MINUTES OF THE 6th MEETING OF THE CPA SCOTLAND BRANCH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 30 APRIL 2009 at 12.45 in ROOM TG-44

Present:

Ted Brocklebank MSP
Karen Gillon MSP
Jamie Stone MSP
Sandra White MSP (Observer)
Margaret Neal (Secretary)

In attendance: Ian Perry (ELU)
David McGill (Clerking Directorate)

Members of the Executive Committee welcomed Sandra White as an observer. The Executive Committee also paid tribute to the contribution made by Roseanna Cunningham to the work of the Branch since September 2006. Roseanna had made a valuable contribution to the forward programme of activities and had met with many CPA related delegations over the years. Her valuable knowledge about Australia had helped influence and shape the proposed programme for the visit to Australia and New Zealand in 2009. The Executive Committee agreed that the Secretary should ask the President of the Branch to write to Roseanna to personally thank her for her very able contribution and hard work for the Branch over the past 3 years.

Action: Secretary to ask the President of the Branch to write to Roseanna.

1. Apologies
None

2. Minutes of the 5th Meeting held on Wednesday 28 January 2008
Approved

3. Matters Arising

CPA Scotland Branch engagement with Malawi – (CPA Paper 2008/09 (22))

A lengthy discussion took place and the contents of the paper were noted. Members of the Executive Committee were delighted that the CPA Secretariat had agreed to extend the technical assistance project (TAP) however were concerned that perhaps following the election capacity building in the broadcasting area may not be a priority for the
new parliament. The Secretary explained that the funding had been earmarked for broadcasting work by the CPA International Executive Committee and that the funding was not transferable to another project. Broadcasting had been highlighted by the Speaker in February 2008 as an area for collaboration and the Branch Executive Committee had also included broadcasting in a list of suggested projects to undertake during the final year of TAP funding. If Malawi and/or Scotland had reservations about this then the matter would have to be referred back to the International Executive Committee with a fresh proposal which had no guarantee of acceptance. The Executive Committee agreed that this matter should be addressed post election.

David McGill explained that, following an invitation from the Clerk of the NAM to the C/CE of the Scottish Parliament, he had been selected to undertake a series of workshops to assist the Clerk prepare for orientation of Members and to take up the unfinished work around Standing Orders started by another senior official from the Scottish Parliament. David was waiting on a programme. He agreed to provide a report on return. The Members raised concerns about officials participating in technical assistance work without input from Members. David was asked to ensure that officials at the National Assembly understood the importance of involving Members in decision making particularly in procedural matters. The Executive Committee agreed in future that engagement with Malawi should comprise both officials and Members where appropriate. David was asked to try to identify areas specifically for engagement by Members particularly in the areas of scrutiny, twinning and Standing Orders.

David was asked to explore with the Clerk of Parliament, DfID and the British High Commissioner what the likelihood might be of resurrecting the Pilot Twinning Initiative following the election on 19 May and how Members of Scotland Branch might assist the National Assembly/other agencies to deliver post election seminars to Members. In particular finding out what areas the National Assembly feel that the Scottish Parliament might add particular value. David was also asked to inform the Clerk of Parliament and the British High Commissioner that CPA Scotland Branch was particularly keen to establish direct contact with Members and to explore ways in which that might be achieved. For example by establishing a Branch Executive Committee for CPA Malawi or establish a cross party group on Scotland or perhaps seek agreement post election, that the Malawian International Relations Committee might serve as a conduit for activity between Members.

David was also asked to discuss the TAP funding with the Clerk of Parliament to ascertain if this activity would remain a priority for the National Assembly and what might be the likelihood of arranging a
study visit before the end of 2009. The Executive Committee felt that the study visit could and should be wider than broadcasting. Given that the main costs will be incurred on travel, the visit could be extended to include other priority areas for strengthening parliament.

**Action:** David McGill to report back as discussed

The Secretary to ensure that the Presiding Officer writes to the newly elected Speaker in due course

The Secretary to check that the new Convener of the EERC is still content to provide informal advice and information to the IRC at the NAM.

**Post election the Secretary to write to the CPA Secretariat to request re-allocation of funding if broadcasting is not a priority area for technical assistance.**

**Cross Party Outward visit to Australia and New Zealand: 2009** (CPA Paper 2008/09 (23))

Given the distance and costs involved with this visit the Executive Committee felt that maximum value for money should be achieved. The Secretary was asked to provide costs to include Western Australia in the itinerary. It was felt that ties between Scotland and Perth were deep and that it would be a missed opportunity not to visit the State Parliament if arrangements could be made to do so. The Executive Committee were content with the draft objectives and agreed that these could be firmed up once the delegation had been selected and the programme developed.

**Action:** Secretary to issue notice to all Members as soon as consultation with other parliament officials complete.

**Commonwealth Day 2009** (CPA Paper 2008/09 (24))

Noted.

**BIMR Annual Conference** (CPA Paper 2008/09 (26))

**Oral update from Secretary**

The Executive Committee agreed that Karen Gillon MSP should share the place with Dave Stewart given that changes to the BIMR constitution had been proposed. The Executive Committee agreed that Critique paper to be discussed at the BIMR AGM merited further examination. It was agreed therefore to discuss this paper at the next meeting in more detail.

Content.

5. Engagement with the National Assembly of Wales (CPA Paper 2008/09 (27))

The Branch Executive Committee was informed of the offer to hold a meeting in Wales for the devolved branches. The Branch Executive Committee hoped to visit Cardiff later in the year to discuss future collaboration. The Executive Committee asked the Secretary to explore the possibility of another visit to Northern Ireland Branch after summer recess.

6. 8th AGM - Wednesday 24 June 2009 (CPA Paper 2008/09 (28))

The Branch Executive Committee was content with the arrangements to date.

7. 7th CPA/Canadian Parliamentary Seminar: 18-24 October 2009

The Branch Executive Committee agreed that Scotland Branch should apply for a place and instructed the Secretary to note interest.

Action: Secretary to contact Canada Branch with a positive response re invitation to apply.


The Branch Executive committee agreed that Scotland Branch should send 1 observer and 1 delegate to attend the conference.

Action: Secretary to issue notice to all Members in usual way.

9. Any other business

The Secretary was asked to deal with correspondence as discussed.

10. Dates of next meeting

Wednesday 27 May 2009
Wednesday 24 June 2009 AGM