

**Cross-Party Group on China
Minutes of Meeting
Date: 30th January 2019**

Attendance

MSP Members

Mary Fee MSP – Co-convener

Dean Lockhart MSP – Co-Convener

Jackie Baillie MSP

Colin Smyth MSP

Members

Daniel Cairns – Secretary

Tammy Wong – Edinburgh Chinese Community School

Jing Si - Chairperson of Edinburgh Art and Culture Association

Henry Tse

Lisa Li - Tattie Cafe at Leith Walk

Mike Wang- Goteachchina in Stirling

Alan Houghton – Grangemouth High School

Rachel Cairns – Grangemouth High School

Mark Scott – Grangemouth High School

Robert Dalzell – North Lanarkshire Council

Natascha Gentz - Confucius Institute for Scotland

Simon Macauley - SCEN

Colin Mitchell – Secretary

Rosemary Mitchell

Siyi Chen – Secretary

Nigel Archdale - Anthony Millard Consulting

Edmund HOFFIE

Orchid Liu – UK China Times

Jim McColm

Dr. Zhang Min

Feng Mohan

Jane Grant – Edinburgh College

Nathan Woolley – Confucius Institute Glasgow

Janice Dickson – SCA

Dale Finlayson – SCA

Ian Baxter – Heriot Watt College

Dr Gonghua Yu – Unicoll

Apologies

Annie Wells MSP

Sandie Robb – Royal Zoological Society

Ruth Taylor – Stewart Investors

Eric Balish

James Brodie – China Britain Business Council

James Trolland

Jessica Guo

Cllr Clare Maitland

Elaine Logan – Glenalmond College

Prof. Ping Zhang – Heriot Watt Confucius Institute

1 Welcome and Apologies

Co-convener Mary Fee MSP welcomes everyone to the meeting and wishes everyone a happy Chinese New Year for the upcoming celebrations of the Year of the Pig.

Mary Fee MSP then discusses the group's aims which have always focused on Education, Business and cultural links between Scotland and China. This evening the group will hear from Rachel Cairns and Mark Scott from Grangemouth High School who have recently been on a visit to China. The Convener states that the group is always delighted to hear about the educational links between Scotland and China. Especially through our Secondary Schools, Confucius Institutes and organisations such as SCEN.

Mary continues by introducing the speakers from the Edinburgh Chinese Community School who will talk about the lived experience of Chinese nationals, who have made their homes and livelihoods in Scotland.

This coincides with the launch of the book by the author Barclay Price called the 'Chinese in Britain.' Today over 400,000 Chinese live in Britain, many more attend British universities, and an increasing number visit Britain on business and as tourists. This book tells the story, from the first recorded visitor in 1687 through to the twentieth century, drawing on accounts by visiting Chinese, newspaper articles, memoirs, royal diaries and other contemporary sources.

Mary continues saying that it will be beneficial for the group to hear from the primary accounts of Chinese individuals living in Scotland. Then she introduces Tammy Wong from Edinburgh Chinese Community School who has brought along with her Jing Si, Chairperson of Edinburgh Art and Culture Association, Henry Tse, Lisa Li who runs the Tattie Cafe at Leith Walk and Mike Wang from Go Teach China in Stirling.

2 Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

Minutes from the previous meeting were agreed to.

3 Edinburgh Chinese Community School – 'Lived Experience of Chinese Community in Scotland'

Co-Convener Mary Fee MSP invites the guests to speak to the group about their experience of living in Scotland.

The first speaker is Jing Sie, Chairperson and Edinburgh Art and Culture Association, who states that the organisation has been operating since 2006. At the beginning, it was mainly to help organise Chinese community involvement with the Edinburgh festival. At the first day of every festival, her organisation creates an event to help start the festival and now it continues to do this every year. This is achieved with help from the local Chinese Consulate.

