



BRANCH EXECUTIVE MEETING

Date: Wednesday 27 November 2024

Time: 12:30-13:15

Location: Video Conference Room

Present

Rhun ap Iorwerth MS, Chair
Llywydd, Elin Jones MS (President)
David Rees MS (Vice-President)
Alun Davies MS
Natasha Asghar MS
Delyth Jewell MS

Secretariat

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

AGENDA

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCES**

Rhianon Passmore MS

2. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** - Paper CPA 6S-24-02 (**DOC 1**)

The Minutes were agreed as a correct record.

3. **MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

Following a discussion on Lee Waters MS' attendance at the *Deepfake and AI Conference (Singapore)*, it was queried whether any known research had been undertaken into the influence of AI and Disinformation on the recent UK General Election.

A short briefing note was drafted by the Senedd's Research Service in response to this query and a note shared with Members.

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

2024

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

The Branch was pleased to have been represented at this year's CYP, hosted by the New Zealand Parliament, by Tegan Skyrme, former Member of the Welsh Youth Parliament. The Chair noted the Branch's gratitude to Tegan for her report which has been distributed as well as to Angharad Earles from the Welsh Youth Parliament team, who accompanied and supported Tegan.

Note: The Llywydd noted that, as part of the discussion the delegation had with the New Zealand Parliament in Sydney, their recent hosting of the CYP had been of interest. This was clearly a major undertaking, involving Members as mentors to the delegates, but an experience which the NZ parliament had obviously found to be rewarding and very worthwhile.

The Llywydd asked Members whether they thought the Senedd should in principle express an interest in hosting a future CYP. It was noted that the timing of the next CYP, scheduled for 2026 and coinciding with the next Senedd elections, could be problematic but there was general support for the Branch to look into this further.

- *BIMR CWP Steering Committee Meetings
16 September / 25 November.*

16 September - Delyth Jewell MS and Rhianon Passmore MS had attended this meeting which had included a discussion on the subject

of *Violence against Women in Politics* in which Delyth Jewell MS had contributed, citing a paper she had written on the issue of abuse of women parliamentarians through social media.

Sarah Boyack MSP (Scotland) had been elected as the Regional CWP Acting Chair at the meeting.

25 November – Natasha Asghar MS had attended part of this meeting which discussed the CWP Conference at the recent CPC in Sydney as well as preparations for the 2025 International Women’s Day.

- *BIMR Election Observer Mission
Montserrat
October*

The Branch had submitted an application for this opportunity but was not successful on this occasion. This was a particularly small mission and the Senedd had been encouraged by the BIMR Secretariat to apply again for future EOM opportunities.

The Llywydd questioned what the process was for a parliament to invite Observers to its elections, aware that there had not been any such missions to observe Senedd elections up until now.

Action: The Branch Secretariat would look into the matter and report back to Members.

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

The Chair noted that he and the Llywydd had been delighted to have represented the Branch at this year’s CPC, hosted by the New South Wales Parliament in Sydney. The conference had been both well organised and attended.

The Llywydd and the Chair discussed their experience at the CPC which had included:

- The Llywydd’s address to the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians on the topic of *“How to Retain Women in Parliament”*

- the Chair's keynote address to the General Assembly Topical Debate on *"Votes vs Likes – the Role of Parliament in Strengthening Democratic Resilience in an Age of Fake News and Synthetic Media"*

The Conference workshop on *"How legislatures can Best Support and Promote LGBTQ+ participation"* had been well attended and far more respectful than at last year's CPC in Ghana.

There had been interest from numerous CPA Regions in the work that the BIMR was undertaking to establish an LGBT network.

The Llywydd noted that, as well as the official programme, they had been pleased to of the opportunity to undertake numerous bilateral meetings within the margins of the conference. These had included meetings with the Speaker of the New South Wales parliament; the Western Cape Provincial Parliament; The National Assembly of Quebec and the Parliament of New Zealand. The Senedd delegation had also participated in the briefing sessions and reception offered by the British Consulate in Sydney.

The Chair and Llywydd noted how pleased they had been to meet with members of the *Sydney Welsh Society*, and wider Welsh diaspora in New South Wales to learn of their stories and lives in Australia as well as to inform them of developments at the Senedd and back here in Wales.

A formal conference report was in development and would be shared with Members in due course.

5. **FORWARD PLANNING**

Forthcoming Meetings, Visits, Events and Conferences

2024

- *BIMR Webinar "What are the barriers for disabled people standing for elected office and how can they be overcome?"*
2 December.

Details of this webinar which would be Chaired by Jeremy Balfour MSP (Scotland), the Regional Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities Chair, had been shared and was open to all. The Deputy

Presiding Officer noted that he hoped to attend given the subject matter was of interest to the work of the [Future Senedd Committee](#) he was Chairing.

- *Online Briefing by CPA Secretary-General Stephen Twigg | Feedback on LGBT+ inclusion discussions at CHOGM and CPC 11 December (12:00-13:00).*

The Briefing had been organised in response to the work which Adam Price MS and others had been leading on in the development of an LGBT+ network for our BIM Region. As well as the Secretary General's update from the CHOGM and CPC meetings, Adam Price MS would be discussing his experience at the recent Commonwealth Equality Network Meeting held in South Africa.

2025

- *Regional Webinar on Gender Quotas
20 January.*

This Webinar, originally intended to take place in October, had now been rescheduled for the New Year. Further details would be circulated in due course.

- *Advance Professional Development & Skills-Building Residency Programme
Valetta, Malta
23 February - 1 March.*

Th Chair noted the forthcoming conference as one of a number of professional development residency programme which the CPA has been delivering in recent months. Unfortunately, it would not be possible for the Branch to facilitate attendance by a Member during this current financial year but it was understood that there will be other similar programmes offered in 2025.

- *73rd Westminster Seminar*
10-14 March

James Evans MS had been selected to attend this annual seminar at which a Senedd Clerk would also be attending.

- *BIMR CWP Conference*
Edinburgh, Scotland
16-19 March (TBC)

Whilst yet to be formally confirmed, the Scotland Branch was expected to host the next Regional CWP Conference in Edinburgh.

- *BIMR Conference*
Cardiff, Wales
June

Members noted the letter from the Llywydd and the CEO & Clerk which had been distributed, officially giving permission for the Senedd to host next year's BIMR Conference and for the resources to be made available to facilitate this.

The Chair stated that this was an exciting, once in a decade, experience to look forward to, and that that initial preparatory work had already begun.

A Branch meeting would be organised in the New Year to discuss the development of the conference program. Members were encouraged, in the meantime, to contact the Branch Secretariat if they had suggestions of any particular themes they would like to propose as potential plenary and workshop sessions.

The Chair explained that, despite our being the conference host, we would be limited in the number of official delegates we could include in the official sessions but that invitations would be extended for all Branch Executive Members and Office Holders to attend the wider programme events.

- *68th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference / CWP elections
Barbados
6-13 October*

The Chair noted that next year's CPC had now been confirmed with Barbados as the host parliament.

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

Papers Noted:

- *10th BIMR CWP (Malta) Report*
- *BIMR 2024 (St Helena) Report*

7. **FUTURE MEETING DATES:**

Branch ExCo Meeting – February 2025 (TBC)
Branch AGM – Tuesday 10 December (virtual)

END OF BUSINESS