

Minutes of the meeting of the Cross Party Group on the Caribbean

Meeting date: 30th September 2015, Scottish Parliament

Attendees: Margaret Mitchell MSP (Chair), Linda Fabiani (MSP), Felicity Hollands (Parliamentary PA), Marianne Paton (Constituency Staff), Richard Sullivan (PA to James Dornan MSP), The High Commissioner of Barbados to the UK, Reverend Guy Hewitt, Carol Anderson (Secretary to the CPG), Chef Paul Wedgwood (guest speaker), Duncan Turnbull, Elizabeth Williams (hoping to set-up Edinburgh Caribbean Association), Bryan Rankine (ex-KPMG and Northern Venture), Iona McIntyre, Edinburgh University, Professor Sir Geoff Palmer, Janice Hogarth (SPAA), Michael Kane (Isochon), Simon Watson (Caledonian Heritable), Iain Gittens, (Business Friends of Barbados) Paulette Simpson - Jamaica National UK Office as well as The Voice London,

Apologies: Stewart Maxwell, MSP, Vice Chair

1. Welcome

Margaret Mitchell welcomed members and guests and gave a warm welcome to the new High Commissioner for Barbados based in London, Rev Guy Hewitt. Guy gave a short presentation. He mentioned that Barbados is Chair of the Caricom group of Caribbean countries, and he brought his blessings from the other islands to the group. He commended the opening of the new direct flight route from Glasgow to Barbados which starts on 8th November, by Thomas Cook Airlines. Rev Hewitt mentioned that there will be increased interest in events between Scotland and Barbados in 2016, as it's the 50th Anniversary of Independence, on Scotland's St Andrews Night date of 30th November.

2. Chef proprietor Paul Wedgwood

Paul gave an interesting presentation on his work in Barbados where he has invested in a restaurant business and helped it to expand and open additional outlets. He is also Head Chef of the Barbados Celtic Festival and explained how he had made the first ever Bajan haggis using local ingredients including black belly sheep. He explained how he coaches and mentors new staff in Barbados as well as running his own award restaurant Wedgwood The Restaurant in Edinburgh's Royal Mile. He is looking to run a skills exchange programme between the two businesses giving young chefs from Edinburgh and Barbados the chance to experience working life in each other's countries.

3. Minutes - the minutes of the AGM held earlier in the year were proposed by Ian Gittens, and Seconded by Sir Geoffrey Palmer.

4. Matters arising –Iona mentioned events upcoming organised by her colleague Natalie at Edinburgh University on 5th November.

Rev Hewitt mentioned the potential twinning that has been attempted with CPG Member Vikki Lee between Oistins/Hastings and Cumbrae and now Lochwinnoch. Janice Hogarth, Secretary of the Scottish Passenger Association explained how good the news is about Thomas Cook Airlines inaugural direct flight to Barbados from Glasgow for 9

winter weeks, starting Sunday 8th November. She explained that it's a new plane which will have Economy and Premium Economy seats for this route. She also explained that Air Passenger Duty has changed its bandings for the Caribbean routes. TCA are also opening new routes to Cuba and Cancun in Mexico.

Carol spoke about future Celtic Festival Barbados events she is planning for 2016, in Barbados and in the UK.

Next Meeting:

Agreed for 1pm on 20th January 2016, in the Parliament.

Carol M Anderson
Secretary CPG.