Jing Sie continues by saying that the event promotes the culture of China to a Scottish audience at the international Edinburgh Festival. It gives the Chinese community a presence at the events. She says that there is a strong Chinese community in Scotland. The most recent event was the best one yet. It was held at the Royal Botanic Gardens with the theme of a traditional Chinese Food Festival.

Jing Sie finishes by stating that everything they try to do is inclusive and close to the Chinese culture and community.

Following from Jing Sie the group hears a contribution from Henry Tse.

Henry begins by saying he is more or less Scottish than Chinese. He came over in 1967 and went to high school in Scotland. Many people had not seen a Chinese person before. Many classmates asked if he knew Karate and Judo. In most cases, his School friends were kind.

Henry continued that he graduated in 1975 and has lived all of his life in Edinburgh. From here, he has also been part of the Chinese Teaching Association which helps in the Chinese community. Henry

continues saying that he used to do lots of promotion for Chinese Culture throughout Edinburgh. Now the second and third generations do not know much about Chinese culture so he sees the Community School as vital to Chinese Scots as well as other Scots.

Henry said that he has been involved in the community School for 30 years. The School may not have many pupils but it is of a high standard. Children and adults attend many different culture, sport and language classes. A Chinese teacher comes every week to help with language.

Henry stated that the School needs more funding. It is sponsored mainly by the community but that is not enough. He would like more business and public support so that the School can thrive and he can retire.

Mary Fee MSP then asked if Lisa Li could contribute.

Lisa started by thanking the group for inviting her to speak. She is from Mainland China and has owned a cafe on Leith Walk for over 15 years. Lisa's first impressions of Scottish people were that they were chatty. Many people felt like old friends. Everyone knows everyone's names. Lisa continued that Scottish people like their tradition and food. She has had some customers order the same things every day for 15 years. Bacon Rolls and baked potatoes are the favourite.

In general, people are warm and welcoming. Lisa also said she enjoyed the diversity and mix of culture in Edinburgh. She then went on to talk about her son who is currently studying at Edinburgh University. She said that he enjoys School as it does not just focus on academia but helps everyone's needs regardless of economics and is very inclusive. Lisa states that her son is growing up in Scotland proud of who he is and proud to come from Edinburgh.

Lisa concludes by discussing the Edinburgh Chinese Community School where she is a senior member and takes part in Tai Chi classes. They are all working hard to keep the School running. The School is a bridge to connect the two countries with different cultures and keep traditions alive. Lisa says she hopes the community can continue to grow with the help of local people.

The next speaker from the group is Mike Wang who set up GoTeachChina. Mike begins by thanking the group for the invitation to contribute to the group. He explains that his company recruits native speakers to teach English in China.

Mike stated that he attended the University of Stirling and during his studies, he had many local friends who were on teaching English masters programs. After graduation, they wanted to teach abroad but found it difficult to navigate in China. That is the reason why he set up GoteachChina. It is hard to find a way through all of the different agencies. Mike helps teachers find work in China and has successfully introduced many tutors into different cities all across China.

Mike then goes on to speak about his involvement in the Chinese Community School. He says that he is interested in music and helps a local Chinese music group. They like to learn Scottish songs and many of the elder Chinese students are excited when they hear them.

The final speaker the CPG hears from is Tammy Wong, who runs the Edinburgh Chinese Community School. The School is located at Edinburgh High School. It offers language, art and culture classes. It also offers a great range of entertainment with music groups and high tea some examples. The school is very proud of its diversity. It has many Chinese and lots of Scots coming to enjoy different culture.

Tammy continues that this is not limited to Edinburgh. The school has students from Falkirk. Tammy states that there are 150 students who attend the school, aged 5 to 65. The School is used as a

community centre for many Chinese people. Many parents bring their children to learn more about their own culture.

Tammy finishes by saying the School is responsible for helping foster Chinese community and culture in Scotland. As a school, they feel like they have a great relationship with Scottish civil society.

Mary Fee MSP then moved the meeting onto a question and answer session. She began by asking Henry about his time at school, how did he find it settling in? And, how did he get involved with the Chinese Community School?

