

Cross Party Group on Women in Enterprise

Minutes of the AGM held on Tuesday 12 September 2017

Meeting Room 4

Present: Gillian Martin MSP (Convenor); Bill Bowman MSP; Ivan McKee MSP; Jackie Baillie MSP (Vice convenor); Maura Sheehan, Edinburgh Napier University; Yvonne Greaves, RBS; Ben Rose, RBS; Liz Scott, HIE; Jackie Brierton, GrowBiz / WES; Carolyn Currie, WES; Laura Galloway, Heriot-Watt University; Julie Hall, WEvolution; Elaine Morrison, Scottish Enterprise; Judith Sijstermans, Scottish Parliament; Lisa, Young Enterprise Scotland; Anne Meikle, WES (minutes).

Apologies: Lynne Cadenhead, WES; Susan Harkins, Business Gateway; Jim Hiddleston, Business Gateway; Susan Love, FSB; Laura McKelvie, FSB; Emma Congreave, Scottish Government; Francis Taylor, Scottish Government; Russel Gunson, IPPR; Karen Anderson, Adiante Leadership; Graeme Roy, Fraser of Allander Institute; Mairi Damer, Word Up communications; Elaine Bone, EDAS; Pamela Stevenson, Fife Council; Clare Haughey MSP.

Gillian Martin opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. As this was the first AGM of this CPG, there was a requirement to elect office bearers – Convenor; Vice Convenor; Secretary; Treasurer.

- Jackie Baillie proposed Gillian Martin as convenor. Seconded by Ivan McKee.
- Ivan McKee proposed Jackie Baillie as vice convenor. Seconded by Bill Bowman.
- Carolyn Currie proposed Anne Meikle as secretary. Seconded by Jackie Brierton.
- Anne Meikle proposed Carolyn Currie as treasurer. Seconded by Gillian Martin.

Those elected as follows –

- Gillian Martin MSP, Convenor
- Jackie Baillie MSP, Vice Convenor
- Anne Meikle WES, Secretary
- Carolyn Currie, WES, Treasurer

Gillian thanked everyone and proceeded to business of the meeting. She commented that she found the meetings of this CPG to be most interesting and liked the fact that the agenda of the meeting carried on in work outwith the meetings. A particularly useful aspect was the involvement of women in business. Jackie Baillie agreed that this CPG was an active one, and hearing the stories from around the table of the women in business themselves made a real difference. In times when money is tight across government (national and local) it was important that this meeting's agenda was mainstreamed across agencies - such as Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Business Gateway - to ensure women were playing a full and productive part in the Scottish economy.

Presentations

Anne Meikle gave a brief over view of the previous year's activities of the CPG –

Aims of the CPG are to -

- Establish a forum for the sharing of experiences and information on the position of women in enterprise in Scotland;
- Enable discussion and debate on the gender gap in enterprise, and seek solutions on how this might be tackled;

- Bring partners together with an interest in women and enterprise to develop a collaborative approach towards working together.

The CPG had a core membership but thrived to ensure that a range of different organisations and individuals came together as part of this CPG. Having a thematic approach to each meeting, helped to bring in different specialists for the sharing of practice and knowledge.

Meetings of the CPG had included -

- Inaugural meeting- Sept 2016 – where themes were discussed; office bearers elected.
- 2nd meeting – ‘Start up Issues’ (Nov 2016) – held during Global Entrepreneurship Week. Also had a motion read in Chamber prior to meeting, and several women were present in the public gallery. The meeting heard from some WES ambassadors and also some of the women from the WES/MOD start up course who all spoke very candidly about their experiences as women starting up, and running businesses.
- 3rd meeting – ‘Importance of Data’ (Feb 2017) – presentations made by Jane Gotts of GenAnalytics and Elaine Morrison, Scottish Enterprise.
- 4th meeting – ‘Gender Specific Support’ (May 2017)- presentations made by Susan Harkins of Business Gateway and Yvonne Greaves of RBS.
- This evening’s AGM, will hear a presentation from Fife Council and their programme of work on ‘Women’s Business and Economic Development’ (Sept 2017).

Moving forward, the CPG will look at some of themes contained within the recently published Scottish Government Framework for Women in Enterprise –

- Measurement
- Mentoring and networking
- Role models
- Growth and finance
- Gender aware support and best practice

Carolyn Currie made a presentation on behalf of Fife Council as Pamela Stevenson had to submit apologies to the meeting.

Background to Fife’s approach –

- SMEs critical for local economy
- Importance of developing a New Enterprise Hub
- Realisation that there were growing numbers of women starting up in business, however, most post start-ups were not fully engaged.

Opportunities identified included -

- Women-specific business creation. Reach direct into local community via WES brand
- Undertaking Business Advisor Gender Balance training to build staff capability
- Taking part in the ‘Leadership for Growth’ course designed for women.

The above training course have been highly successful – and also oversubscribed. Fife Council plan to continue engagement in these courses as part of the ongoing CPD for staff as well as improvement to service delivery in the Fife area.

Discussion and Suggested Themes for 2017/2018 CPG

- Gillian Martin suggested inviting some of the business advisers who had undergone training (from Fife and Edinburgh) to ask their views on whether it had changed their perception and / or practice on working with women in business.
- Jackie Brierton asked about the previous training that was undertaken by business advisers in Scotland – Premier Adviser training – and whether this still existed and, if so, if it included any training on gender and gender aware practice. Elaine Morrison stated that Premier Adviser training programme did not exist anymore. Elaine proposed that it may be a good idea for some of the Leadership and Learning Team from Scottish Enterprise to attend the CPG to take part in the discussion on training and BAGB.
- Jackie Baillie suggested that we involve CoSLA in discussions on BAGB rather than trying to negotiate with each council individually.

Suggested themes for meetings included –

- Finance / different forms of finance and gender issues related to different finance streams
- Focus on rural enterprise – to include CPG on rural policy and also include the rural council
- Young people and entrepreneurship – including education and entrepreneurship
- Looking at the budget and a gender budgeting approach to economic development and enterprise funding

D.O.N.M 14/11/17

The next meeting will be sponsored by RBS and will include a buffet after the meeting. The annual report of the CPG will be launched at the meeting. Since this meeting falls within Global Entrepreneurship Week, there will be a motion in the Chamber on women in enterprise (either Tuesday 14th or Wednesday 15th).