

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Cross Party Group on Food held in Committee
Room 4 of the Scottish Parliament on 5 October 2016**

Present

Richard Lochhead	MSP (Chair)
Mark Ruskell	MSP
Rhoda Grant	MSP
Mags Hall	Office of Mark Ruskell
Alan Clarke	Scottish Bakers
Nick Shields	SMAS*
Helen Muir	Dawnfresh *
Ken Moran	Guala Closures*
Wendy Barrie	Scottish Food Guide
David Thomson	SFDF
Cat Hay	SFDF
Mary Lawton	CPG Food
Christine Graham	Kettle Produce
Miriam Smith	QMU
Gillian Kynoch	Fareshare
Archie Gibson	Agrico
Graeme Findlay	SQA
Gordon King	Scottish Meat Training/SFMTA
Rosemarie Hoyle	Apetito
Viv Collie	Vivid Solutions
Ian Land	Seafish
Jonathan Wilkin	Abertay Uni
Costas Stathopoulos	Abertay Uni
Graham Young	Scotland Food and Drink
Bosse Dahlgren	Consultant
Gerry McBride	Skills Development Scotland
Geoff Ogle	Food Standards Scotland
Pam Rodway	Crofting Connections
David Whiteford	North Highland Initiative
Pat Abel	Transition Edinburgh South
Paul Swarbrigg	Consultant*
Eve Keepax	Keep Scotland Beautiful
Howell Davies	Interface
Ian Collinson	Scottish Enterprise
Laura Stewart	Soil Association Scotland
Aoife Behan	Soil Association Scotland
Kirsten Leask	Soil Association Scotland
Moyra Burns	NHS Lothian
Ceri Ritchie	SAC Consulting
Willie Fergusson	Zero Waste Scotland
Phil Thomas	Artilus
Ewan MacDonald –Russell	Scottish Retail Consortium

To meet new requirements of CPGs, non-members (as submitted on re-registration) are denoted by an asterisk.

1. Apologies for Absence

These were received from John Scott, Martin Meteyard, Amanda Brown, Bill Crosson, John Whitehead, Jackie McCabe, James Withers, Lesley Stanley, Maggie Gordon, Julian Mercer, Douglas Scott, Dave Simmers, Anita Aggrawal, Brian Ratcliffe, Sue Bird, Karen Barton, Paul Birkin, Claire Hislop, Jennifer Bryson, Amanda Fox, Uel Morton and Fiona Bird.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

These were approved with the amendment that the next meeting would be on January 18th.

3. Matters Arising

- Mary Lawton (ML) had received notification that the CPG Food had been accorded recognition, so this was an official meeting.
- Scottish Government (Health) had provided the following update on malnutrition:

“The Scottish Government remains committed to tackling malnutrition in Scotland and we are currently considering our next steps. In doing so, we are taking account of the recommendations made by the CPG on Food during the last Parliament as well as the outputs from the Malnutrition Summit. The Scottish Government will set out our recommendations for action in due course. These recommendations will be taken forward during this current Parliament.”

It was agreed to keep a watching brief.

ACTION: ML

4. Productivity –Time for a Leap Forward

Scotland's food and drink industry launched a new, ambitious [action plan](#) to boost productivity in the sector on September 7th. The call to action has been made by a coalition of key public sector and industry bodies working through Scotland Food & Drink. There were the following short presentations, all of which are would be sent out with the minutes.

- Overview of the importance of productivity to the food and drink industry
Alan Clarke ,Chief Executive Scottish Bakers (AC)
- Support for productivity Nick Shields, Director of the Scottish Manufacturing Advisory Service (SMAS) (NS)
- Specific industry examples
 - Helen Muir, Group HR Director, Dawnfresh (HM)
 - Ken Moran, General Manager, Guala Closures (KM)

These were followed by an open debate.

Richard Lochhead (RL) introduced the discussion by noting the background on Brexit and the need even more for a strong food and drink industry.

David Thomson SFDF (DT) asked how companies in Scotland, particularly SMEs could be helped on this productivity journey.

KM thought it vital that companies used support out there such as SMAS and importantly that they shared information with each other. He understood the challenges particularly with SMEs in getting out of the business but he would encourage people to do that as he always found it beneficial and ran an open door policy at his site.

NS said that food and drink was SMAS's biggest sector and last year they helped food and drink businesses realise £5.9 million of efficiency savings. They saw a lot of repeat business which was good but they also wanted to get the message out to others. They could provide free diagnostics on the business and ongoing advice and had other activities such as a staff engagement programme, bespoke Food and Drink Academy and Capital Asset Review.

Eve Keepax (Keep Scotland Beautiful) (EK) asked about the new 11,000 jobs forecast in the action plan and where they would come from.

AC referred to the Scottish Bakers training arm National Food and Drink Training (NFDT). This was a direct result of strengthening its training provision to include lean manufacturing techniques and the delivery of the new Food Manufacturing Excellence (FME) qualifications. He noted the Great British Bake Off had increased interest in baking. There were jobs at all levels and the industry needed to be seen as a career of choice.

Cat Hay (SFDF) said that there was a skills shortage facing the food manufacturing industry, particularly in STEM. There as a lot of good work going on to address this, including the SFDF Schools programme. **Ceri Ritchie (SAC) (CR)** agreed and said she had been with QMU that day talking to university students about the exciting opportunities in the industry.it was important to raise awareness of the different types of jobs such as product development and innovation. **Jon Wilkin Abertay (JW)** noted the good work of industry programmes but thought it was important for all in the room to get out and inspire the youth. The industry was not just catering!

