

# minutes

**Meeting:** Cross Party Group on Scotch Whisky  
**Location:** Committee Room 3 Scottish Parliament

**Date Held:** Tuesday 21 February 2017

**Present:** **MSPs:** Richard Lochhead, Alison Harris, Rhoda Grant, Gordon MacDonald.

**Other attendees:** Blair Bowman, Campbell Evans (Atholl Crescent Consultants), Karen Freel (Perspectiva Consultants), Jack Gemmell (Chivas), Annie Hill (Institute of Brewing and Distilling), Liam Hughes (SCDA), Lauren McArthur (SWA), Douglas Meikle (SWA), Beatrice Morrice (SWA), Devin Scobie (Caledonia Public Affairs), Ian Smith (Diageo) and Alan Wolstenholme (SCDA).

**Apologies:** Jackie Baillie MSP, Murdo Fraser MSP, Liam McArthur MSP, Douglas Ross MSP, David Stewart MSP and Andy Rosie (SEPA)

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Richard Lochhead MSP chaired the meeting and welcomed attendees.

## Minutes

The minutes from the previous meeting, held 11 January 2017, were agreed.

### 1. Scottish Craft Distillers Association

A presentation was given by Liam Hughes, Vice Chairman of the Scottish Craft Distillers Association and Managing Director of Glasgow Distillery. He set out how he built the distillery with a small budget and advised that he is just one year away from the company's first single malt.

The company employs 15 people and is looking to increase this number soon. Engaging with his customers and marketing his product is important given the tough market place. He also underlined the high cost of the verification scheme for new distilleries.

Liam introduced the Scottish Craft Distillers Association (SCDA) and the importance of their accreditation scheme for members that aims to protect the provenance of their products. Alan Wolstenholme, SCDA Chairman, explained that the accreditation currently is for gin only but will be extended to Scotch Whisky in due course.

Liam also welcomed the recent signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the SCDA and the SWA as an important document setting out how the organisations will work together in the future.

### 2. Scotch Whisky Action Fund

Douglas Meikle, Head of Alcohol Policy at the SWA, provided information on the Scotch Whisky Action Fund that has been running since 2013 and

## Action

SWA to circulate

provides £100,000 each year to projects tackling alcohol misuse across Scotland. The fund has already made 22 awards to 20 projects. Douglas agreed to circulate the criteria and contact details for Foundation Scotland to the CPG.

criteria for the fund.

He also highlighted that the Scotch Whisky Action Fund was open for new applications and the closing date for submission is 30 June. MSP and CPG members are asked to highlight this to local projects where relevant.

Douglas also informed members of a recent Action Fund event in Glasgow, where several projects that had received funding shared their experiences in relation to tackling alcohol misuse. The SWA is arranging a similar event for MSPs and researchers at the Scottish Parliament on 31 May 2017 to which all members will be invited.

Ian Smith, Diageo, underlined that the SWA Action Fund is complementary to the work carried out by companies that continue to invest in tackling alcohol misuse themselves.

### 3. Any other business

Beatrice Morrice raised the issue of a recent report concerning advertising and sponsorship of alcohol. She underlined that the industry is committed to responsible marketing and that the SWA's Code of Practice includes a section on protecting those under the legal purchase age. Scotch Whisky provides valuable sponsorship to a wide range of arts, cultural, and sporting events across Scotland.

Douglas Meikle, SWA, highlighted also that there was a UK wide Sponsorship Code which was developed on the back of guidelines introduced by the Scottish Government Alcohol Industry Partnership. Ian Smith noted that alcohol consumption among young people was currently declining and that in France, after introducing a ban on alcohol advertising, underage drinking actually increased. The group agreed that advertising and sponsorship should be re-visited by the CPG at a future date.

Beatrice also discussed the proposed CPG visit. It was agreed that proposed dates will be circulated to MSPs in the first instance.

Richard Lochhead thanked attendees and members noted the date for next meeting:

Tuesday 23 May 6-7pm, Committee Room 4.

For more information please contact Beatrice Morrice [bmorrice@swa.org.uk](mailto:bmorrice@swa.org.uk) or call 0131 222 9247.