



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

CPA Scotland Branch Report 2022-23

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 conference [here](#).

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, chairing 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 25-27 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 conference [here](#).

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](#)".