CPA SCOTLAND BRANCH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 4th meeting held at 12.45pm on Thursday 28th January 2010 in the Queensberry House Dining Room

Present:
Alex Fergusson MSP, Branch President (Chair)
Karen Gillon MSP
Jamie Stone MSP
Sandra White MSP
Margaret Neal (Secretary)

In attendance:
Jane McEwan, PPS/PO
Billy McLaren, Senior Parliamentary Relations Officer

1. Apologies

Apologies received from Ted Brocklebank MSP

2. Minutes from 3rd Meeting and Matters Arising

Proposed Visit to Northern Ireland (NI) Branch

There was a discussion around the planned visit to Northern Ireland Branch. The Secretary advised that the Northern Ireland Branch had offered the date of 12 January, however, due to Christmas recess, there had been insufficient time to organise a visit. The Secretary had asked for another date but had not yet received a response. Given the political situation in Northern Ireland at the moment the Secretary felt that the NI Assembly Speaker and Members would be pre-occupied on other business and it would be better to wait until things settled a bit before pursuing further. The Presiding Officer fully endorsed this course of action given that the Branch President of CPA Northern Ireland (i.e. the NI Assembly Speaker) took an active role in CPA inward visits.
Action (4-1): Secretary to continue to seek a suitable date for an outward visit to the NIA

Proposed visit by William Shija – Secretary General of CPA

The Secretary advised Members that the Secretary General was keen to visit the Scottish Parliament and we were looking for a suitable date. One suggestion was to invite the Secretary General to attend the Commonwealth Day dinner with Consul Generals. Given the number of events held in London that week however, this suggestion was deemed unfeasible. The Secretary was asked to try to identify an event to which the Secretary General could either attend or have a key role.

Action (4-2): The Secretary to try to identify an event to which the Secretary General could either attend or have a key role.

Commonwealth Day

The Executive Committee discussed planning for securing the slot for the Commonwealth Day Debate on Wednesday 10 March. This slot had been allocated to the SNP. Sandra White MSP undertook to speak to the Business Manager about securing this slot for a Members’ Debate for Commonwealth Day 2010.

Action (4-3): Sandra White MSP to speak to the Business Manager about securing slot on 10 March for a Members’ Debate for Commonwealth Day 2010.

3. Report on CPA visit to Australia and New Zealand

Ross Finnie MSP and Rhoda Grant MSP, both members of the delegation that visited Australia and New Zealand, attended the meeting to contribute to this discussion of the draft visit report.

The Presiding Officer highlighted some key points in relation to the report, including the sharing of information about the Scottish Parliament’s Festival of Politics, the establishment of a cross party friendship group on Scotland in the New Zealand parliament and the exchange of information and experience in relation to youth participation. The Presiding Officer also highlighted that meetings about minority and coalition governments in both countries had been extremely enlightening. Other members contributed as follows:

- Ross Finnie MSP provided a few additional comments, which were gratefully accepted by the Committee. He had welcomed the opportunity to meet with climate change experts during the visit and noted that as in Scotland, Australia and New Zealand faced common problems and groups interested in climate change are keen to share solutions.
• **Sandra White MSP** noted issues around SDI’s role in Australia and New Zealand and the publicity impact in New Zealand and Australia about the Year of Homecoming. Sandra also felt that the delegation had learned a lot during the visit and she would cascade information to colleagues and others. Sandra also thanked accompanying officials for arranging an interesting and informative visit programme and for support throughout the visit.

• **Rhoda Grant MSP** also felt that the visit had been extremely worthwhile and had learned a lot about policy approaches to domestic violence. She had been impressed with the powers Children’s Services had in Western Australia and noted that the justice and police services were keen that the Childrens’ Services should use their statutory powers more often to deal with domestic violence. Rhoda requested that the report should include information about the New Zealand Government’s Youth Voices initiative which seemed to be highly successful and proactive in engaging the youth of New Zealand in current issues.

The Executive Committee agreed that the Presiding Officer should write to the Clerk/Chief Executive to ensure that the recommendations involving parliamentary officials would be taken forward. Karen Gillon MSP further suggested that the Clerk/Chief Executive should update the Executive Committee in 6 months in relation to the recommendations.

The Executive Committee agreed that subject to the changes discussed, that the draft report be posted on the Scottish Parliament’s website.

**Action (4-4):** The Secretary to meet with Ross Finnie and amend report accordingly and make other changes as agreed.

**Action (4-5):** The Secretariat to arrange for final report to be published on the Scottish Parliament’s website.

**Action (4-6):** The Secretary to draft a letter to the Scottish Parliament’s Clerk/Chief Executive to highlight recommendations involving officials and to contact other organisations as appropriate.

**Action (4-7):** The Secretary to ensure the Executive Committee was updated in 6 months in relation to progress on recommendations.

4. **CPA Governance**

The Committee noted the paper on governance and agreed to defer this item until the next meeting on 3 March.

**Action (4-8):** The Secretary to ensure that this item is included on the Agenda at the next meeting.
5. **Malawi visit (13\textsuperscript{th} – 20\textsuperscript{th} Feb 2010)**

Karen Gillon MSP spoke of the delegation’s aspirations for the forthcoming visit to Malawi. The Executive Committee noted and approved the draft visit programme and objectives.

6. **CPA resources and forward programme of activity – review**

Billy McLaren was invited by the chair to outline the main points in Paper CPA/S3/09-10/4/6. Billy explained that changes in the UK & International Relations Office would have resource implications for support to CPA Scotland Branch. It seemed sensible therefore to re-visit the forward plan of CPA Scotland Branch given recent developments. In general the Executive Committee were content with the proposals for the 2010/11 budget. With regard to the proposed outward visit to India in October 2010 the Executive Committee agreed that objectives would need to be set before a decision could be taken on this proposed visit. Karen Gillon MSP suggested that the outward visit to India could be based on the same model as that for visits to Malawi.

The Branch Executive Committee agreed with Billy that he should report the financial position at each meeting in future.

7. **41\textsuperscript{st} BIMR Regional Conference, Isle of Man (IoM): Monday 10 May to Friday 14 May**

The Executive Committee discussed the invitation and agreed that a cross party delegation should attend for the duration of the business strand of the conference only. The Secretary was asked to amend the notice to Members accordingly and advise the Executive Committee of the financial arrangements in relation to the cultural day before issue.

The Executive Committee also agreed that the delegation should be led by a Member of the Executive Committee.

**Action (4-8):** The Secretary to check the cost implications for Scotland Branch and to amend wording of notice to Members to reflect that Members would be expected to attend the business aspect of the IoM programme.

8. **Any other business**

None.
9. **Future meetings**

The Executive Committee agreed forward dates and rotation of Chair duties for Branch Executive Committee meetings as follows:

- **Wednesday 3 March, 12.45pm to 1.45pm, Room Q1.04, Karen Gillon MSP to chair**
- **Wednesday 28 April, 12.45pm to 1.45pm, Room Q1.04, Jamie Stone MSP to chair**
- **Wednesday 26 May, 12.45pm to 1.45pm, Room Q1.04, Sandra White MSP to chair**
- **Wednesday 23 June, 1.00pm - 1.45pm, AGM - Debating Chamber/CR1, Presiding Officer will chair**

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