

Minutes of an AGM of the Cross Party Group on Food held in Committee
Room 4 of the Scottish Parliament on 7 October 2015

Present

John Scott	MSP (Chair)
Patrick Harvie	MSP
Shirley Spear	Food Commission
Pete Ritchie	Food Commission
Pam Whittle	Food Commission
Robin Gourlay	Food Commission
Mary Lawton	CPG Secretariat /SFDF
Cat Hay	Scottish Food and Drink Federation
Kirsty Ritchie	Scottish Food and Drink Federation
Wendy Barrie	Scottish Food Guide
Christine Fraser	Food Training Scotland
John Cooke	Slow Food Scotland
Anita Aggarwal	Pilton Community Health Project
Graeme Findlay	SQA
Ian Shankland	Lanarkshire Com Food and Health
Gordon Thomson	Lanarkshire Com Food and Health
Angela Mitchell	Soil Assn Scotland
Kirsten Leask	Soil Assn Scotland
Pat Abel	Transition Edinburgh South
Jackie McCabe	REHIS
Ceri Ritchie	SAC Consulting
Louise Welch	Food Standards Scotland
Heather Kelman	Food Standards Scotland
Peter Midgely F	Food Standards Scotland
Anna Strachan	Obesity Action Scotland
Dr Jon Wilkin	Abertay University
Dr Flora Douglas	Rowett/Aberdeen University
Archie Gibson	Agrico
Kelvin Thomson	Pinnacle Food and Drink
Eve Keepax	Keep Scotland Beautiful
Douglas Scott	Scottish Fed of Meat Traders Assn
Jacqui McDowell	Community Food & Health Scotland
Alison Clews	Sainsburys
Pamela Berry	Scottish Government
Christopher Trotter	Christopher Trotter
Sue Whittle	Compassion in World Farming
Gemma Davies	Compassion in World Farming
Lynette Low	Compassion in World Farming
Kate Kryk	Compassion in World Farming
Ahmed Hamdallah	Compassion in World Farming
Lorna Pellet	Love Pure Cakes
Richard Oliphant	Love Pure Cakes
Moyra Burns	NHS Lothian Public Health
Rob Ralston	Edinburgh University
Kirk Hunter	Dairy UK

Jhonti Bird
Maxim Bird
Paul Birkin
Stephen Hutt

Scot Lib Dems
Scot Lib Dems
Glasgow City Council Environ Health
RHASS

1. Apologies for Absence

These were received from James Withers, James Graham, John Whitehead, Wendy Wrieden, Norma Murray, Lesley Stanley, Douglas Watson, Roz Corbett, Amanda Brown, Uel Morton, Frances Birch, Julie Edgar, Maggie Gordon, Fiona Bird, Brian Ratcliffe, Moira Stalker, Claudia Beamish MSP, Jim Hume MSP, Robbie Beattie, Jackie Baillie MSP, Christian Allard MSP, Brid McKibben, Leigh Edwardson, David Thomson, Viv Collie, Margaret Smith and Sarah Dempster.

2. Minutes of the last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting of 17 February 2015 were proposed by Christine Fraser and agreed.

3. Results of Electronic Election

Mary Lawton (ML) noted that the AGM on June 17 had to be cancelled at the last minute due to parliamentary business running on. It was agreed with the Co-Conveners that an electronic election would be held. Notice was sent out on June 17, the election held on July 1 with all votes to be in by July 17 2015.

ML confirmed that the following had been elected:

Co Conveners

Claudia Beamish Labour
Rob Gibson SNP
Patrick Harvie Green
Jim Hume Lib Dem
John Scott Con

Secretariat

Mary Lawton SFDF

The Annual return for the Group would now be submitted.

Action ML/JS

4. The Food Commission

Shirley Spear (SS) co-owner of the “Three Chimneys” 5 star restaurant with rooms in Skye and Chair of the Food Commission gave a presentation. Slides are attached.

SS explained the journey they were on with the Good Food Nation (GFN) building on the first national food policy Recipe for Success. The Food Commission (FC) had met 3 times so far with the next meeting planned for Dec 1st. There had been discussions with the International Futures Forum looking at Scotland’s food culture and horizon modelling, and also on modern food systems with the New Economics Foundation (NEF) facilitating discussions on indicators. Meetings had been held at the Moredun Institute and a school.

The FC thought the way forward was “bottom up” and that rigour needed to be added. To this end they were working on a small set of indicators with NEF which they intended to include in an interim report to Ministers at the end of the year. These would cover health, social justice, sustainability and prosperity.

