



CPA Scotland Branch Legacy Report 2026

Introduction

1. The [Commonwealth Parliamentary Association](#) (CPA) is one of the oldest established organisations in the Commonwealth. Founded in 1911, it is a membership association which brings together Members, irrespective of gender, race, religion or culture, who are united by community of interest, respect for the rule of law and individual rights and freedoms, and by the pursuit of the positive ideals of parliamentary democracy.
2. The Association is made up of over 180 Legislatures (or Branches) divided up between nine geographic regions: Africa, Asia, Australia, British Islands and Mediterranean, Canada, the Caribbean, the Americas and Atlantic, India, the Pacific and South East Asia.
3. Since 2000 the Scottish Parliament (known as the Scotland Branch) has been a member of the CPA and is part of the [British Islands and Mediterranean Region](#) (BIMR). This region consists of 14 legislatures from Alderney, Cyprus, Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Guernsey, Isle of Man, Jersey, Malta, Northern Ireland, Sark, St Helena, Scotland, United Kingdom and Wales.

Governance

4. The Presiding Officer is the President of the Scotland Branch and all Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) are automatically members of the CPA Scotland Branch, however they can opt out if they wish to do so.
5. The Branch is managed by a Branch Executive Committee (BEC), which is elected on an annual basis at the AGM.
6. The role of the BEC is to manage the day-to-day running of the Branch including assessing which CPA opportunities the Branch should promote to MSPs.

CPA Scotland Branch Executive Committee Membership 2021 to 2026

2021 to 2022	Jeremy Balfour MSP, Sarah Boyack MSP and Stuart McMillan MSP
2022 to 2023	Jeremy Balfour MSP, Sarah Boyack MSP and Stuart McMillan MSP

2023 to 2024	Jeremy Balfour MSP, Sarah Boyack MSP and Stuart McMillan MSP
2024 to 2025	Jeremy Balfour MSP, Sarah Boyack MSP and Stuart McMillan MSP
2025 to 2026	Sarah Boyack MSP, Roz McCall MSP and Stuart McMillan MSP

Networks

7. The Scotland Branch is a very active member of the CPA and during Session 6 had regional representatives on three of four of the CPA bodies:
 - Jeremy Balfour MSP was the BIMR Champion on the [Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities](#) (CPwD) Network, December 2023 to March 2026
 - Sarah Boyack MSP was the BIMR representative on the [Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians](#) (CWP) Network, July 2024 to June 2025
 - Stuart McMillan MSP was one of the BIMR representatives on the [CPA International Executive Committee](#), June 2018 to October 2025

CPA activities

8. The CPA offers Members and officials various opportunities to get involved in their work including attending conferences, Election Observation Missions, webinars and training courses. The activities offer attendees professional development and knowledge exchange opportunities to enhance their skills and share best practice with colleagues across the world.
9. The International Relations Office (IRO) started collecting statistics on CPA opportunities in September 2024.

1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025

10. From 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025 25 opportunities were presented to the Scotland Branch. Of these, the Scotland Branch Executive Committee offered 18 opportunities to Members and/or officials. As a result, 37 Members and one official took part in opportunities during this period (some opportunities offered multiple spaces).
11. Furthermore, the Scottish Branch network representatives took part in 19 network meetings and events during this period.
12. From 1 September 2025 to 25 March 2026 20 opportunities were presented to the Scotland Branch. Of these, the Scotland Branch Executive Committee offered eight opportunities to Members and/or officials. As a result, eight Members and one official took part in opportunities during this period (some opportunities offered multiple spaces).
13. Furthermore, the Scottish Branch network representatives took part in seven network meetings and events during this period.

Recommendations

The Scotland Branch Executive Committee 2025 to 2026 recommends to the next BEC members:

1. That the BEC meets on a monthly basis to discuss CPA matters.
2. That the CPA Scotland Branch reports on its activities on a 6 monthly basis, sharing the report with all Members of the Scottish Parliament.
3. That the Members of the BEC, on an annual basis, promote the work of the Branch and spread awareness of CPA amongst their colleagues through an engagement event.

**International Relations Office
March 2026**

Annex A: Session 6 CPA Scotland Branch Annual Reports



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

CPA Scotland Branch Report 2021 to 2022

Below is an overview of the CPA activities of the Scottish Parliament along with a note of non-CPA engagements which the Parliament had with other Commonwealth parliaments

CPA

September 2021

- At the Branch Executive Annual General meeting Stuart McMillan MSP, Sarah Boyack MSP and Jeremy Balfour MSP were elected as members of the Branch Executive Committee.
- Sarah Boyack MSP and Stuart McMillan MSP participated in the 50th British Islands and Mediterranean Region (BIMR) Conference virtually, hosted by the Northern Ireland Assembly.
- Stuart McMillan MSP participated in virtual Executive Committee meetings.

October 2021

- Dean Lockhart MSP, Fiona Hyslop MSP, Pauline McNeill MSP and Foyso Choudhury MSP registered for the CPA UK Climate Webinar and Roundtable Series.
- Sarah Boyack MSP spoke at the “Climate Governance and Devolution” discussion paper launch.

November 2021

- Jeremy Balfour MSP attended the CPA Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD) regional meeting.
- Sarah Boyack MSP and Elena Whitham MSP attended the virtual Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Steering Committee meeting.
- As part of COP26, the Presiding Officer met with Stephen Twigg, Secretary General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

December 2021

- Sarah Boyack MSP and Stuart McMillan MSP participated in the CPA BIMR Working Group on Climate Emergency.

February 2022

- Jeremy Balfour MSP attended a virtual workshop on “Human Trafficking through Sport”.
- Stuart McMillan MSP participated in the Executive Committee Constitutional Amendments Working Party.

