

Cross-Party Group on Space

Thursday 28 September, 18:00 – 19:30

Minutes

Present

MSPs

- Colin Beattie MSP
- Sharon Dowey MSP
- Jamie Halcro Johnston MSP
- Paul Sweeney MSP
- Beatrice Wishart MSP

Non-MSP Group Members

- Colin Baldwin
- Martin Coates
- Julian Dines
- Emily Dingle
- Andrew Fournet
- David Geen
- Peter Guthrie
- Lewie Haar
- Alastair Heron
- Ramsay Jones
- Colin Macleod
- Warrick Malcolm
- Jonathan Orr
- Sharon Parker-Lines
- Nic Ross
- David Sandy
- Dave Shaw
- Pamela Smith
- Frank Strang
- Kristina Tamane
- Alan Thompson
- Luke Vanstone
- John Young
- Konrad Zadecki

Apologies

- Grant Lewis

- Ivan McKee MSP
- Tim Pinchin

Agenda item 1: Approval of the minutes

Convener (Colin Beattie MSP) went through each page of the minutes from our last meeting. Amendments were made to page 3 and 4. The meeting minutes were then approved.

Agenda item 2: Discussion on the CPG's priorities

Colin Beattie provided an update on the CPG's priorities. Colin Beattie had a discussion with Mark Garnier MP, the Chair of the Westminster All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Space. The two agreed that the CPG and APPG would work closely together and be supportive of each other. It was noted that there is a possibility of a joint CPG-APPG meeting in Prestwick to be held in December, date TBC.

Colin Baldwin of UKspace touched upon the Space APPG, which is supported by the trade associations ADS and UKspace. Colin Baldwin highlighted how the group's objectives are to raise awareness of space among parliamentarians in Westminster, doing this by hosting drop-in sessions in parliaments featuring space companies from across the UK, as well as organising site visits. Lewie Haar of ADS extended an invitation for CPG members to attend the next APPG event.

Frank Strang of SaxaVord put forth the point that until we can get MSPs and MPs to understand the significance of the sector in their constituencies, we will not have the support we need. John Young of BAE suggested that one way of doing so is educating MSPs on how the Scottish Government itself makes use of space technology. Colin Beattie agreed that he would be happy to sponsor an event to promote the sector to MSPs, requesting support from the CPG to do so. **Frank Strang agreed to provide support for putting on an engagement.**

Colin Beattie stressed the importance of the CPG delivering something that will help industry and influence the Scottish Government. To do so, the CPG needs to identify what the issues are and what the priorities are for the group over the next year. This is the direction Colin as Convenor would like to see the group move in. Colin Beattie gave the example of deep technology and how industry input is essential to build on existing technology. Colin Beattie then opened up the floor for a discussion on industry priorities for the Scottish Government.

Alastair Heron highlighted the difficulty and importance of educational institutions identifying what employers need, and the progress on this front. Colleges are being proactive in this area, looking for courses in space. A discussion was held on this topic.

Colin Beattie stressed the importance of getting pupils interested in space at the high school level, and having them carry it forward into college, university, etc. Emily Dingle spoke on how AVS has been working with employers and colleges to achieve this. Pamela Smith of AAC Clyde Space highlighted the work Space Scotland has been

doing in partnership with colleges. Colin Baldwin flagged on the skills side that a Space Workforce Action Plan being developed by UK government, steered by an organisation called the Space Partnership, that the CPG should make sure this takes the entire UK landscape including Scotland into account.

Colin Beattie queried members about what other priorities they would like to see addressed by the CPG. Alastair Heron stressed the importance of promoting what is already available to schools, which may not necessarily be well known. Colin Beattie highlighted how by promoting the priorities of the sector to MSPs, we can link them up to schools in their constituencies to help do this work.

Andrew Fournet of CGI said that we need to have more discussions about sustainability, how industry is working in a sustainable way with a drive to sustainability. Andrew stressed how while engaging with STEM students, sustainability needs to come into the conversation. The future generation when entering into the workforce will prioritise companies by their commitment to sustainability. Pushing this agenda requires support from Scottish government. Nic Ross of Niparo seconded this point.

Alan Thompson of Skyrora, John Young of BAE, Pamela Smith of AAC Clyde Space, and Emily Dingle of AVS all highlighted the importance, for SMEs in particular, of contracts rather than grants, and government being an anchor customer for space services. The way that government funding is often structured is for individual financial years. Emily said that if there is anything that can be done from a governmental side to look at multi-year funding, that would be transformational. **Colin Beattie requested more information on this topic to circulate to MSPs, which Emily, Pam and Colin Baldwin agreed to collate and provide.**

David Geen of ALL.SPACE stressed the importance of the scope of “space” including ground-based assets, because there are a lot of high tech developments going on in the UK at the ground-level.

Martin Coates of Orbex as a priority highlighted the desire to align regulation to enthusiasm for supporting industry.

Agenda item 3: Presentation from Colin Macleod, CAA Head of UK Space Regulation

Colin Beattie introduced Colin Macleod, Head of UK Space Regulation at the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Colin Macleod provided an overview of the CAA’s priorities. He highlighted how the UK is currently the only country in Europe that has regulations in place to undertake spaceport and launch activities as well as orbit.

Public safety is a top concern of the CAA, and spaceports in Scotland have put this into practice.

The second priority highlighted was the licensing of satellite and orbital operations and protecting the UK's international obligations in this field. The UK is unique in that most countries separate the regulation of orbital activities from spaceports and launches. This has been helpful in many ways.

The third priority highlighted was efficiency and effectiveness, making sure industry is supported in its activities. He highlighted how regulation can be as easy or as difficult as you want to make it, but that the CAA is trying to make the process as efficient and effective as possible.

In Colin's time at the CAA, the regulator has changed the way it engages with the sector quite dramatically. Originally when set up the CAA was given a tight framework for industry engagement. Since then, the CAA has developed products such as safety, hazard and environment workshops to encourage companies to come to the UK and help them through the application process when they arrive.

Another example of how the CAA supports industry includes external engagement in terms of growing their presence at events in the UK and Europe.

Colin Beattie opened the floor to CPG members for questions and comments. Frank Strang and Colin Baldwin commented on how the CAA has transformed its engagement with industry over the last two years in a significantly positive way. Colin Baldwin said that the overwhelming message from industry is about a positive relationship with Colin Macleod and his team. Colin Macleod said that the CAA works closely with other regulators in the US and Europe to share best practice and identify opportunities for collaboration.

Colin Beattie asked about space debris and if it is on the CAA's radar. Colin Macleod explained that government sets policy surrounding space debris and that UK policy is to follow the UN's IADC guidelines, which are 90% of the satellites or objects coming down within 20 years. The CAA assesses missions put forward by companies, who estimate how long it will take them to take the satellite back down. The key challenge is that even the smallest piece of debris can do a heavy amount of damage.

Alan Thompson asked about the CAA's relationship with other regulators like Marine Scotland. Colin Macleod said that the CAA has a good relationship with Marine Scotland and other regulators.

Agenda item 4: Close of meeting

Colin Beattie brought the meeting to a close, **suggesting to Frank Strang that the CPG go with a 2-hour slot for an event. Ramsay Jones to pick this up and lead.**

Colin Beattie to come back to the group in the near future on agreed priorities for the group.

No other business. Meeting closed at 19:30.

Next meeting date to be communicated in due course.