MINUTES OF THE 1st MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
CPA SCOTLAND BRANCH HELD ON WEDNESDAY 20 JUNE 2007 IN THE
QUEENSBERRY HOUSE DINING ROOM AT 12.45pm

Present: Ted Brocklebank MSP
Roseanna Cunningham MSP (Chair)
Karen Gillon MSP
Jamie Stone MSP
Margaret Neal (Secretary)

In attendance: Ian Perry, Head of External Liaison Unit

The Secretary congratulated the Members on their recent success in being elected to the Branch Executive Committee.

Members agreed that the practice of rotating the responsibility of chairing the meeting in alphabetical order should continue, and that Roseanna Cunningham MSP should chair the first meeting.

1. Apologies

All Members were present

2. Minutes of the 4th Meeting held on Wednesday 7 March 2007 (For information)

The Secretary advised that Lord James Douglas-Hamilton and Dr Jackson had approved the note of the 4th meeting of the Executive Committee prior to dissolution.

3. 6th AGM – Wednesday 13 June 2007

The Secretary reported that there had been a good turnout at the AGM and that a number of Members who had participated in CPA events during 2006-07 had contributed in a positive manner by sharing their experiences with other Members.

4. CPA Scotland Branch Forward Programme

A lengthy discussion took place about a proposed forward programme for the Session 3 as outlined in CPA PAPER (2007/08–02).

The Executive Committee raised serious concerns about how the Branch could operate effectively in future and fully participate in CPA events in view of the political composition of the Parliament following the Scottish Elections in May. The Executive Committee felt that it would be difficult or perhaps impossible for Scotland Branch to participate in events that did not involve cross party participation unless some form of pairing of Members could be arranged. It was noted that this situation would also affect future outward
visits for parliamentary committees and Ministers of the Scottish Executive. The Executive Committee also discussed the financial implications for the Branch, which would arise if the Branch had to request additional places at seminars and conferences to allow Members of Scotland Branch to participate. The Secretariat advised that on many occasions early booking of flights was recommended to obtain the cheapest travel tickets. Delays in booking flights often resulted in higher costs. In the past the Secretariat arranged non flexible tickets to keep travel costs down. However, if in future, attendance at events could not be guaranteed, more expensive options would need to be considered to ensure that full refunds were available.

The Executive Committee agreed to write to the Presiding Officer in the first instance to ask that he raise these concerns with Business Managers and ask how this perceived difficulty might be resolved to ensure that Members would be able to continue participating in CPA events outside Edinburgh.

The Executive Committee also discussed future outward engagement taking into account past activity. It was agreed that the forward programme would take time to develop however initial thoughts were as follows:

**UK**

Engagement with UK and Wales Branches should continue; however the Executive Committee were particularly keen to develop links with the newly formed Northern Ireland Branch and agreed that the Scotland Branch should be proactive and should explore the possibility of strengthening existing links with colleagues in Northern Ireland under the auspices of the CPA to add value and co-ordinate the engagement which had already begun in other areas of the Parliament. The Executive Committee agreed that the Secretary should contact Northern Ireland Branch to arrange a visit to meet the counterparts once the Northern Ireland Branch had been constituted to explore how both Branches could work together in the future.

The Executive Committee agreed that further consideration should be given to exploring the possibility of setting up a sub group comprising Members of the Branch Executive Committees of the devolved legislatures within the UK to underpin the work undertaken by UK Branch to promote democracy.

**Canada**

The Executive Committee agreed that in view of the strong links with Canada engagement should continue and that the relationship between Scotland Branch and Canadian Branches should continue to develop organically.
Australia

The Executive Committee noted that a planned outward visit to Australia in 2006 had not taken place due to resources being re-directed elsewhere and agreed that in view of the invitations, both formal and informal, that Scotland Branch had received from Australian Members to visit, serious consideration should be given to sending a cross party delegation to Australia in 2008/09. It was also noted that the majority of the Australian sub state delegations were from the State Parliament of Victoria. Given the fact that Scotland and Victoria had signed a 3 year protocol known as the “Sister State Agreement” which covers government, science, culture, health and education at institutional level, consideration should be given to include Victoria as well as the Australian Parliament in the itinerary to add weight to the Scottish Executive’s engagement with Victoria State.

The Executive Committee noted that the travel costs associated with a visit to Australia were likely to be high and asked the Secretary to provide estimated costs based on current prices for consideration at the next meeting.

India

The Executive Committee noted minimal engagement between the Scottish Parliament and Indian legislatures over the past 8 years. The Executive Committee suggested that the Scottish delegation who would visit New Delhi to attend the CPA Annual Conference should take the opportunity to network with Indian delegates to ascertain if there might be interest from any legislatures in exploring the possibility of developing links with the Scottish Parliament. Ideally any potential relationship should have existing foundations to build on through established links between Indian regions and Scotland either through the Indian diaspora in Scotland or cultural and economic links.