March 2022

- Jeremy Balfour MSP attended a CPA BIMR CPwD meeting.
- The 51st BIMR regional conference was hosted by the Parliament of the Isle of Man and members of the Branch Executive Committee participated. The CWP Steering Committee met as part of the wider BIMR regional conference. Sarah Boyack MSP participated in person and Elena Whitman MSP participated remotely, both members of the Steering Committee.
- Ahead of Commonwealth Day 2022 Sarah Boyack MSP lodged a motion, which received cross-party support:
“That the Parliament celebrates Commonwealth Day 2022 on 14 March 2022, which has the theme, Delivering a Common Future, and aims to highlight how the member countries in the Commonwealth family are "innovating, connecting and transforming" to help achieve goals such as tackling climate change, promoting good governance and boosting trade; recognises the work of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association over the last 12 months, mainly through virtual meetings, in discussing a range of issues, including the response to COVID-19, encouraging greater diversity in parliaments and the climate emergency; considers that these will be key themes across 2022, as will the work of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians and the Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities networks, and believes that the Scottish Parliament, in its relations with Commonwealth legislatures this session, will continue to share ideas, thoughts, experiences and best practice on how to make parliaments work effectively in holding governments to account on behalf of the people that they serve.”
- Pam Gosal MSP, Rhoda Grant MSP, Emma Roddick MSP, Katy Clark MSP, Paul McLennan MSP, Pauline McNeill MSP and Elena Whitham MSP registered for the “CPA UK's Virtual Roundtable on Online Violence Against Women”.

April 2022

- Stuart McMillan MSP attended the mid-year CPA Executive Committee conference in Assam, India.

June 2022

- Martin Whitfield MSP participated in the CPA BIMR Election Observation Mission to Jersey as Head of Mission.
- Jeremy Balfour MSP chaired a virtual session on “The Access to Elected Office Fund Scotland” for the BIMR legislatures.
- Sarah Boyack MSP chaired a virtual session on “The Scottish Parliament’s Sustainable Development Impact Assessment Tool” for the BIMR legislatures.

August 2022

- Claire Baker MSP attended the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Halifax, Canada as the delegate for the Scottish Parliament. Stuart McMillan MSP also attended the conference as a member of the Executive Committee. As part of the conference Claire Baker MSP chaired the workshop “The Climate Emergency: Are Parliaments Holding Governments to Account?” and spoke at the workshop Financial Empowerment of Women and Gender-Sensitive Budgeting”.

‘Non’ CPA

The Scottish Parliament also engaged with Commonwealth parliaments on the following occasions:

COP26

As part of COP26, the Presiding Officer met with (during visits to the Scottish Parliament):

- Hon Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
- Benoit Charette MNA, Minister of the Environment and the Fight against Climate Change
- Mohamed Nasheed, Speaker of the Parliament of the Maldives (People’s Majlis)
- Hon Samuelu Teo, Speaker of the Parliament of Tuvalu
- Rosa Galvez, Senator for Quebec

Parliament relationship building

- In September 2021 the Presiding Officer held a virtual call with Trevor Mallard MP, Speaker of the New Zealand Parliament, to discuss the parliamentary response to COVID and interparliamentary relations.
- In October 2021 the Presiding Officer held a virtual call with François Paradis MNA, President of the National Assembly of Quebec, to discuss the parliamentary response to COVID and interparliamentary relations.
- In April 2022 Felicity Wilson MP of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly held a virtual call with Siobhian Brown MSP of the COVID-19 Recovery Committee.
- In April 2022 Hon Jonathan O’Dea MP, Speaker of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, visited the Scottish Parliament and met with the Presiding Officer, Deputy Presiding Officer Annabelle Ewing MSP, Alexander Stewart MSP, Michelle Thomson MSP, Sarah Boyack MSP, Siobhian Brown MSP, Stephanie Callaghan MSP and Murdo Fraser MSP.
- In May 2022 Masizole Mngqasela, Speaker of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament, led a delegation to the Scottish Parliament and met with the Presiding Officer, Miles Briggs MSP, Paul McLennan MSP, Gillian Mackay MSP and Sue Webber MSP.
- In May 2022, a delegation from the Provincial Assembly of Balochistan visited the Parliament and met with Kaukab Stewart MSP and Anas Sarwar MSP.
- In June 2022 Nathan Cooper, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, visited the Parliament and met with the Presiding Officer, David Torrance MSP, Katy Clark MSP, Elena Whitham MSP and Paul O’Kane MSP.

Scottish Parliament's Gender Sensitive Audit

In February 2022, The Presiding Officer launched an audit to review the representation and participation of women in the Scottish Parliament. The audit is scheduled to be completed by the end of the year. Based on work developed by both the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, all of Holyrood's parties are represented on a board that is overseeing this work. The board will consider the audit's findings and make recommendations for change. As well as Members from all of the political parties, the board includes senior parliament staff, pre-eminent academics and a representative of Engender (a feminist policy and advocacy organisation).



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

CPA Scotland Branch Report 2022 to 2023

Below is an overview of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) activities of the Scottish Parliament along with a note of non-CPA engagements which the Parliament had with other Commonwealth parliaments.

CPA

September 2022

- In September 2022 the Branch Executive Committee hosted an event for Members to raise awareness of the work of the CPA. Members who were involved in the CPA activities last year spoke about their experiences and CPA Secretary-General Stephen Twigg attended the event to speak about the association's wider work. The event was attended by Members from across all parties.
- The Presiding Officer chaired the Branch Executive Annual General meeting and Stuart McMillan MSP, Sarah Boyack MSP and Jeremy Balfour MSP were re-elected as members of the Branch Executive Committee.

