



CPG ON CULTURE: MINUTES

15 SEPTEMBER 2015, 5.30PM-8PM

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT, COMMITTEE ROOM 2

THE USE OF SCOTS ACROSS THE ARTS, SCREEN AND CREATIVE
INDUSTRIES

Introduction

The following MSPs were noted to be in attendance:

- Jean Urquhart (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)
- Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP)
- Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
- George Adam (Paisley) (SNP)

Group apologies received from:

- Lloyd Anderson
- Claire Cunningham
- Annette Gillies
- Billy Kay
- Eoghann MacColl
- Jennie Macfie
- Carol Main
- Sheena McDonald
- Catriona Miller
- Ian Mills
- Ann Packard
- Dharshi Santhakumaran
- Simon Thoumire

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved.

Mary Blance/James Robertson/Liz Niven – readings

Attendees listened to readings in Scots from Mary Blance, James Robertson and Liz Niven.

Panel Discussion

There then followed a panel discussion on the subject of musical, featuring:

- Dr Alasdair Allan, Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages, Scottish Government
- Mary Blance, Convener, Shetland ForWirds
- Katrina Lucas, Scots Language Coordinator, Education Scotland
- Hamish McDonald, Scriever
- Liz Niven, Writer and Poet
- James Robertson, Novelist and Poet
- Donald Smith, Director, Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland (TRACS)

The discussion is available to listen to in full online at:

<http://www.cpgonculture.com/previous-meetings/cpg-on-culture-meeting-tuesday-15-september-2015/>

The Minister spoke first. He explained his background in the use of the Scots language and expressed his desire to see further support. He pointed to achievements in recent years including increases in

James Robertson discussed the challenges faced by Scots in publishing, stating that they face an uneven playing field in access to markets. James expressed the need to produce more books for adults, in particular, in Scots. He also recommended that there be a fund established for the Scots Language, similar to the Gaelic Books Council.

Mary Blance provided an overview of the work of Shetland Fir Wirids in promoting the Shetland dialect. She called for Parliamentarians to respect the work being done in support of Scots. You can read more about the group online here: <http://www.shetlanddialect.org.uk/>

Katrina Lucas spoke to the group about the work of the language and literacy team at Education Scotland and their current interaction with schools. She stated that ES was always seeking new partnerships to develop new opportunities for engagement. Katrina underlined the need for greater diversity in the use of Scots dialects across the arts, screen and creative industries.

Donald Shaw highlighted that we are at an important and exciting time for Scots. He noted issues with the classification of the language but was encouraged by the increased volume of work being published in Scots. He cited examples of work by the Scottish Storytelling Centre and TRACS. He stressed that advocacy of Scots would need to continue in order to develop on these advances.

Hamish McDonald informed attendees of work planned for the coming years around his role of Scriever. He spoke of the value of the inclusion of Scots in the Curriculum for Excellence and suggested that further outreach programmes, such as those in prisons and with theatre groups would be beneficial.

Liz Niven stressed the need to support our national voice and warned that lack of funding for publishing has resulted in a lack of material in Scots. She recommended an increase in the use of Scots signage to increase awareness and acceptance of Scots as a language. Liz warned of the folly of letting Scots language materials go out of print, as has been the case in the past.

Group Discussion

The discussion was then opened up to the Group and is similarly available online at the following link:

<http://www.cpgonculture.com/previous-meetings/cpg-on-culture-meeting-tuesday-15-september-2015/>

Any Other Business/Next Meeting

- It was noted that the next meeting of the Group was scheduled to take place on Tuesday 1 December, 2015.