

**BRANCH EXECUTIVE MEETING**

**Meeting Date:** Wednesday 27 March 2019

**MINUTES**

Present:
 **Branch Executive Committee**

Rhun ap Iorwerth AM, Chair

Ann Jones AM, DPO & Branch Vice-President

David Rowlands AM

Rhianon Passmore AM

Mohammad Asghar AM

Secretariat:

Al Davies, Acting Branch Secretary

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

None

1. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** – Paper CPA 02-18M (**DOC 1**)

Minutes of the last Branch meeting were approved.

1. **MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

There were no matters arising.

1. **REVIEW OF RECENT ACTIVITIES**

 **Feedback and follow-up of recent Meetings, Visits,
 Events and Conferences**

* *BIMR CWP Steering Committee Meeting*

*London
21 January (****DOC 2****)*
Joyce Watson attended this meeting, minutes of which had been distributed. Issues to note included discussions surrounding the forthcoming CWP Chair election in Uganda as well as clarity sought for the role of CPW Vice-Chair.

* *Branch President and Chair Visit to Botswana and South Africa
26 February – 1 March*The Branch President (Llywydd) had undertaken an official visit to Botswana, at the invitation of the Botswana parliament Speaker during the February recess. The Branch Chair had also been asked to attend.

The Chair noted that the visit had been positive and worthwhile. He noted that the visit had highlighted how much our parliaments have in common and, and yet, how much there was to learn from each other.

The visit to the Botswana parliament offered the opportunity to evaluate the sustained and ongoing support which the CPA Wales Branch had provided in areas ranging from developing the research functions to the importance of Members Professional Development and Public Engagement. It had been clear from meetings held with senior Members and officials at the parliament that this support was much valued and that tangible progress had been made, as a result of some of the training and advice provided by our Branch.

A subsequent short visit to the Western Cape Provincial Parliament in Cape Town had included discussion on numerous matters of mutual interest. This had included the governance of devolved parliaments; capacity issues; the Assembly’s Dignity and Respect Policy as well as that of the Welsh Youth Parliament.

A formal report would be completed shortly which would be shared with Branch Members at the next meeting and posted on the Assembly’s CPA pages.

* *International Women’s Day Programme
Marlborough House, London
8 March*Joyce Watson had attended this programme as the Regional CWP Chair. The programme agenda has been circulated for reference.
* *Commonwealth Day Observation
Westminster
11 March*CPA Wales was again represented by two young people at the official Commonwealth Observance, organised in partnership with our Education and Youth Engagement team. Laura Johnson and Zach Evans participated in this year’s programme, the theme of which was
 “*A Connected Commonwealth*”. A report of their attendance was subsequently received and posted on the Branch website.

Members discussed that it would be appropriate and beneficial, where practical, for the Branch’s future work with young people to be aligned with that of the Welsh Youth Parliament.
* *Commonwealth/International “Wales and the World” Event
Senedd
12 March*A lunchtime reception had been held in the Senedd to mark this year’s Commonwealth Day. As agreed by Branch Members at our last meeting, the theme of the reception was “*Wales and Africa*” . The programme had included speeches by the Branch President, Chair as well as Cat Jones of Hub Cymru Africa.
Participants had the opportunity to visit numerous stands present of Welsh organisations working with Africa and there was a memorable performance by Ballet Nimba.

**5.** **FORWARD PLANNING**

 **Forthcoming Meetings, Visits, Events and Conferences**

* *48th BIM Regional Conference
Guernsey
19-22 May*The Branch had now confirmed that it would on this occasion be represented by all four Members of the Branch Executive Committee. An additional place had been granted for Joyce Watson AM, as the outgoing Regional CWP Chair.

The Chair noted that the conference’s Regional AGM meeting would include the election of a new CWP Chair for the 2019-2022 period. Profiles and election statements of the candidate(s) would be made available later that week.
* *Westminster Workshop on Gender Sensitive Scrutiny
17-19 June
London*Our Branch had been invited to apply for up to two places, with the Branch Vice-President, Ann Jones AM, having noted her interest to attend.

A Branch notice seeking expressions of interest from male AMs had not resulted in any applications. CPA UK had, however, offered our Branch the option of nominating a second woman AM to accompany Ann. Rhianon Passmore was pleased to take up this place and the Chair wished both Members well at the workshop.
* *Cyprus CWP Programme
12-15 June*This visit aimed at raising awareness of women’s political participation, ahead of Cyprus’ forthcoming elections had been arranged by the BIMR secretariat, in partnership with the Cypriot Parliament.

