

Scottish Parliament
Cross Party Group on China Annual General Meeting
Tuesday 9 June 2015
Committee Room 3, Scottish Parliament

***Draft* MINUTES**

Present

Convener: Graeme Pearson MSP

MSPs

Chic Brodie MSP

Mary Fee MSP

Colin Keir MSP

Jamie McGrigor MSP

John Scott MSP

Speakers

Dr Martin Mills, Senior Lecturer in Anthropology, University of Aberdeen

Dr Samantha May, Teaching Fellow, International Relations, University of Aberdeen

Members

Margaret Alcorn, Convener, SELMAS

Nigel Archdale, Anthony Millard Consulting

James Brodie, CBBC Scotland

Cissy Bullock, Scottish Development International, High Growth Markets Unit, China Lead

Sharon Cheng, Investment Director, Clyde Blowers Capital

Dr Roger Collins, Honorary Fellow, The University of Edinburgh

Brian Duncan Thomson, Ayr

Linda Fu, International Client Relations Director, HBJ Gateley

Jessica Guo, EEB Consulting

Dr Richard Jin, Co-Director, Confucius Institute for Scotland, University of Edinburgh

Li Jingyi, Moray House School of Education

Catriona Llanwarne, Senior Solicitor, Burness Paull LLP

Simon Macaulay, SCEN Field Worker and University of Aberdeen

Jim McColm, Sounding board at Panda Modium, China / Scotland Solutions, Ayr

Judith McKerrecher, Professional Development Officer, CISS

Brian Mcleish, Stakeholder Engagement, Scottish Enterprise

Emma Meredith, International Director, Edinburgh College

Changchub Mermesel, Edinburgh resident

Paul Miller, Founder, Eden.Mill St Andrews Distillery and Brewery

Victoria Miller, Graduate in Law and Business Law, Heriot-Watt University

Tim Musson, ET Horizons

Wing-Yan Ng MSYP, St George's School, Edinburgh

Fiona Pate HMIe

Manan Rathod, Clyde Blowers Capital

Dr Jim Scott, University of Dundee, University of Edinburgh, ELLC Consulting

Sandie Robb, Senior Education Officer, RZSS

Ruth Taylor, First State Stewart

Graham Thompson, Director, The Blackford Trust

Wang Yuchen, PhD Student, Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh

Nancy Zhang, Repsol

Guests

Kenny McBrearty QC, Axiom Advocates

Dr David Tann, Assistant Dean (International), School of Engineering & Computing, UWS

Brian Thomson, Architect

Nicol Watt, Bioengineer

Secretary

Dr Judith McClure CBE

1 Welcome from the Convener

Graeme Pearson MSP, Convener of the Cross Party Group on China, welcomed members and guests to the Annual General Meeting.

2 Apologies

Apologies were noted from:

Jackie Baillie MSP

Dr Richard Simpson MSP

Robert Brennan, Howden

Helena Brown, Director, Burness Paull LLP

Professor Tariq Durrani, Vice President International, Royal Society of Edinburgh

Sheila Forbes, SIPRA, University of Strathclyde

Professor Natascha Gentz, Director, Confucius Institute for Scotland, University of Edinburgh

Cathy Gu and Peter Kwok, Co-Directors, Young Chinese Professionals

Alistair Hamilton, SRUC

Ed HOFFIE, Eden School of English, Nanning

Janet Kelso, Professor Development Officer, SCILT

Lindesay Low, Legal Advisor, Scotch Whisky Association

Brian McClean, Glasgow Airport

Councillor Eoghann MacColl, East Ayrshire Council

Councillor Maureen McKay, East Ayrshire Council

Colin Mitchell, Deputy Headteacher, Lasswade High School, Midlothian

Margy Ogilvie-Stuart, Crown and Stone

Ed Payne, Senior Manager: Education, Scottish Development International

Neil Phillips, Positive Solutions (Glasgow)
 Colin Rogers, International Recruitment Manager, E & SE Asia, University of Strathclyde
 Rory Swinson Reid, Project Co-ordinator at Collaborate
 James Trolland, Ridrum International
 Angus Tulloch, Joint Manager, First State Investments Asia Pacific Leaders' Fund
 Iain Valentine, Director of Giant Panda Project and Strategic Innovations, RZSS
 Alan Williamson, Headteacher, Lasswade High School, Midlothian

3 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: Election of Office Bearers

3.i Convener

Mary Fee MSP took the chair for the election of the Convener. Colin Keir MSP nominated Graeme Pearson MSP. Jamie McGrigor MSP seconded this nomination and there were no others.

