

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Cross Party Group on Food held
in Committee Room 5 of the Scottish Parliament on 19th June 2013**

Present

John Scott	MSP (Chair)
Jim Hume	MSP
Claire Baker	MSP
Patrick Harvie	MSP
Rob Gibson	MSP
Andy Bruce	Scottish Government
Mary Lawton	SFDF
Kirsty Ritchie	SFDF
Chris Peace	SFDF
Polly Jones	Asda
Christopher Mantle	Edinburgh Community Food
Lindsey McLellan	Edinburgh Community Food
Bill Gray	Community Food & Health Scotland
Anne Gibson	Community Food & Health Scotland
Jennifer Bryson	Abertay Uni
Christine Fraser	Food Training (Scotland)
Rosemary Davidson	Food Training (Scotland)
Steven Birrell	McDonalds
Peter Hess	McDonalds
Graham Findlay	SQA
Justine Geyer	Scot Gov
Oriane Brunet	Glasgow Uni
Michelle Cullis	Pinsent Masons
Amanda Brown	Scotland Food and Drink
Pieter van der Graaf	Scot Gov
Ian Shankland	Lanarkshire Community Food and Health
David Martin	Scottish Retail Consortium
Michael Craig	NHS Health Scotland
Laura Stewart	Soil Association
Elsie Downham	Soil Association
Sarah Dempster	NHS Lothian
Nicki Holmyard	Seafood Scotland
Viv Collie	Vivid Ideas and Solutions Ltd
Emma Burnett	Trellis/ Fed City Farms/Community Gardens
Ian McCulloch	ITC

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Lewis Macdonald, Laurent Vernet, Fiona Richmond, Stephen Hutt, Jane Cullingworth, John Whitehead, Jim Wildgoose, Douglas Scott, Norma Murray, Fi Bird, Stuart Martin, Ruth Chesser, Wendy Barrie, Uel Morton, Linda McPherson, Alison Hardaker, Gillian Kynoch, Wendy Wrieden, Sarah Deas, Brian Ratcliffe, Willie Fergusson, Bill Crosson, Mary Cursiter, Tony McElroy, Dave Simmers, Phil Thomas, Martin Meteyard, Lorna Murray, Kelvin Thomson and Eve Keepax.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

These were proposed by Christine Fraser and seconded by Pieter van der Graaf.

3. Matters Arising

Following the last meeting, a letter had been sent to the Economic Secretary to the Treasury concerning the modernising of legislation concerning co-operatives. This letter had been signed by all Co-convenors of the Cross Party Group on Food and Cross Party Group on Co-operatives. John Scott had received a reply from Sajid Javid MP updating on progress. This would be circulated with the minutes.

ACTION: ML

4. Election of Officers

John Scott noted that Lewis Macdonald was standing down as Co-Convenor and thanked him for all his work on behalf of the CPG Food.

The following were proposed as Co-Conveners by Jennifer Bryson, seconded by Christine Fraser and elected:

Claire Baker MSP (Lab)
Rob Gibson MSP (SNP)
Patrick Harvie MSP (Green)
Jim Hume MSP (LD)
John Scott MSP (Con)

Mary Lawton SFDF was proposed as Secretary by John Scott, seconded by Jim Hume and elected.

5. The Food and Health Agenda

Andy Bruce (AB) Head of Tobacco, Alcohol and Diet in the Public Health Division on the Scottish Government (SG) gave a short presentation.

Supporting Healthy Choices

AB outlined their draft proposals for a voluntary framework to support healthy choices. This focuses on the dietary role in obesity –the “energy in” and supports the dietary goals published by the Food Standards Agency Scotland in May 2013.

SG’s proposal is for industry voluntary action to help tackle the burden of obesity and diet related diseases. [The framework](#) outlines four key principles as follows,

1. Put **children’s health** first in all food-related decisions.
2. Rebalance **promotional activities** to significantly shift the balance towards healthier choices.
3. **Support consumers and communities** with education and information:
 - working jointly on social marketing campaigns;
 - providing nutrition information on labels and calorie labelling on menus.
4. Formulate **healthier products and menus** across retail and catering:

- reformulating existing products over time;
- improving kitchen practice.

Seventeen commitments to support each principle are given.

He stressed that they were keen to work in partnership with industry and there had been a meeting on 18 May to discuss the proposals with a wide range of stakeholders to get early views.

