

minutes

Meeting: Cross Party Group on Scotch Whisky
Location: Room TG20/21, Scottish Parliament
Date Held: Thursday 14 June 2012
Present: MSPs: Annabelle Ewing, Hugh Henry, Liam McArthur, John Park, Dennis Robertson, Mary Scanlon, David Stewart

Other attendees: James Carney (VisitScotland), Campbell Evans (SWA), Jack Gemmell (Chivas Brothers), Rosemary Gallagher (SWA), Julie Hesketh-Laird (SWA), Angela Keir (Scotch Whisky Experience), Eilidh Macdonald (Assistant to John Park), Susan Morrison (Scotch Whisky Experience), Gordon Paul (William Grant and Sons), Siobhan Paterson (SWA), Jennifer Ross (Assistant to Liam McArthur), Devin Scobie (Caledonia Consulting), Bill Sinclair (VisitScotland), Fraser Sutherland (Assistant to Marco Biagi), Craig Thomas, Ian Urquhart (Gordon and MacPhail/Speyside Whisky Festival), Lynne Veitch (Scottish Government), David Walsh (VisitScotland), Richard Walsh (Scottish Government)

Apologies: Claudia Beamish, Marco Biagi, Amanda Brown (Scotland Food and Drink), Marie Claire (Fife Food Network), Vivien Collie (Fife Food Network), Jenny Faichney (SEPA), Murdo Fraser, Beatrice Morrice (SWA), Andy Rosie (SEPA), Alastair Ross (Pinsentmasons), Tavish Scott, Jean Urquhart

John Park, Chair of the meeting, welcomed attendees.

1. Minutes

The group agreed the minutes from April 25 2012.

2. Scotch Whisky Tourism

Campbell Evans, SWA, gave an overview of the importance of Scotch Whisky Tourism highlighting that the industry welcome 1.3 million visitors to Scotch Whisky visitor centres and distilleries each year. Visitor centres and distilleries provide 640 jobs and £30.4 million in value to the economy.

John Park reminded the group that MSPs can carry out Scotch Whisky industry site visits in their local constituencies during recess and invited them to get in touch with the SWA to arrange.

3. Presentations

The Group heard from Susan Morrison, Scotch Whisky Experience (SWE), who spoke about the evolution the Scotch Whisky Experience has made as a visitor attraction has made to make it one of Edinburgh's key tourism attractions. Susan also gave an overview of ScotlandWhisky, a private/public Scotch Whisky Tourism initiative set up in 2003 to explore where Tourism and Scotch Whisky could work together, and how it has developed.

Action

MSPs to let the SWA know if they wish to arrange a distillery/site visit over recess

The Group then heard from Ian Urquhart, Gordon and MacPhail and Speyside Whisky Festival Board Member. Ian talked about the successes and challenges of the Speyside Whisky Festival and how it has grown substantially since its inception in 1999 bringing economic benefits to Moray and Speyside.

(Presentations available on request)

4. AGM

The Group considered and agreed the content (in principle as this must be done formally electronically) for the Annual Return Form which is part of the Annual General Meeting procedure for a Cross Party Group to complete and send to the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee clerk. Office Bearers were also re-elected (to be completed electronically).

SWA to circulate Annual return form to office bearers and submit by 14 July

5. Any other business

John Park let members know that the next meeting would be in September and it was agreed the focus would be on Scotch Whisky and the Environment.

It was also agreed that a future meeting topic would look at exports and trade and this could be held in early 2013.

John Park also highlighted that the SWA's centenary celebration launch took place on Wednesday 13 June at the Glasshouse Hotel where Liz Lochhead, Scotland's Makar, read a new poem on Scotch Whisky. In addition, the SWA is holding a large scale exhibition in the Scottish Parliament's main entrance which commences from the 28 November 2012 until the end of January 2013. MSPs will receive invitations to the exhibition launch.

The next meeting of the CPG on Scotch Whisky takes place at 12.45 on Wednesday 12 September 2012 in TG20/21 and the topic will be the environment.