

**Cross Party Group on Volunteering AGM
Minute
Wednesday 28th June 2017, 1.00pm-2.30pm
Committee Room 5, Scottish Parliament
Convenor: Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP**

Attendees

MSP members of the Group

Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP – Scottish Liberal Democrat Party
Jeremy Balfour MSP - Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party
Fulton MacGregor – Scottish National Party
Gordon Lindhurst MSP – Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party

Non-MSPs Members of the Group:

Paul Okroj – Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland, Margaret Starkie – Volunteer Scotland, George Thomson – Volunteer Scotland, Gordon Brown – VC Borders, Helen Fleming – Dyslexia Scotland, Ruth Hutton – Scottish Government, Bernadette Monaghan – Volunteer Glasgow, Robert McGeachy – Camphill Scotland, Amy Blake – The International Voluntary Service, Amy Hickman – Breast Cancer Now, Annie Woodman – Homestart UK, Beverly Gall – Rowan Alba Ltd, Gail Cassidy- Volunteer Centre East Ayrshire, Elaine Rimmer – PKAVS Volunteering Hub, Elanor Cormack – Royal Voluntary Service, Gail Phillips – Lead Scotland, Jack Sanderson – Voluntary Arts Scotland, James Jopling – Samaritans, Lidia Dye - PKAVS Volunteering Hub, Louise McGinty – Quarriers, Melanie Craig – South Lanarkshire Council, Sarah Latto – Shelter Scotland, Victoria McRae – CVS Falkirk, Emma Logan – Volunteer, Paul Wilson – Volunteer Edinburgh, Paul Reddish – Project Scotland, Stephen Adamson – Fife Voluntary Action, Tracey Passway – NHS Tayside

Apologies

MSP members of the Group

Pauline McNeil MSP – Scottish Labour Party
Johann Lamont MSP – Scottish Labour Party

Non-MSPs Members of the Group:

A considerable number of apologies were received for this meeting.

1. Welcome and introductions

The Convenor, Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP welcomed everyone to the first Annual General Meeting of Cross Party Group on Volunteering and invited introductions.

2. Minutes of Previous meeting

The minutes of the last meeting and the Inaugural meeting held on 28th June 2016 (no previous AGM held) were approved as an accurate record of the meeting. This was seconded by Paul Okroj – Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland.

Actions from previous meeting (29th March 2017):

- The CPG Secretariat to follow up discussions with Jacqueline Campbell Scottish Government, Allan Johnstone VAS and Claire Stevens VHS on how the CPG can support the next stage of the IJB & Third Sector journey. **Complete**

- It was agreed that the CPG would look at establishing a process on how CPG members will be informed on consultations to allow them to contribute. **On-going**
- Lunchtime seminars: The secretariat will request members to provide information on what the issues are to help identify themes/subjects for the seminars. **On-going**
- The CPG would look at establishing a process on how CPG members will be informed on consultations to allow them to contribute. **On-going**

All actions from the meeting on the 29th March were ratified.

The convener highlighted the disappointment in having to cancel the Volunteers Week Parliamentary reception due to the General Election but agreed that overall the activities and management of the week was a great success and thanked everyone involved. The secretariat will look at another date/opportunity to hold a similar event in the coming year.

3. Election of Office Bearers (Convener/Vice Convener/Secretariat)

It was agreed that Alex Cole Hamilton MSP would stand again as Convener; this was seconded by George Thomson, Volunteer Scotland.

Paul Okroj, Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland took the opportunity to thank the Convener for their support in the first year of the CPG on Volunteering and we look forward to the coming year.

The Convener thanked the Secretariat, Paul Okroj – Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland and Margaret Starkie – Volunteer Scotland for all their hard work and support in the last year and for creating one of the most functional and largest Cross Party Group meetings. The Convener proposed they continue in the role of secretariat, both agreed. This was seconded by Fulton McGregor MSP.

The convener proposed that Fulton MacGregor MSP stand as Vice Convenor in the absence of Jeremy Balfour MSP – this was agreed and seconded by Paul Okroj – Chest, Heart and Stroke Scotland.

4. Annual Return – Progress update

The annual return has been completed by the Secretariat and submitted to the Standards, Procedures and Public Affairs Committee and can be found on the Parliament website.

The annual return along with the update on activity report shows good and varied engagement across various sectors and Scottish Government and provides a good standing for the year ahead.

It was agreed the themes of each of the meetings in the last year had been a success and helped in supporting Scottish Government and joint working opportunities and the theme of Volunteering being the Golden Thread worked well throughout the year.

The Cross Party Group has helped increase the profile of Volunteering within Government and it was agreed the theme for next year should focus on Inclusion.

