



COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION
NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY BRANCH – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**Executive Committee,
Monday 20 February at 5 pm
Room 29**

Present:

The President, Mr William Hay MLA
Mr Stewart Dickson MLA
Dr Alasdair McDonnell MP MLA
Mr David McClarty MLA

Apologies:

Mr Jim Wells MLA
Mr Jimmy Spratt MLA
Mr Basil McCrea MLA

Also In attendance:

Mr Gareth McGrath, Director of Information & Outreach
Mr Peter Hall, Head of Outreach & Education
Mr Robin Ramsey, Advisor to the Speaker
Ms Nicola Rafferty, Outreach (Minutes)

1. WELCOME

The President welcomed Members to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

Mr Jim Wells and Mr Jimmy Spratt were unable to attend.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes were agreed without amendment.

4. 58th COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE

The Speaker asked members for any suggestions for the conference theme and discussion topics. Mr McClarty stated that many topics had already been discussed at previous conferences. The Speaker advised Members to consider the information provided and pass on any suggestions they may have to the Secretary, Peter Hall.

5. CONFLICT, PEACE & REGENERATION CONFERENCE

The Speaker asked Mr Peter Hall to give an update on the preparations for the conference.

Peter advised Members only 5 countries had made a firm commitment to attending. He stated that a keynote speaker had not been confirmed but that Bill Clinton had been approached. As a result consideration is being given to cancelling the conference and a decision on this will be made in mid to late March.

Dr McDonnell suggested that other possible keynote speakers should be considered such as Tony Blair, Bertie Ahern or George Mitchell. He stated that the conference was a good concept and could help generate more conflict resolution tourism. He also stated that he may be in Washington for St. Patricks Day and would approach Bill Clinton, if he meets him, about doing the keynote speech for the conference.

Peter Hall stated that he would seek to take these issues forward.

6. KOSOVO

The Speaker stated that he has received an invitation from the President of the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo to make an official visit to the Assembly of Kosovo at the end of March which he has accepted.

The core purpose of the visit will be to officially establish a relationship to assist the Assembly of Kosovo on parliamentary and corporate issues, primarily research and IT services which are the remit of the Assembly Commission. However, due to the initial connection between the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Assembly of Kosovo emerging from the work of the NI Assembly Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association the Speaker proposes that one Member of the Assembly Commission and one Member of the CPA should join him on the visit.

Peter Hall then advised Members that applications had been requested to join the Speaker on the visit and that one application had been received, from David McClarty. He also advised that the CPA Selection Committee would meet on Tuesday 21st February to consider this application.

The Speaker then asked Mr Gareth McGrath to update the Members on his visit to Kosovo.

Gareth advised Members that his visit had been very useful and that he had met a number of MPs, local mayors and other representatives. He stated that everyone he met was very interested in establishing links with the NI Assembly and that there is tremendous potential in the country.

Dr McDonnell stated that it is very important to have links with a European Muslim country and that the Speaker should consider a visit to Serbia while in Kosovo.

Gareth advised that the Speaker's diary would not allow for another visit while in Kosovo.

7. COMMONWEALTH DAY 2012

The Speaker asked Peter Hall to update Members on the Assembly event for Commonwealth Day.

Peter Hall advised Members that the event, on 14th March, is a concert showcasing artists from different Commonwealth countries with an invited audience of 150-200 people and that a copy of the invitation and the draft programme are included in their packs. He stated that the concert would include performances from the Belfast Community Gospel Choir and a special performance of the Haka.

9. INWARD VISITS

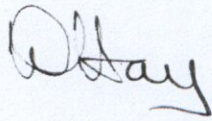
Mr Hall advised Members of inward visits to the Assembly since the last meeting and upcoming visits.

10. AOB

The Speaker advised Members that a meeting of the Selection Committee would be held on Tuesday 21st February.

11. Date of the next meeting

The next will be held on 26 March 2012 in Room 29.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Hay". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent loop at the beginning.

**WILLIAM HAY MLA
PRESIDENT**