



BRANCH EXECUTIVE MEETING

Date: Wednesday 17 July 2024
Time: 12:30-13:15
Format: In person Meeting
Location: Conference Room A

Present

Rhun ap Iorwerth MS, Chair
David Rees MS (Vice-President)
Alun Davies MS
Rhianon Passmore MS
Natasha Asghar MS
Delyth Jewell MS

Secretariat

Al Davies, Acting Branch Secretary
Elin Sutton, Llywydd's Private Office

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCES**

Apologies were received from Sam Rowlands MS

2. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** - Paper CPA 6S-24-01 (**DOC 1**)

The Minutes were agreed as a correct record.

3. **MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

None.

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

- *BIMR Conference
St Helena, 18-25 May
(Hybrid AGM on 20 May).*

Natasha Asghar MS had represented the Senedd in this successful and unique Regional conference.

Natasha Asghar MS relayed how much she had enjoyed her time in St Helena and expressed her gratitude for this opportunity. She gave an overview of how the St Helena Legislature and Government functioned and of some of the challenges faced by the island due to its remoteness and of concerns over the young people leaving to look for work elsewhere. She also highlighted some of the opportunities for the St Helena with its new improved IT connectivity and of its unique selling points as a sustainable tourism destination.

Natasha Asghar MS had contributed fully at the conference, including as a keynote speaker in the opening plenary session on Artificial Intelligence.

A comprehensive conference report would be provided by the BIMR Secretariat in due course.

The Chair thanked Natasha Asghar MS for her contribution and for representing the Branch at this year's Regional Conference.

- *AI and Deepfakes Conference
Singapore
18-20 June*

Lee Waters MS had been selected as the Senedd's delegate to attend this conference. Lee's comprehensive [report](#) has been circulated and he had indicated that he would be pleased of the

opportunity to discuss his experience and findings further with Members.

The Chair noted that there was clearly a great deal of interest and enthusiasm from Members of the Senedd in this work and it was hoped that there would be further opportunities for Members' participation in future CPA Conferences on AI.

Note: Alun Davies MS, within the context of this conference, queried whether any known research had been undertaken into the influence of AI and Disinformation on the recent UK General Election. The Branch Secretariat would liaise with the Senedd's Research Service to ascertain what information there was in relation to this.

- *Visit by Speaker-led Delegation from National Assembly of Quebec
11 June*

The Llywydd had been delighted to host the visit of Speaker Nathalie Roy and her delegation from the National Assembly of Quebec. A full programme was undertaken by the delegation which had included sessions on Official Languages, Women in Parliament and an overview of Senedd Business and current Reforms. The Deputy Presiding Officer had hosted a luncheon with several Committee Chairs and the Llywydd hosted an official dinner for the delegation.

Note: An article on Speaker Roy's visit to the Senedd is featured in "[The Parliamentarian](#)" journal (vol.105).

- *Visit by Speaker of the Queensland Parliament
5 July*

Hon Curtis Pitt, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland visited the Senedd on 5 July. With the Speaker's visit falling on a Friday (and the day after the General Election) it had unfortunately not been possible to offer an official Speaker's programme. However, a presentation on developments at the Senedd as well as sessions with senior officials, including on Members' security and support, had been provided.

- *BIMR CWP Steering Committee Meeting*
Virtual
15 July.

A meeting of the Regional Women Parliamentarians had been held a few days previously. Rhianon Passmore MS and Delyth Jewell MS were present from our Branch.

It was noted that Dame Maria Miller had not been re-elected at the recent UK election. Sarah Boyack MSP (Scotland) was ratified as the new Regional Vice-Chair (and Acting Chair until the election of a new Regional Chair)

Other matters discussed included:

- participation (by Rhianon Passmore MS) in a working group meeting on the effective use of Regional Strengthening Funds.
- the issue of intimidation of women standing for election.

The Chair noted the Branch's thanks to Rhianon Passmore MS for her time as the Regional CWP Vice-Chair.

5. **FORWARD PLANNING**

Forthcoming Meetings, Visits, Events and Conferences

- *Commonwealth Youth Parliament*
Wellington, New Zealand
2-6 September

Following an open selection process, this opportunity had been promoted to eligible past Members of the Welsh Youth Parliament. A very positive response had been received with over a dozen applications.

