

**Minutes of
CPG on USA meeting
19.03.2021
Virtual**

List of attendees (65)

Alan Mitchell
Alan Johnston
Alastair Ross
Alexia Haramis
allan hogarth
Angus Johnstone
Bill Bowman
Brad MacKay
Bruce Wilson
Calum Moultrie
Camille Mateos
Carol Dew
Cat Hay
David Kelly
David Ross
Dean Lockhart
Donella Beaton
Duncan Wood
Ellen Wong
Emma Thomas
Emma Eusebi
Frank Cogliano
frank levene
Gerard Howe
Gillian Sandie
Greg Rankin
Heather Astbury
Ian Wallace
Jo Graham
John Donald
John Leighton
Kara Falconer
Karri Tough
Kate Nowakowska
Kenneth Shand
Kevin Havelock
Lesley-Anne Campbell
Liam Kerr
Lola Nicolas
Luke Skipper
Lynn Dickson
Malcolm Crawford

Margaret Mitchell
Marie Owen
Martin Bell
Mary Brett
Murdo Fraser
Myles Bax
Neville Wylie
Nora Rothrock
Olivia McLaren
Peter Mowforth
Phil Knight
Rachael Hamilton
Richard Muir
Richard Wells
Robbie Beattie
Sarah Maltman
Sarah Jane Anderson
Scott Johnstone
Steve Kerr
Steve Brunige
Stuart Hamilton
William Stirling
Yvonne Munro

Apologies

Rebecca Bonnington
Martin Valenti
Leigh Gibson
Paul Collins

Agenda:

9:45am	<i>Edinburgh Chamber to open the Zoom meeting - Speakers to join</i>
10:00am	Meeting to commence Dean Lockhart , MSP, to open the meeting, to present the agenda of the day and to introduce E. Wong
10:05am	Ellen Wong , Principal Officer of the U.S. Consulate General in Edinburgh, to provide updates on the new Administration Q&A
10:20am	D. Lockhart to introduce the panel of speakers

	<p>General discussions on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COP26: an update from the Scottish Government (20min) <p>Gerard Howe, Deputy Director, COP 26 & International Climate Change, Energy & Climate Change Directorate (10 min)</p> <p><i>Q&A (10 min)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Galleries of Scotland: cultural links with the US (20 min) <p>John Leighton, Director-General, The National Galleries of Scotland (10 min)</p> <p><i>Q&A (10 min)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish trade missions to the US update (10 min) <p>Stuart Hamilton, Business Development Business Support, Scottish Chambers of Commerce (5 min)</p> <p>Allan Hogarth, Executive Director, Scottish North American Business Council (5 min)</p>
11:10am	D. Lockhart to thank the audience and handover to E. Wong for final remarks
11:15am	E. Wong to provide final remarks
11:20am	D. Lockhart to provide closing remarks
	Meeting to finish

Minutes:

Welcome from Dean Lockhart MSP

Dean Lockhart MSP (DL MSP) opens the meeting, presents the agenda and welcomes all attendees. DL MSP informs all attending that this is the last meeting before the elections and gives thanks to the US Consulate, the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce and group members for supporting the group and meetings. DL MSP also welcomes Murdo Fraser MSP, Liam Kerr MSP, Margaret Mitchell MSP and Rachel Hamilton MSP. DL MSP invites Ellen Wong (EW) to give the group an update.

Update from Ellen Wong, Principal Officer at Consulate

EW welcomes attendees and notes that the next U.S. Ambassador to the UK is yet to be nominated. She highlights the temporary suspension of tariffs, and explains that the Biden administration is currently reviewing and consulting with Congress on trade policy, with this review expected to intensify over the forthcoming weeks with the confirmation of the new U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai. COP26 is one of the priorities for President Biden and John Kerry has been nominated as Special Presidential Envoy for Climate Change and visited the UK earlier in March. The US Government is open to collaboration with the private and public sector around COP26. EW is pleased to hear about the many successes of the virtual trade missions to the US and highlights another opportunity, the SelectUSA Investment Summit in June 2021. EW also highlights many other events and opportunities for the US and Scotland to come together, such as the April 6 Tartan Day.

DL MSP thanks EW for the update and asks about collaborations around COP26.

EW invites interested parties to contact the US Consulate directly.

Murdo Fraser MSP welcomes the lift on the embargo on whisky and cashmere and adds a permanent solution will be most welcome.

EW agrees, adding that it is the US Government's great desire to reach a resolution of this matter.

DL MSP presents a question from Olivia Maclaren (via chat box) about updates regarding UK and US travel ban.

EW confirms this is being discussed at the highest level in the U.S. government. However, there are no predictions on details at the moment. There may be some exemptions in the future for certain groups, such as students, but no decisions have been made yet and will depend on the progress of the virus.