SS said a Good Food Nation movement for change was required and must;

- Embrace the population at large
- Build momentum from the grassroots
- Not provide dietary advice
- Be IN-clusive, not EX-clusive
- Create an ethos, blaze a trail and make the idea attractive
- Be responsive and far-reaching, over-arching, relevant and justifiable

This would need;

- Clarity about our objectives and our audience
- Be considered as a Branding exercise.
- Marketing of the idea of Building A Good Food Nation
- Bringing people together to work towards the same aim
- Building of a network of Local Food Champions to assist us in this task
- Endorsement by Scottish Government 100%.

SS emphasised that the FC were aware that there is a great deal of excellent work happening throughout the country already and they were keen to embrace this, possibly by creating a hub, to which all projects large or small, would feel they were contributing in a positive way towards building the GFN. Joining up the dots between all of the work on-going, would have a positive effect, help to spread knowledge and resources and pull projects together in a common cause.

Open Debate

John Scott MSP asked how they would empower grass roots. **SS** noted the good inspiring work going on in schools such as Food for Life, community projects, cafes, cooking classes and other initiatives. These were all important but there was overlap and some lack of knowledge of the work of others on the ground. She hoped GFN

could be a hub so they could feed into a common purpose. SS also mentioned the recent statistics in [Growing Up in Scotland](#) and thought GFN could have a role in addressing these. JS asked whether there was a budget for GFN. SS said the FC acts in an advisory capacity to Cabinet, via the Cabinet Secretary, Richard Lochhead. Budgets for any projects, such as a marketing campaign, would require agreement. The Cabinet Secretary was very open to ideas and encouraging.

Patrick Harvie MSP shared SS's enthusiasm and asked what MSPs could do to engage with their constituents. **SS** said they should encourage the whole idea of GFN, and back those trying to make a difference. MSPs should also encourage their local Councils, local employers, local health boards and those working for example, in workplace canteens, schools, hospitals, and all local community initiatives, including farm shops, farmers markets, cafes, drop-in centres and after-school clubs, to reinforce the importance of healthy food and drink to all and that their work is contributing towards building the GFN.

Eve Keepax KSB said there SS's presentation gave lots of areas for action and asked how they would be taken forward. SS said that they hoped to have decisions on this in December. **Pam Whittle FC** said there was work ongoing focussing on the detail of the ambition.

John Scott MSP asked if the food commission would be a statutory body. **Pamela Berry SG** said it was an Advisory group that would issue reports and provide recommendations to Ministers.

Louise Welch FSS asked what SS meant by not providing "finger wagging" dietary advice and what they would do going forward. **SS** said she was against too much negative conflicting advice and had concerns regarding people's self-esteem and did not want to be judgemental. She saw the importance of GFN as being more positive, taking a more upbeat approach to everyday diet and eating habits, by empowering the population to lead a healthier lifestyle for their own good, the benefit of their families and their improved happiness and well-being, plus a better way of life all-round.

Archie Gibson Agrico noted the other excellent work in schools including the SFDF programme. He thought it was important that the FC engaged with other SG departments involved with sport and the Curriculum for Excellence. **SS** agreed these cross-connections were important and they needed a balance. She noted that Robin Gourlay was on the FC and already had been involved with a great deal of constructive work in this area in the recent past. His insight would be invaluable.

Jhonti Bird Scot Lib Dems said that although food was on the curriculum in primary schools they needed to be well equipped. Teaching children was paramount as they then went home and told their families. **SS** said that improving teaching in schools from nursery right through primary and secondary was extremely important. She agreed that all schools needed adequate teaching facilities, as well as kitchens

and canteens. The transfer of knowledge from school to home was also important. She also questioned whether the career path to be a Home Economics teacher was rather complicated nowadays and that there was a dire shortage of qualified HE teaching staff in secondary schools, plus the health and safety rules and regulations sometimes deterred Primary school teachers from getting more involved.

Ian Shankland LCFH said that part of the GFN nation aspiration was to make healthy food choices. He asked whether the FC was considering the struggle for some to make healthy choices due to poverty. **SS** said this was a very important factor in all discussions and Caroline Mockford from the Poverty Alliance was on the FC. **SS** noted that there were many ongoing changes in the population's lifestyle and that poverty was not just financial but also in about knowledge and understanding of good diet and nutrition, having access to good food and how to cook it, having domestic utensils and basic equipment etc. She wanted to empower people to eat better for their own benefit and for the benefit of their families.

Flora Douglas Rowett asked about the indicators regarding food poverty. Her recent [research](#) had indicated that people on low incomes were just as interested in cooking. A real understanding of food practices in Scotland was needed. **SS** agreed and thought lack of knowledge was prevalent across the incomes and what was needed was motivation and encouragement. She had already come across some excellent community projects and said that wherever she attended events, the desire for more cookery lessons was always highlighted. The FC was considering carrying out a mapping exercise of good practice at all levels across the country in order to help find a coherent way forward.

