Minutes of the 3rd Meeting of CPA Scotland Branch Executive Committee held on Wednesday 26 October 2011 at 1.45pm Room 1.04 QBH

Present: Patricia Ferguson MSP
         Margaret Mitchell MSP
         Sandra White MSP (Chair)
         Margaret Neal (Secretary)

In attendance: Billy McLaren, Senior Parliamentary Relations Officer (SPRO)

1. Apologies
   Apologies were received from Tavish Scott MSP.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 September 2011
   The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

3. CPA Scotland Branch working practices: CPA Paper/S4/11-12/3/1
   The Branch Secretary was asked to ensure, for the future, that the flags on papers were consistent with the agenda item number.

   The Branch Executive Committee (BEC) agreed to re-visit the possibility of reviewing the Branch Rules at the meeting to be held on 25 January. The BEC were content with the paper.

   The BEC fully discussed progress in relation to programme development. It was agreed that the Conference theme would be “Making Parliaments Relevant”. It was further agreed that a plenary session about recent world-wide political change should be included. Based on the discussion, the Branch Secretary was asked to reshape the programme and source appropriate expert, high profile speakers. The Secretary was also reminded to take into account gender balance when sourcing speakers, generally, for the Conference.

5. Scottish Parliament’s International Strategy
   The Senior Parliamentary Relations Officer was asked to notify Members of the BEC following publication of the strategy paper, on which the BEC reaffirmed their support.

Members of the BEC noted the current financial position of the Branch and agreed on a number of areas where the Secretary should use the budget to take forward elements of the forward programme. It was also noted that a small part of the BIMR Conference project budget was available to spend this financial year.

The BEC also agreed:

- Two Members should attend the CPA Annual Conference each year. The Secretary of Scotland Branch should also attend once every 3 years, to provide the role of shared secretariat support to all 3 delegations from devolved Branches.
- Four Members and one official should attend the British Islands and Mediterranean Regional Annual conferences.
- CPA Scotland Branch should consider invitations to attend other CPA conferences and seminars, providing there are resources available.
- To ring-fence £6,000 per annum to support the CPA Scotland Branch Internship Programme, during the 3 year lifetime of our TAP2 project with the National Assembly of Malawi. The BEC also agreed that no approach was needed this year to CPA for a contribution to the internship costs.
- To consider each year whether or not to plan to allow 2 Members involved in the Parliamentary Pairing Initiative (PPI) to participate in two-way exchange visits.
- To provide hospitality to visitors from other CPA Branches, where otherwise not covered under the general UKIRO budget.
- To endorse a forward programme of activity, in principle, for approval by the Special Envoy, in relation to her role, until 2014.
- To consider approving cross party delegation outward visits where there was a robust business case which fits with priorities set by the BEC and the activity complements the Scottish Parliament’s UK and International Strategy.

**CPA UK Branch Millennium Development Goals Conference**

The BEC were advised that the Special Envoy had received an invitation to participate at the Conference, which was under consideration. If the invitation was accepted, the Branch Secretary was asked to circulate a copy of the draft speech, for the Special Envoy, prior to the session on HIV/AIDS.

**22nd Commonwealth Parliamentary Seminar – New Delhi**

The Secretary advised that arrangements were in hand and asked Members of the BEC to note the change of venue from Kerala to New Delhi.

**Commonwealth Week 2012**

The BEC agreed that should the Special Envoy accept the invitation to visit the Scottish Parliament on 14 March 2012 and a suitable programme should be arranged. The Secretary was asked to produce an outline programme for consideration at the next meeting. It was further agreed that the programme should incorporate an event in the Chamber with invited guests from the Scottish International Development community.
7. **Engagement with Malawi**

   **Internship Programme**  
   The Secretary advised that the internship programme would be re-arranged from 21 February to 25 March 2012.

   **Parliamentary Pairing Initiative (PPI)**  
   Members of the BEC agreed that Patricia Ferguson MSP should chair the meeting on 2 November for Members interested in joining the PPI. The Secretary was asked to prepare a PowerPoint presentation to include key points as well as images, to try to capture the essence of Malawi. It was further agreed that an information pack should be prepared and distributed to participants.

   **TAP2**  
   Members of the BEC expressed disappointment that the visit from internship participants had been postponed by the National Assembly of Malawi. The Secretary was asked to e-mail the current TAP2 programme to Members.

8. **Any Other Business**

   **Eminent Persons Group (EPG)**  
   The Secretary was asked to update the BEC, by e-mail, in relation to decisions emanating from the EPG following the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Perth, Australia which was due to take place 28-30 October.

9. **Dates of next meetings**
   - Wednesday 7 December 2011: Room Q1.04 12.45pm
   - Wednesday 25 January 2012: Room Q1.04 12.45pm

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