October 2022

- Sarah Boyack MSP attended the 9th CPA British Islands and Mediterranean Region (BIMR) Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) conference in Gibraltar. During the conference she chaired the workshop "Findings from the Report on Effective and Inclusive Parliaments in the British Islands and Mediterranean Region (BIMR)" and was a panellist on the session "Equality Reviews and Reforms in BIMR Parliaments". [Read the report from the Report of the 52nd British Islands and Mediterranean Region Conference.](#)

November 2022

- Jeremy Balfour MSP attended a virtual CPA BIMR Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD) meeting.
- Sarah Boyack MSP attended a virtual BIMR CWP Steering Committee meeting.

- Michelle Thomson MSP was elected as one of the Scotland Branch CWP representatives.

December 2022

- Stuart McMillan MSP attended a virtual CPA Executive Committee (ExCo) meeting.

January 2023

- Stuart McMillan MSP attended a virtual CPA ExCo meeting.
- Sarah Boyack MSP and Michelle Thomson MSP attended a virtual BIMR CWP Steering Committee meeting.

March 2023

- On 13 March the Scottish Parliament marked Commonwealth Day by flying the Commonwealth flag and Jeremy Balfour MSP lodged the following motion, which received cross-party support:
 “That the Parliament celebrates Commonwealth Day 2023 on 13 March, and recognises what it sees as the important role that the Commonwealth continues to play in building and maintaining relationships across the world; notes that the theme of 2023 is "Forging a sustainable and peaceful common future", which aims to promote peace, prosperity and sustainability, especially through climate action, so as to secure a better future for young people and improve the lives of all Commonwealth citizens; recognises the work of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) in discussing a range of issues, including climate change and in relation to gender sensitising parliaments; notes the work of the CPA Scotland Branch and Members over the last year, which has included completing a gender audit, charring sessions on how to hold governments to account over the climate emergency, how to enhance scrutiny through the Scottish Parliament’s Sustainable Development Impact Assessment Tool, and the support offered to candidates standing for election through the Access to Elected Office Fund Scotland; further notes the role of the CPA Scotland Branch and Members in representing the region at the Executive Committee; acknowledges the work of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians and Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities networks on their contributions to amplifying the perspectives and the rights of women and people with disabilities; trusts that the Scottish Parliament will, both domestically and internationally, continue to share ideas, thoughts and experience on good governance, parliamentary process, and on holding governments to account on behalf of the people that they serve.”

April 2023

- The 52nd conference of the BIMR of the CPA took place in Westminster, London from 25 to 27 April 2023. The delegation from the Scottish Parliament consisted of five cross-party Members: Jeremy Balfour MSP, member of the Scotland Branch Executive Committee and CPwD Network; Sarah Boyack MSP, member of the Scotland Branch Executive Committee and CWP BIMR Steering Committee; Gillian Mackay MSP, member of the Scottish Parliamentary Bureau; Stuart McMillan MSP, member of the Scotland Branch Executive Committee and Regional Representative on the CPA ExCo; and Michelle Thomson MSP, member of the CWP BIMR Steering Committee.

As part of the conference Sarah and Michelle attended the CWP Steering Committee meeting. Furthermore, Jeremy Balfour MSP was a panellist on the “Plenary: Inclusive Parliaments”; Stuart McMillan MSP provided delegates with an update on the work of the CPA ExCo; and Sarah Boyack MSP chaired the “Plenary: Parliamentary Movements to Address the Climate Emergency”. [Read the report from the 52nd conference of the BIMR conference.](#)

June 2023

- The International Relations Office hosted a visit by their counterparts at CPA UK.
- Sarah Boyack MSP and Michelle Thomson MSP attended a virtual BIMR CWP Steering Committee meeting.

July 2023

- Sarah Boyack MSP chaired a virtual session on “Parliaments and Future Generations”. The event, jointly hosted by CPA and the School of International Futures, explored what governing in the interest of both current and future generations means for Parliaments and young people across the Commonwealth. The event was attended by parliamentarians across the world.

August 2023

- International Relations Office officials met with CPA UK and CPA HQ in Westminster.

‘Non’ CPA

The Scottish Parliament also engaged with Commonwealth countries on the following occasions:

October 2022

- The Governor of Victoria, Australia met with the Presiding Officer.
- Northern Territory MLA Robyn Lambley met with Sarah Boyack MSP and Stuart McMillan MSP.

November 2022

- Dame Eleanor Laing, Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons visited the Scottish Parliament to observe First Minister’s Questions.
- Officials from the Government of Canada met with parliamentary officials.
- A delegation from the Canadian House of Commons, led by Speaker Anthony Rota, visited the Scottish Parliament and met with the Presiding Officer, both Deputy Presiding Officers and Members.
- The UK House of Commons’ Procedure Committee met with the Presiding Officer and the Members of the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee.

January 2023

- Everiss Scholars from Otaki College, New Zealand met with Deputy Presiding Officer Liam McArthur MSP.
- Members of the House of Commons Speakers Conference visited the Scottish Parliament and met with the Presiding Officer, Members and officials.
- The Agent-General of Québec in London visited the Scottish Parliament and met the Presiding Officer.

February 2023

- A group of Canadian Parliamentary Interns met with Deputy Presiding Officer Annabelle Ewing MSP, Members, and officials.
- The Scottish Parliament welcomed Malaysian participants in the 2023 International Young Leaders Programme.

March 2023

- Members of the Parliament of Maldives visited the Scottish Parliament and met with Members and officials.
- The Clerk of the Legislative Council and Clerk of the Parliaments of Western Australia visited the Scottish Parliament and met with officials.
- A delegation from the Parliament of Sri Lanka visited the Scottish Parliament and met with Members of the Public Audit Committee, Finance and Public Administration Committee and Social Justice and Social Security Committee.

April 2023

- President Craig Farrell of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Tasmania visited the Scottish Parliament and met with the Presiding Officer, Deputy Presiding Officer Annabelle Ewing MSP and officials.

