

Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group on Nuclear Disarmament

4th December 2018

1. AGM Business

Present:

Parliamentarians:

Ruth Maguire MSP

Bill Kidd MSP

Sandra White MSP

Claudia Beamish MSP

Owen Thompson (Office of Gail Ross MSP) and Jenny Olson (Office of Bill Kidd MSP).

Civil Society Organisations:

Michael Orgel (MEDACT)

Emma Cockburn (SCND)

David Mackenzie (Nukewatch)

Carol Acutt (SGI)

Maki Kumari (International Board Member UK WILPF).

Gari Donn

Dr Barbara Burns (University of Glasgow) also attended.

Apologies:

Janet Fenton (sec) Sheena Holden (MEDACT) Melanie Scott (CAAT) Jane Tallents (TP) Brian Larkin (Edinburgh P&J) Bill Butler (NFLA)

!2 Annual report highlights

Chair Bill Kidd surveyed the activity in the past year, highlighting the visit of ICAN CEO Beatrice Fihn and of Rebecca Johnson of the Acronym Institute bearing the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to ICAN in December 2017. He also noted the successful NAE NUKES ANYWHERE rally at Faslane on 22nd September.

1. 2 Election of Office bearers

Bill Kidd MSP was elected as Convenor of the Nuclear Disarmament CPG following nomination by Claudia Beamish MSP and seconding by Sandra White MSP.

Janet Fenton, Vice-Chair of Scottish CND was elected as Secretary following nomination by Ruth McGuire MSP and seconding by Carol Acutt.

Ross Greer MSP was elected as Deputy Convenor. Bill Kidd MSP nominated Mr Greer and Sandra White seconded this nomination.

2. Presentation

Bill Kidd then introduced Barbara Burns of Glasgow University who gave a presentation on the life and significance of Austrian aristocrat Bertha von Suttner, the first woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Suttner's pioneering novel *Die Waffen Nieder* (English version "*Lay Down Your Arms*") was based on direct research and oral testimony relating to the European wars in the second half of the 19th Century and through this fictional method catalogued the horrific nature of the

conflicts and their devastating social effects.

She chose the fiction as the means of dissemination in order to reach a wide audience and indeed the book had 40 editions and was translated into 16 languages, in spite of strong opposition in Austria. She also travelled widely to lecture and used voluminous correspondence to spread her views. Suttner founded the Austrian Peace Association and prompted Nobel's decision to include peace in his awards. She also had the support of Andrew Carnegie who provided her with a pension.

She was a key figure in the growth of the 20th Century peace movement.

The presentation was warmly received and was followed by discussion. It was noted just how relevant Suttner's perspective was to today's situation, especially since we are again rediscovering the contribution women have made and continue to make to disarmament. Barbara is also working with Education Scotland on the nation's links with Alfred Nobel and his munition factories.