COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION
(SCOTLAND BRANCH)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING THURSDAY 19 JUNE 2014

DRAFT MINUTES

1. The Annual General Meeting (AGM) opened in Committee Room 2 at 1.00 pm and was chaired by the Rt Hon Tricia Marwick MSP, Presiding Officer and President of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Scotland Branch.

Attendance

2. The following Members of the Branch were in attendance: Clare Adamson MSP; Sarah Boyack MSP; Chic Brodie MSP; Roderick Campbell MSP; James Dornan MSP; Patricia Ferguson MSP; Murdo Fraser MSP; Kenneth Gibson MSP; Rhoda Grant MSP; Mark Griffin MSP; Cara Hilton MSP; Lewis Macdonald MSP; Paul Martin MSP; Rt Hon Tricia Marwick MSP; Liam McArthur MSP; Fiona McLeod MSP; Duncan McNeil MSP; Margaret Mitchell MSP; John Scott MSP; Tavish Scott MSP; Kevin Stewart MSP; and Maureen Watt MSP.

3. The Branch President welcomed the Members and noted that the quorum for the AGM of one twelfth of the Membership of the CPA Scotland Branch (the Branch) had been met.

4. The Branch President informed Members that Patricia Ferguson MSP was elected as the Vice-Chair of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Steering Committee in August 2013 and has already established the CWP British Islands and Mediterranean Region (BIMR) steering committee and a structure to enable regular regional CWP Conferences to take place. The Branch President noted that in March 2014 the Scottish Parliament was the first Branch to host the CWP BIMR Conference, which had received excellent feedback.

Agenda Item 1: Apologies

5. Apologies were received from: Alex Fergusson MSP; John Finnie MSP; Ken Macintosh MSP; Stewart Maxwell MSP; Margaret McCulloch MSP; Margaret McDougall MSP; Jamie McGrigor MSP; Alison McInnes MSP; Siobhan McMahon MSP; Stuart McMillan MSP; Nanette Milne MSP; and Elaine Smith MSP.
Agenda Item 2: Minutes from the 2013 AGM

6. The Minutes of the AGM 2013, which took place on Thursday 13 June 2013, were proposed by Patricia Ferguson MSP and seconded by Tavish Scott MSP. The Minutes were agreed to.

Agenda Item 3: The Report and Accounts for 2013-14

7. The Reports and Accounts for 2013-14 were proposed by Tavish Scott MSP and seconded by Patricia Ferguson MSP. All Members present were content. The Branch President invited comments from Members on the Annual Report and the activities which the Branch had supported over the course of the year.

8. Kenneth Gibson MSP spoke about his visit to Dar Es Salaam to attend the 25th Commonwealth Parliamentary Seminar. Mr Gibson had found the seminar to be a very rewarding experience as it covered several relevant and important topics with delegates from 18 countries attending.

9. Mr Gibson chaired the session on the role of Members of Parliament. Other sessions covered the role of the Presiding Officer and the role of committees as well as other topics focussing on strengthening parliamentary democracy. The conference programme started at 9.00 am until 5.00 pm each day with informal networking opportunities available each evening.

10. Mr Gibson had provided information about credit unions to delegates from Tanzania who were very interested in this form of lending.

11. Overall Mr Gibson found the different approaches from other legislatures to be very informative, particularly in the area of parliamentary scrutiny. Mr Gibson recommended that the Branch should continue to apply for Members to attend this Seminar as it was worthwhile and had the potential to enhance and develop the knowledge and skills of Members who were fortunate to attend.

12. The Branch President noted that this was the first time Mr Gibson had attended a CPA Conference and asked Members present to continue to encourage colleagues to apply for these opportunities.

13. Liam McArthur MSP had recently returned from a visit to Malawi. He had been invited by the CPA to participate in their resource team to deliver post-election seminar to the newly elected Members at the National Assembly of Malawi. Mr McArthur outlined the new composition of the National Assembly. The results produced 52 independent MPs and 50 from the Democratic People’s Party (DPP) with the remaining parties taking up the remainder of the seats. The new President, Peter Mutharika, leader of the DPP, was in the process of forming a government. Ninety six new Members were elected and the election of the Speakers took place on 16 June 2014.

14. Mr McArthur led the discussion at four workshops, chaired others and served as a panellist.
15. Mr McArthur felt that the Branch should maintain its relationship with Malawi with a stronger focus on supporting officials although he felt that there seemed to be a desire and need for political input. As a member of the Parliamentary Pairing Initiative with Malawi, Mr McArthur felt that the initiative had not operated as effectively as anticipated.

16. Sarah Boyack MSP added to this discussion by saying that that she had noticed a significant drop in the number of women elected. Ms Boyack mentioned that her own parliamentary partner had not been re-elected. Ms Boyack wondered if there might be scope for the Branch to collaborate with non-governmental organisations and the Scottish Government to strengthen good governance in Malawi. Ms Boyack also stated that in Malawi there was traditionally a high turnover of Members and it may be that workshops which focus on developing Members skills and knowledge should be repeated. Ms Boyack also felt that both Members and officials should be involved in parliamentary strengthening work.

17. Maureen Watt MSP thanked Ms Boyack for bringing forward this suggestion and agreed with her comments. Ms Watt informed Members that her parliamentary partner had been re-elected. She also mentioned that she had been involved in working with the Malawian Women’s Caucus and it might be worth exploring if there was scope to work with the Caucus at some point in the future.

18. Liam McArthur MSP added that local radio was still one of the best forms of communication in Malawi as it had the widest reach. He felt that there could be scope, in view of the work already undertaken by MSPs in this area, to assist the Malawians to develop communication skills to use radio and the media for best effect.

**Agenda Item 4: Election of Executive Committee**

19. Patricia Ferguson MSP, Margaret Mitchell MSP, Tavish Scott MSP, and Sandra White MSP were nominated and elected as Members of the CPA Scotland Branch Executive Committee for the period 2014-15.

**Agenda Item 5: Any Other Business**

20. There were no matters raised under this agenda item.

21. The Branch President brought the meeting to a close and thanked Members for attending.

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