

# minutes

**Meeting:** Cross Party Group on Scotch Whisky  
**Location:** TG20/21 Scottish Parliament  
**Date Held:** Thursday 3 December 2015  
**Present:** MSPs: Gordon MacDonald, Jackie Baillie, Murdo Fraser, Joan McAlpine, Jamie McGrigor, and Mary Scanlon.

**Other attendees:** Annie Hill (Institute of Brewing a& Distilling), Christopher Land (office of Mary Scanlon), Gez Lawson (Mentor UK), Sian Langdon (Foundation Scotland), Simon Lyle (White Light Media, World Whisky Day), Lauren McArthur (SWA), Douglas Meikle (SWA), Beatrice Morrice (SWA), Tony Reeman-Clark (SCDA), Douglas Ross (office of Mary Scanlon), David Williamson (SWA), and James Withers (Scotland Food & Drink).

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Mary Scanlon MSP chaired the meeting and welcomed attendees.

## 1. Minutes

The group approved the minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2015.

## 2. Scotch Whisky Action Fund

Douglas Meikle (SWA) introduced members to the Action Fund. The SWA is committing £100,000 each year, for five years, to innovative projects across Scotland to tackle alcohol misuse.

Sian Langdon (Foundation Scotland) explained that her organisation manages the fund for the SWA. They provide support to projects during the application process and administer an independent panel, chaired by Dame Joan Stringer, which decides on projects to fund on the basis of various criteria. A maximum of £25,000 can be awarded to any one project in any given year.

Gez Lawson (Mentor UK) provided an overview of an Action Fund backed project at HMI Polmont Youth Offenders institute. The project provided a training programme for under 18 offenders, who received information on alcohol and how it affects the body, risk taking and harm reduction. Peer education training and personal development were also part of the programme. Over 400 people participated, of which 14 were subsequently trained as educators.

All the projects are evaluated, with the intention being to share learnings. The next application period commences in January 2016 and will close in June 2016. Further information on the fund and the programmes delivered is available at:

<https://www.foundationscotland.org.uk/programmes/scotch-whisky-action-fund/>

## Action

Information on the projects awarded funding this year is available at: <https://www.foundationscotland.org.uk/media/450560/SWA-Grants-awarded-2015.pdf>

### **3. Export Collaboration charter**

David Williamson (SWA) introduced a new export collaboration initiative developed by the Scotch Whisky Association and Scotland Food & Drink (SF&D) to promote food and drink exports and to share more widely the whisky industry's international experience and networks.

The so-called 'export collaboration charter' includes ten commitments covering market access, advice on how to protect intellectual property, mentoring, export seminars and collaboration to help showcase Scottish food and drink at overseas events.

James Withers (Chief Executive, SF&D) welcomed the charter and explained that the purpose of SF&D is to bring together different products and industries to help grow the sector.

He provided examples of the diverse range of Scottish products, such as seafood and rapeseed oil, which are exporting well. The SWA and SF&D are also working with the Scottish Government to develop the new trade and investment strategy. Tony Reeman-Clark (SCDA) highlighted that there was huge scope for small distilleries to collaborate and underlined that Scotland itself is a brand.

MSPs welcomed the initiative, noting that encouraging collaboration at a local level will be a key to success. The CPG will receive an update on the charter next year.

### **4. Next meeting**

The next meeting of the group, the last of this Parliament, will be held on Tuesday 24 February from 6-7pm in Committee Room 5.

For more information please contact Beatrice Morrice [bmorrice@swa.org.uk](mailto:bmorrice@swa.org.uk) or call 0131 222 9247.