Graeme Pearson MSP was elected unanimously.

3.ii Vice Convener

Graeme Pearson MSP took the chair. He nominated Colin Keir MSP as Vice Convener and Mary Fee MSP seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations and **Colin Keir MSP was elected unanimously.**

3.iii Secretary

Graeme Pearson MSP nominated Judith McClure CBE as Secretary. Dr Jim Scott seconded this nomination. There were no other nominations and **Judith McClure CBE was elected unanimously.**

4 Annual Return Form: the Group's Membership & Activities 2014-15

4.i Accuracy of Return

The Secretary presented the Annual Return 2015, describing the Group's Membership and Activities since the last Annual General Meeting.

The accuracy of the Return was agreed.

4.ii Statement of Activities

The Statement of Activities was agreed.

4.iii Financial Support Declaration

The Financial Declaration was agreed.

AGENDA FOR MEETING OF 9 JUNE 2015

❖ Tribute to Tom McCabe

The Convener paid tribute to Tom McCabe, former Convener of the Cross Party Group on China, who died on 19 April 2015. He was a member of the Scottish Labour Party and first became an MSP for Hamilton South in the first elections to the Scottish Parliament in 1999, serving until May 2011. He held the positions of Minister for Parliament (1999-2001), Deputy Minister for Health and Community Care (2003-2004) and Minister for Finance (2004-2007).

The Convener said that he had been a personal friend of Tom McCabe for thirty years and he had enormous respect for his industry, integrity and commitment. His death from cancer had come at the early age of sixty. The Convener said that his thoughts were with Tom McCabe's wife and young daughter.

The Convener said that he had met Tom when he himself was a young Police Inspector, and Tom as a young Councillor. He was clearly a serious and committed politician, for became Leader of South Lanarkshire Council before being elected to the first Scottish Parliament and becoming Finance Minister. The Convener said that he had always been impressed by Tom's honesty and straightforward way of doing business. He would be remembered.

5 Minutes of the Meeting of 24 March 2015

The Minutes of the Meeting of 25 March 2015 were approved.

6 Matters arising

(a) *Item 8: Update on Chinese Language Presentations by Dr Jim Scott; his lecture on 27 May 2015 and proposed question by the Convener to the Scottish Government*

The Convener said that he intended to put a question to the Scottish Government concerning the development of Chinese language teaching in Scotland's schools as well as cultural links between China and Scotland.

See attached note of the Convener's question in the Chamber, answered by Fiona Hyslop MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Europe and External Affairs, 17 June 2015.

(b) Item from Annual Review: Meeting of 4 November 2014: Convener's proposal to invite a Minister to present the Group's annual review of Scotland's Strategy for Stronger Engagement with China in November 2015

The Convener said he would invite the Cabinet Secretary or Minister to update the Group on the China Plan, including the language challenges revealed in the SQA statistics. He would encourage Ministerial attendance; it had been good in the past to have the presence of officials, but it would be of great value to hear a Ministerial view. He believed that the numbers present at meetings of the Cross Party Group on China justified this.

The Convener wrote to Fiona Hyslop MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Europe and External Affairs, on 11 June 2015, inviting her to give an update on 'the Scottish Government's China Plan and regarding the teaching of Chinese language in schools.'

7 Presentation by Dr Martin Mills and Dr Samantha May, University of Aberdeen

Environment, Law and Industry in the People's Republic of China

One of the most pressing concerns emerging from China's history-making boom over the last twenty years is the cost that has been borne by the environment, and the impact of those environmental changes on population, health and economic life, both nationally and regionally. From the dramatically declining state of air quality in major cities and water purity in rural areas, the desertification of much of the region's grasslands, and the instability of China's major river systems, the environment has become a central political, legal and state concern in the PRC. The last two decades have seen a massive expansion in state-related and independent civil society organisations focused on these issues, and in the last two years, major revisions have been put in place to China's environment laws. Dr Mills and Dr May examined the environmental challenges faced by the growing PRC, the government's responses to them, and the new conditions these impose on NGOs and businesses alike.

