

## **Cross-Party Group on China**

### **Minutes of the Meeting**

**Date: 29 November 2016**

#### **Attendance**

##### **MSP Members:**

- Mary Fee MSP
- Colin Smyth MSP

##### **Special Guest:**

- Consul General Pan Xinchun
- Consul Lyu Yanxia

##### **In Attendance:**

- Daniel Cairns

##### **Members:**

- Bethany Gallagher, Individual
- Jacqueline Gallagher, Individual
- Dr. JIN Ri (Richard), Co-Director of the Confucius Institute for Scotland in the University of Edinburgh
- Robert Dalzell, North Lanarkshire Council
- Margaret Alcorn, Convenor of SELMAS
- Janice Dickson, Chairman the Scotland China Association
- Colin Mitchell, Depute Head Teacher, Lasswade High School, Midlothian
- Rosemary Mitchell, Individual
- Daniel Crabbe and Abi Scotland, Pupils from Lasswade High School (Invited guests)
- Rosemary Mitchell, Convener of SCEN Ambassadors
- Iain Nicol, Partner, Balfour & Manson LLP
- Neil Phillips, Positive Solutions (Glasgow)
- Sandie Robb, Senior Educational Officer, Royal Zoological Society for Scotland
- Dr Jim Scott, ELLC Consulting, Senior Lecturer, School of Education and Social Work, University of Dundee
- Gavin Mowat
- Catherine Cairns, Scottish Enterprise
- Dr Meryl James, Senior Professional Development Officer Scilt/Ciss
- Orchid Liu, UK Chinese Times

- Margie Ogilvy-Stuart
- Dr Sylvia Warnecke, School of Languages and Applied Linguistics, The Open University in Scotland
- Yuwen Fortune, Jordan hill School Head of Swire Chinese Language Centre at Jordanhill School
- Will Tuladhar Douglas, Director, Confucius Institute Aberdeen University
- Helen Ford
- James Brodie, Scotland & China Business Adviser
- Tom Nisbet, Scottish Churches' China Group
- Peter Kwok - The UK Federation of Chinese Professionals (FCP) & Young Chinese Professionals Scotland (YCP)
- Nigel Fong - Hong Kong Scotland Education Connection (Attending)
- Kathy Chan - Young Chinese Professionals Scotland (YCP)
- James Trolland
- Mr Wang Ziyang

### Apologies

- Ruth Taylor, Stewart Investors
- Jamie Kerr, Thornton's Law LLP
- Qingli Xu, Individual Member
- Nick Mackie, Edinburgh University
- Janette Kelso, Strathclyde University
- Savanna Kenny, Individual Member
- John Scott MSP
- Jackie Baillie MSP
- Dr Roger Collins, Honorary Fellow, University of Edinburgh
- Dr Judith McClure, Chair of SCEN
- David Tann, BSc (Eng) MSc PhD CEng FICE MIMMM SHFEA,
- Eric Balish - China Scotland Business Forum
- Neil Bibby MSP
- Claudia Beamish MSP
- Dr Hawley - Loretto School
- Ian Baxter - Scottish Confucius Institute Heriot-Watt University
- Dr Petra McLay - Individual
- Lindsay Low - Scotch Whiskey Association
- Edmund Hoffie - Eden English Language School

### **1. Welcome and Apologies**

Mary Fee MSP welcomed all members of the CPG to the meeting and informed them that there will be opportunity to network at the end of the meeting and refreshments will be provided.

### **2. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising**

Minutes of last meeting of CPG on China were agreed.

Mary Fee MSP informed the group that Dr. Judith McClure has stepped down as the secretary of the CPG and Daniel Cairns, caseworker for Mary Fee MSP, has agreed to take the position of secretary of the CPG. Mary Fee MSP thanked Dr. Judith McClure for her service to the CPG and the assistance Judith has provided since she was elected as Chair of the CPG on China.

### **3. Update on Parliamentary Business**

No current Parliamentary business relating to CPG. Mary Fee informed the group that she expects there to be more parliamentary business before the next CPG and that she will submit parliamentary questions focusing on Scottish-Chinese relations.

