

Cross Party Group on Tibet - minutes **2nd October 2013 – Holyrood CR4**

Attendees: Linda Fabiani, Maureen Watt Rod Campbell and 15 members of the public.

Apologies: Alison McInnes, Margaret Mitchell, Kevin Stewart, Alison Johnstone.

Agenda

Welcome and matters arising from last meeting

CPG secretary election

Martin Mills – Briefing paper self-immolations 2013 update

Announcement of the death of Robert Ford

Centenary Petition - update on progress in the European Parliament

AoB / DoNM: 19 February 2014

Minutes and matters arising

Maureen Watt lodged Motion S4M-06980: Concern at Self-immolations in Tibet which achieved cross party support from 24 MSPs. Iain Thom remains in contact with the APPG group in Westminster.

CPG secretary election

Unanimously agreed to elect Max Rollins as secretary of the CPG to replace Iain Thom. Max is a member of the Edinburgh University Tibet Society. Iain will continue to provide support, booking rooms and escorting people within the Parliament for example.

Briefing paper self-immolations 2013 update

Martin spoke to this briefing paper. Minor changes were suggested and the briefing was adopted unanimously pending those changes being made and the **secretary** will publish on the CPG website: <http://scotlandtibet.wordpress.com/>

There is an opportunity to bring a members' debate on this issue. Members' debates have no vote and are not binding on the Government but are an opportunity to highlight issues and have the relevant Minister respond. There was a wide discussion on what the debate should cover including self-immolations, trade, the HR situation and surrounding countries.

It was agreed that:

1. **MSPs** will work on a motion for members' business debate on the work of the Scottish Centre for Himalayan studies at the University of Aberdeen and the Grampian Tibet Support Group, and the HR situation in Tibet which has resulted in self-immolations.
2. Once we know the date of the debate, **Edinburgh University Tibet Society** will prepare a 2 page briefing for MSPs in advance of the debate. **Iain** will book a room for a post-debate meeting and de-brief.
3. **All of us** will encourage our MSPs to attend the debate.
4. **MSPs** will approach the CPG China in advance of the debate to see what form the issues could be usefully discussed.

Announcement of the death of Robert Ford

Roger Eames announced to the CPG the death of Robert Ford on 20th Sept 2013, aged 90. Robert Ford was one of the very few westerners in Tibet during the invasion where he continued to work as a radio operator and spent time in jail for doing so. He recounted his experiences during a visit to Grampian Tibet Society and recorded them in a book. His obituary appeared recently in the Telegraph:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/military-obituaries/air-force-obituaries/10359396/Robert-Ford.html>

Centenary Petition - update on progress in the European Parliament

Roger Eames gave this update to say the petition was now lodged with the Euro Parliament and is awaiting approval of admissibility.

AoB

- In light of a crackdown on 'intellectual' Tibetans in Tibet and Nepal the CPG were encouraged to invite Tibetan poets, musicians, writers and thinkers to future meetings.
- Tibet teaching in schools was raised. EUTS offered to give a talk at an Edinburgh school. One CPG member who is in school already has a presentation and will speak to his Head-teacher about sharing this on GLOW.

DoNM

Next meeting is **19 February 2014** although it is expected to have a reception and debrief after a members' business debate sometime before Christmas 2013. This date will be confirmed by the secretary. Subsequent meeting is: **7 May 2014**.