

## **BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS COMMISSION OF INQUIRY**

### **PRESS NOTICE**

#### **COMMISSION OF INQUIRY PROCEDURAL RULES AND PROTOCOLS FOR LEGAL REPRESENTATION AND WITNESS EXPENSES**

The Commission of Inquiry (“the COI”) was announced on 18 January 2021 to look into whether corruption, abuse of office or other serious dishonesty may have taken place amongst public, elected and statutory officials in recent years. The Rt Hon Sir Gary Hickinbottom is the sole Commissioner.

Exercising his powers under section 9 of the Commissions of Inquiry Act (“the Act”), the Commissioner has today published ‘COI Rules’, dealing with matters of evidence and procedure, and two further Protocols, one concerning applications for legal representation and the other for witness expenses. They can be found on the COI’s website at [www.bvi.public-inquiry.uk](http://www.bvi.public-inquiry.uk).

The Commissioner has a wide power to determine the procedures by which the COI will conduct its work. Given the pandemic, it is important that the COI is able to work as flexibly as possible.

The Rules published today will assist all those who may be involved in the COI particularly relating to hearings. The two further Protocols give guidance as to the process by which the Commissioner will consider applications to be represented by counsel and claims for appropriate witness expenses (which exclude any fees and expenses incurred by a person in respect of legal representation or advice).

The Commissioner continues to encourage anyone who believes they have information that may assist the Inquiry, who has not yet submitted it to the COI, to submit that information directly to the COI as soon as possible via the secure website portal ([www.bvi.public-inquiry.uk](http://www.bvi.public-inquiry.uk)). As well as the website portal, the COI has provided a number of different and secure ways for individuals to share information with the Inquiry Team, including a dedicated email address ([contactcoi@bvi.public-inquiry.uk](mailto:contactcoi@bvi.public-inquiry.uk)), a WhatsApp phone number for messages or audio/video calls (+ 1 (284) 340 9078), and a UK postal address (The Secretary, BVI Commission of Inquiry, Room RB 1.11, 22 Whitehall, London SW1A 2EG). Please be assured that all information will be received and held in strict confidence.

If anyone wishes to meet/speak with the Commissioner, they should contact the Secretary who will be able to arrange a face-to-face or a remote meeting (for example by WhatsApp).

Steven Chandler  
Secretary to the Commission

13 April 2021