MINUTES OF THE 8th MEETING OF THE CPA SCOTLAND BRANCH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 28 MAY 2013 AT 5.15PM IN Q1.04

Present: Patricia Ferguson MSP (Chair)  
Margaret Mitchell MSP  
Tavish Scott MSP

In attendance: Margaret Neal, Secretary  
Stephen Herbert, Senior Parliamentary Relations Officer

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Sandra White MSP.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 April 2013

The minutes were agreed.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

a) Invitation to attend the CPA Canada Parliamentary Seminar in Ottawa from 2-8 June 2013

It was noted that Jenny Marra MSP would be travelling economy class to the CPA Canadian Parliamentary Seminar in Ottawa.

4. Forward Programme of Activities / Financial Paper

Members queried whether a surplus from one financial year could be carried over into the next financial year. It was confirmed that a surplus could not be carried over. It was noted that strenuous efforts had been made to ensure that all 2012-13 costs were incurred in that financial year. However some costs would impact on the 2013-14 financial year.

It was further noted that by reducing the range of activity that was taking place in March that this should reduce the future risk of impacts of this kind on the budget in future years. Members noted the 2012-13 and 2013-14 budgetary
position whilst observing that the Branch would not have a surplus of £17K by the end of 2013-14.

Lastly, it was agreed that the selection of a delegate and observer to attend the CPA Conference in South Africa in September would take place immediately after the conclusion of the Branch AGM.

5. Arrangements for the CPA Scotland Branch Annual General Meeting 2013

It was noted that the nominations for election to the Branch form should be lodged with the Secretary by 6 June. The Secretary was asked to re-send nomination forms to Members of the Branch Executive Committee.

The Branch noted the recent news regarding the health of the Presiding Officer. The Members of the Branch asked the Secretary to convey the best wishes of the Branch for a speedy recovery to the Presiding Officer.

It was also agreed that Tavish Scott MSP would Chair the AGM in the absence of the Presiding Officer.

The Annual Report was considered to provide an accurate account of the activities of the Branch over the course of the reporting year. It was agreed to mention the attendance of Margaret Mitchell MSP and Stuart McMillan MSP at the BIMR Regional Conference in the Falkland Islands within the highlights section of the Annual Report.

Members agreed to remind Members at Group meetings to attend the AGM. It was noted that current indications of attendance would not provide a quorum for the AGM and that a minimum of 11 Members were required to provide a quorum.

6. Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Steering Group

Patricia Ferguson MSP advised that the British Islands and Mediterranean (BIMR) CWP Group would meet in London on 9 July for the first time. Patricia Ferguson considered that it could be helpful to have a standing item on the Scotland Branch agenda to consider the CWP but that she would be able to take a more informed view on the utility of this following the meeting in July.

Members agreed that if time allowed, Patricia Ferguson MSP should meet with the CPA Secretary-General during her visit to London on 9 July.

Margaret Mitchell MSP mentioned that the BIMR Annual General Meeting (AGM), in the Falkland Islands, had decided that the Branch of the BIMR CWP representative, who would also chair the BIMR CWP Regional Committee, could also send a delegate to the BIMR CWP Regional Committee meetings. It was agreed to investigate this matter further with the CPA UK Branch. The Secretary of CPA UK Branch is also the Regional
Secretary of BIMR and therefore is responsible for producing the Minutes of the BIMR AGM.

Members of the Branch Executive Committee were disappointed to note that the Special Envoy would not be attending the CWP Meeting in South Africa. The Branch agreed that the Secretary should contact the Special Envoy’s personal assistant to ask if there was a particular reason for her not being available and to also explore the possibility of the Scotland Branch delegation visiting one of the Special Envoy’s projects in South Africa during the Commonwealth Plenary Conference.

It was agreed that the future activities of the Special Envoy should be an item on the agenda at the next meeting of the Branch.

7. Falkland Islands – Secretary’s Report

The report was considered to be timely, sound, and provided a very accurate and comprehensive account of the BIMR conference in the Falkland Islands.

8. Cayman Islands - Election Observing Mission

Margaret Mitchell MSP provided a comprehensive account of her role as an election observer in the Cayman Islands. The elections were held on 22 May 2013 and Margaret noted that there had been a vote of no confidence in the then, incumbent Government in December 2012 following which observers were invited to observe the election. It was further noted that the vote of no confidence was instigated by a criminal investigation into the then, President McKeeva Bush. Margaret noted that the electoral system used was a block voting system. There had been a previous referendum previously on introducing a “one person, one vote” which received 67% support from those who voted in the referendum. However, President McKeeva Bush was not prepared to introduce the system as this did not represent 50% of the electorate.

The outcome of the election was that no one party received an overall majority. However, the main opposition party, People’s Progressive Movement (PPM), obtained 9 of the 18 seats available with the previously incumbent United Democratic Party obtaining 3 seats. Therefore, the PPM were expected to form a Government with Independents holding the balance of power.

Margaret Mitchell advised that the observers had produced an Interim report which found the election processes to have been fair. However a full report, with recommendations, would be available in 2 months’ time. Margaret Mitchell noted that she would provide a written report to the Branch in due course.
9. **Interns’ programme**

The Members noted the reports provided by the interns from the National Assembly of Malawi.

10. **Any Other Business**

A draft letter to the Chair of the CPA Malawi Branch was tabled. Tavish Scott noted he was content with the content of the letter. The Secretary agreed to e-mail an electronic version of the letter to other Branch Members for their consideration.

11. **Dates of next meetings**

The date of the AGM on 13 June 2013 had previously been agreed and the meeting on 26 June 2013 was agreed.

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