George Thomson – Volunteer Scotland welcomed the format of the update on activity reported and liked how each meeting/theme could be easily identified within each of the groups remit areas which provides a strong structure for the coming year.

James Jopling – Samaritans agreed the Golden Thread theme provided organisations the opportunity to have a common/distinctive message.

5. Future success of CPG on Volunteering

The year ahead will allow for broad themes to emerge, such as the Governments proposed National Volunteering Framework – which will be discussed at future meetings.

It was suggested that the current membership should identify other organisations/individuals to join the CPG who have strong links within the Voluntary sector. It was agreed that presence from the Private sector was lacking with the group and we should seek membership from these groups.

Paul Reddish – Project Scotland highlighted that 2018 is the Year of Young People and should be given particular focus to explore volunteering within young people in Scotland. Discussions have taken place between Volunteer Scotland, Project Scotland and Young Scot on how to take the campaign forward. It was agreed a presentation would take place at the March CPG on Year of Young People activities.

Gail Cassidy – Volunteer Centre East Ayrshire highlighted that Willie Coffey MSP was heavily involved in activities relating to the Year of Young People 2018.

The previous discussion on creating lunchtime seminars with MSP's is still on-going and further updates will be provided.

It was agreed that the Convener and secretariat would encourage MSP's to engage with Volunteers within their constituencies and write to schools encouraging volunteering.

Fulton MacGregor MSP highlighted he was Convener of the CPG on Inequality and that a motion should be passed in Parliament to encourage volunteering. He also highlighted that he was impressed to see such cross party representation at the meeting which can be a challenge for other Cross Party Groups.

It was suggested that there should be more joint Cross Party Group meetings given that Volunteering has an impact across various topics/sectors. It was also suggested that speakers from other sectors would be beneficial to the CPG and its member's e.g. Public sector and corporate. Bernadette Monaghan suggested Police Scotland should be approached to join the CPG esp. Youth Volunteers.

It was suggested that the Mental Health Strategy 2017 has very little mention of Volunteering and suggested the CPG look at this and other strategies where Volunteering is not highlighted as important and engage with other CPG's to work on changing this in the future.

Bernadette Monaghan – Volunteer Glasgow suggested that Employer Supported Volunteering should be discussed at a future meeting and there are various new models emerging within the sector.

George Thomson – Volunteer Scotland raised the question on how can the CPG help increase Volunteer participation, celebrate good practice and recognise challenges within Volunteering.

Gordon Brown – VC Borders asked 'what impact does the CPG make?' It was agreed that given this was the first year of the CPG on Volunteering they question of impact will continually be asked and will be incorporated in all activities we engage in.

Further suggestions were that when new reports/consultation opportunities arise the Secretariat will communicate to the members to encourage involvement and awareness.

Fulton MacGregor MSP suggested that more awareness should be given to what is being discussed at the various committees within Parliament to ensure Volunteering is a live topic for discussion and included in the agendas. He is Parliamentary Liaison Officer to the Health Secretary and would be happy to take suggestions forward to discuss with her.

Robert McGeachy – Camphill Scotland has agreed to discuss the impact of Brexit on Volunteering at the next CPG.

Ruth Hutton – Third Sector Division – Scottish Government stated that they welcome the links being made between the CPG and Government and will ensure contribution continues. She highlighted that work has started to look at how a National Volunteer Framework could be introduced in Scotland and they are identifying key members to take this forward – further updates will be provided.

Alex Cole-Hamilton highlighted he was encouraged by the co-production and cross-working of the group and its members.

6. Any other Business

The convener thanked everyone for their contribution and continues support and future dates will be circulated in due course.

7. Date of next meeting

Dates of meetings held in session 2017-2018 to be confirmed and circulated by secretariat.

ACTIONS

- The Secretariat will seek alternative date for a Parliamentary reception in light of the Volunteers Week event being cancelled.
- Cross Party Group theme for 2017-2018 should be on Inclusion.
- CPG – March 2018 – A presentation of the activities/campaign of the Year of Young People 2018.
- The Convener and secretariat would encourage MSP's to engage with Volunteers within their constituencies and write to schools encouraging volunteering.
- There is to be an effort made to hold more joint Cross Party Group meetings given that Volunteering has an impact across various topics/sectors.
- It was suggested that the Mental Health Strategy 2017 has very little mention of Volunteering and suggested the CPG look at this and other strategies where Volunteering is not highlighted as important and engage with other CPG's to work on changing this in the future.
- Employer Supported Volunteering (ESV) should be on a future agenda.
- When new reports/consultation opportunities arise the Secretariat will communicate to the members to encourage involvement and awareness.
- More awareness should be given to what is being discussed at the various committees within Parliament to ensure Volunteering is a live topic for discussion and included in the agendas.