



**COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION**

**NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY BRANCH – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2015  
4.00PM IN THE PRIVATE DINING ROOM**

**Present:**

Mr Mitchel McLaughlin MLA, President  
Mrs Jo-Anne Dobson MLA  
Mr David McIlveen MLA  
Mr Robin Swann MLA  
Mr Stewart Dickson MLA

**Apologies:**

Mr Alban Maginness MLA  
Mr Basil McCrea MLA

**Also In attendance:**

Mr John Stewart, Director of Information & Outreach  
Ms Susie Brown, CPA Branch Secretary Designate  
Mr Robin Ramsey, Adviser to the Speaker  
Ms Nicola Crawford, Outreach (Minutes)

**1. WELCOME**

Mr McLaughlin welcomed Members of the CPA NI Executive Branch to the meeting and introduced himself as the new President of the Branch and stated that he looked forward to working with them.

He advised Members, as stated in his previously issued letter to all Branch members, that he would be the President of the Branch and chair the annual general meetings but, in line with the other devolved legislatures, he would not be involved in the day to day running of the Branch. This role will be taken by an elected Branch Chairperson.

## **2. APOLOGIES**

Mr Alban Maginness and Mr Basil McCrea were unable to attend.

## **3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes were agreed without amendment.

**Proposed: Robin Swann**  
**Seconded: Stewart Dickson**

## **4. CPA EVENTS**

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

Stewart Dickson MLA and Alastair Ross MLA attended the international parliamentary conference in London in February.

The conference theme was Human Rights in the Modern Day Commonwealth and brought together parliamentarians, experts and academics to discuss Human Rights in the modern day Commonwealth.

Mr Dickson advised Members that the conference was very worthwhile and enjoyable and that he was extremely grateful for the opportunity to attend. He stated that it had been an intense programme but that there were many common themes relevant to experiences in Northern Ireland. He also stated that he particularly enjoyed the various debates amongst parliamentarians from the African Commonwealth countries.

### **COMMONWEALTH WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS (CWP) ANNUAL CONFERENCE, 6-8 FEBRUARY, GIBRALTAR**

Jo-Anne Dobson MLA, Brenda Hale MLA and Michelle McIlveen MLA attended the annual CWP Conference in Gibraltar in February.

The conference theme was Violence against Women and was attended by women parliamentarians from the British Isles and Mediterranean Region.

Mrs Dobson advised Members that the conference theme was a sensitive subject but that the experience was very useful, informative and worthwhile. She stated that the conference was very well attended by female parliamentarians throughout the BIMR and that she chaired one of the sessions and received excellent feedback from it.

## **5. FORTHCOMING EVENTS:**

### **12TH CPA CANADIAN PARLIAMENTARY SEMINAR, OTTAWA, 24 - 30 MAY 2015**

The President advised Members that an invitation has been received from the Parliament of Canada offering the Branch the opportunity to apply for a place at the 12<sup>th</sup> CPA Canadian Parliamentary Seminar in Ottawa from the 24<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> May.

The Branch has expressed an interest in one of these places and if successful the Executive Committee will be asked to decide whether to take up the offer

### **45TH BIMR CONFERENCE - LIMASSOL, CYPRUS, 24 – 27 MAY**

The President advised Members that an invitation has been received from Cyprus CPA Branch for four delegates from the NI Assembly to attend the 45<sup>th</sup> BIMR Conference in Limassol in May. He also advised that Jo-Anne Dobson, as the Assembly's representative on the CWP Steering Committee, is automatically given one of the places.

The Secretary suggested that due to forthcoming budget cuts the Branch send two delegates and a Secretary rather than four. The Members agreed.

**ACTION:** Invitation to be issued to CPA Members and nominations sought to attend the conference.

## **6. COMMONWEALTH DAY 2015**

The Commonwealth Day 2015 event, in conjunction with the Rock the Vote organisation, will take place on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March in the Senate, from 7.00pm to 9.00pm.

To highlight this year's theme of 'A Young Commonwealth', the event will be a mix of music from young local bands and singers and speeches by young people currently involved on in politics, including a speech from James Hurley, our US Fulbright bursary student.

The President encouraged Members to attend and support the event.

## **7. COMMONWEALTH GROUPS**

The President advised Members that Mr Dickson had stated at a previous meeting that he had met a member of the Commonwealth Solicitors Association and suggested that it may be advantageous for the Branch to meet with this group and other similar groups based in Northern Ireland.

The President stated that a list of similar groups had been compiled and as a first step to establishing a working relationship with these groups they were invited them to attend the Commonwealth Day event.

## **8. VISITS UPDATE**

The President asked Members to take note of the inward visits to the Assembly since the last meeting.

## **9. A.O.B**

The Secretary advised Members of a change to the Branch rules which would allow for the creation of the position of a Branch Chairperson. The Secretary stated that a Chair would be elected at the annual general meeting each year with the next annual general meeting taking place on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April to ratify this rule change and elect the new Chair.

**10. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will take place on **Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2015 at 5.00pm, Room 29.**

**MITCHEL MCLAUGHLIN MLA  
PRESIDENT**

DRAFT