AB said he recognised that the commitments were challenging for industry but thought there needed to be ambition to address obesity. He was keen to build on current good work and increase the pace. He noted that some had already met commitments or were moving towards doing so, for example on front of pack labelling.

There is also a [reformulation paper](#) which contains a number of targets set for achievement by 2015, using 2010 levels as a baseline.

He said there were similarities to the Responsibility Deal (RD) in Westminster but whereas the RD was incremental this framework was the full package. SG was now engaging with companies to seek views with a final version expected in the Autumn. Whilst SG was prepared to make some changes they were not looking to alter the scale of ambition.

New Food Body

AB reported that Scottish Ministers announced their decision to accept all of the recommendations in the Scudamore report on 27 June 2012 and now intends to bring forward legislation to create a stand-alone body in Scotland for food safety and standards, feed safety and standards, nutrition, food labelling, and meat inspection policy and operational delivery.

SG published a consultation on whether the new food body could usefully expand its role and responsibilities beyond those functions and on how the new food body's independence from Government and the food industry could be assured. They had received 130 responses which are now on their website: [consultation on a New Food Body for Scotland](#)

Following the horsemeat incident two expert groups had been established. One chaired by Jim Scudamore will advise on any changes required to the FSA in Scotland ahead of the creation of the New Food Body. This will report to Michael Matheson before summer recess. Another group set up by Richard Lochhead and chaired by Ray Jones has been created to take forward the Scottish food industry's work on traceability and provenance.

Open Debate

Horse Meat

John Scott MSP asked why there was no working traceability scheme for horses given that there was one for cattle. AB said that this was handled by his rural affairs colleagues. He understood that questions had been raised over the effectiveness of

horse passports. **Jim Hume MSP** said that cattle traceability was dealt with at an EU level and that work on horsemeat traceability needed to be at that level.

Claire Baker MSP noted the two expert groups but wondered if there were enough Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) to ensure that any recommendations could be robustly applied.

Supporting Healthy Choices Voluntary Framework

Amanda Brown Scotland Food and Drink asked how SG was consulting with the manufacturers on the Supporting Healthy Choices Voluntary Framework.

AB said that he was keen to speak directly to companies and that the SFDF was doing an excellent job in brokering this. He recognised that some manufacturers were at the vanguard of this work and he was keen to reach those not active currently. He was taking advice from SFDF on this.

Jennifer Bryson Abertay Uni said that many microbusinesses were not in any trade body and unaware of what was going on particularly with respect to the targets for product reformulation. **AB** agreed and said this was why SG (Health) funded the Reformulation Manager at SFDF who could work with such companies. There were also others offering help on reformulation. Jennifer agreed that but said that the cost implications needed to be recognised. Others along the supply chain also needed to be made aware of proposals.

Bill Gray CFHS reminded that there was a consumer dimension. The consumer needed to be informed and in particular there should be a dialogue with communities and disadvantaged consumers.

Christine Fraser Food Training (Scotland) was concerned that front of pack labelling could unfairly demonize foods. Dairy products provided calcium and many on a low income diet used a lot of milk and cheese and she would not want this to stop. This could lead to malnutrition. There was also the danger that “processed” foods were seen as “bad”. Advances in food technology had provided huge benefits for consumers.

AB replied that people needed to eat a balanced diet. There needed to be a population –wide rebalancing of consumption in line with the dietary goals; there were some products we were eating too much of, and some we were eating too little of.

John Scott MSP noted that the Scottish Diet Action Plan had been published in 1996 with the review by Tim Lang’s team in 2006. Fergus Millan had presented on the Obesity Route Map to the CPG Food in 2011, but still there seemed to be no progress on obesity figures.

Christine Fraser said she thought that the right messages were not getting out. She also had concerns regarding reformulation, she pointed out that there was only a certain level of reformulation that could be done on a product –otherwise no one would want to eat it.

Claire Baker MSP said that Parliament had been good at public health messages on alcohol and tobacco, but not so for food where there is a huge emotional element. She thought there needed to be a focus on catering –particularly portion size and also children’s meal offerings.

AB answered that caterers were included in the voluntary framework:

- Removal of confectionary from till points, checkout aisles;
- SG will publish a guide for caterers on healthy options for children’s meals;
- Incentivise healthy lunchtime meal deals;
- Encourage healthier elements in meal promotions;
- Make small portions available and ensure that soft drinks with added sugar are available in small portions of 250 ml or less;
- Train staff to no longer ask if customers want larger options;
- Work towards healthy living award.

