



**COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES BRANCH EXECUTIVE**

**REPORT TO THE CPA WALES BRANCH FOR THE PERIOD
1 January 2011 – 30 June 2012**

Background

The National Assembly for Wales unanimously agreed a motion signed by the four party leaders to apply for admission to membership of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) on 7 July 1999. Wales was formally welcomed into the CPA at the General Assembly meeting in Trinidad on 19 September 1999.

The Branch Executive meets at least once a term, on the basis that any other Branch Members who wish to be present are also welcome to attend, with prior notification requested if possible.

Note:

This report, due to last year's National Assembly for Wales election and the decision to change the timing of the Branch AGM, covers a longer than usual 18 month period and some activities of the former Branch towards the end of the Third Assembly.

Branch Structure

All Assembly Members are by default Members of the CPA Wales Branch

Branch Executive Committee

President: Rosemary Butler AM

Vice President: David Melding AM

Chair: Joyce Watson AM

Vice Chairs:

Simon Thomas AM

Mohammad Asghar AM

William Powell AM

Secretary: Claire Clancy, Chief Executive and Clerk of the National Assembly for Wales

Acting Secretary:

Al Davies, International Relations Manager

CHAIR'S REPORT

The Branch has maintained its position as an active member of the CPA. It has sent delegates to conferences and seminars in the UK and overseas and has hosted a range of visitors from across the Commonwealth to the National Assembly for Wales.

I was elected as a new Chair to our CPA Branch last June. During this past year I have learned much, not only about the historical work and influence of our own Branch, but also of the wider Association and the opportunities for good presented through our membership of the CPA, including a platform to showcase the National Assembly for Wales as a small but leading and innovative international legislature.

I have been encouraged by the interest in the work and activities of our Branch by Members, and in particular by those Members elected to the Assembly for the first time last year.

Our Membership also enables us as a Branch to offer opportunities to young people here in Wales and I'm pleased of the Branch's decision to work more strategically with the Assembly's Outreach and Education services during this past year to source suitable young people through their network of contacts and stakeholders. This has resulted in the CPA Wales Branch being represented very enthusiastically at events such as Commonwealth Day and a Youth Parliament in Westminster, as well as participation in our very own successful Commonwealth debate in Siambwr Hywel.

The Branch has also continued its interest, and participation in the discussion, to positively influence the governance of the CPA and we were pleased to support the election, in July of last year, of Sir Alan Haselhurst MP to the position of Chair of the Association. Sir Alan visited the National Assembly this March and has made clear his commitment to working towards ensuring that the CPA is transparent and accountable whilst looking after the best interest and needs of its members and remaining fit for purpose.

The CPA Wales Branch Executive Committee held nine formal meetings during the period of this report. **The minutes from these meetings, as well as all reports submitted by Branch Members during this period, are available bilingually on the CPA pages of the National Assembly's website and I would welcome any feedback you may have. The Branch's reports webpage can be accessed by clicking [here](#)**

May I therefore take this opportunity to thank Members for their interest in our Branch and may I again encourage your further participation in our work and the opportunities presented by our membership of the CPA.

Joyce Watson AM.
CPA Wales Branch Chair.

ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN DURING THE PERIOD OF THE REPORT:

CPA Working Party and Executive Committee Meetings - Yukon, Canada (February 2011)

Former Branch Chair Janet Ryder represented the British Isles and Mediterranean (BIM) Region at meetings of both the CPA Working Party and International Executive Committee.

Commonwealth Day 2011 (March)

An evening reception was held in the Senedd to celebrate Commonwealth Day 2011, the theme of which was “**Women as Agents of Change**”. The event was sponsored by the CPA Wales Branch and jointly organised with Cardiff Council to coincide with the prestigious **Commonwealth Local Government Forum Conference (CLGF)** which the City hosted.

The Branch was also represented at the official Commonwealth Day celebrations in Westminster by two young people – Bradley Morgan and Jade Mills – from “Funky Dragon”.

Visit by a delegation from the Canadian Parliament (March 2011).