DL MSP introduces the panel of speakers

Gerard Howe (GH) gives an update from the Scottish Government on COP26. GH states there is a broad range of interest in COP26 and with 32 weeks to go until COP26 begins, the plans are still being consolidated.

Objectives of the Scottish Government regarding COP26:

1. To be a safe, secure and successful event.
2. To raise awareness of action needed regarding climate change, moving to net zero carbon and having the right financial support and levels of adaptation in place across Scotland.
3. Enhancing Scotland's path to net zero carbon
4. Enhancing Scotland's position globally to attract foreign investment

GH also highlighted some risks such as the COVID19 pandemic, public health and reputational risk. The Scottish Government aim for COP26 to be inclusive with an aim to involve young people as well as rural areas, Just Transition is also a priority. GH is pleased to see the US playing an active role.

DL MSP asks if there will be events and opportunities leading to COP26 to showcase Scotland, and when the program will be confirmed.

GH highlights this should be a year of COP26 with a series of events and themes. The program is to be announced in late September followed by national and international campaigns. GH is eager to find out and hear from organisations and businesses on their plans to discover potential areas of collaboration and encourages stakeholders to contact COP26@gov.scot so that this information can be shared with Scottish Enterprise colleagues.

Rachel Hamilton MSP asks about rural connections and engagement.

GH stated this engagement to be meaningful to all – rural areas and communities as well.

DL MSP asks about the cooperation between the UK and Scottish Governments.

GH confirms COP26 is led by the UK Government with the support from the Scottish Government, who are working closely with the COP26 Delivery Board and UK Ministers.

Margaret Mitchell MSP asks about the tension between green recovery and necessity for travel to COP26.

GH agrees this should be a broader discussion, however admits that physical representation brings a “louder voice”. COP26 will also be a hybrid event, with many virtual aspects.

Alastair Ross asks about importance of finance and funds, and how to best engage.

GH agrees this is an important point as green finance is at the top of the agenda nationally and globally.

DL MSP invites John Leighton (JL) to give an overview of the National Galleries of Scotland, Cultural links with the US.

JL highlighted the importance of culture and how it can develop and strengthen ties. The National Galleries of Scotland holds some of the most famous US pieces of art and also lends many works to US museums and galleries. The galleries have ties and partnerships across the whole US and work on various joint projects and events, both in Scotland and US, which helps raise opportunities, funds and patrons. Cultural diplomacy is to be even more important now post Brexit and there is scope to be more joined up as there are some synergies which are not currently being explored. It is crucial to engage and include cultural aspects in ‘non obvious’ activities such as trade missions. JL believes there is potential for culture to play a stronger part in future US Scotland collaboration.

DL MSP agrees cultural links to be important and asks if JL finds it difficult to find the right and relevant links.

JL believes that one of the key issues is to determine where to focus the efforts and being better and recognising what’s effective. More tailored and focused events and activities are more beneficial. Another risk is taking long standing and strong links for granted – these must be continually nurtured.

DL MSP mentions the importance of virtual and digital connections and asks if these have been of benefit to the National Galleries of Scotland.

JL recognizes there is a huge demand for good quality digital content such as videos and talks, but there is no substitute to the real experience. Virtual connections will definitely play a key part in the future. There is an opportunity to diversify more in Scotland and explore using more contemporary art for synergies with the US.

William Stirling asks how to incorporate cultural initiatives within government work and activities.

JL mentions that the Scottish Government pulls together a horizon scanner with future plans. The cultural world is resetting its plans and looking for synergies and there should be more collaboration with building on the back of what is already in place.

Scott Johnstone (SJ) gave an example of culture influencing investment and business links.

EW highlighted existing collaborations and the need for these to be more publicised.

Stuart Hamilton (SH) gave an overview of the International Trade Partnership Program which is run by the Scottish Chambers of Commerce and funded by the Scottish Government to support their Export Growth Plan, Trading Nations. The trade missions focus on setting up B2B meeting and meaningful connections in the top priority markets including the US. Virtual/online trade missions have been very successful over the last few months, saving time and costs for businesses. These virtual missions enable businesses to build relationships in advance of physical meetings which can take place when international travel resumes.

Allan Hogarth (AH) gave examples of fruitful missions with various Scottish Chambers of Commerce such as the Edinburgh, Inverness and Ayrshire Chambers of Commerce with different regions across the US. AH mentioned some businesses who have managed to gain productive contacts with organisations in the US.

SJ highlights the importance of life sciences as this sector is closely aligned to the environmental agenda and COP26.

DL MSP thanks all attendees for a meaningful discussion and meeting. The group will formally come to end and then will be reconstituted.

EW also informs this will be her last meeting as she will be moving to a new post in Berlin before September. EW thanks DL MSP for leading the CPG USA and thanks attendees and ECC for carrying out the role of Secretariat for this group and asks all to nurture and build on the connections that have been made.

DL MSP gives a final thanks to all and to EW for her support during the last three years in-post and closes the meeting.