

Cross Party Group on Cuba
28th March 2018
TG21/22

MINUTES

1. Welcome – Elaine Smith MSP opened the meeting by welcoming everyone who attended and in particular special guest speaker Brian Wilson. Elaine noted the disappointingly low attendance as many members and MSP's were unable to be present. Elaine also advised that the MSP's had hoped to arrange a social event in June – however, the dates coincided with the Donald Dewar Debate in the Parliament and, therefore, was not possible.

2. **Attendees/Apologies**

Elaine Smith MSP
Colin Beattie MSP
Ronnie Moran
Chris Costello
John Campbell
Ian Parsons
Pauline Boyle
Lesley Dobbin

APOLOGIES

Neil Findlay MSP, Sandra White MSP, Kath Campbell, Liz Elkind, Claudia Beamish MSP, Margaret Cameron, Frieda Park, Ann Henderson, Margaret McGregor, Colin McCulloch, Marilyn Glen, Neil Andrew, Kevin Carroll, Cllr Gordon Munro, Pauline Bryan, Dr Joan Cutting, Kath Bateman.

3. **Minutes of the last meeting**

Minutes of the last meeting (27th September) this was a procedural AGM attended by the MSP's only and minutes were agreed previously by them.

A copy of the Annual Report was handed out.

4. **Update on Solidarity Campaign – Kath Campbell**

Due to the unavoidable absence of Kath Campbell, Ronnie Moran read a report on the Scottish Cuba Solidarity Campaign. The report included information on the Cuban Elections noting the high turnout and that 53% of elected members are women making it the second highest percentage in the world.

5. **Update from Venezuela Campaign on matters of interest in the region – Matthew Crighton.**

Mathew advised the group on the ongoing situation in Venezuela and Brazil. Matthew noted that when attempting to arrange Latin American events there is a difficulty in securing speakers as they are mainly from outside Scotland.

6. **Speaker: Brian Wilson, Havana Energy**

Brian Wilson gave an extremely interesting account of his connections with Cuba, starting with his initial meeting with Fidel Castro when he was a Government Minister. Brain also explained how Havana Energy was set up and explained the difficulties caused by the blockade and the subsequent involvement of the Chinese in taking forward the project.

7. **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on 7th June 2018 with guest speaker Arnold August – Journalist and author of 'Democracy in Cuba'