

Minutes of the Cross Party Group in the Scottish Parliament, on the Caribbean

Meeting date: 20th January 2016

Attendees: Margaret Mitchell MSP (chair), Stewart Maxwell MSP (Vice chair), Felicity Hollands (Parliamentary PA), Marianne Paton (Constituency Staff), Carol Anderson (Secretary to the CPG), Duncan Turnbull, Elizabeth Williams (working on the Edinburgh Caribbean Association and running Homestay Grenada) Michael Kane (Isochon, working in Jamaica)

1. Welcome

Margaret Mitchell welcomed everyone

2. Apologies

Have been received from Sir Geoff Palmer, Ian Gittens, Janice Hogarth, Vicki and Robin Lee, Iona McIntyre

3. Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting on 30th September 2015 were proposed by Michael Kane, and seconded by Duncan Turnbull.

4. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Dissolution and re- registration of Group ref SP Election

Margaret Mitchell explained that with the forthcoming parliamentary elections, the Group would be dissolved from 00.01 hours on March 24th 2016. And may be re-registered when the new Parliament convenes, within 90 days of the first meeting of Parliament.

The Group went through a draft legacy paper which outlined all the achievements of the Group which would be edited and then shared with all members in due course.

Carol relayed that Sir Geoff, our Treasurer, had reported the £40 in our bank account with ELREC had paid for two lots of coffee for the meetings. So our account was at zero.

6. AOB

Stewart Maxwell mentioned various meetings he was actively promoting the CPG whenever the opportunity arose in meetings. He had been instrumental in arranging for Barbados High Commissioner Rev Guy Hewitt to meet with Richard Lochhead MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment regarding food imports and exports. He also noted that Dr Lisa Cameron MP, based in Westminster, is a member of the International Development Committee and would like to share mutual information (via Stewart Maxwell) that might be of interest/benefit to the CPG. She is the SNP MP contact for the Caribbean.

Carol Anderson mentioned Chef Paul Wedgwood's activities to promote Scotland through making a variation of our national dish Haggis in Peru using local ingredients with a local celebrity chef. Stewart Maxwell had mentioned Paul to STV for their interest.

Elizabeth Williams explained the plans to create an Edinburgh Caribbean Association with others interested in social/business/historical links and cultural links. There is an estimated 3,000 Caricom nationals living in Scotland.

Michael Kane explained his business servicing shipping which carried Rum from Jamaica to the UK. (Grangemouth) He explained that Kingston Jamaica is in St Andrews Parish in Jamaica.

Duncan Turnbull was keen to find out if BMEX is taking place in Barbados this year, ref international export opportunities for Bajan businesses.

Carol reported that Guy Hewitt had communicated that the two possible twinning opportunities between Millport and Lochwinnoch, and Barbados had not materialised as these local authorities were not interested. Duncan Turnbull suggested the Isle of Arran, and its associated company "Taste of Arran" which brings together local producers. Carol suggested Orkney as a local musician was working on the Celtic Festival and had approached the island Council.

APD –the power to control Airport Passenger Duty will be devolved to the Scottish Parliament when the Scotland Bill is finalised The Scottish Government intends to reduce the burden of APD in Scotland by 50%, with the reduction beginning when a Scottish replacement to APD is introduced in April 2018 and delivered in full by the end of the next Scottish Parliament, expected to be in 2021. The proposal is for there either to be a one-off cut to 50% or a gradual reduction down to 50%.

It was agreed in the next session, we should put out an "open invitation" to the High Commissioners from the Caribbean countries to contact us if their business brings them to Scotland and we will organise a special meeting of the CPG.

Carol M Anderson

Secretary

Cross Party Group Caribbean Scottish Parliament

2nd Feb 2016