May 2023

- Speaker Mark Shelton of the House of Assembly of the Parliament of Tasmania visited the Scottish Parliament and met with the Presiding Officer, Deputy Presiding Officer Liam McArthur MSP, Members and officials.
- Speaker Catherine Gotani Hara and Members of the National Assembly of Malawi visited the Scottish Parliament and met with the Presiding Officer, Deputy Presiding Officers, Members and officials.
- The High Commissioner of New Zealand met with the Presiding Officer.
- Speaker Mark Monaghan of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly visited the Scottish Parliament and met with the Presiding Officer, Members and Officials.

June 2023

- Speaker Nontembeko Nothemba Boyce and Members of the KwaZulu-Natal Legislature visited the Scottish Parliament and met with the Presiding Officer, Members and officials.

September 2023

- A delegation from the Tobago House of Assembly Legislature, led by the Presiding Officer Abby Taylor, visited the Scottish Parliament and met with the Presiding Officer and officials.

Other

Scottish Parliament's Gender Sensitive Audit

In February 2022 the Presiding Officer set up a Board to oversee a Gender Sensitive Audit of the Scottish Parliament. The Board was chaired by the Presiding Officer and comprised of Members from each political party in the Parliament, external experts and senior parliamentary officials. In March 2023, the findings and recommendations from the report were published in the "[A Parliament for All: Report of the Parliament's Gender Sensitive Audit](#)".



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

CPA Scotland Branch Report 2023 to 2024

Below is an overview of the [Commonwealth Parliamentary Association](#) (CPA) activities of the Scottish Parliament (known as the Scotland Branch) along with a note of non-CPA engagements which the Parliament had with other Commonwealth parliaments.

CPA

September 2023

- In September 2023 the Branch Executive Committee (BEC) hosted an event for Members to raise awareness of the work of the CPA. Sarah Boyack MSP, Stuart McMillan MSP and Jeremy Balfour MSP, Branch Executive Members 2022-23, spoke about the work of the Branch over the last year. [CPA International Executive Committee](#) (ExCo) Chairman Ian Liddell-Grainger MP attended the event to speak about the association's wider work. The event was attended by Members from across all parties.
- The Presiding Officer chaired the Scotland Branch Annual General Meeting and Stuart McMillan MSP, Sarah Boyack MSP and Jeremy Balfour MSP were re-elected as members of the Branch Executive Committee for 2023 to 2024. As a result, Sarah Boyack MSP became a representative on the on the [British Islands and Mediterranean Region](#) (BIMR) [Commonwealth Women Parliamentarian Network](#) (CWP) Steering Committee for 2023-24 and Jeremy Balfour MSP became a representative for the BIMR [Parliamentarians with Disabilities Network](#) 2023 to 2024 Steering Committee.



- Kaukab Stewart MSP attended the 66th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) in Accra, Ghana as the delegate for the Scottish Parliament. Stuart McMillan MSP also attended the conference as a member of the ExCo. As part of the conference Kaukab Stewart MSP was a panellist on the workshop “The Commonwealth Charter: A Charter for all human rights, or just some?” where she spoke about the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee’s work on Asylum seekers in Scotland. In addition to the conference agenda the two Members had six bilateral meetings with Speakers, Members and academics from Québec, Kwazulu-Natal, New South Wales, Victoria, New Zealand and Commonwealth Parliamentary Association HQ. [Read the report from the 66th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference.](#)

“Attendance at the CPC is a crucial part of the Scottish Parliament’s international engagement. Since my involvement with the CPA, there has been a notable increase in engagement between colleagues from the Commonwealth legislatures and MSPs who attend CPA events, such as the CPC. These events allow MSPs to attend workshops, network and exchange information with counterparts, which we can then share with colleagues back home..... It is important that we continue our engagement with our CPA colleagues, including at the CPC, to continue to look for ways to share information and learn from others.” Stuart McMillan MSP

“I was truly honoured to represent the Scottish parliament at the 66th CPA Conference in Accra. My knowledge of Commonwealth legislatures has increased, and I am able to compare different democracy models.My own confidence levels have increased, and I am already able to apply my knowledge and skills during my committee work and how I take part in debates.” Kaukab Stewart MSP



October 2023

- 16 to 20 October 2023 the Scottish Parliament hosted the fourth CPA Advanced Parliamentary Development Residency Course. Twenty-six parliamentarians from across the Commonwealth attended the course to enhance their skills as parliamentarians. Deputy Presiding Officer Liam McArthur MSP chaired a mock Chamber debate, Sarah Boyack MSP hosted the welcome reception and Martin Whitfield MSP, Ruth Maguire MSP and Neil Stewart, Chamber Office, took part in the course as Mentors.

“It was a pleasure to welcome so many Parliamentarians from across the Commonwealth to the Scottish Parliament this week. The CPA Parliamentary Academy residency programme is a fantastic opportunity for Parliamentarians to network, learn and develop as Members of Parliament. It was my privilege to preside over the debate and to meet Members from a range of different Legislatures.” Deputy Presiding Officer Liam McArthur MSP

[Read the press release from the fourth CPA Advanced Parliamentary Development Residency Course.](#)



- Michelle Thomson MSP was elected as the second Scotland Branch representative on the BIMR CWP Steering Committee for 2023 to 2024.
- The Broadcasting Team successfully bid for the CPwD Capital Investment Fund and received a £10,000, which was used towards the purchase of new Chamber Conferencing Accessibility Boxes.

November 2023

- Sarah Boyack MSP and Mark Ruskell MSP attended the CPA BIMR/Climate Emergency: The Ocean - Our Climate Ally workshop online.
- Jeremy Balfour MSP wrote a blog on [How to host a disability outreach event in Parliament](#) following the Scottish Parliament's first Summit to mark International Day of Persons with Disabilities.



