MINUTES OF THE 2nd MEETING OF THE CPA SCOTLAND BRANCH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 3 OCTOBER 2007 AT THE ROYAL SCOTS CLUB, ABERCROMBIE PLACE, EDINBURGH

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

Observer: Ian Perry, Head of External Liaison Unit

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Jamie Stone MSP

2. Minutes of the 1st Meeting held on Wednesday 20 June 2007

Agreed

3. Matters Arising

CPA Scotland Branch Draft Forward Programme CPA PAPER (2007/08 – 05)

In general the Executive Committee was content with the revised draft programme of activities which would form the basis of the Branch Forward Work Programme for the period September 2007 to March 2011. However concern was re-iterated about the impact that the current political landscape in the Scottish Parliament would have on Scotland Branch participation at CPA events. It was noted that Business Managers had informed the Presiding Officer that they were aware of the difficulties, which also affected other areas of the Parliament, and consideration would be given to developing an absence management policy.

In the meantime the Executive Committee agreed that opportunities to attend CPA Conferences and Seminars should continue to be offered to Members. The Secretary was advised to seek at least 2 places for Scotland Branch at CPA events in future which, under certain circumstances, might make it easier for Business managers to approve absences.

The Executive Committee agreed that subject to fine tuning, the proposal for forward activities should be put to Members for endorsement at the AGM in June 2008.

19th CPA Parliamentary Seminar, Edinburgh 28 October to 3 November 2007 CPA PAPER (2007/08 – 06)
The Executive Committee discussed the latest draft of the Seminar programme and was content with arrangements. However the Executive Committee asked the Secretary to ensure that contingency plans were in place to manage the impact on arrangements should a UK General Election be called.

6th CPA Canadian Parliamentary Seminar, Ottawa, Canada

The Secretary reported that the CPA had not selected Scotland Branch to participate at the Canadian Seminar.

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

The Secretary was asked to provide a short report about the Conference for consideration at the next meeting.

**Action: Secretary to write short report**

Visit to Northern Ireland Branch

The Secretary reported that the Northern Ireland had agreed to host a visit for the Members of Scotland Branch Executive Committee on Tuesday 13 November as discussed at the last meeting. The Secretary was asked to take forward arrangements for the visit taking into account travel issues for those Members living outwith Edinburgh.

**Action: Secretary to take forward arrangements as required**

CPA Cross Party Outward Visit to Australia 2008/09

At the last meeting of the Executive Committee in June, the Secretary had been asked to estimate the cost of a CPA Scotland Branch cross party visit to Australia. The Secretary advised the Executive Committee that the cost would be in the region of £30,000 to send 4 Members and 1 official to visit the State Parliaments in Tasmania, Australia Capital Territory and Victoria and the Federal Parliament. The Secretary was asked to draft a proposal for a cross party visit to Australian Branches for consideration after the AGM in June 2008.

**Action: Secretary to draft a proposal for a cross party visit to Australian Branches and ensure item on agenda for June 2008 meeting**

Thank you letters to previous members of Branch Executive Committee

The Secretary reported that the President of the Branch had sent letters to former Members of the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee agreed that Patrick Harvie MSP should attend the Climate Change Conference and the Secretary was asked to contact the organisers to secure an additional place for Jamie Stone MSP.

**Action: Secretary to advise applicants of Branch Executive Committee’s decision and take forward arrangements as necessary**

5. Engagement with Malawi CPA PAPER (2007/08 - 08)

The Secretary reported that she had accompanied Ann Nelson to Malawi from 16-19 September and that the visit had been fruitful. It would have been difficult to determine which activities would be most appropriate and useful to the National Assembly of Malawi, without direct Scottish Parliament understanding of the current context, opportunities and challenges within the National Assembly. Therefore it was agreed that Ann Nelson should initially go to Malawi over the week beginning 17 September 2007 to meet with Clerk/Chief Executive, Matilda Katopola and other key players; the aim was, through a series of meetings and research carried out over the 5 days of a scoping study, to arrive at a clear definition of the Stage 2 project, to be agreed by the Clerk/Chief Executives of the respective Parliaments. It was envisaged that Ann Nelson would then return to Malawi in October to carry through the project.

The Secretary reported that during the visit, meetings were held with senior staff at the Malawi National Assembly, and with the other main organisations supporting the Assembly. As a result of these meetings, Ann Nelson would be leaving for Malawi on 5 October for about 4 weeks to work with the Clerk on stage 2 of the Technical Assistance Project which would focus on the following planned activities under Pillar 1 of the National Assembly’s Strategic Plan:

- Develop a code of ethics and register of interests / assets for MPs
- Train / conduct meetings, and provide technical assistance to MPs on Code of Ethics
- Train Commissioners in Corporate Governance and Strategic Plan implementation
- Review the Parliamentary Service Act in consultation with the Ministry of Justice
- Review National Assembly Powers and Privileges Act

Within this broad framework a number of possible mini-projects for Stage 2 had been identified:

Working in association with National Assembly of Malawi staff and others, and drawing on comparators from elsewhere, such as Scotland and the Southern African Development Community, review selected aspects of:
• The Parliamentary Service Act, the National Assembly Powers and Privileges Act and identify possible options for change, ready for discussion with stakeholders in government, National Assembly of Malawi and elsewhere.

• Building on work done during the Parliamentary Commissioners’ visit to the Scottish Parliament in February 2007, and making appropriate use of external learning and knowledge sharing programs (such as the Joint World Bank Institute – Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Program for Professional Development for Parliamentary Staff), run two half-day training seminars, on topics to be selected, concerning practical challenges of parliamentary corporate governance.

• Review any existing draft Code of Ethics for the National Assembly of Malawi, drawing on the experience of operating, reviewing and rewriting such a code in the Scottish Parliament, and discuss findings with interested parties.

In addition, the Secretary reported that she had arranged meetings between the Scottish Parliament’s Clerk/Chief Executive, the Malawian Clerk and the Secretary General of the CPA in New Delhi. These meetings had been productive with the Secretary General fully endorsing the engagement between the legislatures and the Technical Assistance Project. The Secretary General had suggested that future activity might involve other legislatures possibly from Africa and asked that proposals for the next stages of the Technical Assistance Project be forwarded to the CPA Secretariat for approval before activities begin.

The Secretary also reported that Ann Nelson had been tasked to identify other specific areas where Members might make an effective contribution to strengthen the National Assembly. The possibility of sending a CPA Scotland Branch Cross Party delegation to Malawi during February recess was discussed and agreed by the Executive Committee in principle providing specific parliamentary governance projects and objectives could be identified and if sufficient funding was available. This visit would be additional to any activity involving Members of the Technical Assistance Project.

The Executive Committee asked the Secretary to provide regular updates.

Action: The Secretary to provide estimated costs for a cross party delegation visit to Malawi in 2007

6. Any Other Business

7. Dates of next meetings

   Wednesday 27 February 12.45pm
   Wednesday 7 May 12.45pm