

Cross Party Group on Tibet - minutes

Initial meeting, parliamentary session 4
7 March 2012 – Holyrood CR6

Attendees: Linda Fabiani, Maureen Watt, Roderick Campbell, Rob Gibson, Jamie McGriggor, Kevin Stewart, Michael Sharpe (representing Ann McTaggart), Iain Thom (representing Alison Johnstone) and thirty-one members of the public.

Apologies: Hugh Henry, Alison McInnes, Richard Baker, Martin Mills, Liz Lindsey.

Agenda

- Welcome and explanation of the role of a CPG
- Introductions round the table
Apologies
Update on HHDL's visit to Scotland
Agree the purpose of the group and the constitution
Elect office bearers
Discussion of future activities

Welcome, introductions

The Group thanked Mike Pringle for his work as Convener of the CPG on Tibet in previous sessions.

Update on HHDL's visit to Scotland

Victor Spence of Edinburgh Interfaith Association provided an update to the Group on His Holiness the Dalai Lama's visit to Scotland 21-23 June this year. He will be visiting Edinburgh, Dundee and Inverness for public talks and is invited to lunch by the Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament. The Group thanked Victor Spence and others who have made this visit possible.

Agree the purpose of the group and the constitution

The purpose of the group was discussed and agreed by consensus as:

To facilitate the building of relations between The Scottish Parliament, Tibet and its people and those interested in Tibet.

The constitution from Session 3 was presented and agreed with one change – the Group's AGM will be held during the month of March, not January. This change was deemed useful as the Group is required to hold elections of office bearer's every twelve months. Amended constitution attached.

Meetings at 6pm on Wednesdays were deemed a good time. Early June and September are to be the next meeting dates.

AP: book rooms for future meetings and circulate dates - IT

Elect office bearers

Maureen Watt proposed Linda Fabiani as Convener and was unopposed. The Group then discussed other office bearers and decided to elect a Deputy-Convener and a secretary. Rob Gibson proposed Ann McTaggart as Deputy-Convener and was unopposed. Victor Spence proposed Iain Thom as Secretary and was unopposed.

AP: complete CPG declaration and registration form and submit to Clerks – IT/LF (done)

Discussion of future activities

The previous CPG on Tibet in Session 3 discussed inviting the Kalon Tripa (Tibetan Prime Minister

in Exile) to Scotland. It was felt important to build relations not only with the Dalai Lama but also the political leadership of the Tibetan Government. The Group discussed the invite and decided to proceed.

Martin Mills, a regular Group member in previous sessions, requested to speak on the Group's behalf in Dharamasala at the March 10th event. This was agreed by the Group.

Cathy Jamieson MP (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) was recently on a visit to the Tibetan Government in Exile. The Group agreed to approach her in the future to meet us and talk about her trip. Because of parliamentary timetable this may not be on a Wednesday. Cathy is also a member of the All Party Group on Tibet in Westminster and it was agreed it would be good to build on that link.

The Group agreed a motion should be lodged in the Scottish Parliament in the name of Linda Fabiani noting Tibetan Uprising Day. The Group discussed future motions on other Tibetan topics including the potential for a Member's debate on HHDL's visit. It was agreed to take advice on this particular issue and decide nearer the time.

A panel debate on the current situation in Tibet, including the self-immolations, was suggested. This could form part of the Festival of Politics in August. This was thought to be far away and potentially something the Edin Uni Tibet Soc could help to run sooner if they were able.

There were questions over a physical presence in the Parliament. Opportunities include a stall or photo exhibition in the Garden Lobby (central concourse). This is free but gets booked up far in advance. It was agreed to look for opportunities to use these.

There are three (out of five) Scottish MEPs on the Inter Group for Tibet in the European Parliament.

The Group briefly discussed the human rights situation in Tibet and Nepal and implications of oppression there for people living in the UK. A short briefing on the current situation in Tibet was thought to be useful if circulated to MSPs alongside a relevant motion.

AP: Draft and send a formal invite to the Kalon Tripa's office - LF

AP: Ask VS re member's debate on HHDL visit - IT/LF

AP: contact the Festival of Politics with Tibet suggestion – IT (done)

AP: discuss panel debate event – EUTS and others

AP: future short briefing on HR situation – MM?

AP: update the CPG's website (<http://scotlandtibet.wordpress.com/>) - IT

AP: continue good work – all!