



COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY BRANCH – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**MONDAY 8TH DECEMBER 2014
5.00PM IN ROOM 21**

Present:

Mr Jo-Anne Dobson MLA
Mr David McIlveen MLA
Mr Robin Swann MLA
Mr Stewart Dickson MLA
Mr Basil McCrea MLA

Apologies:

Mr Alban Maginness MLA

Also In attendance:

Mr John Stewart, Director of Information & Outreach
Ms Susie Brown, CPA Branch Secretary Designate
Ms Louise Close, Outreach Manager (Deputy Secretary)
Ms Nicola Crawford, Outreach (Minutes)

1. WELCOME

The Secretary welcomed Members of the CPA NI Executive Branch to the meeting and advised that in the absence of a President, Mr Stewart Dickson MLA had volunteered to chair the meeting and would do so if agreed.

The CPA NI Branch agreed Mr Stewart Dickson MLA chair the meeting.

Proposed: Mr David McIlveen
Seconded: Mrs Jo-Anne Dobson

2. APOLOGIES

Mr Alban Maginness was unable to attend.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes were agreed without amendment.

Proposed: David McIlveen

Seconded: Robin Swann

4. CHAIRING BRANCH MEETINGS

Mr Dickson advised Members that as the Speaker, Mr William Hay MLA had retired the CPA Branch currently has no President. The Branch rules state that 'in the absence of a President of the CPA NI Branch, the Executive Committee may elect as office-holders in their place other members of the Branch until holders of those offices willing and qualified to be office-holders become available.' Therefore, the Executive Committee can either request a volunteer from the Executive Committee to chair each forthcoming meeting prior to the meeting or nominate a representative to hold the post until the AGM in June.

Members agreed that they were happy with requesting a volunteer to chair each meeting until a new President is instated.

5. ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mr Dickson advised that in the last meeting in June it was agreed that the option of amending the Branch rules to allow for Executive Committee Members to sit in post for a full mandate would be raised at the AGM in September. This issue was discussed at the AGM and it was agreed unanimously, by the Members present, to amend the rule regarding the election of the Executive Committee.

6. FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- **MONTSERRAT POST-ELECTION SEMINAR, JANUARY 2015**

A request was received from CPA UK seeking an experienced parliamentarian, preferably a woman, from a CPA BIMR Branch to travel to Montserrat to attend the two day post-election seminar in January and to act as a speaker, chair and workshop facilitator. The successful

applicant would be joined by a parliamentarian from a Caribbean-based British Overseas Territory and a Clerk from the UK's House of Lords.

This opportunity was forwarded to all CPA NI Branch members and Stewart Dickson MLA applied for the position. Mr Dickson advised Members that he is waiting to hear if he has been chosen.

- **INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE,
4-6 FEBRUARY 2015, LONDON**

An invitation has been received from CPA UK inviting two Members from the NI Assembly to attend an international parliamentary conference in London in February. The conference theme is Human Rights in the Modern Day Commonwealth, "Magna Carta to Commonwealth Charter" and will bring together parliamentarians, experts and academics for an International Parliamentary Conference focused on Human Rights in the modern day Commonwealth.

Mr Dickson asked Members if they were content to send representatives to the Conference. Members agreed that they were happy for this invitation to be issued to all CPA Members.

7. COMMONWEALTH DAY 2015

Initial planning is underway for the Commonwealth Day 2015 event. The theme for Commonwealth Day is 'A Young Commonwealth' and the Outreach Office is currently working with the Education Service to produce a youth orientated event to encourage youth participation in democracy. This event will take place on Wednesday 11th March in the Great Hall and it is hoped that it will be collaboration with Rock the Vote organisation.

Mr Dickson advised Members that more information on the event would be issued to Members in the New Year.

8. BRANCH BUDGET

For information.

9. VISITS UPDATE

Mr Dickson asked Members to take note of the inward visits to the Assembly since the last meeting.

Ms Close advised Members that the Outreach Office would be working closely with Committees in the future to co-ordinate visits that may be of interest to Committee members and relevant to their ongoing work.

Mr McCrea suggested sending a text to CPA Members to remind them about upcoming visits that they may wish to attend.

10. A.O.B

- Ms Close advised Members that an invitation had been received from CPA UK inviting two young people to attend the Commonwealth Day celebrations in Westminster in March. Ms Close asked Members how they thought the young people should be chosen.

Mr Dickson suggested approaching the NI Youth Council to ask for volunteers. Mr McCrea suggested asking the Assembly's Education Service to circulate the invitation through their contacts and ask for nominations.

ACTION: Meeting to be held with the Education Service to discuss finding young people to attend.

- Mr McCrea suggested to Members that the Assembly should consider hosting the annual CPA Conference in 2016. He stated that it would be very advantageous for the Assembly and that Lord Rana had expressed his support for the idea.

ACTION: A paper to be written evaluating all possible options for hosting CPA conferences.

10. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on **Monday 2nd March 2015 at 5.00pm,**
room to be confirmed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Dickson', written in a cursive style.

**STEWART DICKSON MLA
CHAIR**

DRAFT