

# **Cross-Party Group on Building Bridges with Israel Minutes**

15/06/2022, 6pm (Zoom)

## **Present**

### **MSPs**

Jackson Carlaw MSP  
Murdo Fraser MSP  
John Mason MSP  
Jeremy Balfour MSP

### **Invited guests**

Mike Freer MP

### **Non-MSP Group Members**

Atilla Inecik  
Euan Waddell  
Edward Green  
Sammy Stein  
Jonathan Connelly  
Paul Edlin  
Evelyn Yedd  
Stanley Grossman  
Jean Brannigan  
Dorothe Kaufmann  
Micheline Brannan  
Doug Flett  
Stanley Lovatt

Walter Hecht  
Christina Jones  
David Gordon  
Gina Brown  
Hazel Mackenzie  
Nathan Wilson  
Nicola Livingston  
Thomas Weber  
Vicci Stein  
Cllr David Gordon  
Fiona Brodie  
James Gurd

### **Apologies**

Fergus Ewing MSP

### **Opening of CPG Meeting:**

Minutes from previous meeting proposed by Stanley Lovatt; minutes seconded by Evelyn Yedd

## Mike Freer MP:

Minister Mike Freer emphasised the strong relationship between UK and Israel on trade and security; as well as on technical expertise, agri-tech and medtech.

Minister Freer states that there was a recent consultation on a free trade deal between the UK and Israel to see what people want included. There are trade opportunities with the UK and Israel and there will be an Investment Summit with the purpose of identifying opportunities for investment. There are 1,000 jobs in Scotland related to Israeli trade and opportunities for this to grow particularly in tech.

Minister Freer said that there are also opportunities between Scotland and Israel with food and beverages; whilst there is already strong trade, more can be done and emphasises the importance of all nations of the UK working together for trade due to the strengths of the UK brand.

## Thank You and Welcome from Jackson Carlaw MSP

Jackson thanked Mike for his participation in the CPG.

Jackson stated that he and Fergus Ewing MSP had a productive meeting with the Israeli Embassy who are keen to start round tables to open up more opportunities for business and trade with Scotland

## Q&A with Mike Freer MP

Mike Freer MP opened up the floor to questions about his portfolio as UK Minister for Exports.

Minister Freer stated that there was a consultation on a Free Trade Agreement and how this should occur, including how it should be created and what should be in the FTA, and that he is keen to see a digital chapter in any agreement to allow the tech market to harness their opportunities.

Minister Freer said that the consultation is now over and it is in its preliminary stage which involves discussions with Israeli counterparts, however, the UK's ability to do bespoke deals is limited by resource and the queue of other countries although Israel is a priority.

Minister Freer stated that the current level of trade between Scotland and Israel is at £130 million per year.

Minister Freer closed by saying that he would be happy to meet in person with the CPG in future in Edinburgh.

## Close by Jackson Carlaw MSP

Thanked Minister Mike Freer MP and hopes that he will be returning

Jackson gave apologies for the delay in starting the CPG due to business in the chamber; spoke about the Nazareth Trust event hosted by Jackson the night before as the Nazareth Trust had previously spoken at the CPG.

Jackson opened the floor to the CPG for any questions; stated that the next meeting that will be held will be the AGM and we plan on talking about cultural links with Israel including links with the Edinburgh Festival which was created by Rudolph Bing who was a major pillar in the Jewish community.

Jackson also mentions the holocaust portraits that were commissioned by HRH the Prince of Wales and that a group of MSPs were able to visit the portraits when they were on show at Holyrood House with the Head of the Royal Collection.

Passed on apologies from the Israeli Embassy for not being able to attend this evening's CPG, and opened the floor to questions:

Questions on innovation, to which Jackson stated that there are plans for a round table with Israeli businesses as well as a delegation to Israel with a focus on trade links. Further question on the Ambassador visiting Scotland and that this is an issue for the Israeli embassy however the CPG would try to facilitate and support this as much as possible.

Jackson closes the meeting with thanks to departing staff member Euan Waddell for his help with the CPG over the years.