Dr May said that the rapid pace of industrialization, population growth and urbanization had led to six major environmental challenges:

- i. Desertification**
- ii. Deforestation**
- iii. Flooding**
- iv. Water Shortage**
- v. Water Pollution**
- vi. Air Pollution**

Dr May said that China's established desert areas make up 2.5 million square kilometres: 27% of its land area. Desert areas are expanding at a rate of 2,460-10,400 square kilometres per year. Areas presently at risk of desertification cover as much as 3,317 million square kilometres: 34.6% of land area. 400 million people are at risk. The supply of water is the most important issue which China faces.

Flooding and deforestation are major problems in the Yellow and Yangtze river areas, affecting farming. Because forests are good for water supply and keep mud out of rivers, the combination of flooding and deforestation not only creates drought but also affects the pollution not only of water but also of air. 76 out of 118 large cities in China have seen the growth of water pollution; WHO estimates that 360 million of China's families have no access to clean drinking water. Air pollution was also a huge problem, most manifest in major cities such as Beijing.

China's response had recognised these very serious issues from the 1970s onwards, signing the Kyoto Agreement and passing many national and local laws. Now the challenge is to enforce the laws in response to industrialisation: the laws are good but hard to implement and the clash between productivity and conservation cause conflict between government departments at local levels. Overall there is not enough sharing of information and strategies are not always powerful, though some good work is being done with the co-operation of local government and international groups.

Dr Mills examined the cost of shifting to renewables:

Desertification	<i>Nature Reserves and Grassland Laws Population Relocation</i>
Water Shortages	<i>Water Relocation Canals and Pipelines</i>
Deforestation and Flood	<i>New Forestry Regulations (1992)</i>
Water Pollution	<i>Crackdown on polluting companies Rise of ENGOs (Environmental NGOs)</i>
Air Pollution	<i>Shift to hydroelectric power (dams)</i>
<i>Hidden costs: inducing seismic activity: the Sichuan Earthquake of 12 May 2008 results in 80,000 dead, 10 million left homeless, and \$150 billion rebuild cost.</i>	

Dr Mills said that China was acting to halt deforestation and to encourage reforestation, e.g. in Eastern Tibet. It was fighting air pollution and residents of major cities were learning to deal with it through domed buildings, for instance new schools.

Dr May concluded the presentation by discussing the shifting environmental costs and the international context. There was no doubt that China was aware of its huge environmental problems and was seeking to tackle them. But it was difficult to balance conflicting needs. Legal issues locally, for instance, made it difficult for companies seeking to work in China. The enormous challenges of balancing economic growth with conservation remain. It was an international problem, transcending China: 15 other countries shared its borders and 16 its rivers.

The Convener expressed the great thanks of the Group for the vital and detailed presentation and invited discussion.

John Scott MSP asked about water storage and the percentage losses through evaporation: Dr Mills said that this was a major problem and explained the geological reasons.

Jamie McGrigor MSP referred to the loss of water to rivers through the melting of glaciers and asked whether it were possible to store water in these areas, for use as pump storage. Dr Mills replied that the remaining glaciers are largely south facing and there no use from China's perspective, that it was hugely expensive to use the water in mountainous regions and that there was geological instability.

There was further discussion concerning the particular issues of Chongqing, the varied successes of NGOs, and the demand for potable water. The Convener then thanked Dr Mills and Dr May, and the Group added its response with warm applause.

Dr Mills has been in touch to say that several members of the Group kindly asked for copies of the presentation. He explained that generally this is not something they do, largely because they tend to be a bit messy, but also because the provenance of some of the photos is complex and not for publication. However, he and Dr May have most generously offered to provide a briefing paper that covers the material more clearly. They're usually about 3-4000 words, with an executive summary at the beginning. The Secretary accepted this offer with alacrity! Dr Mills said that this could be produced in the late Autumn, and that he and Dr May would be pleased to do this since from their perspective, it helps make those research arcs worthwhile. Such papers come at no charge, and we're always happy to take editorial input from Groups near the end of the drafting cycle. The Secretary expressed the huge thanks of the Group and will circulate the paper when it is received.

