

# Minutes of the Cross-Party Group on Tibet

Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> March 2021

## 1. Attendance

Linda Fabiani, MSP Chair (LF)

Ross Greer, MSP (RG)

Maureen Watt MSP (MW)

Dr Martin Mills, Secretary (MM)

Roger Eames, Treasurer (RE)

Sonam Frasi, Representative to His Holiness the Dalai Lama (SF)

Zamlha Tempa Gyaltzen (ZTG)

Gabriel Latiffe (GL)

Christa Meindersma (CM)

Maxwell Macleod (MMac)

Eleanor Byrne-Rosengren (EBR)

Jill Sudbury (JS)

Ron Scrimgeour (RS)

Other initials

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama (HHDL)

Cross Party Group on Tibet (CPG)

Scottish Centre for Himalayan Research (SCHR)

## 2. Apologies

Add apologies for the last meeting from Victor Spence and Linda Hendry. Both locked out.

This meeting Mark Watson

## 3. Minutes. Adopted unanimously

## 4. Group Climate Change Statement and Future Plans

Discussion took place on the draft statement. A map was to be added and a title that carried some impact. Additions were made in response to previously emailed submissions. Care was to be taken in the final draft that the inclusion of human rights and other current Tibetan issues would dilute the impact of this environmental crisis. The final draft statement would be distributed to MSPs and modified versions sent to the media and other parliamentary groups. EBR, MM and LF would produce the final draft in light of the wide-

ranging discussion and comments. The draft statement and background work would be used if any of the partners gained access to the November COP26 display space in Glasgow.

4. **Samye Ling Issue.** The Secretary gave a comprehensive briefing on the two firing ranges that were operating close to Samye Ling. The unwelcome gunfire disturbed the tranquillity of the monastery and retreat centre. It also had a traumatic effect on some of the elderly monks who had experienced repression by the Chinese army in Tibet. The Chair had already submitted objections to the planning committee and circulated her letter for others to model their objections on. A petition only counted as one objection, regardless of the number of people signing it.

5. **Reconstitution of the Group.** The statement on the Third Pole was regarded as a legacy statement to the Scottish Parliament. It was hoped that this would demonstrate the need for a new CPG to be formed after the May election. MM indicated that he was standing down as secretary of the group. VS and LF thanked him for serving the CPG so well.

6. **AOB.** VS rehearsed the origins of the CPG in 2004 and paid tribute to LF for her long and faithful service to the CPG, the work of HH and the cause of the Tibetan people. SF added that LF had been a friend of HH and a friend of Tibet and hoped she would continue in her retirement from office. He added his thanks to MW and RG for their work on the CPG. Both VS and SF wished the retiring MSPs well in their life outside politics.

The meeting concluded at 9.20 pm