MINUTES OF THE 1st MEETING OF THE CPA SCOTLAND BRANCH 
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 26 JUNE 2013 AT 
12.45PM IN Q1.04

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

In attendance: Margaret Neal, Secretary 
Stephen Herbert, Senior Parliamentary Relations Officer 
Sally Coyne, Media Relations Officer 
Fergus Cochrane, Assistant Clerk, Economy, Energy and 
Tourism Committee

1. Apologies

No apologies were received.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 May 2013

The minutes, subject to changes, were agreed as discussed. Members of the 
Branch Executive Committee agreed that Margaret Mitchell MSP should 
submit the Election Observing Mission’s report of the Cayman Islands election 
to the Branch and that report would serve as the visit report.

3. Malawi outward visit March 2013: Visit report

Item 8 on the agenda was brought forward to facilitate parliamentary 
business.

Sarah Boyack MSP and Alex Fergusson MSP spoke about their recent visit to 
Malawi. It was highlighted that there had been significant interest from 
Malawian MP’s in the budget scrutiny session. However, it was noted that 
until the separation of powers between the Malawian Government and 
Parliament was formalised, the budget scrutiny process in Malawi would 
remain problematic.
It was also mentioned that Malawian MP’s were keen to scrutinise what the Scottish Government does in Malawi and why certain policy areas were selected as a focus for capacity building. At present, there appears to be no awareness amongst Malawian MP’s of Scottish Government activity in their constituencies. Ms Boyack and Mr Fergusson informed the Committee that they had already passed on their observations to the Scottish Government’s Minister for External Relations and International Development, Humza Yousaf MSP.

A general Q&A followed with Members of the Branch Executive Committee.

It was noted that Swedish and Norwegian Non-Governmental Organisations were very active in Malawi. It was further noted that during the visit by the delegation, the main Malawian political parties had informally agreed to put measures in place to ensure that female MP’s would be put forward for re-selection to stand for election.

There was general agreement that CPA Scotland Branch should be starting a dialogue with the National Assembly on what support should be provided to newly elected MP’s.

It was noted that due to the high turnover of Malawian MPs it would probably be necessary and desirable to deliver tried and tested workshops with each new intake of Members, focussing on the role of the MP.

Overall, Members of the delegation agreed that the workshop and visit, in general, was extremely worthwhile and that engagement with Malawi should continue at parliamentary level.

Members of the delegation agreed that the TAP2 should reflect points made by the delegation in relation to pre and post-election activity. This should include pre-election work with officials from the National Assembly involved in pre and post-election planning to support MPs, inductions workshops for new members with a focus on the role of an MP and holding the executive to account.

Sarah Boyack MSP and Alex Ferguson MSP were asked to provide feedback in relation to follow up action at a later date.

4. Forward Programme of Activities / Financial Paper

The Secretary provided an update on the recent visit by the Regional Secretary to the Parliament. This resulted in the following decisions.

a. The Scotland Branch would not nominate a Member to attend the Caribbean Region Conference.
b. The Scotland Branch would not participate in the additional activities to a variety of locations in Southern Africa which were being planned by the CPA UK Branch.

c. It was agreed to consider what plans, if any, should be made to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the signing of the Magna Carta in 2015 at the next meeting of the Branch Executive Committee in September.

Members of the Branch Executive Committee stated that they required earlier notice of invitations, such as the invitation to attend the Caribbean Region Conference. The Secretary was asked to e-mail a copy of that invitation letter to Members of the Branch Executive Committee, for information.

Members indicated that they were interested in participating in election observing training which would be organised by CPA UK Branch. The Secretary was also asked to provide a list of forthcoming elections at the next meeting.

Members noted the financial position and agreed that there would be considerable opportunities to fund new activity over the course of the financial year. The Secretary was asked to place this matter on the agenda for the September meeting of the Committee and produce a paper detailing options for activity over the remainder of 2013-14.

5. Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Steering Group

Patricia Ferguson MSP informed the Branch Executive Committee that she would be attending a meeting, as Chairperson, of the British Islands and Mediterranean Region Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Steering Committee (hereafter referred to as the Steering Committee) in London on 9 July. It was expected that 10 out of 13 BIMR regions would send a representative to the meeting.

A discussion took place regarding whether the Branch which holds the position of Chair could also send an additional representative to Steering Committee meetings. The Branch Secretary advised Members that the draft minutes of the Annual General Meeting were silent on that particular issue. The Regional Secretary had agreed to investigate by examining the audio tapes of the Annual General Meeting. Margaret Mitchell MSP reminded the Branch Secretary to pursue this matter with the Regional Secretary. It was further agreed that Patricia Ferguson MSP would speak to the Regional Representative who chaired the Annual General Meeting to determine what was actually agreed at the Annual General Meeting in the Falkland Islands.

The Members of the Branch Executive Committee noted that Patricia Ferguson MSP would visit the Dr Shija, CPA Secretary—General at CPA Headquarters during the visit to London on 9 July and agreed that Ms Ferguson should invite Dr Shija to visit the Scottish Parliament.
6. Arrangements for meeting with Commonwealth Parliamentarians

Members of the Branch Executive Committee agreed to continue with the current approach of UK and international Relations Office contacting Members of the Branch Executive Committee in the first instance. However, if a Member of the Branch Executive Committee is not available, if mutual interest can be identified, UKIRO officials may approach a member from the same party, ideally with relevant experience of the country concerned. Members also agreed that the existing cross party approach for CPA meetings should be maintained.

7. Role of the Special Envoy CPA

A discussion took place on the future role of the Special Envoy. The Branch Secretary was requested to look for opportunities within the Parliament including high profile events which could have a direct bearing on the Special Envoy’s humanitarian work directly related to her main area of interest in campaigning on behalf of women and children in Africa living with HIV/AIDS.

It was agreed that the Secretary should invite the Special Envoy to address delegates at the British Islands and Mediterranean Region Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Conference, to be hosted by the Scotland Branch on 8 March 2014, should that be agreed by the Steering Committee.

It was agreed that this item should be considered again at the September meeting.

8. 5th Commonwealth Youth Parliament Report

The contents of the report were noted.

9. Any Other Business

It was noted that Gordon Arthur, Director of Communications, Glasgow 2014 Limited would attend the next meeting on 25 September 2013.

10. Dates of next meetings

- Wed 25 September 2013 at 12.45pm in Room Q1.04
- Wed 30 October 2013 at 12.45pm in Room Q1.04
- Wed 27 November 2013 at 12.45pm in Room Q1.04
- Wed 29 January 2014 at 12.45pm in Room Q1.04
- Wed 26 February 2014 at 12.45pm in Room Q1.04
- Wed 26 March 2014 at 12.45pm in Room Q1.04

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