Minutes of the Branch Executive Committee Meeting held on
Wednesday 18 June 2008 at 1.30pm in Room TG 45

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

In attendance:  Paul Grice, Clerk Chief Executive
                Ian Perry, Head of External Liaison Unit

The Secretary congratulated the Members of the Executive Committee on
their re-election to the Scotland Branch Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee were pleased that the forward programme of
activities had been approved at the AGM as this would provide a good basis
to plan and prioritise work over the next 4 years.

The Secretary was asked to provide a paper for the next meeting with a
proposed outline visit programme for a cross party delegation visit to Canada
in November 2008.  The Executive Committee agreed that the proposed visit
should complement the Scotland Week programme and add value where
possible to the “Year of Homecoming” as well as focusing on key area of
interests which would benefit Members.

Action: The Secretary to provide a paper for the next meeting with a
proposed outline visit programme for a cross party delegation visit to
Canada in November 2008.

1. Apologies

None

2. Minutes of the 5th Meeting held on Wednesday 7 May 2008

Approved

3. Matters Arising

Visit to Northern Ireland Assembly

Roseanna Cunningham and Ted Brodiebank reported that the visit to the
Northern Ireland Assembly (NIA) had gone well and the delegation had been
well received by Members of the NIA.  The main outcomes had been that the
Executive Committee of CPA Northern Ireland Branch would be amenable to
sharing inward visits with the Scottish Parliament in the future and would be
keen to work with their Scottish counterparts on joint projects if these could be
identified.
It was anticipated that now that the NIA was fully operation there would be scope for working closely on areas of mutual interest at various levels within the parliament.

**CPA Scotland Branch engagement with Malawi - Twinnings (CPA PAPER 2008/09 - 01)**

Paul Grice suggested that the President of the Branch should write to the Speaker of the National Assembly to kick start the Pilot Twinning Initiative. The Secretary was asked to draft a letter for the Presiding Officer’s consideration. The Secretary was also asked to contact all Members to invite notes of interest in participating in the Pilot Twinning initiative based on the proposals outlined in CPA Paper 2008/09 - 01.

The Executive Committee considered that in view of the forthcoming elections in Malawi timing of the Twinnings Pilot Initiative might be an issue however agreed that the initiative should not be delayed.

The Executive Committee were pleased to note that the Convenor of the European and External Relations Committee had agreed to provide informal support and advice to the International Relations Committee of the National Assembly. The Secretary was asked to ensure that this message was conveyed to the Speaker of the National Assembly of Malawi.

**Action:**
- The Secretary to draft a letter for the Presiding Officer’s consideration.
- The Secretary to contact all Members to invite notes of interest in participating in the Pilot Twinning initiative

**CPA Scotland Branch engagement with Malawi – TAP (CPA PAPER 2008/09 - 02)**

A discussion took place about the early of involvement of Members in relation to engagement with Malawi. Members of the Executive Committee re-iterated that there should be Executive Committee approval for activity in advance of engagement which involved TAP funding. The Secretary was asked to ensure that any proposals in future involved Members.

It was noted that there would be around £12,000 left in the Technical Assistance project funding for 2008 and the Executive Committee were keen to ensure that this funding was used to involve Members in accordance with the aims of the TAP. Ian Perry suggested that it would be prudent to wait until the Committee Clerks returned from Malawi at the end of August before considering how this funding should be spent. Ian also informed the Executive Committee that this was the last year of the TAP, however the CPA had not ruled out further funding in the future. The Executive Committee
agreed to wait for an update in September before considering the next stage of the TAP.

Based on information and experience to date, Members of the Executive Committee felt that Scotland Branch Members could assist their Malawian counterparts to hold their government to account more effectively and suggested that it might be worth focussing on this area in the future.

The Secretary was asked to explore the possibility of arranging for Members of the Scottish Parliament to join an election observing team in Malawi during the May 2009 elections. It was also suggested that an area of co-operation between Members could be in the area of exchanging ideas and experience around election campaigning.

**Secretary: to contact CPA secretariat to advise of interest in election observing.**

39th British Island and Mediterranean Region Annual Conference 12-15 May: Gibraltar

The Secretary reported that this Conference had gone well with the Scottish delegation fully participating in the programme. Margaret Mitchell had participated in a working group which had produced a communiqué on Climate Change. This communiqué would be issued to the Commonwealth secretariat and the United Nations to allow the views of Members of the BIMR on this important subject to be known.

The Secretary also reported that Scotland Branch had offered to host the Annual Conference in 2012 as previously agreed with the Executive Committee.

20th Commonwealth Parliamentary Seminar: 8-14 June Ottawa

Bill Butler had recently returned from Ottawa and a seminar report would be provided in due course.

International Parliamentary Governance Seminar 8-20 June 2008

Iain Smith had also recently returned from the UK Branch Seminar and his report would also be available in due course.

54th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, 4-10 August: Kuala Lumpur

The Secretary reported that arrangements were well in hand and would inform the Members of the Executive Committee when nominations for the position of Chairperson of the CPA were known. The Executive Committee agreed that they would provide a steer on voting at the General Assembly for the Scottish delegate.
Action: The Secretary to advise Members of the Executive Committee when all nomination for CPA Chairperson post received.

4. Any other business

Karen Gillon advised that she would be on maternity leave from 19 September and asked the Secretary to send hard copies of papers to her constituency office.

5. Dates of next meeting:

Proposed dates:

- Wednesday 29 October 2008
- Wednesday 10 December 2008
- Wednesday 28 January 2009
- Wednesday 15 April 2009
- Wednesday 17 June 2009