8 **Chinese New Year Event in Glasgow 2016**

The Convener said that he had been approached over preparations for the Chinese New Year Event 2016 in Glasgow. A Committee would be formed over the Summer and preparations would take place in the Autumn. There would be a procession and cultural events in George Square. **He invited members who wished to be involved to let the Secretary know.** The Convener said that there was genuine energy about the event. He would invite a representative to speak about it in due course.

9 **Updates from Members**

- **The Eden.Mill Distillery and Brewery and Law and Business in Shanghai**

Paul Miller, Managing Director of the Eden.Mill Distillery and Brewery at the former paper mill in Guardbridge, north of St Andrews, introduced his daughter Victoria Miller, who had taken Eden.Mill products to China. Her experiences in Shanghai can be seen at:

<https://vimeo.com/129429506>

They had read Tim Clissold's book, *Mr China*, and had been terrified! But Victoria had learned Mandarin at school and had confidence; getting to know the right people, positive personal relationships, delivery on promises and using Scotland's reputation had all helped. Victoria Miller said that SDI had been very helpful, especially in dealing with legal issues.

Chic Brodie MSP said this experience reinforced the importance of the food and drink industry for Scotland's economy and international trade.

- **National Youth Orchestra Scotland Tour of China**

The Secretary reported that National Youth Orchestra of Scotland Symphony Orchestra would be giving a concert on 29 July 2015, 19:30 at Perth Concert Hall.

In 2004, NYOS toured China with its Children's String Ensemble, but 2015 will be the very first time NYOS has toured China with a full symphony orchestra. Everyone connected with the Organisation cannot wait to see the Orchestra perform in three world-class venues in Shanghai, Tianjin and Beijing.

- **Cross-Party Steering Group on Post-Study Work Visa**

The Secretary reported that a group including representatives of all major political parties in Scotland has been set up to work for the reintroduction of the Post Study Work Visa. The cross-party group, which has been established by Europe and International Development Minister Humza Yousaf, will look at how the visa can best work in Scotland.

- **Sandie Robb, Senior Education Officer, RZSS**

Sandie Robb, Senior Education Officer of RZSS, reported that there would be a Senior Delegation from the State Forestry Administration will be China at Edinburgh Zoo in the 1st week of July. They but also will be discussing the continuing giant panda programme wildlife trade looking at RZSS expertise in helping to tackle illegal using the world expert RZSS genetics team.

- **New Confucius Classrooms**

Judith McKerrecher, CISS Professional Development Officer, reported that 21 new Confucius Classrooms would be opened in primary schools across Scotland.

- **ESMS in China**

Nigel Archdale reported on continued progress with the establishment of a school in China by ESMS.

- **Scottish Enterprise and China**

Brian Mcleish introduced Cissy Bullock, the China Lead for Scottish Development International, High Growth Markets Unit

10 **Any Other Business**

The Convener reported on the visit of the Shanghai Education Convention: 30 educational establishments had visited Cork, Falkirk and Edinburgh and London. He had been overwhelmed by their interest and energy.

11 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Cross Party Group on China will be held on Tuesday 29 September 2015 at 6.00 pm in Committee Room 3 of the Scottish Parliament.

There will be a presentation by Dr Alasdair Allan MSP, the Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages. Dr Allan has been invited by the Convener to update the Cross Party Group on China on progress with the Scottish Government's China Plan and on the teaching of Chinese in Scotland's schools.

There will also be a presentation by Tim Clissold, the businessman with two decades of experience in China and author of *Mr China: a Memoir* and *Chinese Rules: Mao's Dog, Deng's Cat, and Five Timeless Lessons from the Front Lines in China*. Tim Clissold is very keen that throughout the UK we should be looking at qualifications in Chinese Civilisation and not simply Chinese Language.

His presentation is entitled *Closing the Knowledge Gap on China*.