

52nd British Islands and Mediterranean Region Conference

25 – 27 April 2023

Official Report



52nd BIMR Conference

Between the 25 – 27 April, CPA UK hosted the 52nd BIMR Conference on Inclusive and Sustainable Parliaments, welcoming over 40 delegates from across the British Islands and Mediterranean Region to Westminster.

Held in the UK Parliament, the programme brought together several themes on which CPA BIMR had been working over recent years. Hearing from experts and parliamentarians from across the region, delegates had the opportunity to discuss the importance of diverse and inclusive parliaments and the role they can play in strengthening democracy through broader representation and providing a platform for a diversity of views and lived experiences. Standards and behaviour were similarly key topics for the conference and delegates had the opportunity to learn more about, and discuss how, different legislatures apply and monitor codes of conduct, and registers of interests.

As the Climate Emergency was BIMR's priority theme for the previous eighteen months, delegates had the opportunity to learn more about the role parliaments and parliamentarians can play to mitigate the crisis. Delegates took part in a committee exercise, facilitated by committee specialists on the topic of climate change, allowing them to put their climate knowledge and committee skills into practice.

Alongside these sessions, the programme gave delegates opportunities to strengthen their network across the region, allowing them to work collaboratively with peers on these important issues.



About BIMR

About the CPA British Islands and Mediterranean Region

The branches that make up CPA British Islands and Mediterranean Region (BIMR) are Alderney, Cyprus, Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Guernsey, Isle of Man, Jersey, Malta, Northern Ireland, St Helena, Scotland, UK and Wales.

CPA UK serves as its Secretariat. Three Regional Representatives from BIMR sit on the international CPA Executive Committee. The BIMR representatives are:

- Leona Vidal-Roberts MLA (Falkland Islands)
- Stuart McMillan MSP (Scotland)
- Chris Elmore MP (UK)

The aims of BIMR are to:

- a) Work together in pursuing the Association's purpose
- b) Promote close relations among the Region's branches and members
- c) Foster close relations with the other Regions of the Association

BIMR's agreed strategy (2019-2024) sets the following Objectives:

1. To strengthen our own Parliaments and their Members
Improving our performance for those we represent and to whom we are accountable
2. To play a leading role in a successful future for the international CPA
Ensuring value for subscriptions and a focus on advancing parliamentary democracy
3. To support non-BIMR Branches, especially where democracy is less established or is under threat
Use the "soft power" of the evolution of our own democratic institutions to support others in their legislatures

Prioritising Themes:

The shape and focus of BIMR's work will be guided by priority themes. The following three themes will be prioritised for the period concerned:

- » **The implications of Brexit:** including parliamentary scrutiny of trade arrangements and citizens' rights
- » **Women in Parliament/CWP:** gender equality, women's empowerment & ending violence against women
- » **Youth:** encouraging greater participation and involvement

Each AGM agrees a specific theme for the following year's work, drawn from proposals by the branches. The work is led by a Working Group formed at or shortly after the AGM, supported by the Secretariat. The following AGM reviews and evaluates the work on that theme over the preceding year and draw lessons for future work.

At the 2022 AGM in the Isle of Man delegates agreed to continue work on '**The Climate Emergency**' which had been agreed six months earlier at the AGM in Northern Ireland (September 2021).

Delegates

Alderney



Mr Ian Carter – Delegation Leader
Mrs Lilian (Lin) Maurice
Rev. David Knight – Delegation Secretary

Cyprus



Mr. Aristos Damianou, MP – Delegation Leader
Mr. Nikos Sykas, MP
Mr. Christos Orphanides, MP
Christiana Solomonidou – Delegation Secretary

Falkland Islands



Hon Leona Roberts MLA – Regional Representative

Gibraltar



Hon Steven Linares MP – Delegation Leader
Hon Paul Balban MP
Hon Roy Clinton MP
Hon Edwin Reyes MP
Simon Galliano – Delegation Secretary

Isle of Man



Mr Chris Thomas MHK – Delegation Leader
Mrs Daphne Caine MHK
Tim Glover MHK
Sarah Maltby MHK
Ms Joann Corkish – Delegation Secretary

Jersey



Deputy Rob Ward – Delegation Leader
Deputy Hilary Jeune
Connétable Andy Jehan
Deputy Raluca Kovacs
Mrs Lisa Hart – Delegation Secretary

