

COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY BRANCH

**MEETING ON MONDAY 25 JUNE 2012 AT 5.00PM IN ROOM 144,
PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Present:

The President, Mr William Hay MLA
Mr Stewart Dickson
Mr Paul Givan MLA
Mr Stewart Dickson MLA
Mr Leslie Cree MLA
Ms Jo-Anne Dobson MLA
Mr Robin Swann MLA
Mr Basil McCrea MLA
Ms Anna Lo MLA
Mr David McClarty MLA
Ms Sandra Overend MLA
Mr Mervyn Storey MLA
Mr Alasdair McDonnell MLA
Mr Alban Maginness

Apologies:

Mr Jim Wells MLA
Ms Arlene Foster MLA

In attendance:

Mr John Stewart, Director of Information & Outreach
Mr Peter Hall, Head of Outreach & Education
Ms Louise Close, Outreach Manager
Ms Frances Leneghan, PS to the Speaker
Ms Nicola Rafferty, Parliamentary Outreach Officer

1. APOLOGIES

The President welcomed Members of the CPA NI Branch to the meeting and agreed that apologies would be reflected in the minutes of the meeting.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of previous Annual General Meeting held on 27th June 2011 were agreed unanimously.

3. MATTERS ARISING

- **42nd Conference of the British Islands and Mediterranean Region, Edinburgh 10-14 June**

Mr Basil McCrea, Mr Stewart Dickson, Mr Sean Rogers and Ms Jo-Anne Dobson attended the conference in Edinburgh.

Mr McCrea stated that the conference was extremely well organised, very professional and the whole experience was very beneficial. Both Ms Dobson and Mr Dickson agreed with this analysis.

Ms Dobson advised the Members that Mr McCrea had been voted as 'The Delegate of the Conference'.

Mr McCrea indicated that he had offered the Assembly to host a BIMR Conference, possibly in 2016. The President advised Mr McCrea and the Members that hosting such a conference would be extremely expensive and stressed that CPA funds are very limited and a proper business case would have to be put together.

- **58th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Sri Lanka 11-14 September**

The President advised Members that Ms Anna Lo MLA had been chosen by the CPA Selection Committee to attend the CPA conference in September. He stated that she would be accompanied by an Assembly official.

Ms Dobson stated that some of the smaller countries in the BIMR were sending more than one delegate to the conference. The President advised that the Assembly CPA membership fee only allows for one delegate to attend the annual conference and that having another allocated delegate would require doubling the CPA membership fee. The President also advised Members of the on-going efficiency saving project taking place within the Assembly which has affected budgets in all business areas. He stated that the CPA budget would be carefully scrutinised next year.

Mr Storey advised the Members that the Branch must continue to show that it is committed to the Commonwealth and the work it does. He suggested finding other means to work with Commonwealth countries other than attending conferences.

Mr Dickson stated that the Assembly must be represented strongly at all CPA events and that guests from Commonwealth countries should be encouraged to visit Northern Ireland and the Assembly.

The President agreed with Mr Dickson and stated that all visitors from Commonwealth countries must be given 'red carpet' treatment and that this would continue to be developed.

4. ANNUAL REVIEW

The Annual Review gave Members information about the visits and conferences attended by CPA Members over the last year and the Commonwealth countries that visited the Assembly. It also covered the concert held in Parliament Buildings for Commonwealth Day 2012. The concert was extremely successful and a suggestion has been made that a concert should be held every year to celebrate Commonwealth Day.

The report was noted by all Members.

5. CPA REVIEW

The President advised Members that a review of the Branch activities had been conducted and that the initial discussion paper they received should be carefully read and considered and comment on it would then be sought from them before moving the review to the next stage. He also advised Members that a questionnaire would be developed, in conjunction with the Executive Committee, and then issued to all CPA Members to complete. The President emphasised the importance of conducting the review in order to ensure that the Branch is being fully utilised.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(i) Budget Paper

Members were given the Branch budget paper to consider. The Secretary, Mr Peter Hall, gave Members an overview of the budget.

There were no comments.

(ii) Queens Jubilee

Mr Storey suggested that a letter be sent to the Queen from the Branch to congratulate her on her Diamond Jubilee.

The President agreed and a letter stated that a letter would be written and issued after her visit to Northern Ireland.

7. NEXT MEETING

The next CPA Executive Committee meeting will take place on 17th September 2012 in Room 29.

The President stated that the CPA Northern Ireland Branch is continuing to act as a successful platform for international engagement and he thanked Members for their continued assistance with Commonwealth visitors.

The President thanked Members for attending.

The President adjourned the meeting.

William Hay MLA
President