**REPORT BY RHIANON PASSMORE AM
CPA Fundamentals Programme on Parliamentary Practice and Procedure**

**24-29 April 2017**

This was an inaugural training programme for parliamentarians elected within the last two years.

The programme was run by the School of Continuing Studies at McGill University, Montreal, Canada. McGill refer to the programme as a Professional Development Certificate in Parliamentary Governance for CPA Small Branches.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the CPA, my hosts at McGill (especially Phoebe Zamunel) and our Branch for sponsoring my participation in this programme.

I must note here that this is a brief report as I only submitted my final written assignment to McGill on Monday!

**Programme Description**

Introduced as part of the CPA’s revised programme strategy. This pioneering programme was launched during the 62nd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference.

The aim and ambition of this accredited programme was to deepen participants’ understanding of democratic parliamentary governance.

The main objective of the programme was to strengthen the capacity of Parliamentarians by equipping us with:

* Greater depth of knowledge of parliamentary practice and procedure
* Increased in-depth and practical knowledge based on accepted theories and international good practices
* An accredited qualification from an internationally recognised university that will benefit us for life during and after Parliament
* Skills to meet our professional development needs

The course comprised of online preparatory modules, seminars during a five day course at McGill, and subsequent online modules to be completed following the sessions in Montreal.

The four core modules provide a useful overview of the subject matter and remit of the course. These were:

***Introduction to Commonwealth Parliamentary Governance***

 This was a self-directed online introductory module which ended in March.

**Contemporary Issues in Parliamentary Governance**

This module was partly completed online and culminated with a final written paper and corresponding presentation during the course at McGill in April. The final paper and corresponding presentation, entitled ‘Assessment of Operations of Your Legislature’ enabled me to not only further my own understanding of Assembly processes and procedure but also to fully reflect on the many merits of this institution.

The sessions at McGill included lectures on legislative process from leading academics, roundtable discussions and seminars with fellow Commonwealth Parliamentarians.

**Advanced Parliamentary Governance**

This online module concluded last week and included an online tutor monitored discussion forum and a final paper based on Greg Power’s study, ‘The Politics of Parliamentary Strengthening’.

**Parliamentary Communications**

This online module is still live but, as previously stated, I submitted my final assignment on Monday. In this final paper, an evaluation of the Assembly’s Communications Strategy, I examined the Assembly Commission’s Strategy and most recent Key Performance Indicators.

I had extensive opportunity throughout the programme to discuss the work of the National Assembly for Wales whilst engaging with fellow course participants and academic facilitators. The course has enabled me to conclude that we’re right to showcase the Assembly as a leading example of parliamentary and legislative best practice.

I found this to be a very interesting and informative programme. As much of the course material was aimed at legislatures far less develop than the Assembly, I often found that I could hail the Assembly as a model of international good governance best practice. Indeed, one of the academics observed that “the Welsh Assembly sounds like an exemplary legislature!”

**Programme Evaluation**

I would most definitely recommend that other Assembly Members complete any future CPA Fundamentals programmes. However, I would warn any future participants about the volume of work involved! I believe that my busy schedule, like that of all Assembly Members, meant that I not always had the opportunity to fully explore the online modules. There were many suggested readings that I simply have not had the opportunity to complete.

Yet this is not to detract from the invaluable experience I have had. I not only gained academic knowledge through studying at McGill but also learnt a significant amount during conversations with fellow parliamentarians from across the Commonwealth. My experiences on this programme will continue to guide me during my time here in the Assembly and beyond.

**Appendix:**

Timetable of the course in Montreal

