



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA



Mr David Horsley
HM Coroner for Portsmouth
Room T20, The Guildhall
The Guildhall Square
Portsmouth
PO1 2AJ

Date: 12/11/12

Dear Sir

Mr Horsley,

Gladys Richards (Deceased) – Inquest Hearing

I write to ask for your assistance further to some concerns I have received from a constituent, Mrs Gillian McKenzie, in relation to the proposed venue for the Inquest Hearing into her late mother's death, Mrs Gladys Richards, due to commence on 3 December 2012.

Mrs McKenzie advises me that it is intended to hold the hearing in the Guildhall, whilst previously it had been suggested there would be more appropriate facilities in the Crown Court?

Mrs McKenzie is extremely anxious because of the wider public interest in this matter, large number of witnesses, the need for public access and the likely media interest. She feels that the facilities in the Guildhall will be inadequate wholly because:-

- There is insufficient space and therefore everyone will be crammed in;
- Access to the room is limited to one doorway and there will be interruptions every time anyone enters or leaves;
- The tables are mobile and noisy every time someone knocks into them;
- There is no witness box;
- There is no witness area;
- There are no conference rooms for meetings with legal representatives;
- The press will have difficulty accessing the hearing.

Mrs McKenzie's view, which having heard the details from her I am inclined to agree with, is that in these circumstances it will not be possible to have a fully effective public hearing. Therefore I strongly, but of course respectfully, urge you to reconsider any decision in relation to the venue and to seek arrangements for facilities that are in keeping with an inquest of this size, complexity, duration and importance. If you wish, I will be very happy to join with you in making plain to the

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local authority and/or Ministry of Justice the absolute necessity that a proper venue is given to this hearing.

On a slightly separate matter, I would also like to repeat Mrs McKenzie's request that there is a loop system or other apparatus that will allow her to participate in the hearing in view of her being hard of hearing.

I look forward to hearing from you.

With best wishes,

Code A

Stephen Lloyd MP
Eastbourne and Willingdon Constituency.

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