

Cross Party Group on Cuba
Wednesday 14th January
Q1.03 6pm

1. **Elaine Smith MSP** welcomed everyone to the meeting and commended the campaigning carried out over the past 17 years which resulted in the freeing of the Miami Five. Elaine also advised that Neil Findlay MSP had lodged a motion in the Parliament and that she had asked a question at First Minister's Question Time relating to the issue. She then invited all members to introduce themselves.

Attendees

Elaine Smith MSP
Neil Findlay MSP
Louise Clark
Joan Cutting
Frieda Park
John Quinn
Graham McGeoh
Pauline Boyle
Matthew Crighton
Paul Harding
Ian Parsons
Elspeth Parsons
Colin McCulloch

2. **Apologies**

Stuart Hyslop, Kath Campbell, Tommy Kane, Sandra Whyte MSP, Lesley Dobbin.

3. **Minutes of previous meeting (05/02/2014 – AGM)**

Minutes of the last meeting were moved by **Elaine Smith MSP** and seconded by **Neil Findlay MSP**.

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

Matthew Crighton updated the group on the current situation in Venezuela. Matthew spoke of the sanctions the USA had enforced and the fact that there are riots on the streets of Venezuela. He also updated the group that Venezuela needs support given the fall in oil prices and that Venezuela now has a place on the UN Security Council. Matthew also highlighted the Justice for Columbia Campaign. **Neil Findlay MSP** suggested a possible event in parliament about South America and indicated that trade unions could get involved and help host such an event.

5. **Guest speaker – Frieda Park**

Freida Park gave an insightful outline of the International Commission of Inquiry into the case of the Cuban Five. Freida explained that events had changed since the Inquiry but work still had to be done. She also congratulated all involved in campaigning for the release of the Miami Five.

6. AOCB

Ian Parsons explained that the Cuba Conservation Trust were still having difficulties with banking however may have found a route through Spain. Ian also advised that their website is currently being set up. **Elaine Smith MSP** suggested they may want to deliver a presentation to the group when the website is fully up and running and the group agreed.

7. Date of next meeting

Elaine Smith advised that an AGM would have to be held relatively soon and also that a meeting should be set up for Spring and Brian Wilson and Cathy Jamieson MP will be invited along as guest speakers.

Elaine thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.