- Sarah Boyack MSP and Michelle Thomson MSP attended a virtual BIMR CWP Steering Committee meeting.
- As part of a CPA BIMR CWP delegation Sarah Boyack MSP attended the Global Forum Women Leaders 2023 in Reykjavik, Iceland.

“There was an amazing range of women from countries across the world. It was an excellent format for networking & inspiring re promoting the importance of women's representation.” Sarah Boyack MSP



Photo: Rhianon Passmore MS

December 2023

- In December, Sarah Boyack, as Branch Executive Member of the CPA Scotland Branch, took part in the Scottish Future Forum/SPICe event “Code Red for Parliaments: What next?”, chaired by Deputy Presiding Officer, Liam McArthur MSP. The event discussed how parliaments are changing to respond to the climate and biodiversity emergencies, supporting their elected members to deal with the issues, and how they are building in consideration of sustainability across their scrutiny and legislation work.
- Jeremy Balfour MSP was elected as the BIMR Champion for the CPwD.

January 2024

- On 29 January Sarah Boyack MSP and Michelle Thomson MSP attended a virtual BIMR CWP Steering Committee meeting.
- Beatrice Wishart MSP, Colin Smyth MSP and Ruth Maguire MSP attended a CPA BIMR Election Observation Course.

February 2024

- On 19 February Sarah Boyack MSP and Michelle Thomson MSP hosted a group session bringing together a group of young women to discuss the issues which are seen as the main challenges faced by young women in Scotland today. [Read the report of the CWP Scotland Branch Group Session.](#)

March 2024

- Sarah Boyack MSP and Michelle Thomson MSP represented the Scottish Parliament at the 10th British Islands and Mediterranean Region (BIMR) Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Conference, which took place in Valletta, Malta, 6 to 9 March 2024. They took part as panellists on the sessions “Women under pressure: the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and cultural and societal inequality and discrimination” and “Challenges of being a Woman Member of Parliament”.

“As ever the opportunity to meet informally with other delegates was excellent and enabled discussions on the issues we were discussing in the conference and helped build relations between those attending especially those of us on the CPA CWP BIMR Steering Committee.” Sarah Boyack MSP

“I regularly mentor women across the Scottish Parliament, regardless of political party. This also includes women supporting the parliament. Since my return from the conference I have been actively involved in supporting a younger woman – and I used the new insights I gained from the conference. All support I give is on a strictly confidential basis”. Michelle Thomson MSP

[Read the report of the 10th British Islands and Mediterranean Region Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Conference.](#)



- Stuart McMillan MSP lodged a motion on behalf of the Branch Executive Committee celebrating Commonwealth Day.

“Celebrating Commonwealth Day 2024

That the Parliament celebrates Commonwealth Day 2024 on 11 March, and recognises what it sees as the important role that the Commonwealth continues to play in building and maintaining relationships across the world; notes that the theme of 2024 is "One Resilient Common Future: Transforming our Common Wealth", which highlights how member countries must harness their strengths by building resilience, unlocking potential, leveraging the 'Commonwealth Advantage' and fostering a connected, digital Commonwealth; recognises the work of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) in discussing a range of issues, including equality, climate change and artificial intelligence; notes the work of the CPA Scotland Branch and Members over the last year, which has included hosting the fourth CPA Advanced Parliamentary Development Residency Course, and the Scottish Parliament's first Summit to celebrate International Day of Persons with Disabilities; being panellists on sessions on human rights, the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and cultural and societal inequality and discrimination, and Challenges of being a Woman Member of Parliament; further notes the role of the CPA Scotland Branch and Members in representing the region at the CPA International Executive Committee and Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities network; acknowledges the work of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians and Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities networks on their contributions to amplifying the perspectives and the rights of women and people with disabilities; trusts that the Scottish Parliament will, both domestically and internationally, continue to share ideas, thoughts and experience on good governance, parliamentary process, and on holding governments to account on behalf of the people that they serve.”
- At the end of March Jeremy Balfour MSP attended a virtual CPwD Regional Champions Meeting.
- Neil Stewart's, Chamber Office, article [Building Parliamentary Networks to promote good mental health](#) was published in the Parliamentarian.

April 2024

- Nicola Hudson, SPICe, took part in a workshop at the Parliament of Malawi on budgetary scrutiny. The workshop aimed to upskill their Members in their understanding of the process and their staff in how they can support Members during it.

May 2024

- 7 to 9 May Stuart McMillan MSP took part in online meetings of the ExCo.



(Photo: CPA HQ)

- Sarah Boyack MSP and Michelle Thomson MSP attended a virtual BIMR CWP Steering Committee meeting.
- 18 to 25 May Sarah Boyack MSP, Jeremy Balfour MSP and Stuart McMillan MSP represented the Scottish Parliament at the 53rd British Islands and Mediterranean Region conference in St Helena.

“For the whole conference networking is very important and beneficial. I came away having learnt lots about issues over countries are facing. I have shared some of this with MSPs from different Parties since coming back.” Jeremy Balfour MSP

“It’s very easy to become focused solely on domestic matters, however meeting colleagues from across our region ensures that many of the issues we face in Scotland are similarly being addressed elsewhere. This ensured a consistency of debate but clearly local factors in each jurisdiction differed which increased understanding of any potential solutions....The experience of the conference will be invaluable and sharing information with members, cross party groups and people I meet in my professional capacity will happen.” Stuart McMillan MSP

“I learnt a lot from some of the sessions, was able to share knowledge in others and there were a couple that were off my radar. It was a long way to travel and I think trying to retain the connections we have made should be a

priority for us both as individuals and as members of the SP branch.” Sarah Boyack MSP