Note –some copies of [Good Food for All-Pilton Community Health Project](#) were circulated after the meeting.

John Cooke Slow Food Scotland asked in terms of the 4 values what prosperity meant. **SS** said that like poverty there were many different levels. It was about helping all thrive at every level as well as the wider economic prosperity of the nation. **Peter Ritchie FC** said that in discussing indicators they had noted the need for good jobs in the food industry right across the board from growing food, to food production and hospitality.

Christopher Trotter Fife Food Ambassador asked why there were scientists and civil servants on the FC and no farmers, butchers etc. He thought the dilemma was that Scotland does well economically with processed food that was not that healthy. **SS** said that those on the FC were also there as individuals as well as for their professional interests. The GFN wanted to build a network at a community level that would encompass all and their contribution was vital. The marketing campaign would be very important here. There had to be changes in production of processed food due to the high levels in obesity and other health issues. Some food producers had altered recipes to make foods healthier and others would be encouraged to make

changes too. **Pete Ritchie** noted that the GFN intended that there would be good food access to all and this meant change.

Note –Copies of the [SFDF Reformulation for Health](#) giving guidance for SMEs are available.

Sue Whittle CIWF asked how the FC would look at sustainability and quality of food and the role of organic and animal welfare. **SS** agreed this was important and that there was excellent representation on the FC with Julie Fitzpatrick of the Moredun Research Institute and Prof Peter Morgan of the Rowett Institute. They had a wealth of knowledge and access to many wider networks. **SS** noted that quality could be expensive and that there may need to be a change of attitude towards the cost and fair price of better quality food. **Pete Ritchie** said that policy coherence was important and they were linking in with strands such as the Scottish Governments agriculture aspiration on green farming, the Organic Action Plan , biodiversity etc.

Jon Wilkin Abertay Uni asked about whether there should be a levy on supermarkets that sell unhealthy food cheaply compared to fruit and vegetables. **SS** said that the future role of supermarkets had been a topic of discussion in the FC. She thought that supermarkets should embrace more local food but was unsure how a levy would work. It was important to enjoy the preparation and eating of home-cooked food but to realise that occasionally everyone needed a quick fix meal. Reformulation of processed food to make it healthier was important.

Ceri Ritchie SAC Consulting said that it was necessary to take a balanced view and that industry had a lot to offer. She asked how the balance of economic and environmental sustainability would be taken. **SS** agreed that balance was needed and that best practice should be sought and disseminated.

Christine Fraser Food Training Scotland said as a food technologist she endorsed a balanced approach. Reformulation was on going but it was important not to demonize foods and work with the supermarkets not against them. Some houses were being built without kitchens as they were no longer deemed necessary as people ate out so frequently. **SS** agreed that supermarkets were never going to go away and said it was also important to understand the changing shopping patterns such as more on-line purchasing. She was astounded at how often people eat out at every meal time and in the rise in take-away or dial-up food eaten in homes. This was another big topic for discussion. Supermarkets and retail outlets were represented on the FC and all members of the FC had personal opinions about these lifestyle changes too.

Wendy Barrie Scottish Food Guide asked about the network of Local Food Champions and how these would be selected. **SS** said there had been much discussion in the FC on whether there should be a controlled measured sign up or have it as a natural evolving network. This was not yet decided, but an issue the FC

wished to resolve as quickly as possible in order to take advantage of the huge groundswell of support that exists within communities for the GFN already.

At the end the other FC were given a chance to a few words.

Pam Whittle noted the range of issues in the GFN. She was an ex civil servant but chaired the Health Council and was president of the Horticultural Society which all informed her role.

Pete Ritchie said that the indicators should help deliver a food system that caused less harm to the environment, helped us eat well and be healthier and give us a fairer society.

Robin Gourlay said a common approach was vital and that food education for children should focus on producing knowledgeable consumers who make the right decisions about food.

SS asked that everyone engaged in the GFN process and asked that people contact the FC via goodfoodnation@gov.scot.

ACTION: ALL

JS thanked Shirley for her excellent presentation.

5. Bank of Scotland Report “Fresh Opportunities and Growth”

Some copies of this [report](#) were distributed. Further details are available from Tim Watkins tim.watkins@grayling.com.

6. Topics For Future Meetings

Ideas for future meetings should be sent to Mary Lawton (cpgf@sdfd.org.uk).

ACTION: ALL

7. Date of next meeting

This will be Wednesday 27 January 2016 on Addressing Malnutrition in Scotland and be introduced by the Minister for Public Health.

After this the CPG will have to be disbanded prior to the Scottish election. It will be reformed afterwards.