

## **Minutes Annual General Meeting (AGM) – CPG on France, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2015**

**MSP in attendance: Christian Allard MSP, Malcolm Chisholm MSP, Cameron Buchanan MSP, Margaret McDougall MSP**

**Other attendees : Consul General Pierre-Alain Coffinier, Adèle Mortier, Marie-Caroline Nivaigne, Niall MacDonald, Sheena Cleland, Tom Wight, Christine Jones, Franck Arnold, Vicky Crichton, Anne-Colette Lequet, Christian Albuissou, Jocelyn MacDonald, Vincent Guérin**

### **1. Welcome and introductions**

The AGM was opened by Christian Allard MSP, Convener of the CPG on France, who welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

### **2. Apologies**

Richard Baker MSP

### **3. Minutes of last meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

### **4. AGM**

Election of office bearers:

Nomination for Convener – Christian Allard MSP  
Vote unanimous, Convener: Christian Allard MSP

Nominations for Deputy Conveners – Alex Johnstone MSP & Richard Baker MSP  
Vote unanimous – Deputy Conveners: Alex Johnstone MSP & Richard Baker MSP

Treasurer: Christine Jones  
Vote unanimous: Christine Jones

Secretary: Adèle Mortier  
Vote unanimous. Secretary: Adèle Mortier.

Christian Allard MSP closed the AGM.

### **5. Talk by Pierre-Alain Coffinier : 5 years as a Consul general**

Consul General of France Pierre-Alain Coffinier talked to the members about his 5 years' experience as a consul in Edinburgh, a very rich and varied experience. It was a pleasure for him to spend 5 years in Scotland.

The French consulate is today at crossroads with changes to come ahead. A decision has been taken to focus the work of the French Consulate General in Edinburgh on outreach. It will continue promoting political, economic and cultural relations, building on the excellent ties between France and Scotland, which are an important aspect of the exceptional bonds between France and the United Kingdom. Some consular services will be transferred to the Consulate General in London. The new Consul general in Edinburgh, M. Emmanuel Cocher, will hold both positions of Consul general of France and Director of the French Institute in Scotland. The

French community in Scotland is strongly integrated. There are 5538 French citizens registered at the Consulate general of France at the moment.

Pierre-Alain Coffinier thanks all members of the CPG for being part of the strong Franco-Scottish connection existing in Scotland. It has been a real pleasure for him to work in relation with the French Embassy in London regarding developing Franco-British and Franco-Scottish matters. It has been the occasion to witness and report on events like the Holyrood elections and the independence referendum, to take part to events such as the Ryder Cup or the French Trade delegation to Scotland and to lead several important projects, especially the signature of 3 agreements between France & Scotland (culture, education, marine energy).

## **6. Any other business**

The members of the CPG sent a letter to Laurent Fabius, French minister for the Foreign Affairs (CC the Ambassador in London), to ask if there is a possibility that, with the proposed changes to the structure of the Edinburgh Consulate, a minimal service for passports can be retained for the French citizens living in Scotland (and French citizens from the North of England). The CPG has not received a response so far. Anne-Colette Lequet suggests to send copies of the letter to Matthias Fekl, minister for French citizens living abroad, Foreign trade and Tourism, to Christophe Premat, French MP for the French nationals living in the Northern constituency and to French Senators representing French nationals living abroad. Christian Allard's office will take care of it.

Christian Allard MSP, convener of the cross-party group on France, closed the meeting.