[Read the report of the 53rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Association \(CPA\) British Islands and Mediterranean Regional \(BIMR\) Conference](#)



June 2024

- 9 to 15 June Hannah Gunn, Official Report, and Emma Phelan, BIT, attended the Advanced Residency Programme for Leadership in Parliament in Columbo, Sri Lanka. This was the first CPA Parliamentary Academy Residency programme for Parliamentary Clerks and officials. [Read the press release from the Advanced Residency Programme for Leadership in Parliament in Columbo, Sri Lanka.](#)

“It was a privilege to take part in the Inaugural Leadership in Parliament Programme for Parliament Clerks & Officials run by the CPA. The course enriched me with new skills and insights, and engaging with fellow delegates was enlightening. Hearing a bit about different cultures through anecdotes from their parliaments added a vivid dimension to our learning. This network of parliament clerks and officials remains an ongoing community for collaboration and support beyond the programme’s conclusion.” Emma Phelan

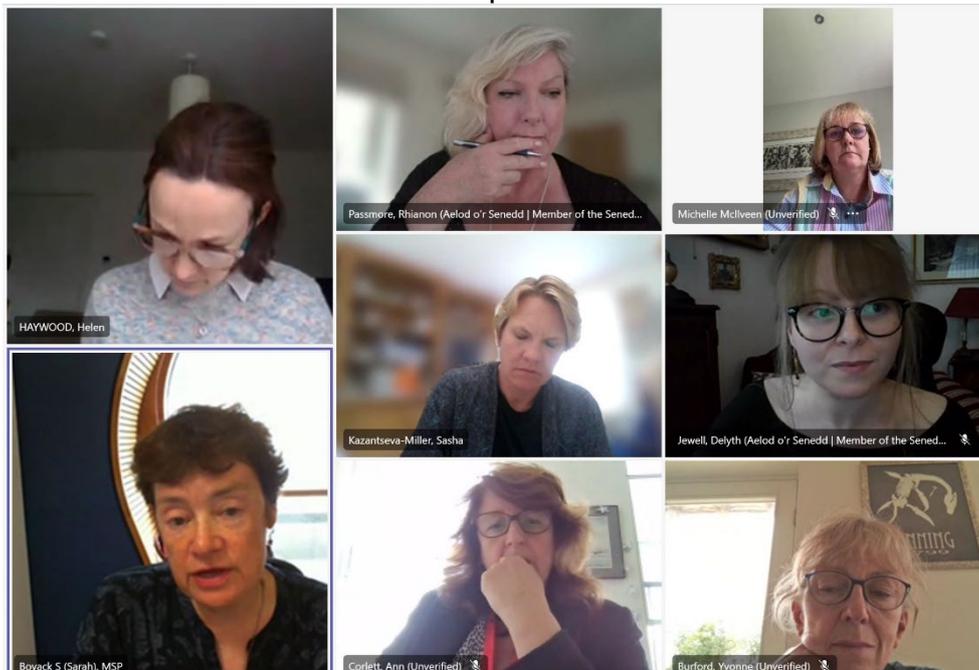
“Before taking part in the programme, I could never have imagined how much I’d gain from it. As well as the activities that we took part in—which were excellent—the chance to meet colleagues from legislatures across the Commonwealth, share experiences and build relationships with them was invaluable. I have come back with more confidence and new skills, and I have already started sharing ideas with colleagues.” Hannah Gunn



(Photo: Parliament of Sri Lanka)

July 2024

- Sarah Boyack MSP attended a virtual BIMR CWP Steering Committee meeting. During the meeting she was elected Vice Chair of the CWP BIMR Steering Committee, and due to a vacancy in the Chair position, as Acting Chair. She will hold this post until the next BIMR Conference, when the election for the next Chair will take place.



August 2024

- Jamie Greene MSP joined the BIMR LGBTI network.

September 2024

- Jeremy Balfour MSP will take part in the first BIMR Digital transformation working group meeting.

‘Non’ CPA

The Scottish Parliament also engaged with Commonwealth countries on the following occasions:

October 2023

- Official from the House of Lords: Meeting with officials.
- Official from the Parliament of New Zealand: Meeting with officials.
- H.E. Vikram Doraiswami, High Commissioner of India: Meeting with Presiding Officer.
- UK Parliament’s Restoration and Renewal programme: Meeting with officials.
- Members from the Parliament of the Gambia: Meeting with officials (Virtual).

November 2023

- Canada-UK Interparliamentary Association, Parliament of Canada: Meeting with Presiding Officer, Deputy Presiding Officer Annabelle Ewing MSP, Members and officials.
- Officials from the Parliament of Uganda: Meeting with officials.
- Members from the Parliament of Australia: Meeting with Members.

December 2023

- H.E. Sada Muna Tasneem, High Commissioner of Bangladesh: Meeting with Presiding Officer.
- UK Government, Northern Ireland Executive, Welsh Government and Scottish Government officials: Meeting with officials.

January 2024

- Everiss Scholars from Otaki College, New Zealand: Meeting with Deputy Presiding Officer Annabelle Ewing MSP and officials.
- Abigail Boyd MLC, Member of the New South Wales Legislative Council: Meeting with Deputy Presiding Officer Annabelle Ewing MSP, Members and officials.

April 2024

- Presiding Officer led a delegation to the US and Canada as part of Scotland Week. As part of the programme they visited the Parliament of British Columbia.
- On 22 April, Hon. Greg Piper MP, Speaker of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly in Australia visited the Scottish Parliament to meet with the Presiding Officer and officials.

May 2024

- On 30 May Mr Roger Bertrand Former President of the National Assembly of Québec met with Presiding Officer.

