COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION
(SCOTLAND BRANCH)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2012

Wednesday 20 June 2012

MINUTES

1. The Annual General Meeting (“AGM”) opened in Committee Room 2 at 1.00pm and was chaired by Tricia Marwick MSP, President of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Scotland Branch.

Attendance

2. The following Members of the Branch were in attendance: Richard Baker MSP; Neil Bibby MSP; Mary Fee MSP; Patricia Ferguson MSP; Kenny Gibson MSP; Margaret MacDougall MSP; Hanzala Malik MSP; Stewart Maxwell MSP; Alison McInnes MSP; Fiona McLeod MSP; Duncan McNeil MSP; Margaret Mitchell MSP; Tavish Scott MSP; Drew Smith MSP; Elaine Smith MSP; Maureen Watt MSP; and Sandra White MSP.

3. The Branch President welcomed the Members and noted that the quorum for the AGM of one twelfth of the Membership of the CPA Scotland Branch (“the Branch”) had been met.

4. The Branch President stated that 2011/12 had been another good year for the CPA Scotland Branch. The Branch President re-affirmed that the Scotland Branch was extremely fortunate to have Annie Lennox as Special Envoy and highlighted the role that Ms Lennox had taken during the Commonwealth Day activities in the Parliament.

5. The Branch President also spoke briefly about the 42nd British Islands and Mediterranean Region (BIMR) Conference which had been hosted by the Scotland Branch the previous week. The Branch President stated that the Conference, the theme of which was Making Parliaments Relevant, “had been a stunning success”. Furthermore, she felt that the delegates had experienced the Scottish Parliament at its best and Members had made many friends as a result. The Branch President concluded by saying that the Conference had been a “huge tribute to the Scottish Parliament” as a forward looking institution dedicated to contributing to parliamentary democracy, not only in Scotland, but the wider world.
Agenda Item 1 - Apologies

6. Brian Adam MSP; Clare Adamson MSP; Jackie Baillie MSP; Sarah Boyack MSP; Margaret Burgess MSP; Graeme Dey MSP; Annabel Ewing MSP; Linda Fabiani MSP; Alex Fergusson MSP; Murdo Fraser MSP; Rhoda Grant MSP; Patrick Harvie MSP; Hugh Henry MSP; Alison Johnstone MSP; Mark McDonald MSP; Jamie McGrigor MSP; Siobhan McMahon MSP; Nanette Milne MSP; Graeme Pearson MSP; Dr Richard Simpson MSP and Jean Urquhart MSP.

Agenda Item 2 - Minutes from the 2011 AGM

7. The Minutes of the AGM 2011, which took place on Wednesday 22 June 2011, were proposed by Sandra White MSP and seconded by Margaret Mitchell MSP. The Minutes were agreed to.

Agenda Item 3 – The Report and Accounts for 2011/12

8. The Reports and Accounts for 2011/12 were proposed by Tavish Scott MSP and seconded by Patricia Ferguson MSP. All Members present were content. The Branch President invited comments from Members on the Annual Report and the activities which the Branch had supported over the course of the year.

9. Margaret MacDougall MSP spoke about her experiences, to date, with CPA Scotland Branch. She informed those present that she was a new Member, elected in 2011, and had applied and been selected to attend the 22nd Commonwealth Parliamentary Seminar in New Delhi which had taken place in November 2011.

10. Margaret MacDougall stated that the seminar was attended by a representative number of delegates from across CPA Regions. She further explained that the number of delegates invited to attend was strictly limited therefore Scotland Branch was extremely honoured to have been invited.

11. Margaret MacDougall found the seminar to be an intensive learning exercise in parliamentary matters. The seminar theme was “Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy” with a focus on developing the skills of new parliamentarians.

12. Margaret Mitchell MSP spoke about her experiences and what she had learned from attending the CPA UK Branch’s International Parliamentary Conference on the Millennium Development Goals “Reaching for 2015: Governance, Accountability and the Role of the Parliamentarian”.

13. Margaret Mitchell noted that whilst Parliaments were crucial in the development process, they were often overlooked. The aim of this conference was to provide Parliamentarians with a tool kit to hold governments to account for their development and aid commitments at a
local, national and international level. Margaret Mitchell mentioned that although the Millennium Development Goals (MDG’s) were created to assist the most impoverished countries in the world, that the MDG’s were also of direct relevance to Parliamentarians from more developed regions. For example, Parliamentarians could learn a great deal about education, women’s issues, health policies and a wide range of other issues as well as giving a voice to the poorest and most marginalised among society.

Agenda Item 3.1 - Consideration of the Scotland Branch proposed Forward Programme of Activity 2012/2014

14. All Members present were content with the proposed programme of activities.

15. The Branch President thanked Members.

Agenda Item 4 - Election of Executive Committee

16. Patricia Ferguson MSP, Margaret Mitchell MSP, Tavish Scott MSP, and Sandra White MSP were nominated and elected as Members of the CPA Scotland Branch Executive Committee for the period 2012-13.

17. The Branch president invited Members of the Branch Executive Committee to address the meeting.

18. Patricia Ferguson MSP spoke about the BIMR Conference. Ms Ferguson considered that the Conference had been an excellent learning experience with all the invited presenters delivering focussed presentations to delegates. She also noted that some of the post-session discussions with delegates had proved invaluable.

19. Patricia Ferguson informed the meeting that the welcome the delegation had received in Glasgow had been outstanding. She observed that the conference delegates were very impressed with the Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome and had understood the potential benefits of hosting major sporting events. Many delegates had expressed an interest in coming to Scotland to visit during the Commonwealth Games. She further stated that activities such as this provided CPA Scotland Branch with an excellent opportunity to promote Scotland to the wider world.

20. Sandra White MSP also spoke about the BIMR Conference. Ms White thanked colleagues for supporting the programme. She also re-iterated that the Conference had provided an excellent opportunity to not only strengthen parliamentary democracy, but to also promote the Scottish Parliament and Scotland internationally. Ms White also asked Members present at the meeting to encourage their colleagues to become involved in Branch activities.
21. Ms White concluded by thanking the Branch Secretary, and others in the UK and International Relations Office, for assistance during the year and for their contribution in organising the BIMR Conference.

22. Tavish Scott MSP agreed with the points made by colleagues. He further noted that for a number of years, the CPA had been experiencing a turbulent period in relation to organisational changes designed to make the Association fit for the 21st century. He felt that all regions were required to find “a single sense of purpose” in relation to proposed changes. Given the sensitivities involved, Mr Scott suggested that Members needed to be aware of the situation before attending CPA events.

23. Margaret Mitchell MSP also spoke about the calibre of presenters at the BIMR Conference and how well delegates engaged at each of the sessions. Margaret Mitchell also mentioned that the BIMR Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) representative was due to stand down from the position on the CWP Steering Group and expressed the view that this would be a wonderful opportunity for a female member from CPA Scotland Branch. She also informed Members that the position of Chair of the CWP would become vacant in 2013 and this would also provide an excellent opportunity for a female Member committed to improving gender equality and women’s issues from a parliamentary perspective.

24. Margaret Mitchell also thanked parliamentary officials for their contribution to ensuring the success of the BIMR Conference and for support to the Committee during the year.

Agenda Item 5 – Any Other Business

25. There were no matters raised under this agenda item.

26. The Branch President thanked Members for their contributions and asked Members to spread a positive message, about the work of the Branch, and the opportunities available to those who become involved, particularly to new Members. She further stated that she felt that there was enthusiasm for the work of CPA Scotland Branch from existing Members.

27. The Branch President brought the meeting to a close and thanked Members for attending.

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