Graham Findlay SQA said that items such as ice-cream that were once seen as treats were now more regularly eaten and of a larger portion size. It was important to get the messages out to all ages including grandparents and also focus on cooking skills.

Nicki Holmyard Seafood Scotland thought that clearer messages were needed on seafood. Consumers were not clear on how many portions to eat a week and also the types they should consume. **AB** said that the refreshed dietary goals stated that Oil rich fish consumption should increase to one portion per person (140g) per week. He agreed that education on this should be aligned with environmental needs. **Nicki** said that they were working with retailers to have more Scottish offering on seafood and that healthy choices were linked to the club card.

David Martin Scottish Retail Consortium said that they were working on a document that would cover a raft of initiatives that should be launched in the autumn. Many of these included were to improve health for example social marketing, front of pack labelling, alcohol and lowering salt.

Laura Stewart Soil Association asked if the voluntary framework also covered environmental aspects. **AB** said that it just covered dietary elements.

Jim Hume MSP said it was important to understand the drivers for buying foods. The front of pack labelling might influence some consumers but there were other issues such as price, ease of cooking, time resource, skills and local accessibility. **AB** said they funded the Scottish Grocers healthy living programme in convenience stores. He agreed price was an issue in these economic times and said they used Kantar data to look at trends.

Pieter van der Graaf SG mentioned research funded at the Rowett on consumer behaviour. It was important to understand why consumers didn’t buy certain foods when they understood the health message.

Ian Shankland LCFH said that they had done work with Glasgow Uni regarding food labelling which suggested that 78% of respondents regularly used food labels but when questioned only 13% fully understood what the label said (www.lcfhp.co.uk).

Polly Jones Asda said that their research showed that fuel and food bills were the highest priority issues. With this in mind Asda concentrated on keeping prices down and helping customers make healthy choices within budgets.

New Food Body

Jennifer Bryson welcomed that there would not be a split on responsibility for food issues as there was in England. She added that she felt that interpretation of information by EHOs could vary greatly. **Mary Lawton SFDF** said she was aware that Food Standards Agency Scotland (FSAS) was constantly looking at consistency; risk ratings were reviewed and there were shadowing programmes. Consistency issues raised with FSAS were investigated.

Note: Questions were raised on the status of the Code of Practice. FSAS has provided the following:

“The Code of Practice is issued under section 40 of the Food Safety Act 1990 (the Act), Regulation 24 of the Food Hygiene (Scotland) Regulations 20061 and Regulation 7 of the Official Feed and Food Controls (Scotland) Regulations 20072 which empower the Scottish Ministers to issue Codes of Practice concerning the execution and enforcement of food law enforcement by Food Authorities.

Food Authorities are required under that legislation to have regard to this Code when discharging their duties. This means, in effect, that Food Authorities must follow and implement the provisions of this Code that apply to them.

Food Authorities that do not have regard to relevant provisions of this Code may find their decisions or actions successfully challenged and evidence gathered during a criminal investigation being ruled inadmissible by a court.”

John Scott thanked **AB** for his presentation. **AB** replied he had found it a very useful meeting and it was agreed that minutes of the meeting would be forwarded to him.

ACTION: ML

AB said that members wanting to discuss further could contact him or via the CPG Food.

ACTION: Members

6. Topics for Further meetings

Ideas were as follows:

- Mary Lawton had approached Ray Jones regarding traceability and Scottish Brand Expert Group;
- David Martin suggested the Scottish Retail Consortium paper;
- Eve Keepax of Eco-Schools had suggested Sustainability;
- Pieter van der Graaf suggested the Global Food Security Programme;

- Rob Gibson raised the debate on the Aquaculture and Fisheries Bill. The Government intended to bring forward a debate as soon as possible after the summer recess to assess food authenticity and food labelling. He thought this would be an appropriate time for CPG Food to discuss this issue including GMO soya.

7. Date of the Next Meeting

These are agreed as:

Tuesday, 24 September	18.00	CR4
Wednesday, 20 November	18.00	CR5
Wednesday, 29 January 2014	18.00	CR4
Wednesday, 19 March 2014	18.00	CR5
Wednesday, 18 June 2014	18.00	CR5