

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Cross Party Group on Food held in
Committee Room 1 of the Scottish Parliament on 25 November 2014**

Present

Colette Backwell	Scottish Food & Drink Federation (SFDF) (chair)
Richard Lochhead	MSP
Claire Baker	MSP
Jim Hume	MSP
John Scott	MSP
Christian Allard	MSP
Mary Lawton	SFDF
Moyna Kennedy	SFDF
Rosemary MacDonald	SFDF
Kirsty Ritchie	SFDF
Pat Abel	Nourish
Karen Alum	Food Train
Wendy Barrie	Scottish Food Guide
Peter Beattie	Consultant
Sue Bird	University of Aberdeen
Paul Birkin	Glasgow City Council
Julia Brown	Pinsent Masons
Liz Breckenridge	Food Standards Agency Board/Glasgow Kelvin College
John Cooke	Slow Food
Bosse Dahlgren	Consultant
Sarah Dempster	NHS Lothian
Peter Faasen de Heer	Scottish Government Health
Fiona McLean	Scottish Government Health
Graeme Findlay	Scottish Qualifications Authority
Suzanne Train	Scottish Qualifications Authority
Christine Fraser	Food Training (Scotland)
Archie Gibson	Agrico
James Graham	Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society
Bill Gray	Community Food and Health Scotland
John Grigor	Abertay University
Sharon Hall	Potato Processors Association
Abigail Harper	Kettle Produce
Colin Herron	McCains
Alistair Hutchinson	Pagoda PR
Kirsten Leask	Soil Association Scotland
Jamie McGill	Soil Association Scotland
Laura Stewart	Soil Association Scotland
Melanie Leech	Food & Drink Federation
Stuart Matheson	Scottish Government
Kate Mathieson	College Development Network
Jackie McCabe	Royal Environment Health Institute Scotland
Tony McElroy	Tesco
Geoff Ogle	Food Standards Agency Scotland
Lorna Pellet	Love Pure Cakes

Ceri Ritchie	Scottish Agricultural College
Pam Rodway	Crofting Connections
Ian Shankland	Lanarkshire Community Food & Health Partnership
Ian Shearer	Packaging Recycling Group Scotland
John Sleith	Society Chief Officers of Environmental Health Scotland
Clare Slipper	National Farmers Union Scotland
Gary Stephenson	Devro
Frank Strang	Scottish Government
Kelvin Thomson	Pinnacle Food and Drink
Mona Vaghefian	McDonalds
James Withers	Scotland Food and Drink
Rachel Wicklow	Scobie & Junor
Jon Wilkin	Abertay University
Gina Wilson	Carnegie Trust
Wendy Wrieden	Robert Gordon University

Apologies for Absence

These were received from Patrick Harvie, Rob Gibson, Moyra Burns, Alison Clews, Willie Fergusson, Alistair Macphie, Stanley Bernard and Martyn Gray.

1. Minutes of the last meeting

These were proposed by Laura Stewart and seconded by Christine Fraser.

2. The Landscape for Food and Drink Post Referendum

Colette Backwell(CoB), thanked Richard Lochhead MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and the Environment, for agreeing to speak and noted the meeting would focus on the landscape for food and drink post referendum and how further devolution could help address the challenges we face in Scotland's aspiration to become "A Good Food Nation".

Richard Lochhead MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and the Environment (RL)

RL welcomed the excellent turnout from a broad range of backgrounds and sectors who are all passionate about food. He noted the following:

- It was a timely opportunity to have this discussion as we are reflecting on the food policy and next steps
- Scotland's food and drink industry is a success story with strong sales and exports and there are still opportunities there to be taken
- The objective of the Good Food Nation is to change Scotland's food culture and what others think of us
- A story is needed that considers food in the round including tourism and children's food

Post referendum he thought there should be;

- Continued engagement at grass roots level with the “Scottish food movement”
- More powers for The Scottish Government (SG) to help deliver their vision
- Control for SG of all levies in Scotland and how they are deployed. This levy revenue should be used to promote Scotland’s produce.
- More involvement for Scotland in European policies through further devolution. At the moment the Scottish Parliament implements EU law but has no formal input.

