

# minutes

**Meeting:** Cross Party Group on Scotch Whisky

**Location:** Committee Room 5, Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh

**Date Held:** Wednesday 7 September 2011

**Present:** **MSPs:** Jackie Baillie, Claudia Beamish, Jackson Carlaw, Annabelle Ewing, Rob Gibson, Christine Grahame, Hugh Henry, Liam McArthur, Margaret Mitchell, Dennis Robertson, Mary Scanlon, Paul Wheelhouse.  
**Other attendees:** Alice Bartholomew, (Photographer), Gareth Brown (Assistant to Mary Fee), Campbell Evans (SWA), Jack Gemmell (Chivas), Gavin Hewitt (SWA), Eilidh MacDonald (Assistant to John Park), Douglas Meikle (SWA), Beatrice Morrice (SWA), Alastair Ross (McGrigors), Andrew Scobbie (Caledonian Consulting), Devlin Scobie (Caledonian Consulting), Ian Smith (Diageo), Siobhan Paterson (SWA).

**Apologies:** John Park, David Stewart, Jamie McGrigor

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	Action
<p><b>1 Welcome</b></p> <p>Mary Scanlon (MSP) welcomed attendees and noted that it was surprising that there had not been a Scotch Whisky Cross Party Group before now given the interest and importance of the industry to Scotland.</p> <p>The group agreed that there was a high number of MSPs in attendance, 12 in total and 2 MSP assistants.</p>	
<p><b>2 Election of office bearers</b></p> <p>Mary Scanlon and John Park were elected as joint co-conveners of the Cross Party Group unopposed.</p> <p>Annabelle Ewing and David Stewart were elected as joint vice co-conveners of the Cross Party Group unopposed.</p> <p>The Cross Party Group agreed that the Scotch Whisky Association will be the secretariat from the group.</p>	
<p><b>3 Presentation and welcome by Gavin Hewitt, Chief Executive of the Scotch Whisky Association, on the Scotch Whisky industry</b></p> <p>Mary Scanlon invited Gavin Hewitt to be the first ever speaker of the Cross Party Group on Scotch Whisky.</p> <p>Gavin Hewitt gave his congratulations on the creation of the CPG on Scotch Whisky and applauded the office bearers on their election.</p> <p>Mr Hewitt underlined key statistics relating to the Scotch Whisky industry and highlighted that France and the USA were the top export markets. He stated</p>	

that emerging markets are increasingly important to the industry, in particular Brazil, Mexico, Russia and China.

Priorities for the Scotch Whisky industry include legal protection against fake Scotch Whisky, market access (particularly India's 150% tariff), alcohol and health, tourism and the environment. He also stated that reform of the UK duty regime remained a key priority as Scotch Whisky is taxed 250% more than cider.

It was agreed that members would be sent a distillery map to aid identification of constituency sites. The SWA would endeavour to provide details of employees within the industry for members wishing this detail. Members also expressed an interest in visiting industry sites in constituency/region areas, including bottling sites. The SWA agreed to facilitate these visits.

SWA

Members agreed that the average salary of £45,000 is high compared to other sectors and that Scotch Whisky export value of £3.45 billion is impressive.

#### **7 Work programme**

Campbell Evans underlined that the group recognised the importance of identifying topical issues of interest to both MSPs and the industry. He also underlined that the Cross Party Group is an ideal forum to exchange ideas and views on the Scotch Whisky industry.

SWA/  
members

#### **8. Next meeting**

Members noted that the next two meetings will take place on: Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2012 from 17.30-19.00 in TG20 and Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2012 from 17.30 to 19.00 in TG20.

#### **7 Canapés and Scotch Whisky**

At the close of the meeting, members had the opportunity to taste some Scotch Whisky.