



COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES BRANCH EXECUTIVE

REPORT TO THE CPA WALES BRANCH FOR THE PERIOD 1 July 2012 – 31 May 2013

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.

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.

If my first year as Branch Chair was predominantly about getting to know the CPA and its work, then this second year has been about promoting our Branch and the interests of the National Assembly for Wales within this network, both on a regional and international level.

One of the key developments during this past year has been the decision by our British Islands and Mediterranean Region (BIMR) to establish a Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Steering Committee with the remit of representing the views and issues of women within our legislatures to highlight concerns and to share best practice. I am pleased to represent the CPA Wales Branch on this steering committee and would welcome input from Assembly Members on any issues affecting Women (either nationally or more specifically within their constituencies and regions), which they would like me to put forward for discussion and to inform the agenda of this committee and the wider work of the CWP.

Once again this year, we have worked with our Education team and stakeholders to engage young people in Wales in our work, and the Branch was represented at both last year's Commonwealth Youth Parliament and the recent Commonwealth Day celebrations in Westminster.

I continue to be encouraged by Members' interest in the Branch's work and activities. For example, we were represented at two major conferences and seminars during this past year by recently elected Assembly Members.

Looking forward, the Branch will be represented at this year's Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa. At this meeting we will elect the CPA's Commonwealth Women Parliamentarian Chair for a three year term.

Of course, at the forefront of our minds now is the 44th British Islands and Mediterranean Regional Conference which the CPA Wales Branch will host here in Cardiff next May, and planning is already underway. This opportunity will allow us to showcase Welsh democracy to an audience of some 70 delegates from our Region of the CPA as well as observers from within the Association's other eight regions internationally.

The Branch has agreed that this conference will focus upon equality of access, which will highlight themes such as “*Gender and Women in Parliament*”; “*Bilingualism and the role of official languages*” and “*Youth Parliaments and engagement of young citizens in the democratic process*” to reflect some of the Branch’s and the Commission’s key areas of interest and strategic priorities.

The CPA Wales Branch Executive Committee held four 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:

58th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC), Sri Lanka
(September 2012)

Rebecca Evans AM attended as the Branch delegate to the 2012 CPA Annual International conference.

As part of the conference, Rebecca attended the meeting of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians and the British Islands and Mediterranean Regional AGM.

[Report](#)

5th Commonwealth Youth Parliament (December 2012)

The Branch worked with the Assembly's Education Service to select two young people, **William Edwards & Amy Fox**, students at Coleg Gwent to participate in the Youth Parliament in the Houses of Parliament. The conference culminated in a debate with their peers from across the Commonwealth on Youth Unemployment, held in the Houses of Parliament.

[Report](#)

43rd Conference of the British Isles and Mediterranean Region (BIMR) Falkland Islands (February 2013).

The CPA Wales branch was represented by Branch Chair **Joyce Watson AM**, and **William Powell AM**. The conference plenary and workshop sessions focused upon the theme of: "Self-Determination and its Role in Self Governance and Devolution". The conference allowed the opportunity to raise the profile and understanding of Wales' model of devolution as well as promoting next year's BIMR conference which we will be hosting.

[Report](#)

Commonwealth Day 2013 (February / March 2013)

Commonwealth Day was this year marked in the Senedd in a special joint International / St David's Day event; the theme of which was

“Wales and the World” hosted by the Branch President and Presiding Officer.

The Branch was also represented at the official Commonwealth Day celebrations in Westminster this year by two young people – **Shaan Desai** and **Anna Ashford** of **Atlantic College**, with whom the Branch has been working.

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24th CPA Parliamentary Seminar, Singapore (May 2013)

Antoinette Sandbach AM, represented the Branch at this seminar, the theme of which was “Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy”. As part of her attendance at the Seminar, Antoinette was invited to Chair a session on Public Accounts Committees.

Report to Follow.

Commonwealth Visitors to the Senedd.

The Branch has assisted in the development of programmes for international visitors to the Assembly included High Commissioners and delegations from **Lesotho, Trinidad & Tobago, Sri Lanka, South Africa and Australia.**

Forward Look:

The Branch will be represented by Branch Chair **Joyce Watson AM, Simon Thomas AM** and **Ann Jones AM** at this September’s **Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in South Africa.**

Looking further ahead, the Branch looks forward to hosting next year’s CPA British Islands and Mediterranean Regional Conference in May 2014.

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 2013