

**SCOTTISH CROSS-PARTY GROUP ON TIBET (CPG)
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 24TH APRIL 2019**

Attendees:

Linda Fabiani MSP Convenor
 Ross Greer MSP Depute Convenor
 Martin Mills Secretary
 Roger Eames Treasurer
 David Cameron
 Linda Hendry
 Sir Maxwell MacLeod of Fuinary
 Topden Thomas
 Ritchie Walker

And two other members of the public.

Apologies:

Jenny Campbell
 Helena Dorup
 John Finney
 Professor Mike Lean
 David Lloyd Hudson
 Val Robertson
 Maureen Watt MSP

The Chair was taken by the Convenor, Linda Fabiani MSP

1. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 12TH DECEMBER 2018

The Minutes were approved by Linda Fabiani MSP.

2. MATTERS ARISING.

None.

3. TIBET EXHIBITION AT THE SCOTISH PARLIAMENT MONDAY 4TH MARCH – FRIDAY 8TH MARCH

The exhibition was held under the auspices of CPG and the Scottish Centre for Himalayan Research in the University of Aberdeen. It was on display in the Garden Lobby where it could be viewed by MSPs and Holyrood staff. It displayed a wealth of material about Tibet. Thanks are due to Aberdeen University and to Dr. Mills who produced the exhibition and the outstanding efforts put in by other members of university staff who prepared the display.

It featured many different facets of Tibet including its history, Tibetan Buddhism, environmental issues and mining as well as a large satellite map of the country. Martin said that it had been very successful; it had been well received, with many MSPs telling him they had found out about the exhibition through word of mouth. He had spoken to Gloria Montgomery of the Tibet Society, secretariat for the UK All Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet and hoped to show it later at Westminster.

Martin had been there throughout the week to explain the significance of the exhibition. Thanks are due to Callum Pearce, Helena Dorup and Néomie Farcy-Michel from Tibet Support Group Grampian and David Lloyd Hudson all of whom provided volunteer support.

4 THE FUTURE OF TIBET; HEARTLAND OF ASIA. RECEPTION AT THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT, WEDNESDAY EVENING 6TH MARCH 2019

This was again held under the auspices of CPG. Thanks are especially due to the Office of Tibet which funded the Reception and the magnificent buffet. In attendance were members of CPG. As well as MSPs, a wide range of people and organisations had been invited.

The proceedings were opened by Linda Fabiani MSP with a talk on the enormous problems that will face Asia as a whole by Tibet's changing climate. Presentations were also given by Mr. Sonam Frasi, Representative of H.H. the Dalai Lama for Northern Europe, Acharay Yeshe Phuntsok, Deputy Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile and Dr. Martin Mills.

Among the guests were four members of the Tibetan Parliament in exile who had flown in from Dharamsala. Apart from the Deputy Speaker, they were Khenpo Jampal Tenzin, Khenpo Kada Ngedup Sonam and Ratsa Sonam Norbu. Other guests included Eleanor Bryne-Rosengren and John Jones from Free Tibet, Gloria Montgomery from the Tibet Society, several members of the Tibetan community in Scotland and members of Tibet Support Group Grampian.

An article had been written by Linda Fabiani which appeared in the March 17th online edition of The National under the heading 'Tibet's Future affects the whole of Asia-and all of us' which drew on much of the material in the exhibition (<https://www.thenational.scot/news/17490465.tibets-future-affects-all-of-asia-and-all-of-us/>).

5. UPRISING DAY SUNDAY MARCH 10TH 2019

A march was held to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of Uprising Day when Tibetans rose up against the Chinese forces in Lhasa and the Dalai Lama fled across the Himalayas into India. The march was not a CPG event. About fifty people, many of them Tibetans from Scotland, joined the march. Eight members of Tibet Support Group Grampian travelled down from Aberdeen and a group of sixteen Tibetans from the Northern Branch of the Tibetan Community of Great Britain travelled up from Manchester to take part. An article about the event appeared in the online paper The National.

Unlike previous years, the police decided not to escort the march. Some concern was expressed at the present meeting about this absence as there is always a possibility of confrontation as well as safety issues. The matter needs to be addressed on future occasions.

6. UPCOMING MATTERS: VISIT OF LOBSANG SANGAY

It was hoped to have a visit from the Sikyong on Tuesday 25th June. It was decided the visit should not be confidential and the Tibetan Community should be given notice of the date and arrangements. It was also decided that arrangements for the visit should be conducted through an online 'Round Robin' rather than by holding another meeting beforehand. It was expected that there would be about ten members in the delegation.

10. TALK: LOSING THE WATER TOWER – CLIMATE CHANGE IN TIBET AND ITS REGIONAL CONSEQUENCES

This was a challenging talk by Martin explaining in considerable detail the effect of climate change on Tibet and the consequences of this for countries downstream from the plateau. Tibet has been described as the Third Pole which, unlike the Arctic and Antarctic, is adjacent to large centres of population. The effect of Climate Change on the Tibetan plateau has been largely ignored in the West whereas it has been a major feature of Chinese research and policy making for a number of years.

The consequences are complex; desertification in some areas, flooding elsewhere, major mudflows in other areas. The immediate effects will be felt over most of Eastern Asia but most especially in Tibet, Western China and Northern India leading to depopulation of cities, towns and entire regions.

It is difficult to overstate the significance of this not only to Tibet and surrounding countries but also to life as we know it worldwide. Martin treated the subject in considerable detail but even this was a simplification, itself drawn from an even more exhaustive account in 'Hindu Kush Himalayan Monitoring and Assessment' published earlier this year by HIMAP. It is to be the subject of a briefing paper by Martin for publication under the auspices of the CPG which will be submitted to the Group at a future meeting later this year.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING Tuesday 25th June on the occasion of the Sikyong's visit.

9. SUBSEQUENT MEETING Date to be arranged. Edinburgh Tibet Collections – Dr Qin Cao, Curator of the Chinese Collections in the National Museum of Scotland including Himalayan and Mongolian regions.

7. AOCB

1. Ron Scrimgeour had written to remind the Group that it was the Panchen Lama's 30th Birthday the following day 26th April 2019. Tibet Network has commissioned a new image of the Panchen Lama from the forensic artist Tim Widden showing how he might look today. This was shown on the BBC's programme about the Panchen Lama on 'One Show' on Tuesday 23rd April and can still be seen on Free Tibet's website www.freetibet.org
2. A play 'Pha-La' about Tibetan protests at the Royal Court in London, due to be staged on April 3rd, was dropped after the British Council advised that it would jeopardise another project by the theatre featuring Chinese writers. It was also controversial in that it failed to include any Tibetan actors.
3. Scotland's Consul General of the People's Republic of China, Mr PAN Xinchun and his attaché visited the Chair to raise certain concerns regarding the Exhibition. These were discussed in some depth, and it was subsequently agreed that the Secretary would visit the Consul General to discuss the matter further.