AC said that trade associations represented companies with many looking for staff and had a huge array of contacts so were an important resource.

Gerry McBride Skills Development Scotland said there was a Skills Development Plan with a theme on how to attract talent. The flow of talent was important, companies could fund modern apprentices but more needed to be

done for example the sponsoring of school leavers to do a degree course. Partnership and collaboration were key.

Howell Davies (Interface) agreed with the need for collaboration and pointed to the Resource Efficiency Industry Advisory Group managed by Interface, Resource Efficient Scotland and SFDF. The group comprises of 22 food and drink manufacturers, representing a variety of sectors within the food & drink industry. There were collaboration and projects with academics on issues such as heat transfer that had helped companies make savings and learnings had been shared. New technologies were also tried, for example Agrico had carried out a waste potato project and this information had been disseminated to the rest of the Group.

Willie Fergusson Zero Waste Scotland (ZWS) reminded the Group of the support ZWS provided on resource efficiency including audits, innovation funding and training. There was “Making Things Last”: Scotland’s first circular economy strategy and a new Scottish food waste reduction target: to reduce all food waste arising in Scotland by 33% by 2025.

Ewan MacDonald –Russell (Scottish Retail Consortium) explained what BRC were doing on productivity. Over the next 10 years there would be 100,000 new jobs in areas such as digital and logistics that did not exist before but on the flip side 900,000 would be lost from the retail side. There would be more interesting jobs available but less of them.

Archie Gibson (Agrico) (AG) highlighted the Tay Cities Initiative that would provide a centre of excellence for STEM and food manufacture and would be important for SMEs. These small businesses had the potential to grow and provide jobs.

Laura Stewart (Soil Association) noted the priority areas of premium, health and provenance and emphasised that role that the growing organic sector could play in this. An Organic Action plan had been published to meet these opportunities.

Mark Ruskell MSP (MR) asked where the benefits of productivity were being felt along the supply chain, for example were farmers getting the benefit in terms of milk price.

Graham Young (Scotland Food and Drink) (GY) said that the new Food and Drink Strategy currently being refreshed would look at the efficiency of the supply chain, where there were benefits and how these rewards could be shared along the chain. **David Whiteford (North Highland Initiative)** said it was important to return the primary sector to growth and profitability and that this sector did not feel they were getting the benefits of margins across the chain. They needed help and to be part of this work. **CR** as Chair of the SFD Agro Group recognized that

the farmers did not feel part of it and it was important for everyone across the chain to work together. **NS** noted that SMAS worked across the whole supply chain and was used to collaborating, negotiating and disseminating learnings between sectors.

Aoife Behan (Soil Association) asked if the Good Food Nation (GFN) bill had been considered and what policy levers could be put in place to deliver the productivity plan. **DT** said that it had been developed over the last 18 months and there was now the opportunity to see how this could support the GFN agenda.

RL thanked everyone for contributing to a good debate and noted there were issues raised that could be picked up by the CPG food at a later date.

ACTION: ML/RL

5. Ark of Taste

Wendy Barrie Scottish Food Guide explained how to give Scottish input into [Ark of Taste](#) a project to protect the world's endangered foods and the opportunities for Scotland. This project created by Slow Food strives to draw attention to the products and the history behind them, inspiring people to take action to protect them. This might be simply buying and eating them, spreading the word, or supporting the producers behind them. In the case of endangered wild species, this might mean eating less or none of them in order to preserve their existence for future generations.

Examples on the list were Original Fresh Blood Scots Black Pudding, Native Bred Aberdeen Angus and Traditional Finnan Haddie. Wendy's presentation would be sent out with the minutes.

Pam Rodway Crofting Connections said that these endangered foods were often found in peripheral communities and noted the important role of tourism. Crofting Connections ran school programmes and there could be opportunities in growing some of those foods on the list.

MR asked if Scottish Natural Heritage had been approached due to the biodiversity agenda and also asked about tensions. **WB said** the important issue was to flag that these foods existed so as to give them a value and for caution to be shown. This had led to interesting debates for example the Scottish Native Goat was perceived by some to be an alien species but in fact had been here for 8000 years.

DW suggested they could connect with the North Coast 500 route. He also asked post Brexit, what would happen to PGI/PDO and whether there could be a Scottish mark.

Rosemarie Hoyle appetito asked if there was the intention to create potential markets. For example Arbroath Smokies could be put into ready meals.

WB said that the important issue was to keep these foods by whatever means. Many were artisan; some were so rare that were not eaten. The PGI had foods listed that used imported ingredients such as black puddings, the important issue was transparency. She asked that anyone with any additions to the Ark list or other thoughts on opportunities to contact her.

ACTION: CPG

6. AOB

- **JW** said the IFST annual lecture was on Oct 20th from 18-21.30pm. The speaker was Anne Glover and the title Science for EU and EU for Science. The meeting was in London but would be streamed to Glasgow and Dundee.
- **ML** thanked those that had contacted her regarding possible themes for meetings and said if anyone else had ideas to contact her.

7. Dates of next Meetings

These would be 18th January and 26 April, all in Committee Room 4.