

Cross-Party Group on China

Minutes of the Meeting

Date: 15 March 2017

Attendance

MSP Members:

- Mary Fee MSP
- Dean Lockhart MSP
- John Scott MSP
- Colin Smyth MSP

Special Guest:

- Deputy Consul General Zhang Limin
- Professor Antonella Sorace

Members In Attendance:

- Daniel Cairns
- Alan Salonika
- Brian Thomson
- Christopher Land
- Colin Mitchell
- Dr Carole Coupar
- Ewen Cameron
- Gavin Mowat
- Iain Valentine
- James Brodie
- James Trolland
- Janice Dickson
- Karen Sim
- Kevin Timlin
- Linus Liu
- Margie Ogilvy-Stuart

- Neil Poposol
- Nigel Archdale
- Orchid Liu
- Professor Antonella Sorace
- Professor Natascha Gentz
- Robert Dalzell
- Rosemary Mitchell
- Sandie Robb
- Savanna Kenny
- Yuwen Fortune
- Jim McColm

Apologies:

- Dame Joan Stringer
- Annie Wells MSP
- Jackie Baillie MSP
- Chic Brodie
- Edward Siu Ming Tsang
- Peter Kwok
- Cathy Gu
- Lindsay Low
- Elaine Logan
- Cllr Maureen McKay
- Ruth Moir
- Dr Judith McClure
- Dr Roger Collins
- Edmund Hoffie
- Nick Mackie
- Martin Bell
- Eric Balish

1. Welcome and Apologies

Mary Fee MSP welcomed all members of the CPG to the meeting.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

Minutes of last meeting of CPG on China were circulated.

Mary Fee MSP informed the group that Consul General Pan Xinchun had agreed to put on a reception in the Chinese Consulate, Edinburgh on 22nd March, starting at 6pm. The invitation was extended to all members of the Cross Party Group on China. Mary Fee MSP stressed the importance of events in strengthening the ties between the Chinese community in Scotland.

Mary Fee MSP informed the group that she received an update on the five-year strategy for engagement between Scotland and China from the Scottish Government. Mary Fee offered to circulate the paper with members of the Cross Party Group after the meeting.

Mary Fee MSP informed the group that an invitation had been extended to the Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs, Fiona Hyslop, to attend the meeting to discuss the five-year strategy for engagement between Scotland and China. Unfortunately, the Cabinet Secretary was unable to attend.

The group were informed about a UK wide celebration of Chinese film, with the Call of Heroes being shown at the Film House in Edinburgh on 29th March at 6pm. There is also a showing at the G-Mac film studio in Glasgow on 30th March at 6pm. These events are sponsored by Hainan Airlines.

3. Professor Antonella Sorace, University of Edinburgh: Presentation on Mandarin in Scottish primary schools

Professor Sorace informed the group of her position as the Director for Information and Public Engagement - Bilingual Matters, an organisation which has fourteen branches in Europe, two in the United States and one due to one in Hong Kong.

Professor Sorace outlined that research has shown that being fluent in a second language can actually enhance the performance of English and boost early literacy skills, such as reading

skills. In addition to this, being bilingual has benefits general studying and education, particularly in the field of science.

At the end of the presentation, Mary Fee MSP welcomed Deputy Consul..... General Pan Xinchun? to the Cross Party Group. The presentation was concluded by a question and answer session.

Professor Sorace presentation will be available to all members of the Cross Party Group.

4. Further Discussion on Work Programme

Mary Fee MSP also gave a short update on the 5 Year Scotland China engagement strategy that she received from the Scottish Government. Mary Fee MSP is keen to invite Fiona Hyslop MSP, the Cabinet Secretary for External Engagement to discuss the 5 Year Strategy.

Mary Fee MSP made suggestions around the Work Programme that the CPG could follow over this session Parliament. It was suggested that education be an avenue for enquiry and for the CPG to invite the Cabinet Secretary for Education to come along. Mary suggested having a strategy of question to engage the Minister if they are able to attend. A general suggestion from the group was encouraging more compulsory language learning from Primary School right through to higher education.

A further suggestion was made to invite a speaker along regarding the Silk Route and the redevelopment along the silk routes and around the issue of direct flights.

5. AOCB

Mary Fee MSP gave an update on the event in the Garden Lobby in June with information being sent out with the minutes.

Mary Fee MSP reminded member around the Reception being hosted by the Consul General on Wednesday 22nd of March.