Malta



Hon. Speaker Angelo Farrugia – Delegation Leader
Hon. Carmelo Abela MP
Hon. Graziella Attard Previ, MP
Hon. Justin Schembri MP
Ms Emma Terribile – Delegation Secretary

Northern Ireland



Nicola Crawford – Observer
Clare Maguire – Observer
Caroline Moore – Observer

Scotland



Sarah Boyack MSP – Delegation Leader
Jeremy Balfour MSP
Gillian Mackay MSP
Michelle Thomson MSP
Stuart McMillan MSP – Regional Representative
Charlotta Craig – Delegation Secretary

Wales



Mr Rhun ap Iorwerth MS – Delegation Leader
Rhianon Passmore MS
David Rees MS
Mrs Joyce Watson MS
Gwion Evans – Delegation Secretary



Day 1 – Tuesday 25 April

Members of the British Islands and Mediterranean Region Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Steering Committee and branch officials met in Parliament for a hybrid Committee meeting, with other colleagues joining remotely from across the region. They discussed in-year activities in lieu of a regional CWP Conference, which would not be held in 2023.

In the evening the delegates gathered for an informal networking reception.

Day 2 – Wednesday 26 April

Following a tour of the UK Parliament CPA UK Chair Rt Hon. Dame Maria Miller MP and British Islands and Mediterranean Regional Representative Chris Elmore MP welcomed delegates. CPA BIMR Regional Secretary Jon Davies gave an overview of the programme.

Rt Hon. Karen Bradley MP gave an opening keynote address as Chair of the House of Commons Procedure Committee. She talked about the Committee's role in providing institutional oversight and how it had reviewed and made recommendations for procedural changes, such as proxy voting. She also talked about lessons learned from the rapid response to Covid-19, which offered insight into the use of technology in running parliaments, and how this could be further leveraged to support diversity and inclusion measures in parliaments.

Inclusive Parliaments

Parliaments across the BIMR region have actively sought to improve the inclusivity and diversity of their parliamentarians and the wider institutions of government over the past two decades. Whilst significant comparative progress has been made, there was an acceptance this will be a continuous process with some areas still lacking. Baroness Grey-Thompson shared her experiences growing up with a disability, and later as a life peer after being appointed in 2010. She pointed out that despite there being a good representation of disabilities in the House of Lords, it is still difficult for peers to juggle personal and work responsibilities, especially those who are parents.

Jeremy Balfour MSP shared the view that parliaments are not accommodating to carers, especially on late-sitting days. He pointed out that despite increased representation of women and people with disabilities, there were still gender biases in certain policy areas, which was reflected in representation on parliamentary committees, and that statistically men are more likely to intervene in debates. Baroness Verma concluded the presentations by emphasising the importance of diversity, not simply for parliamentarians, but also for wider staff and institutions. She stressed the point that inclusivity should be 'anyone able to represent everyone'.

There was consensus amongst delegates that adjustments will need to be put in place, such as implementing a hybrid system, to make parliaments more inclusive for under-represented groups, especially those with disabilities. From legislative action to debates, delegates agreed that progress would only continue if the present status quo was constantly challenged.

Workplace Equality Networks

With the UK Parliament's Workplace Equality Networks (WENs) as the example this session introduced ways in which institutions can directly address diversity and inclusion. Anne Moghadammi, Senior Diversity and Inclusion Manager in the House of Commons Governance Office, shared the history of her role and of the WENs. Following the Equality Act 2010, which introduced a variety of protected characteristics in the UK, the UK Parliament established relevant WENs, seeking to provide cross-Parliament staff with practical support and a safe space for open discussions.

Whilst there was not always an exact replica of these networks in other BIMR parliaments, there were a variety of other institutional methods and processes used by parliaments to boost diversity and inclusion. Almost all legislatures represented at the conference had constitutional protections in place; in the case of Gibraltar, they now possessed an equalities minister whose remit includes "the eradication of discrimination." On a more practical level, some legislatures – Malta and Scotland in particular – had chambers purpose-built for accessibility. Despite these developments, it was concluded that issues continue to occur, and it is therefore important to continuously seek solutions to support diversity and inclusion.

"A very good programme with excellent panels. Some great external speakers added to the experience. Good networking opportunity as well. Thank you!"

BIMR Conference participant 2023

Address by the Speaker of the House of Commons

Mr Speaker addressed the Conference. He highlighted the importance of such gatherings as opportunities to acquire knowledge that helps parliamentarians in their roles and contributes to parliamentary strengthening through applied learning.