June 2024

- On 12 June the Assistant Clerk- Procedure of the New South Wales Legislative Council visited the Scottish Parliament and meet with officials.
- 12 to 13 June Nathalie Roy MNA, President and Members of the National Assembly of Québec, met with the Presiding Officer, Deputy Presiding Officers, Members and officials.
- On 25 June the Greffier to the States of Guernsey visited the Scottish Parliament and met with officials.

**Charlotta Craig
International Relations Officer
and CPA Scotland Branch Secretary**

CPA Scotland Branch Report 2024 to 2025



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba



Photos: Scottish Parliament, CPA UK and Assemblée nationale du Québec

Introduction

Below is an overview of the [Commonwealth Parliamentary Association](#) (CPA) activities of the Scottish Parliament (known as the Scotland Branch) along with a note of non CPA engagements which the Parliament had with other Commonwealth parliaments.

The report covers the period 25 September 2024 to 16 September 2025. During which 37 Members and one official took part in 18 CPA activities. In addition, 18 network meetings took place during this period.

CPA September 2024

- In September 2024 the Presiding Officer chaired the Scotland Branch Annual General Meeting. During the AGM Jarvis Matiya, Deputy Secretary General of the CPA, spoke about the association's wider work, and Jeremy Balfour MSP, Sarah Boyack MSP and Stuart McMillan MSP spoke about the work of the Scotland Branch and their roles in the organisation. Jeremy Balfour MSP, Sarah Boyack MSP and Stuart McMillan MSP were re-elected as the BEC for 2024/25 and as a result, Sarah Boyack was elected as one of the Branch representatives for the [British Islands and Mediterranean Region \(BIMR\)](#) [Commonwealth Women Parliamentarian Network \(CWP\)](#) Steering Committee 2024 to 2025 and Jeremy Balfour MSP as the Branch representative for the BIMR [Parliamentarians with Disabilities Network \(CPwD\)](#) Steering Committee 2024 to 2025.
- 2024 marked the Scottish Parliament's 25th anniversary and 20 years since



the opening of the Holyrood building. Throughout the year the Parliament celebrated the anniversary and in September 2024 Parliament held a 25th anniversary event, which was attended by Their Majesties The King and Queen. Furthermore, Presiding Officer Alison Johnstone MSP wrote an article for the Parliamentarian looking at the Parliament's initiatives and engagement over the years. [Read the article titled "25 Years of the Scottish Parliament: Innovation and engagement"](#).



- Jeremy Balfour MSP took part in the first BIMR Digital transformation working group meeting.
- Jamie Greene MSP attended the first BIMR LGBT+ Network steering committee meeting.

October 2024

- Roz McCall MSP was elected as the second Scotland Branch representative on the BIMR CWP Steering Committee for 2024 to 2025.
- Jamie Greene MSP took part in an Election Observation Mission to Monserrat. [Read the Montserrat General Election October 2024, CPA BIMR Election Observation Mission Final Report.](#)



Photo: CPA UK

November 2024

- Jeremy Balfour MSP, as BIMR Champion on the CPwD Network; Sarah Boyack MSP, as BIMR Representative on the CWD Network; and Stuart

McMillan MSP, as one of the BIMR Representatives of the CPA International Executive Committee (ExCo) attended the 67th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) in Sydney, Australia. As part of the conference Jeremy Balfour MSP was a panellist on the workshop “[Creating Inclusive Elections for Persons with Disabilities \(CPwD\)](#)” where he spoke about the challenges faced by parliaments in making election inclusive and accessible. [Read the report of the 67th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference.](#)



- On their return, the delegates who attended the 67th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Sydney, Australia held a drop-in session to inform members and staff of the discussion points from the workshops and meetings they attended.
- Sarah Boyack MSP and Roz McCall MSP attended a virtual BIMR CWP Steering Committee meeting.
- Karen Adam MSP, Convener of the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee took part in a video for the CPA Parliamentary Academy’s online course titled “[Human Rights: A Parliament’s Role](#)”.

December 2024

- During the week of International Day of Persons with Disabilities, Jeremy Balfour MSP, as BIMR Champion on the CPwD Network, chaired the BIMR webinar “What are the barriers for disabled people standing for elected office and how can they be overcome?” [Read a statement on the CPA BIMR Webinar on Barriers for Parliamentarians with Disabilities.](#)



- Stuart McMillan MSP and Sarah Boyack MSP attended the webinar “Feedback on LGBT+ inclusion discussions at CHOGM and CPC” hosted by CPA HQ. [Read the statement on the CPA BIMR Webinar on LGBT+ Inclusion and Network.](#)

January 2025

- Sarah Boyack MSP chaired the CWP Webinar on “Gender Quota Mechanisms in Parliaments”. It was also attended by Beatrice Wishart MSP and Rhoda Grant MSP. [Read the article about the webinar titled ‘Our work is not finished. So let’s get on with it!’.](#)

February 2025

- Sarah Boyack MSP, as Acting Chair of the BIMR, attended the CWP International Steering Committee meeting.



March 2025

- The Scottish Parliament hosted a three day Clerk development programme for the Assistant Clerk of the Cayman Islands.

- 16 to 18 March the Scottish Parliament hosted the 11th Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) British Islands and Mediterranean Regional (BIMR) Conference. The conference was attended by 40 parliamentarians and officials from 12 branches of the BIMR.



- Liam McArthur MSP lodged a motion titled [Celebrating Commonwealth Day 2025](#).

April 2025

- Evelyn Tweed MSP took part in an Election Observation Mission to the Cayman Islands. [Read the report from the CPA BIMR Election Observation Mission to the Cayman Islands April 2025](#).



Photo: CPA UK

May 2025

- Stuart McMillan MSP took part in the mid year meeting of the CPA International Executive Committee in London.



Photo: Stuart McMillan MSP Photo: CPA HQ

- Clare Haughey MSP, Douglas Ross MSP and Paul Sweeney MSP took part in Election Observation Mission training.

