

Cross Party Group on Cuba AGM
3rd February 2016 6pm
Committee Room 5

MINUTES

- 1. Elaine Smith MSP** welcomed everyone to the AGM meeting and Indication she would do a fuller introduction after the AGM formalities.

ATTENDEES

Elaine Smith MSP
Sandra White MSP
Neil Findlay MSP
Hugh Henry MSP
Lesley Brennan MSP
Denise Christie
Kath Campbell
Matthew Crighton
Colin McCulloch
Lesley Dobbin
Dr Joan Cutting
Pauline Boyle
Hernando Fernandez
Stuart Hyslop
Ronnie Moran
Valentina Montoya Martinez
David Russell
Marcelo Russell
Rev Graham McGeoch

- 2. APOLOGIES**

Murdo Fraser MSP, Jim Hume MSP, Drew Smith MSP, Phil McGarry, Tommy Kane, Neil Anderson, Dougie Kerr, Marlyn Glen, Margaret McGregor, Ann Henderson, Rev Graham McGeoch, Freida Park, Cllr Gordon Munro, Arthur West, Margaret Cameron, Kath Bateman, Liz Elkind, Ian Parsons,

- 3. Minutes of the last meeting**

Minutes of the last meeting (9th October 2015) were moved as a correct record by Neil Findlay MSP and seconded by Kath Campbell.

- 4. Election of Office Bearers**

Convener – Elaine Smith MSP was nominated by Kath Campbell and seconded by Sandra White MSP

Deputy Convener – Sandra White MSP was nominated by Neil Findlay MSP and seconded by Kath Campbell

Deputy Convener – Neil Findlay MSP was nominated by Sandra White MSP and seconded by Stuart Hyslop

Secretary – Liz Elkind was nominated by Elaine Smith MSP and seconded by Sandra White MSP

Elaine Smith MSP then welcomed everyone to the meeting, mentioning that it will be the last meeting of this session in Parliament and that she hopes the group will be reformed in the next session: obviously depending on who is elected. **Elaine** gave history on the group which had initially been established in 1999 by John McAllion. **Elaine** acknowledged the support given by the group over the years especially with regard to the Miami 5 Campaign and noted that the Members Debate in 2012 was the first parliamentary debate anywhere outside Cuba about the 5. **Elaine** noted that the group had not been able to arrange a delegation to visit Cuba and hoped that in the future they might tie in with the Westminster APG to enable this to happen.

Elaine thanked speaker **Denise Christie of FBU** for attending and asked everyone to show their appreciation for the catering the FBU had provided. All members introduced themselves.

5. **Kath Campbell CSCS**

Kath Campbell acknowledged all the support that had been given over the years by the group, giving tribute to Elaine for chairing and organising the meetings. **Kath** gave an update on the Miami Five advising that they are possibly visiting in the summer. She noted that because of the blockade, companies were still finding it difficult to trade in Cuba and recently the Coop Bank had closed all bank accounts. **Kath** handed over a gift to Elaine stating that she hoped she would be re-elected.

6. **Update from the Venezuela Solidarity Campaign on matters of interest in the region.**

Matthew Crighton gave an update to the group on the current situation in Venezuela election. Matthew advised how the Solidarity campaign continues to offer solidarity and support. He advised of forthcoming events in London on 5th March and 12th March in Glasgow.

MSP's expressed their concerns at the current situation with both Neil Findlay and Sandra White commenting on their experiences whilst during visits to Venezuela.

Elaine Smith MSP thanked Matthew for his contribution.

7. **Guest Speaker: Denise Christie FBU Scottish Regional Treasurer**

Elaine Smith MSP introduced **Denise Christie** who spoke on her experiences *via* her trade union visits to Cuba and commented on the advances in supporting and promoting LGBT rights in Cuba. It was also noted that the FBU offer unfailing support to the SCSC which was much appreciated by Kath Campbell.

Elaine Smith MSP thanked Denise again for taking the time to come along and for supplying the catering.

8. AOCB

Elaine Smith MSP then closed the meeting by thanking everyone for coming and warmly welcomed Chilean singer **Valentina Montoya Martinez** and **David Russell** of Voces Del Sur who entertained the group with Latin American music.