The visit had originally been scheduled for last year with Joyce Watson AM, as the CWP Chair, to lead a delegation of 3 women parliamentarians from the Region. Arrangements were underway to facilitate Joyce’s participation.
* *6th BIMR CWP Conference
Jersey
19-20 September*The Annual Regional CWP Conference dates as well as the theme of “*The next 100 years”* had been confirmed. The event would mark the culmination of events to mark the centenary of (some) women in Jersey getting the vote.

Our Branch expected to be offered three places at the conference and applications would be invited in due course. It was noted that this would be a good opportunity to attract interest and participation from some women AMs, who had not previously been involved in CWP events.
* *2019 Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference
Kampala, Uganda
22-29 September*

The 64th CPC in Uganda had been confirmed by the CPA Uganda Branch and a webpage launched on the Secretariat’s website.

A draft programme as well as an information circular was expected to be released in late April.

CPA Wales were guaranteed a place for one Assembly Member. It was normal practice for the Branch Vice-President to attend one CPC during an Assembly term and Ann Jones AM noted that she would like to attend and lead the Branch’s participation at this year’s conference. She added that she would not be pursuing any other CPCs this Assembly. The Branch Executive Committee was pleased to endorse this.

**Opening up Branch Opportunities**

The Chair noted that the forthcoming CPC in Uganda prompted the need for a discussion about opening up Branch opportunities. This was important as we entered the latter stage of the Fifth Assembly, with all Branch Executive Members having had the opportunity to represent Wales on at least one CPA Conference internationally.

The Chair added that he was aware of considerable interest within the wider Branch from Members who wished to experience and participate in CPA activities. It was an important part of the Branch’s remit to facilitate such opportunities.

The forthcoming CPC in Uganda presented such an opportunity, at which we would likely be permitted to also send an observer to accompany the Vice-President, as our delegate. The Chair stated that he was in favour of ensuring that All Members had the opportunity to be considered for this conference – and that priority should be given to attracting interest from those who had not previously participated in CPA Wales activities, internationally.

* 1. **FUTURE MEETING DATES:**

 Branch Executive Meeting – May/June (TBC)

**7.** NEW ITEMS / ANY OTHER BUSINESS

 - ***CPA Wales Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP)
 Representative.***A discussion was held on the Branch’s representation on the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP).

Background
The Chair stated thatJoyce Watson AM had been Chair of the Wales Branch between 2011-16, for the duration of the Fourth Assembly. Joyce had also represented our Branch as our CWP representative since its establishment as a BIMR network, in 2013.

Since 2016 Joyce had been the Regional CWP Chair, a term that would come to an end at the BIMR AGM in Guernsey on 20 May. As part of a rotation of the Region’s CWP Members – Wales was one of the Branches who had the option this year to change our CWP representative. This term had already been extended to ensure that Joyce was able to complete her full term as Chair.

The Chair confirmed that he had written to Joyce Watson AM on the matter, stating that there would now need to be a Branch discussion on who would represent us on CWP matters in going forward. Joyce Watson had confirmed that she would like to continue in the role.

Whilst some were in favour that this should be permitted, concerns were raised that this went against the spirit of opening up opportunities to the wider Membership, earlier discussed at the meeting within the context of the forthcoming CPC in Uganda. The point was also made that it would be difficult to justify automatically allowing Joyce Watson to renew her term when she had attended over 20 CPA conferences, more than any other Branch Member. Furthermore, it was noted that there was a pool of talented women AMs within our Branch, several of whom had repeatedly expressed interest in being considered for these opportunities.

The Chair reminded Members that the Branch Executive Committee also included three eligible women Members who should be considered for this position.

 A key issue in the deliberation of this matter was the absence in the CPA Wales Branch constitution to any reference of the CWP, and of how our representation in these roles should be selected.

 The Chair raised that this led to a wider need for our Branch’s standing orders, originally drafted in 2000, to be updated more generally to be fit for purpose and more accurately reflect, and provide guidance for, our current Branch’s work and priorities.

The meeting was adjourned.

* ***Accompanying spouses at CPA conferences.***

Not discussed.

 END OF BUSINESS

March 2019