He stressed his responsibility in providing a secure framework for UK parliamentarians in which to operate. This included physical safety, online safety and the security of Parliament as an institution that is often the target of multiple and repeat attacks on its cyber infrastructure. He commented that he sees the protection of the integrity of parliaments, and of those who work within them, as fundamental in safeguarding democracy.

British Islands and Mediterranean Region Annual General Meeting

Senior British Islands and Mediterranean Regional Representative Hon. Leona Roberts MLA (Falkland Islands) chaired the meeting. Ms Roberts and Stuart McMillan MSP reported back on the previous week's international CPA Executive Committee meeting held in Gibraltar. The main update related to the Status of CPA, which remained an urgent concern across many branches of the CPA. In the UK Parliament CPA UK Chair Rt Hon. Dame Maria Miller MP had put a Private Member's Bill before Parliament and had been in active discussions with the UK Government to

support legislation to allow CPA to become an international parliamentary organisation instead of a UK Charity.

Delegates also discussed the importance of retaining 'The Climate Emergency' as the regional strategic theme at length.

Address by Stephen Twigg, Secretary-General, CPA

Stephen Twigg addressed the Conference and thanked the regional representatives for their active and positive participation in the work of CPA. He noted the efforts of CPA Chair Ian Liddell-Grainger MP, CPA UK Chair Rt Hon. Dame Maria Miller MP and BIM Regional Secretary Jon Davies in doing all they could to encourage the UK Government to support the change of status for the CPA. He emphasised the broad range of work and activities being taken forward by CPA across the Commonwealth. The Secretary-General promoted the online Parliamentary Academy and encouraged enrolment by parliamentarians and parliamentary officials in the region, highlighting the newest course on establishing women's caucuses.



DAY 3

Standards and Behaviour

Delegates had the opportunity to explore how different legislatures apply and monitor codes of conduct, registers of interest, and how they investigate alleged breaches. Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards Daniel Greenberg CB reflected on his approach to taking over the role and not coming into it with preconceptions. He stressed that most public servants live up to the principles and values placed on them, and that the few should not cast a shadow on the many. His priority, he stated, is to rebuild trust between politicians and the public. Deputy Rob Ward, Jersey States Assembly, informed delegates about recent developments in his legislature. He shared that Jersey, as of March 2023, has appointed a commissioner to work collaboratively with Guernsey, emphasising the importance of proactively enforcing codes of conduct to maintain balance and boundaries, although it was too early to report on the impact of this appointment.

Delegates discussed the challenges that have arisen due to social media, such as the increased risk of online abuse, though it was similarly recognised that social media can increase accountability and facilitate outreach and engagement. The need to recognise and enforce boundaries, and for stronger laws, was discussed as a potential solution to find the correct balance between the two. Finally, there was a strong emphasis placed on the importance of training to promote good and ethical behaviour, which can in turn enhance a clear understanding of expectations when an MP is elected.



Parliamentary movements to address the climate emergency

During the session, delegates discussed and heard from a panel of climate experts on the role parliamentarians and parliamentary groups can play to address and mitigate climate change. Chris Venables, Deputy Director of Politics and Partnerships, Green Alliance, shared how as the UK Parliament's Environment All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) secretariat, Green Alliance often organises educational visits for MPs to promote dialogue around environmental issues, whilst allowing MPs to ask simple questions to enhance their knowledge.

Deputy Hilary Jeune, Minister for Energy and Climate Change, Jersey States Assembly, shared the history of her position in Jersey, which arose following discussions from a Citizen Assembly launched to address Jersey's path towards Carbon Neutrality. The Ministry of Environment also designed a Roadmap to address climate change, with heating and transport being priority issues, however Deputy Jeune informed delegates that limitations of financing would prevent full commitment to the Roadmap.

Baroness Hayman, Co-Chair of Peers for the Planet, shared some of the key actions taken so far to address climate change, including sending letters to the House of Lords to bring the issue of climate change into focus. Similarly, to swiftly and effectively address climate change she emphasised the importance of collaboration, both with external climate trusts and foundations, as well as internally within parliament with MPs across government and opposition. The session concluded with delegates agreeing that climate change is an immediate emergency, and that it is important for parliaments across the region to network, share innovative solutions, and continue dialogue around climate change.

