Proposed Cross-Party Group
Combatting Sectarianism in Scottish Society

Wednesday 27th June, 6pm
Room Q1.03

Minutes

Present

MSPs - James Dornan MSP, Donald Cameron MSP, James Kelly MSP and John Mason MSP.
Non MSPs – Sean Rodgers, from the office of James Dornan MSP

Welcome

James Dornan MSP welcomed the above to the initial meeting of the proposed Cross-Party Group on Combatting Sectarianism in Scottish Society. James Dornan advised that Sean Rodgers will be taking the minutes for this meeting, as he is still in talks with a number of groups about becoming the formal secretariat going forward.

James Dornan MSP handed out the CPG registration form to the other MSPs for their reference.

Election of Office Bearers

Donald Cameron MSP proposed James Dornan MSP to be Convener and John Mason MSP seconded this. As such, James Dornan MSP was elected as Convener.

James Dornan MSP said that he was hoping that there would be one Convener elected, and two Vice-Conveners. Donald Cameron MSP agreed to this, and James Dornan MSP proposed him to be a Vice-Convener and John Mason MSP seconded this. As such, Donald Cameron MSP was elected as Vice-Convener.

No other MSP was put forward to be an office bearer. Both James Kelly MSP and John Mason MSP agreed to become group Members.

James Dornan MSP noted that as the group would not handle money, no treasurer would be required.

Discussion of the Group’s Focus
James Dornan MSP said that the aim of this CPG would be to bring together like-minded MSPs, as well as religious groups, charities, organisations, academics and other stakeholders to work collaboratively to see how we can finally end this scourge on Scotland.

Suggestions of topics could include:

- The role of the Scottish Government, local authorities, and the media – if indeed any role.
- Sectarianism and football.
- Sectarianism related to marches.
- Looking at if there are lessons to be learned in the granting of government funds to charities/organisations who aim to address sectarianism.
- The role school education plays in addressing sectarianism.

James Dornan MSP also suggested that the group could perhaps aim to work towards a target of achieving something substantive and by doing so, the efficacy of the Group could perhaps be measured. This was left open for Members to think about.

James Kelly MSP raised the issue of the definition of ‘sectarianism’. Himself, John Mason MSP and James Dornan MSP then spoke of Professor Duncan Morrow and the Scottish Government’s recently established working group to propose a definition of the word. James Dornan MSP stressed that the CPG wouldn’t be looking to step on the toes of the working group, and the proposed CPG wouldn’t seek to define ‘sectarianism’.

James Dornan MSP said that the CPG shouldn’t be frightened of trying to call out sectarianism wherever it rears its head.

John Mason MSP asked how much focus would be on the role of sectarianism and football. James Dornan MSP said that it obviously plays a huge role, however he didn’t want it to solely look at football.

**Discussion of the Group’s Membership**

James Dornan MSP passed around a list of suggested organisations and individuals that the group could potentially invited to become Non-MSP Members of the Group. This list is attached to the end of these minutes under Appendix A. Also circulated was a suggested letter to post/email to these organisations and individuals. Slight changes to the letter was suggested by John Mason MSP. It was agreed this would be sent by James Dornan MSP and Donald Cameron MSP as office bearers.

**AOCB**

Donald Cameron MSP advised that sectarianism isn’t as prevalent in the region he represents – Highlands and Islands. As such, he said he would appreciate the chance to visit
places like Glasgow where sectarianism is more prominent, and speak with sectarianism charities etc. The other MSPs present agreed this sounded a good idea.

John Mason MSP asked whether the group would look at issues that surrounded sectarianism between Sunni and Shia Muslims. James Dornan MSP said that it would, however it is likely to more naturally focus on issues between the Roman Catholic and Protestant faiths.

**Date of Next Meeting**

Sean Rodgers advised that there wasn’t a lot of available rooms in September or October.

James Dornan MSP said he hoped the next meeting will be at some point in November. His office will liaise with the other Members over the summer recess to find a suitable date.

**APPENDIX A**

**Suggested List of Organisations to contact**
Action of Churches Together in Scotland
Bridging the Gap
Brora Learning Centre and Creativity in Care
Catholic Bishops Conference of Scotland
Central Scotland Regional Equality Council
Citizens Theatre
Community Safety Glasgow
Conforti Institute
COSLA
Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service
Education Scotland
Engender
Equality & Human Rights Commission
Equality Network
Faith in Community Scotland
General Assembly of the Church of Scotland
Inverclyde Community Development Trust
Law Society of Scotland
Nil by Mouth
North Kelvin Sports Development Group
Place for Hope
Police Scotland
Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church
Sacro
Scottish Council of Jewish Communities
Scottish Newspaper Society
Scottish Women’s Convention
Scottish Youth Parliament
Sense over Sectarianism
Scottish Football Association
Scottish Football Supporters Association
Show Bigotry the Red Card/ Show Racism the Red Card
Scottish Professional Football League
Stewartry CVS
Stonewall Scotland
Supporters Direct Scotland
Victim Support Scotland
West of Scotland Regional Equality Council
Youth Scotland
YouthLink Scotland

APPENDIX B

Dear ____,
Proposed Cross-Party Group on Combatting Sectarianism in Scottish Society

We are writing to you to ask that you consider joining the aforementioned proposed Cross-Party Group (CPG) of the Scottish Parliament.

On the 27th June 2018, an initial meeting was held to start the formal process of setting up this CPG, with James Dornan MSP (SNP) and Donald Cameron MSP (Conservative), being elected as the group’s office bearers. The next step in the process is that the CPG will be considered by the Members of the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee, and should the CPG be approved by Committee, then it will be formally established.

The aim of this CPG would be to bring together like-minded MSPs, as well as religious groups, charities, organisations, academics and other key stakeholders to work collaboratively to see how we can best address sectarianism in our society. Each meeting of the CPG would be themed (for example, on the roles, if any, of local authorities, the Scottish Government, and the media in addressing sectarianism), and we would intend on holding 3-4 meetings per calendar year – the next of which would hopefully be held in November.

We would therefore hope that you could consider joining our Cross-Party Group as a non-MSP member. If this would be something which may interest you, or if perhaps you would like to meet with the convener of the proposed CPG, James Dornan MSP, for further information, then please do not hesitate to get in touch using the details below.

Thanks very much for your time, and we look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Kind Regards,

James Dornan MSP

Donald Cameron MSP