

**Annual General Meeting Minutes**  
**Cross Party Group on Germany**  
**9<sup>th</sup> December 2020 (AGM), 6.30pm – 7.30pm**  
**Microsoft Teams**

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In attendance – Colin Beattie MSP, Gordon Lindhurst MSP, Maureen Watt MSP, Joan McAlpine MSP, Elaine Smith MSP, Louise Cameron, Alexandra Stein, Cameron Buchanan, Annette Gotzkes, John Clifford, Karen Freel, Manuela Calchini, Peter Friedrich, Peter Mueller, Sigrid Rieuwerts, Hans Georg Thonges.

Apologies – James Trolland,

**Welcome and Approval of Previous Minutes**

Meeting opened 18.50, with a late start due to the Parliament's decision time overrunning.

The minutes were proposed by John Clifford and seconded by Cameron Buchanan. The minutes were approved by the group.

**Election of Office Bearers – Chaired by Maureen Watt MSP**

a. The Election of the CPG Convener

Colin Beattie is proposed by John Clifford, this is seconded by Sigrid Rieuwerts.

There are no other nominations and Colin Beattie MSP is duly elected as Convener.

b. The Election of the Deputy Conveners

Peter Friedrich, Gordon Lindhurst MSP, Elaine Smith MSP are proposed as the joint Deputy Conveners of the group by Colin Beattie. This nomination is agreed unanimously by the group.

c. Secretary

Louise Cameron proposed by Colin Beattie MSP with no abstentions from the group. Louise Cameron is elected as Secretary.

**Political, Economic, Cultural Updates**

Peter Friedrich noted there are currently no updates on the appointment of a new Consul General.

Sigrid Rieuwerts is still working on the 'Get Buddied Up' programme, funded by the German Foreign Office. This has been going well and is being rolled out to primary schools. The funding comes to an end in December, but the students who have taken part in the programme would like to continue helping pupils get ready for exams. SR is very pleased that there will now be lots of extra primary materials in Scotland.

Regarding Unter der Mondsichel, which was discussed at the last meeting, the event had to be cancelled but you can still buy the book. “Unter der dünnen Mondsichel: Gedichte aus Schottland“ (in German and English). Ed. Sigrid and Hans Thill. – can be ordered through the publisher Wunderhorn in Heidelberg (ISBN: 978-3-88423-632-1))

In relation to ‘Reading Scotland’ they are building up a Scotland library in Germany and because of Covid-19 they have gone virtual, hosting a student led programme to discuss their work. Yesterday they had a poet and lecturer from Aberdeen, and next week they have Karine Polwart (singer/songwriter) who is joining to talk about climate change ahead of the Climate Summit next year in Glasgow. [www.scotland.uni-mainz.de](http://www.scotland.uni-mainz.de) has all the information. If anyone has a writer that they would like to contribute, then please get in touch.

Elaine Smith notes that in future (post Covid-19) it would be good to have a mix of in person and online meetings. This presents lots of good opportunities for attending events we might not normally manage to attend. CB agrees with this hybrid approach.

KF notes that hybrid meetings allow for a greater variety of meetings – we can look to broadening when we have the meetings to allow different people to take part. CB notes this may be a good way of getting more people in and getting a wider audience. LC will look into this with the Parliamentary Authority to see how it could work to have this in the future. MW notes that we need to make sure we have the facilities to do it, but it means we can get a wider audience from across Scotland of those who can’t necessarily travel. This is a huge opportunity to make Parliament more inclusive than we previously thought possible. CB stated that this is a good opportunity to reach out to German people all across Scotland.

AS had a session with Mike Russell, Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, Europe and External Affairs, on how to take partnerships with Germany forward following Brexit. There were key discussions around areas such as climate change and the environment, Higher Education and research. They are expecting a Hydrogen Policy to be published by the Scottish Government and expect discussions to take place in relation to that going forward. There is the potential for good partnerships and German expertise to be shared with Scotland. MW notes that she had a good meeting with Scottish Renewables who highlighted how interested Germany are in us exporting hydrogen, and that we shouldn’t miss out on opportunities like this. Oil and gas companies are transitioning to renewables and retraining staff, so this is a huge opportunity for Scotland.

PF notes that leaving the EU without a deal would have serious consequences for all and we need to hope and trust in those meeting in Brussels that they will find a good solution.

SR notes that the Erasmus programmes can be extended to 2023. Germany can invite Scots to the country in relation to renewables. There is a component called ‘Digital’ which allows them to bring in Scottish partners in a digital manner – this is more green. Scottish students and workers can participate in this exchange on renewables. No decision has been taken yet, but we need to think about how Scotland can be included. It would be great to have more exchange with Aberdeen – they only have one hub left in Aberdeen and that is worrying – this is with one Grammar School and a few Primary Schools. SR to send details to MW and LC in relation to which schools are under pressure and need support. She notes that Northern areas are under pressure, and CB suggests writing as a

CPG to the Minister on this once we have the further information. MW highlights that Robert Gordon University has developed a course on renewables so this could have potential for exchanges.

**Dates of future meetings**

Colin notes dissolution of Parliament means that the next meeting will be the last meeting of this session.

LC informs the group that the next meeting is on Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

Colin thanks everyone for attending – meeting closed at 19.30. CB wished the group a happy Christmas.