Claire Baker MSP (CIB)

CIB welcomed the Cabinet Secretary’s statement and the comprehensive nature of the Good Food Nation document. She noted the following:

- The health issues need to be debated more in the Scottish Parliament; different Scottish Government departments need to work together more and not in silos so initiatives match up.
- There have been radical changes on issues such as alcohol and smoking but nothing on food. The Food Commission might help but we need to be honest about our food habits.
- Some traditional Scottish products may not be as healthy as our fresh produce. We need to be responsible when promoting our products including overseas.
- The price of food is a barrier for some.
- Children’s health is a big issue that needs to be resolved, some children are obese and others are going to bed hungry.
- Scotland’s reputation on food safety and standards is important, everyone is vulnerable, and we need to protect Scotland from criminality.
- Public health is already devolved, the Food Standards Agency is devolved, and we have the levers to improve public health already. By 2030 the NHS will be spending £3bn on obesity.

Jim Hume MSP (JH)

JH said:

- Scotland is known for its high standards of food from farm to fork and has a good reputation.
- The quality of the brand needs to be protected; the horse meat incident reminded us how complicated food chains are and some of the perils of producing low cost foods. It gave a good opportunity to shine the spotlight on our farm products. We need to keep protecting the quality of our brands.

- He highlighted that new entrants to the market have need for support and we need to tackle bullying behaviour from the supermarkets.
- SG needs to use the powers they already had to protect the reputation of food and farm as a priority. He also said we need to make the best of rural communities.
- He noted there is a lot more work to be done on health.

John Scott MSP (JS)

John Scott noted that 2015 would be the year of food and drink and so capitalise on the success of the events in 2014. He welcomed the Good Food Nation (GFN) document and the focus on children's food and local food. He highlighted the success of the food and drink industry and noted the following challenges in becoming a GFN:

- Obesity needed to be addressed with the percentage of adults who are obese increasing from 52-62% between 1995 and 2012 and with 31% of children currently overweight. The NHS will spend £3bn on obesity in 2030.
- There are real limits to what Scotland's land can produce. He thought we were good at promoting our products and creating demand but there was a worry of running out of raw materials. We are 68% self-sufficient now compared to 87% 20 years ago.
- Skills are an issue –wait to see what Smith commission says on tax and employment law.
- Devolution is not the answer - the single market must not be diluted. We need different ways of working and need to work together better globally building transnational partnerships and global co-operatives.

The floor was opened for questions to the Cabinet Secretary (who attended part of the session) and speakers.

Topics raised covered:

- The role of education, local food and cooking from scratch;
- The potential impact of devolution of levies on availability of levy board R&D funding in Scotland;
- How government intend to engage with the least vocal in society on GFN;
- The role of local champions;
- Community projects;
- The need for a public debate on food and health to engage people and change behaviour;
- The difficulties in changing people's behaviour and need for radical approaches;
- The definition of 'good' food in GFN;
- Public contracts for food;
- Importance of the food and drink manufacturing sector to the economy;

- Need to learn from elsewhere such as Brazil (legislation favouring local farmers) and Peru (social inclusion);
- Strengthening of image of agriculture;
- Food waste;
- Tourism.

CoB closed the meeting with a summary of the main points:

- Food is not a single issue and there is a need for an honest debate across many aspects of food production and consumption;
- The government vision is for Scotland and its food to be thought of as highly as food from countries like France;
- There is a need to clarify the definition of 'food' in GFN;
- Clarity is needed on what the Food Commission will be set up to do;
- Radical change is needed on society's approach to diet and health;
- We need to ensure that all parts of society are included in the debate.

3. Date of the Next meeting

PLEASE NOTE THE MEETING FOR JANUARY 29th HAS BEEN CANCELLED. THIS WILL NOW BE **TUESDAY FEBRUARY 17TH** IN COMMITTEE ROOM 5 OF THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT AT 6PM.

Ross Finnie Chair and Geoff Ogle Chief Executive of the new Food Standards Scotland will be the speakers.