

## **APPG for Proportional Representation – Inaugural AGM**

6pm – Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2016 – Room T, Portcullis House

### **Draft Minutes**

Attendees: Ben Howlett MP, Caroline Lucas MP, Chuka Umunna MP, Daniel Zeichner MP, Jon Cruddas MP, Liz Saville Roberts MP, Paul Blomfield MP, Paul Flynn MP, Stephen Kinnock MP, Stephen Pound MP, Tommy Sheppard MP, Lord Beith, Lord Greaves, Lord Tyler, Baroness Walmsley, Lord Wigley

Observers: Charley Jarrett (Electoral Reform Society), Darren Hughes (Electoral Reform Society)

Apologies: Jonathan Reynolds MP, Stephen Twigg MP, Baroness Jones, Lord McNally, Baroness Northover, Lord Plant, Baroness Randerson, Lord Rennard, Lord Wrigglesworth

### **Election of officers**

Ben Howlett assumed the chair at the beginning of the meeting, for the election of the Chair.

Stephen Pound proposed that Chuka Umunna (Labour) be the Chair of the Group – and this was seconded by Lord Beith. Attendees agreed Mr Umunna should be Chair and Registered Contact, and he duly took the chair.

The Chair proposed that Ben Howlett (Conservative), Caroline Lucas (Green), Liz Saville Roberts (Plaid Cymru) and Tommy Sheppard (SNP) be Vice-Chairs; and that Paul Flynn (Labour) be Honorary Treasurer – and this was seconded by Lord Wigley. Attendees agreed those so nominated should assume their various officer roles.

### **Further details of the group**

Attendees agreed the name of the Group would be—

The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Proportional Representation

Attendees agreed the Group's statement of intent would be—

To build alliances for the adoption of a system of proportional representation, for elections to the House of Commons and to local authorities in England.

### **Secretariat**

Attendees agreed that the Group's Secretariat would be provided by the Electoral Reform Society and that the Group's Public Enquiry Point would be the Society's Policy & Public Affairs Officer Charley Jarrett.

## **Further discussion**

One attendee asked about the involvement of other groups which advocate for proportional representation. The attendee was assured that Make Votes Matters and others would be involved – it is important to involve organisations and others outside of the democracy sector, to ensure the Group is not just one of ‘the great and the good’.

Another attendee shared two ideas they had had thus far on activities the Group might undertake in its first twelve months. One was to commission some polling. The other was an inquiry into how effective PR has been in parts of the UK where it is already used. A further attendee agreed, noting how successful STV has been in achieving cross-community politics in Northern Ireland. A fifth attendee observed a strong current in favour of STV in Wales, where its particular AMS – while better than FPTP – has its own imperfections. An attendee envisaged the Group as a place where PR supporters could move towards some agreement on a system.

A sixth noted a shift in Conservative thinking about electoral reform since 2005, not least due to their success under PR in Scotland. The regional devolution of powers to combined authorities could provide another way of getting more Conservatives on board.

Attendees were broadly in agreement that a Backbench Business Debate could be a good thing.

Another attendee stressed the importance of involving young people in the issue – it was then suggested the UK Youth Parliament might be a good organisation to approach.

Action: the Chair asked attendees and other members of the Group email his office with ideas for other activities, which could form the basis of a discussion document at the next meeting.

## **Date of next meeting**

4pm – Monday 19<sup>th</sup> December – Room S, PCH