The Secretariat was now awaiting confirmation as to whether our nominations had been successful.

Afternote: [Tegan Skyrme](#) was selected as the Senedd's nomination at the CYP.

- *CWP Workshop on Combatting Gender Based Violence*
Abuja, Nigeria
20-22 August 2024

The Chair brought this CWP Workshop to the attention of Members, noting that it would no doubt be of interest to many within our Branch. However, the late notice of the Workshop, as well as anecdotal concerns about the feasibility of securing visas within the required timeframe, meant that we would not be able to put any Members forward for this opportunity.

- *Advanced Parliamentary Development Residency Programme
Kuala, Lumpur, Malaysia
22 - 28 September*

As with the CWP Nigeria conference, notification of this programme had arrived at very late notice.

Note: In view of the above instances, (as well as the recent CPA Singapore conference) the Branch Secretariat had now written to the Head of Programmes at CPA HQ to state how difficult it was to effectively budget and plan our engagement with so little notice being provided.

Th CPA had promptly acknowledged this and responded that it would now endeavour to provide a longer lead-in and earlier awareness of programmes they had in the pipeline.

- *67th CPC,
Sydney, New South Wales
3-8 November*

The Chair noted that the Branch had now received an official invitation to attend this year's CPC in Sydney.

The Llywydd had stated that she would like to attend this year's CPC. It was noted that no Llywydd had previously attended an international CPA Conference and that it seemed particularly appropriate for the Llywydd to go to this year's CPC, which coincided with the Senedd's 25th anniversary.

The Chair discussed that he had not, in his eight years of chairing the Branch, attended a CPC but that he also hoped to attend this year's CPC.

Members were in agreement that the Llywydd and Chair should represent the Senedd Branch at this year's conference.

The Branch secretariat would now liaise with the CPA in order to maximise opportunities for our delegation in Sydney, including to participate in bilateral meetings as well as with the Welsh diaspora in New South Wales.

Note: Rhianon Passmore MS questioned whether the election of the BIMR CWP Chair (in which she had an interest in putting herself forward for) would take place at the CPC. The Branch Secretariat confirmed that this would take place at the next BIM Regional Conference in 2025.

2025

- *73rd Westminster Seminar
10-14 March*

Next year's Westminster Seminar had already been confirmed and the Senedd invited to send one Member (and a Clerk) to the Seminar. This opportunity would be advertised following the Summer recess.

- *BIMR CWP Conference
Edinburgh, Scotland
March/April (TBC)*

CPA Scotland Branch had noted their wish to host next year's Regional CWP conference and this was likely to be confirmed in the Autumn.

- *BIMR Conference
Cardiff, Wales*

Discussed below

- *68th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference / CWP elections
Barbados
August (TBC)*

Details of the 2025 CPC was expected to be confirmed at this year's CPC in Sydney, NSW.

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

- ***Update on BIMR LGBTQ+ Network***

One of the positive outcomes from the AGM at the BIMR in St Helena was the agreement that the Region should work towards establishing an LGBTQ+ Network. The BIMR Secretariat was currently seeking interest from Branches to nominate representatives to participate in an initial working group and its first meeting was being planned for after the summer recess. Adam Price MS would initially represent the Senedd and the Branch would be pleased to open this opportunity for other Members.

- ***Participation in new BIMR Strategic theme: "Digital Transformation(and E-Parliament) (DOC 3)***

At the recent BIMR AGM it was suggested that this year's Regional Theme should be on "Digital Transformation". A working group will also be established on this subject in which Senedd Members will be welcome to participate.

- ***Update on CPA Senedd Hosting of 2025 BIMR Annual Conference.***

The Chair noted that he had now written to the Llywydd and the Chief Executive and Clerk of the Senedd in order to officially request that the Branch could host next year's BIMR, and that the required resources and support be made available to facilitate this.

7. **FUTURE MEETING DATES:**

Branch ExCo Meeting – October/November (TBC)
Branch AGM - December

END OF BUSINESS