South Africa

The Executive Committee noted that the informal relationship between officials from the Gauteng Provincial Legislature (GPL) had been maintained and noted that the CPA cross party delegation who had visited the GPL in February 2005 had recommended that the Scotland Branch should facilitate study visits from the GPL if requested. The Executive Committee also noted the Secretary of the GPL would attend the Session 3 Opening Ceremony to represent the Speaker. The Executive Committee agreed that engagement with the GPL should be maintained and the possibility of expanding existing arrangements would be explored in the future.

Malawi

Ian Perry and the Secretary updated Members of the current state of play in relation to engagement with the National Assembly of Malawi. It was noted that given limited resources, much had been achieved since the first visit to Malawi in February 2005 by the CPA Scotland Branch cross party group. It was also noted that engagement at parliamentary level had been slow mainly
due to the political situation in Malawi. Whilst activity has slowed down since the Parliamentary Service Commissioners visit in February, the Executive Committee hoped that the CPA funded technical assistance project (TAP) would be implemented over the next 3 years. The Secretary was asked to look for opportunities to progress the TAP.

It was also noted that CPA Scotland Branch had collaborated on Malawian initiatives with the Scottish Parliament’s Cross Party Group on Malawi, the Scottish Executive, the Scotland Malawi Partnership and the British Council. The Executive Committee agreed that engagement with Malawi should continue as planned and that the Secretariat should continue to collaborate with the Scottish Executive, public bodies and civil society as appropriate.

It was noted that the Scottish Parliament’s European and External Relations Committee would likely enquire about the Scotland Malawi relationship at some point during the next session.

The Executive Committee asked the Secretary to provide Karen Gillon MSP, Co-Convener of the Scottish Parliament’s Cross Party Group on Malawi during Session 2, with contact details for Malawian MPs who had shown an interest in twinning with a Scottish counterpart. Ms Gillon would contact Malawian politicians during recess to maintain contact at parliamentary level. The Secretary was also asked to ensure that provision was made in the forward programme to include a visit to Malawi at some point during Session 3. Finally, The Secretary was asked to report back at the next meeting on progress to second a senior member of SPCB staff to Malawi.

Pakistan

According to the 2001 census, the largest ethnic minority in Scotland were of Pakistani origin (32,000). The Executive Committee noted that engagement with Pakistan over the past 8 years and agreed that efforts should be made to build links at parliamentary level with the Pakistan Punjab. The Secretary was asked to explore the possibility of including a short visit to the Punjab Provincial Parliament in the itinerary for Members attending the CPA Annual Conference in New Delhi in September 2007.

Tanzania

The Executive Committee noted that during the first 2 sessions of Parliament, a steady flow of delegations from Tanzania had visited the Scottish Parliament and that one MSP had visited Tanzania in 2003. The Executive Committee agreed that the Scotland Branch should continue to be receptive to requests to visit from counterparts in Tanzania.

Nigeria

It was agreed that Scotland Branch should continue to engage in the usual way with delegations from Nigeria.
Other points

The Executive Committee noted that to date most of Scotland Branch’s engagement with the Commonwealth had been with former British colonies. The Secretary was asked to look at Branches without the historical ties to Britain with a view to exploring the different legislative practices and culture that existed within the Commonwealth at some point in the future. Mozambique was cited as an example.

The Executive Committee agreed that a planned approach should be taken and asked the Secretary to draft a forward calendar to reflect activities and engagement that might be included in the CPA Scotland Branch forward programme for the period 2007-2011 taking into account the views of the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee also agreed that the final Forward Work Programme should be included in the agenda for the 2008 AGM for endorsement by Members of the Branch.

Action:

The Secretary was asked to amend the Agenda to correspond with heading on CPA Paper 2007/08–02.

Ian Perry to draft a letter to the Presiding Officer to ask that he raise concerns with Business Managers to ensure that Members would be able to continue participating in CPA events outside Edinburgh given the new political composition in the Parliament.

The Secretary to contact Northern Ireland Branch Secretary to arrange a visit to meet counterparts once the Northern Ireland Branch had been constituted to explore areas of mutual interest and identify ways in which both Branches could work together in the future.

The Secretary to provide estimated costs based on current prices for a cross party visit to Australia for consideration at the next meeting.

Scottish delegates attending the CPA Annual Conference to look for networking opportunities particularly with Indian counterparts. The Secretary to produce a short report specifically about Scottish Indian links on return from the Conference.

The Secretary to explore the possibility of visiting the Pakistan Punjab Province either before or following the CPA Annual Conference in New Delhi.