Mary Fee MSP began by making suggestions for future CPG meetings. The first suggestion was to invite the Minister for External Affairs, Fiona Hyslop, to the next CPG on China. The second suggestion from Mary Fee MSP was to have a reception in the garden lobby to celebrate Chinese culture at the end of May/June 2017. Both of these suggestions gained a general agreement from around the room.

#### **4. Dr. Jim Scott, University of Dundee: Presentation of Chinese language in Scottish education**

Dr. Jim Scott from the University of Dundee presented information on Mandarin in Scottish education:

- Overall, level 3 – level 5 Chinese language qualifications have improved but there has been a slight drop in qualification in recent years but this can be attributed to the general downward trend of uptake of modern languages by pupils in Scotland.
- Since 2013, Chinese attainment has dropped by around 30%; this compares to a 60% drop in French and 58% drop in German.
- It is extremely difficult to get significant levels of uptake of alternative languages in Scotland: there have been past examples with the failure of sustaining uptake of Danish, Swedish, Polish and Japanese, for example. Uptake in Chinese is suffering from the same problem, with only 326 students in total from level 3 to advanced higher who are studying Chinese. This is just above the threshold which the SQA deems as viable.
- Dr. Scott highlighted various points regarding the Curriculum for Excellence, including structural problems and specific issues. Over the last three years, since the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence, 60,000 classes in modern languages have been lost.

Dr. Jim Scott answered questions from the group regarding Chinese language in Scottish education. The question and answer discussion focused on how to improve the uptake and qualification rate of Chinese language at secondary school level.

#### **5. Update from Dr. Carole Couper on Internationalisation of Scottish SMEs to China**

Dr. Couper presented a brief update on the research that she has conducted as part of her PhD thesis. The Chair invited Dr. Couper to present her conclusions and findings in full to the CPG on China at a future date to allow the group to have wider discussion, in greater depth, on SMEs in China.

#### **6. Discussion with Daniel Travin and Abbie Scotland of Lasswade Secondary School**

Daniel and Abbie are pupils at Lasswade Secondary School in Midlothian who were selected to visit China as part of a short-exchange programme they applied to through their school.

Daniel and Abbie spoke of their experience of visiting three of the biggest cities in China. They arrived in Shanghai and spend six days in the city, before visiting Tianjin and Beijing, staying in China for a total of ten days. They noted the friendliness and great hospitality of the Chinese people, particularly in Shanghai. Whilst in China, both students stayed with local families and visited Chinese schools, having the opportunity to speak with pupils in these schools and discuss differences in their educational experience.

#### **7. Update from Consul General Pan Xinchun**

The Consul General congratulated Mary Fee MSP on being elected as the Chair of the CPG on China. Consul General Pan noted the work of the CPG, Confucius Institutes through Scotland, and UK and Scottish Governments in trying to promote the uptake of the Chinese language among school pupils and further and higher education students. He articulated his view that modern languages in Scotland should be compulsory to ensure that all young people in Scotland are fluent in at least one other language. The Consul General made reference to the takeover of Edinburgh based Sky Scanner by a Chinese company could open up a new opportunity for increased communication, collaboration and exchanges being the Scotland and Chinese business communities. Consul General Pan invited all members of the CPG on China to a party at the Chinese Consul in Edinburgh to celebrate the reestablishment of the group.

#### **8. Presentation by Nigel Archdale on ESMS International Schools Project**

The ESMS International School Project is a project by the Erskine Stewart's Melville Schools, an independent school in Edinburgh, which has been looking to establish an international school in China. Nigel Archdale represents Erskine Stewart's Melville Schools and his work on this project has been ongoing since 2014 and recent developments have resulted in meeting representatives in Shenzhen. A memorandum of understanding was been signed in September 2016 in presence of Mayor of Shenzhen and Lord Provost of Edinburgh. Nigel Archdale informed the CPG that they are on track to open the first Scottish-Chinese International School in 2019.

The Chair requested that Nigel Archdale keeps the CPG informed of any progress in the opening of this school in Shenzhen.

**9. Any Other Current Business**

There were no other matters of current business raised by any members of the CPG.

Mary Fee MSP informed the CPG that she will circulate the time and date of the next meeting in due course but that the meeting would likely be on a Wednesday at 6pm due to suit the availability of the Chair and Secretary.

**END OF MEETING**