June 2025

- Jeremy Balfour MSP, as BIMR Champion on the CPwD Network; Sarah Boyack MSP, Acting Chair of the BIMR CWD Network; Stuart McMillan MSP, as one of the BIMR Representatives of the CPA ExCo; and Jamie Greene MSP, member of the BIMR LGBTI+ Network attended the 54th BIMR Conference in Cardiff, Wales. As part of the conference Stuart McMillan MSP chaired the AGM; Jeremy Balfour MSP was a panellist on the workshop “How can Parliaments enable effective and full participations of persons with disabilities at all levels”; Jamie Greene MSP was a panellist on the workshop “The Importance of LGBT voices in Parliament”; and Sarah Boyack MSP was a panellist on the workshop “Changing the Rules of Engagement: How modern parliamentarians are engaging in an evolving digital landscape”. The report from the conference will be published on IRO’s [International Activity](#) webpage shortly.



Photo: Chris Hoskins Photography

- Rhoda Grant MSP took part in an Election Observation Mission to Guernsey.



Photo: CPA UK

- Douglas Ross MSP took part in a Post- Election Seminar in Turks and Caicos.



Photos: Turks and Caicos Parliament

July 2025

- Pam Duncan-Glancy MSP and Roz McCall MSP attended the 61st Canadian Regional Conference of the CPA and the Canadian Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Conference, in Québec, Canada. As part of the conference Roz McCall MSP gave an overview of recent work of the Scottish Parliament and Pam Duncan-Glancy MSP was a panellist on the session “Disabilities and parliamentary life: removing obstacles, strengthening inclusion”. The report from the conference will be published on IRO’s [International Activity](#) webpage shortly.



Photo: Assemblée nationale du Québec

September 2025

- Jamie Greene MSP attended a BIMR LGBT+ Network steering committee meeting.

Statistics

CPA opportunities 25 September 2024 to 16 September 2025

Number of CPA opportunities offered to the Scotland Branch	25
Number of opportunities offered to members	18*
Number of members applied for opportunities offered	41
Number of members nominated to take part in CPA opportunities	24**
Number of members who took part in CPA opportunities	37
Number of opportunities offered to officials	1
Number of officials applied for opportunities offered	N/A
Number of officials nominated to take part in CPA opportunities	N/A
Number of officials who took part in CPA opportunities	1

* Several opportunities allowed for multiple members to attend

** Not all opportunities required nominations

Number of CPA Network and ExCo meetings 25 September 2024 to 16 September 2025

CWP International Steering Committee meetings	Sarah Boyack MSP	3 (2 online and 1 in person)
CPWD International Steering Committee meetings	Jeremy Balfour MSP	2 (1 online and 1 in person)

CPA International ExCo meetings	Stuart McMillan MSP	3 (3 in person)
CPA International ExCo Finance Committee meetings	Stuart McMillan MSP	2 (2 in person)
BIMR CWP Steering Committee meetings	Sarah Boyack MSP Roz McCall MSP	4 (2 online and 2 in person)
CPA BIMR LGBT+ Network Steering Committee meetings	Jamie Greene MSP	4 (4 online)

‘Non’ CPA engagement

The Scottish Parliament also engaged with Commonwealth countries on the following occasions:

September 2024

- Officials from the Provincial Assembly of the Punjab visited the Scottish Parliament.
- Siddharth Malik, Consul General of India visited the Scottish Parliament.

October 2024

- Official from the Scottish Parliament attended Parliamentary Officers’ Study Programme in Ottawa, Canada.
- Officials from the Parliament of Malawi visited the Scottish Parliament.

November 2024

- Kirsty Duncan MP, Parliament of Canada, visited the Scottish Parliament.
- Abby Tinica Taylor, Presiding Officer of the Tobago House of Assembly, visited the Scottish Parliament.

December 2024

- The Northern Ireland Assembly Committee on Procedures visited the Scottish Parliament.

January 2025

- The Hon Mr Om Birla, Speaker of Lok Sabha, Parliament of India visited the Scottish Parliament.
- Official from the Scottish Parliament attended an Australia and New Zealand Association of Clerks-at-the-Table seminar in Wellington, New Zealand.

March 2025

- Twila Escalante, Deputy Clerk of the Parliament of the Cayman Islands visited the Scottish Parliament.

April 2025

- Deputy Presiding officer Annabelle Ewing MSP, Alexander Stewart MSP and Michelle Thomson MSP took part in Scotland Week, which included a visit to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta.
- Hon Maree Edwards MP, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Parliament of Victoria, Australia visited the Scottish Parliament.

May 2025

- Hon Pat Weir MP, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Parliament of Queensland, Australia visited the Scottish Parliament.
- Senator the Hon Sue Lines, President of the Senate, Parliament of Australia visited the Scottish Parliament.
- Delegation from the National Assembly of Zambia visited the Scottish Parliament.

June 2025

- The Presiding Officer attended a Quadrilateral meeting of Speakers in Cardiff, Wales.
- The Hon Raj Chouhan MLA, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, Canada, visited the Scottish Parliament.
- Mitch Knight, Deputy Chief Executive of the Parliament of New Zealand visited the Scottish Parliament.
- Dan Mazier MP, Parliament of Canada, visited the Scottish Parliament.

July 2025

- Steve Streefkerk, Serjeant-at-Arms of the New Zealand Parliament visited the Scottish Parliament.
- The Hon. Aileen MacDonald MLC, Parliament of New South Wales, Australia visited the Scottish Parliament.
- Helen Dalton MP, Parliament of New South Wales, Australia visited the Scottish Parliament.
- The Hon. Ben Franklin MLC, President of the Legislative Council, Parliament of New South Wales, Australia visited the Scottish Parliament.

**International Relations Office
September 2025**