Committee Exercise

Facilitated by two committee specialists James Hockaday and Eleanor Ferguson, delegates took part in a mock oral evidence session on 'reflections of COP26 and preparations for COP27. The session's aim was to improve delegates' knowledge of committee procedure and evidence-gathering skills during oral evidence sessions. Delegates were guided on how to extract information from evasive witnesses, such as asking for 'yes' or 'no' answers or asking the witness to 'grade on a scale'.

"The committee session was particularly useful a good chance to improve scrutiny skills and learn from experiences of others."

BIMR Conference participant 2023

Monitoring and Evaluation

PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEMS ACROSS THE COMMONWEALTH

↑ 35% Increase in delegates' understanding of comparative parliamentary systems across the Commonwealth.

CLIMATE EMERGENCY

↑ 18% Increase in delegates' understanding of parliamentary movements to address the climate change emergency.

EFFECTIVE QUESTIONING & SCRUTINY

↑ 15% Increase in delegates' understanding of effective questioning and scrutiny approaches.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

↑ 17% Increase in delegates' understanding of diversity and inclusion.

76%

Of the participants found the conference fully relevant to their role.



Programme

TUESDAY 25 APRIL	
1600 - 1730	BIMR Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Steering Committee Meeting
1800 - 1930	Welcome Reception

WEDNESDAY 26 APRIL	
0900 - 1000	Tour of Parliament
1000 - 1030	<p>Official Welcome Speakers: Rt Hon. Dame Maria Miller MP, Chair of CPA UK Chris Elmore MP, British Islands and Mediterranean Regional Representative and Treasurer of CPA UK Jon Davies, British Islands and Mediterranean Regional Secretary</p>
1030 - 1100	Keynote Speech: Rt Hon. Karen Bradley MP, Chair of the Procedure Committee
1130 - 1300	<p>Plenary: Inclusive Parliaments Chair: Rt Hon. Dame Maria Miller MP, Chair of CPA UK Speakers: Baroness (Tanni) Grey-Thompson, UK Jeremy Balfour MSP, The Scottish Parliament Baroness (Sandip) Verma, House of Lords, UK Parliament</p>
1400 - 1515	<p>Facilitated Workshop: Workplace Equality Networks Facilitator: Jo Jengo, Projects & Programmes Manager, CPA UK Speaker: Anne Moghaddami, Senior D&I Manager, Diversity and Inclusion, Governance Office, House of Commons</p>
1545 - 1615	Address by The Rt Hon. Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP, Speaker of the House of Commons
1615 - 1730	BIMR AGM
1730	Address by CPA Secretary-General Stephen Twigg
1800 - 1930	Reception at Speaker's House

THURSDAY 27 APRIL

0930 - 1030	<p>Plenary: Parliamentary Standards and Behaviour</p> <p>Chair: Mrs Daphne Caine MHK, Isle of Man</p> <p>Speakers: Daniel Greenberg CB, Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, UK Deputy Rob Ward, Jersey</p>
1030 - 1100	Break
1100- 1215	<p>Plenary: Parliamentary Movements to Address the Climate Emergency</p> <p>Chair: Sarah Boyack MSP, Scotland</p> <p>Speakers: Chris Venables, Deputy Director of Politics and Partnerships, Green Alliance Secretariat Deputy Hilary Jeune, Minister for Energy and Climate Change, Jersey Baroness Hayman, Co-Chair of Peers for the Planet</p>
1230 - 1415	<p>Lunch in the Cholmondeley Room, House of Lords</p> <p><i>Sponsored by Baroness (Gillian) Merron of Lincoln</i></p>
1430 - 1630	<p>Committee Exercise on Climate Emergency: The Decarbonisation of the Energy Sector</p> <p>Facilitators: James Hockaday, Committee Specialist, House of Commons UK Eleanor Ferguson, Committee Specialist, House of Commons UK</p>
1630 - 1700	<p>Facilitated Feedback and Learning</p> <p>Led by: Helen Haywood, Deputy Chief Executive, CPA UK Jo Jengo, Projects & Programmes Manager, CPA UK</p>
1715	Group Photo in Westminster Hall
1730 - 1830	Closing Reception in the CPA Room, Westminster Hall.

CPA UK
Westminster Hall | Houses of Parliament | London | SW1A 0AA
T: +44 (0)207 219 5373
W: www.uk-cpa.org
E: cpauk@parliament.uk