The Secretary to provide Karen Gillon MSP, with contact details for Malawian MPs with an interest in twinning.
The Secretary to ensure that provision made in the forward programme to include a visit to Malawi at some point during Session 3. Secretary to report back at the next meeting on progress to second a senior member of SPCB staff to Malawi.

The Secretary was asked to look at Branches without historical ties to Britain with a view to exploring the different legislative practices and culture that existed within the Commonwealth.

The Secretary to draft a forward calendar to reflect activities and engagement that might be included in the CPA Scotland Branch forward programme for the period 2007-2011.

The Secretary to note that the Forward work programme is included on the agenda for the Scotland Branch AGM in 2008.

5. 6th CPA Canadian Parliamentary Seminar, Ottawa, Canada

The Executive Committee considered the proposals as set out in CPA paper (2007/08 – 03) and agreed that Scotland Branch should apply for a place at the 6th CPA Canadian Parliamentary Seminar. In light of the perceived difficulties in sending individual Members to CPA events, the Executive Committee asked the Secretary to explore the possibility of securing 2 places for Scotland Branch with the Canadian Branch Secretary. The Executive Committee also agreed that a notice should be sent to all Members inviting applications.

Action:

The Secretary to explore the possibility of securing 2 places for Scotland Branch with the Canadian Branch Secretary.

The Secretary to send out a notice to all Members inviting applications.

6. 19th CPA Parliamentary Seminar, Edinburgh 28 October to 3 November 2007

The Executive Committee considered the information as set out in CPA Paper (2007/08 – 04) and were content with progress so far. The Secretary was asked to continue with arrangements and circulate more detailed information once information about participants and sessions had been received. The Executive Committee agreed to defer a decision about the cultural tour until the next meeting however the general view was that the visit should include a visit to a rural area of Scotland.
The Executive Committee also noted that the costs for hosting the seminar would be high. The Executive Committee also noted that Scotland Branch had received the same level of funding since 2000. The Secretary was asked to find out what the allocation of funding would have been if the annual budget for the Branch had been increased in line with inflation.

Action:

The Secretary to continue to liaise with CPA Secretariat and take forward Seminar arrangements as necessary.

The Secretary to find out what the allocation of funding would have been if the annual budget for the Branch had been increased in line with inflation.

7. **53rd CPA Annual Conference 21 to 30 September, New Delhi India**

The Executive Committee carefully considered the 4 applications received from Members, as set out in CPA paper (2007/08 – 01), to attend the CPA Annual conference in New Delhi and selected Margaret Mitchell MSP as the delegate and Jamie Stone MSP as observer to attend on this occasion.

The Executive Committee noted that the Secretary would also provide Secretariat support to Northern Ireland and Wales Branches.

Action:

The Secretary to write to all applicants advising of the Executive Committee’s decision.

The Secretariat to take forward all arrangements for attendance in the usual way.

8. **CPA Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee noted the contents of the report by Lord James Douglas-Hamilton who had attended the mid year meeting of the International Executive Committee in Cyprus in April. Lord James Douglas-Hamilton had attended this meeting in place of Dr Jackson who had been one of 3 British Islands and Mediterranean Regional Representatives. Duties associated with this role included membership of the International Executive Committee. The Secretary was asked to write to Lord James Douglas-Hamilton to thank him for providing an informative and interesting report.

The Secretary also advised the Executive Committee that an alternate Executive Member should be appointed to attend the CPA International Executive Committee to replace Dr Sylvia Jackson. Scotland Branch had served on the International Committee for 3 years and in accordance with the BIMR constitution, the place would be passed to Wales Branch until October
2010. The Executive Committee agreed that in the interests of continuity, Jamie Stone who had also represented BIMR at the International Executive Committee in Nigeria in 2006, would represent BIMR at the meeting of the International Executive Committee in New Delhi as well as attending the Annual Conference as an observer.

Action:

The Secretary was asked to write to Lord James Douglas-Hamilton to thank him for providing an informative and interesting report.

9. Any Other Business

The Secretary was asked to draft letters to the former members of the Branch Executive Committee who were no longer in the Scottish Parliament to thank them for their contribution to CPA Scotland Branch.

Action:

The Secretary to draft letters to the former members of the Branch Executive Committee thanking them for their contribution to CPA Scotland Branch.

10. Date of next meetings

In view of the consideration that needed to be given to the forward programme and the 19th CPA Parliamentary Seminar, the Secretary was asked to arrange an Away Day for the Executive Committee, similar to that which had been arranged in 2003, for the first week in September to allow ample time to discuss pertinent issues.

Dates for future meetings from September 2007 to June 2008 would be agreed at the next meeting.

Action:

The Secretary to arrange an Away Day for the Executive Committee to take place during the first week in September.

Branch Secretariat
August 2007