

Note of AGM and CPG Palestine meeting 6th November 2013

MSPs Present

Sandra white
Claudia Beamish
John Finnie
Jim Hume
Jean Urqhart
Guest Humza Yousaf (for CPG Meeting)

Apologies – Drew Smith, Jackie Baillie, Elaine Smith, Alison Johnstone, Sarah Boyack

43 members of the Public Present

AGM

The following were elected by unanimous acclaim

Co-conveners

Sandra White MSP
Jim Hume MSP
Claudia Beamish MSP
Jean Urqhart MSP

Secretary

Tony Grahame

Treasurer

Nick |Dekker

The secretary reported on last years activities and confirmed he would be submitting a report to the corporate body as required. For the next year – 2 exhibitions planned, showing of 'children in chains and also entry to Festival of Politics. 300 names now on contact list. Attendance probably makes this the largest CPG in the Scottish Parliament. Finances stand at £2549.42 with no expenses during the year and all income was from membership fees. Funds to be used for political purposes including high profile speakers.

End of AGM

CPG Palestine meeting 6th November 2013

Jim Hume MSP in the chair welcomed the guest speaker – Humza Yousaf MSP, Minister for International Development and External Affairs

The Minister – Humza Yousaf MSP –addressed the meeting and answered many questions. These included:- his relationship with UK government Foreign Office

CPG can ask minister to influence UK policy on Palestine. The meeting asked the minister to raise concerns about the siege of Gaza and now how the blockade of the tunnels and closure of Rafah crossing was having a disastrous impact of lives in Gaza. The minister described how his relationships work and that he would be pleased to hear from the CPG and to represent views. This could be a productive channel for the CPG to influence decisions and policy.

Resolution at party conferences are up to members of individual parties. These have been moved in the past.

BDS by government and use of companies such as HP G4S Eden springs etc. Eden sPRINGS got a grant for training from a public body. Councils using Viola. G4S involvement in commonwealth games all raised.

The minister urged all present to engage with the procurement bill currently going through parliament.

Check procurement for social and moral issues in procurement. Make representation to committee considering the Bill.

Issue of Alex Salmond meeting Israeli ambassador was raised – the minister advised that policy was not to boycott such relationships but to use them to voice concerns which occurred at the meeting.

The minister was not aware of the recent meeting by another CPG with an Israeli businessman in parliament but advised that he could not censor such meetings and those with concerns should raise it with their MSPs and the sponsor Ken Macintosh MSP.

Understanding of UK role in Palestine - to schools. Balfour project details to be sent to Alisdair Allan MSP the minister responsible for schools.

Jim Malone of FBU raised training fire fighters from Palestine, thanked Scottish Government for its help so far and asked for further assistance. Details to be sent to minister by JM.

The meeting warmly thanked the minister for his attendance and full answers. He advised the meeting that we would welcome any future invitations.

Other business

The meeting discussed future topics and activities

MPs and MEPs how we can work with them

More proactive with all party group Westminster

Children in chains film at next meeting

Parliamentary debate sponsored by Claudia Beamish to be advised to members when the date is available

Discussion about BDS and how this can be promoted

Invite speaker from Gaza re prisoners

Invite MEP re trade and Israel

The meeting closed at 7.30pm