Henry answered that he was the only person with a “funny” accent in his school. But what most did not realise was that he struggled with the Scottish accent. Kids in his class seemed to like him. Within a year he was made a house captain despite not being able to play any rugby. He continued that he was very appreciative of his Head teacher who encouraged him to go to University to achieve his potential. He remarked that he did like school in Scotland compared to Hong Kong. School in Hong Kong was hard working but in Scotland, you can have a few Highers and still go to University.

Henry continued that he became involved with the Community School in 1990. At that time it was a different association however eventually in 2000 it became what it is now. The school at the beginning was small but it has steadily grown.

Tammi contributed further saying that the Chinese Community has different backgrounds as well. For example, she is from mainland China and Henry is from Hong Kong. The community works together.

Colin Smyth MSP references that his mother in law is Malaysian and moved here in the 1960's. She has said that things have changed. Are there anymore barriers towards settling in Scotland that the Chinese Community face?

Henry responded by saying that he still receives some abuse from drunks mainly. But it has definitely got better. He has spoken to many different nationalities who own businesses in UK, including people from Italy, Pakistan and India. They have all had similar abuse mainly from drunks. He has lived here 32 years and he still enjoys it so much that he has retired here.

Tammi stated that she was once the Commercial Manager for the Edinburgh Tram Project. In her experience, she was employed in ability rather than race. If you are capable then you will have the same opportunity as others. There are always one or two instances of abuse but there are always one or two odd people.

Jackie Baillie MSP asked a question focused on school. In what way could people not from the Chinese Community be involved in the School? Who funds you? What could you do with more?

Henry responded by saying that the majority of funding came from the Chinese Community and Edinburgh Council. He continued that if you want to learn with the School they are welcome to all people.

Tammi added more by detail by saying that there were teachers sponsored by Edinburgh city council. There are some funding obstacles. Five years ago, it cost £1700 for school hire, this year it is £6000, which is a big jump and challenge. The School does many fundraising activities to help. In terms of external attendees, many people want to learn mandarin as a language for the future. The School has children from Polish, Spanish and British families learning mandarin at the School.

Dean Lockhart MSP asked about using technology between China and Scotland. Are there any issues between using apps like Weichat and not having any equivalent in Scotland?

Mike responded that technology is very popular in china. Everyone who is young pays by technology. Some shops in Scotland have already started these kind of things but it is still some years away.

Janice Dickson from the Scottish China Association said that the BBC were making documentaries about the Chinese Community in Scotland. They would focus on Chinese food and how the older generation of Chinese migrants are treated in Scotland. If anyone is interested then please do get in touch.

4 Grangemouth High School

Rachel and Mark recently visited China and spoke about their impressions and experience of the visit. China trip in October 2018 for ten days. They visited shanghai, a fast moving paced city which was different to the relaxed element of Scotland.

This included a visit to a School in Shanghai, which was newly built. They were impressed with the level of sophistication in the School. They had a number of pictures of their trip, which they explained to the group.

Mary asked how did they prepare to go?

Mark response that he thought it was going to be a lot hotter. They had packed shorts but it was not that kind of weather. Rachel felt like she was constantly eating as there was so much food offered to the group. They sometimes felt bad that they were not able to finish the whole plate.

Edmund Hoffie asked what was your strongest memory of the trip? And what was the biggest contrast?

Mark responded visiting the great wall. Rachel said she was shocked at how many Chinese people wanted pictures with them.

5 AOCB

Ian Baxter informed the group of the new City wide Chinese New Year festival in association with Edinburgh city council. This is a two-week celebration of Chinese New Year. They have built a coordinated citywide strategy for this focusing on three events. It is a pilot, which they hope to take into the future. It is seen as a good opportunity for a mini festival at a relatively quiet part of the year. Ian said that he would come back to the CPG to report on its progress.

Date of Next Meeting: 27th March 2019