of Steward and Deputy Steward of the Manor of Northstead in Yorkshire. Under the Act of Settlement, any Member of Parliament accepting an office of profit under the Crown must give up his or her seat. An MP applies for the office to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who usually then signs a warrant appointing the now former MP. The appointee holds the office until such time as another MP is appointed, or they apply to be released. Sometimes this can be a matter of minutes, as on the occasion when three or more MPs apply on the same day.

Current holder

The last appointment to the office was that of Eric Illsley, the former Labour Member of Parliament for Barnsley Central, who resigned on 8 February 2011 shortly before he was due to be sentenced on three counts of false accounting as part of the United Kingdom Parliamentary expenses scandal.^[2]

Example notices and orders

When an MP is appointed to the post, the Treasury releases a public notice such as the following: "The Chancellor of the Exchequer has this day appointed Ian Gibson to be Steward and Bailiff of the Three Hundreds of Chiltern."^[3]

Once the Speaker has been notified, the appointment and resulting disqualification is noted in the Vote and Proceedings, the Commons' daily journal of proceedings:

Notification, laid upon the Table by the Speaker, That Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer had today appointed Mrs Iris Robinson, Member for Strangford, to the office of Steward and Bailiff of the Three Hundreds of Chiltern.^[4]

Thereafter, the former MP's party (or the Government if she was an independent or her party has no other MPs) moves for a writ of election to be issued calling a by-election. The resulting order is in the following form:

Ordered, That Mr. Speaker do issue his Warrant for the Clerk of the Crown to make out a new writ for the electing of a Member to serve in this present parliament for the County Constituency of Haltemprice and Howden in the room of the Right Honourable David Michael Davis, who since his election for the said County Constituency has accepted the Office of Steward or Bailiff of Her Majesty's Three Chiltern Hundreds of Stoke, Desborough and Burnham in the County of Buckingham.^[5]

See also

- List of Stewards of the Chiltern Hundreds
- List of Stewards of the Manor of Northstead

References

- ↑ "The Chiltern Hundreds" (<http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-information-office/p11.pdf>) . *Factsheet P11 – Procedure Series*. House of Commons Information Office. August 2010. <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-information-office/p11.pdf>. Retrieved 14 January 2011.

2. ^ "Politician Quits After Expenses Scandal" (http://news.sky.com/skynews/Home/Politics/Labour-MP-Eric-Illsley-Resigns-After-Pleading-Guilty-To-Three-Charges-Of-False-Accounting/Article/201102215926253?lpos=Politics_First_Home_Article_Teaser_Region_0&lid=ARTICLE_15926253_Labour_MP_Eric_Illsley_F) Sky News. 8 February 2011. http://news.sky.com/skynews/Home/Politics/Labour-MP-Eric-Illsley-Resigns-After-Pleading-Guilty-To-Three-Charges-Of-False-Accounting/Article/201102215926253?lpos=Politics_First_Home_Article_Teaser_Region_0&lid=ARTICLE_15926253_Labour_MP_Eric_Illsley_F
3. ^ "Press notice: Three Hundreds of Chiltern" (http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100407010852/http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/press_53_09.htm) . 8 June 2009. http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100407010852/http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/press_53_09.htm. Retrieved 8 February 2011.
4. ^ "House of Commons Vote and Proceedings for 13 January 2010" (<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmvote/100113v01.htm>) . <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmvote/100113v01.htm>. Retrieved 8 February 2011.
5. ^ "House of Commons Debates 19 Jun 2008, c. 1061" (<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmhansrd/cm080619/debtext/80619-0001.htm>) . Hansard. <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmhansrd/cm080619/debtext/80619-0001.htm>. Retrieved 8 February 2011.

External links

- UK Parliament - Glossary - *Chiltern Hundreds and the Manor of Northstead* (<http://www.parliament.uk/site-information/glossary/chiltern-hundreds/>)

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