The National Assembly for Wales hosted a federal delegation representing both Houses of the Canadian Parliament for their first visit to Wales as part of a Canada-UK Inter-Parliamentary Association visit. The visit allowed the opportunity for our two legislatures to learn from each other and exchange best practices in key areas of mutual interest, such as citizen participation, e-democracy and working bilingually. The CPA Branch Chair and Executive Members also met the delegation to discuss CPA related matters.

Report

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JdOZU17Dphg&feature=plcp>

(Interview with The Hon Dr Carolyn Bennett MP MD)

57th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC), London
Branch Chair Joyce Watson AM attended the CPA Annual International conference as the CPA Wales delegate with **Mohammad Asghar AM** also attending as an official observer.

As part of the conference, Joyce Watson attended the meeting of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians and both Members attended the BIM Regional AGM.

[Report](#)

4th Commonwealth Youth Parliament (September 2011)

The Branch worked with the Assembly's Outreach Service to select two young people, **Aled Jones & Steffan Evans**, through the **Young Farmers Wales Forum** to participate in the Youth Parliament; which culminated in a debate with their peers from across the Commonwealth on Climate Change in the House of Lords.

[Report](#)

Visit to Western Cape Provincial Parliament, South Africa

(October 2011)

Darren Millar AM visited South Africa's Western Cape Provincial Parliament and also held meetings with community and faith groups as part of this study visit, under the CPA Wales Branch Sponsorship Scheme.

[Report](#)

9th Canadian Parliamentary Seminar, Ottawa (October 2011)

William Powell AM was selected to represent the Branch at this seminar, aimed at new and recently elected Members; the theme of which was: "**Strengthening Democracy and the Role of Parliamentarians: Challenges and Solutions**".

[Report](#)

Destiny Africa Children's Choir, Kampala, Uganda (November 2011)

A packed house at the Assembly's Pierhead witnessed the welcome return of the Destiny Africa Children's Choir from Kampala, Uganda in an event hosted by the **Presiding Officer and Branch President Rosemary Butler AM**.

The children's visit also included the opportunity to view Assembly business in the Senedd and partake in a bespoke session with our Education service to learn of democracy in Wales, the rights of children and the importance of having their voices heard to drive positive changes.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IV_1MAVfkrs&feature=plcp (video)

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/nationalassemblyforwales/sets/72157627978012549/> (photos)

Commonwealth Day 2012 (March)

The Branch was represented at the official Commonwealth Day celebrations in Westminster this year by two young people – **Hannah Kirkby and Jacob Ellis**.

Report

The CPA Wales Branch also hosted a successful International youth debate on this year's Commonwealth theme of "***Connecting Cultures***". The debate included Welsh and International young people representing over 30 countries.

Event report and photos.

42nd Conference of the British Isles and Mediterranean Region (BIMR) Edinburgh, Scotland (June).

Parliamentarians representing all 13 BIM Branches were present at the Regional conference in Edinburgh. The CPA Wales branch was represented by a delegation, led by the Branch Chair **Joyce Watson AM**, and included **Simon Thomas AM** and **Byron Davies AM**. The conference plenary and workshop sessions focused upon the theme of: "**Making Parliament Relevant**".

A full report will follow on the Branch webpages in due course.

Commonwealth Visitors to the Senedd.

The Branch has assisted in the development of programmes for many international visitors to the Assembly and visits have included High Commissioners and delegations from countries including **Canada, Lesotho, Uganda, Singapore, India, Bangladesh** and **Australia**.

Forward Look:

The Branch will be represented by **Rebecca Evans AM** at this September's **Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Sri Lanka**. The Branch also hopes to be represented at the forthcoming **International Parliamentary Conference (IPC) on Gender** in November and the **5th Commonwealth Youth Parliament** in December. Looking further ahead, the **Falkland Islands** have announced that they will be hosting the **2013 BIMR Conference** in

February of next year at which the CPA Wales Branch will be invited to participate.

Branch Sponsorship Scheme (on-going).

Members are reminded of this scheme and encouraged to look for opportunities to apply for support for study visits to other Commonwealth Parliaments and Assemblies. Members interested in this opportunity should in the first instance email the Acting Branch Secretary Al Davies (al.davies@wales.gov.uk) with a brief outline and business case of their proposed study visit.

June 2012