

**Minutes of a meeting of the Cross Party Group on Food held in Committee
Room 4 of the Scottish Parliament on 18 January 2017**

Present

Mark Ruskell	MSP (Chair)
John Scott	MSP
Rhoda Grant	MSP
Mary Lawton	CPG
Gerry McBride	Skills Development Scotland
Moirra Stalker	FDF Scotland
Kate Mathieson	CDN*
David Thomson	FDF Scotland
Karen Barton	Abertay Uni
Johnathon Wilkin	Abertay Uni
Graham Findlay	SQA
Miriam Smith	QMU
Jeff Justice	Edinburgh University*
Ian Land	Seafish
Ceri Ritchie	SAC Consulting
Suzanne Train	SQA
Kirsten Leask	Soil Association Scotland
Douglas Scott	Scottish Federation of Meat Traders
Gordon King	Scottish Meat Training
Sheena Howden	Lantra
Jackie McCabe	REHIS
Helen Welsh	Food hygiene trainer
Pat Abel	Nourish
Pete Ritchie	Nourish
Lorna Aitken	Education Scotland
Phil Thomas	Artilus
Vivian Maeda	Business in the Community*
Beatrice Morrice	Scotch Whisky Association
Kim Newstead	NHS Health Scotland
Sue Whittle	Compassion In World Farming
Laura- Alexandria Smith	Science Connects*
Christine Fraser	Food Training Scotland
Eve Keepax	Keep Scotland Beautiful
Paul Swarbrigg	Beckford Associates*
Ewan Scott	Scottish Government
Alistair Trail	SRUC
John Cooke	Slow Food Scotland

To meet new requirements of CPGs, non –members (as submitted on re-registration in 2016) are denoted by an asterisk.

1. Apologies for Absence

These were received from Martin Hunt, Amanda Brown, Jennifer Bryson, Lesley Stanley, Ewan Macdonald –Reid, David Lonsdale, Pam Rodway, Brian Ratcliffe, Julian Mercer, Cat Hay, Tony McElroy, Howell Davies, Wendy Wrieden, Paul Birkin, Dave Simmers, Robbie Beattie, Anita Aggrawal, Stan Blackley, Amanda Fox, Willie Fergusson, Bill Gray, Ian Shankland, Uel Morton, Moyra Burns, Wendy Barrie, Bosse Dahlgren, Fiona Bird, Viv Collie, Seton Steele, Richard Lochhead, Martin Meteyard, Rea Chris, Kirk Hunter, Derek Oliver and Nicki Holmyard.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

In the final paragraph on the Ark of Taste, the second sentence was change to read “The PGI had foods listed which that used imported ingredients.....” The minutes were then approved.

3. Matters Arising

Mary Lawton (ML) updated on the malnutrition issue. There had been a stakeholder event on 2nd December and Food Train plan to submit a bid for Big Lottery funding by the end of February to roll out their services and help implement the 13 recommendations in the report. A watching brief would continue.

ACTION: ML

ML reported that on productivity, a regional delivery programme was being produced.

4. Education, Career and Progression Routes in Food and Drink Manufacturing

The theme was introduced by 3 short presentations updating on activities which are attached to the minutes.

Schools

Moiria Stalker (MS) National Co-ordinator FDF Scotland Schools programme covered work in schools, noting that her work promoting the food and drink industry as a career destination of choice was just part of the food education landscape and she worked very closely with partners.

This work has led to 13,000 pupils participating directly in activities between school and industry and 26,000 pupils exposed to career information. With 2047 teachers receiving CPL training the opportunity was there for dissemination to tens of thousands of pupils. Educational resources on the [website](#) had seen in excess of 80,000 downloads and ambassadors to schools had reached over 1000 pupils and 50 teachers (in less than one year). There were new qualifications to support pathways into the industry.

This work and the joining up of partners had taken time but now had real traction. MS noted the role of industry's in kind contribution; over £3 for every £1 of Scottish Government's (SG) contribution. Currently there was no clarity on criteria for the next round of funding from SG. She asked for this money to continue in order to build on the excellent work over that last few years that was making a real difference, provided real value for money and now had a head of steam.

Colleges

Kate Matheson, (KM) Subject Mentor Food and Drink, College Development Network reviewed their work with colleges. In particular she mentioned the National Progression Award in food manufacturing that was developed with the help of producers and could be delivered to senior school pupils, at college students or alongside apprenticeships to current employees. This award is seen as being equivalent of a Higher and gives hands on skills.

The pilot CPD scheme for teachers and lecturers about the sector and the career opportunities finishes in March and it is hoped to take this out to regions if funding continues. Work is also ongoing with SQA on updating the HNC/D in Food Science and Technology. Food and Drink supply events are also being held.

KM emphasised that this encouraging interest in the sector and opportunities was down to the collaboration and joined up working of all partners and she urged the SG to continue supporting this valuable work.

Apprenticeships

Gerry McBride (GM) Strategic Relations Manager-Food and Drink, Skills Development Scotland said the Skills Investment Plan would be launched on January 19. This [action plan](#) aimed at helping Scotland's food and drink employers attract a new generation of skilled professionals has been launched by the industry.

Businesses need to attract new talent and as well as Moira and Kate's important work, Modern Apprenticeships (MA) were another part of the jigsaw. These provide work based learning providing qualifications, developing competences and transferable skills. Employers found the scheme beneficial as the skills were aligned to their needs, there was help with training costs, motivated staff and gave access to a pipeline of future talent. There was a wide range of MAs available, with 75% of employers saying they improved productivity, 89% that they would recommend the scheme and 88% that they were important for their business.

A new development was Foundation Apprenticeships for S4-6 pupils providing work-based learning to a national qualification and work- based Graduate level Apprenticeships up to Masters Degree level.

Open Debate

Jon Wilkin (Abertay Uni) noted the importance of education and had worked on a relevant course with industry. Abertay had a new laboratory opening soon with facilities such as UHT pasteurisation, spray drying and brewing.

Ceri Ritchie (CR) (SRC) said it was important to look at food across the whole supply chain and highlight opportunities right across the sector including agriculture.

Kirsten Leask (KL) (Soil Association) thought that the joined up approach was vital. She reported that Henry Graham, Scottish Chair of Lantra had been announced as the new Agricultural Education and Training Champion 16 January and should be included in joined up work. (Note the new Food and Drink Champion is Archie Gibson, Chair of the FDF Scotland.)

GM agreed and said he already had good relationships with their organizations.

Ian Land Seafish said that collaboration had really progressed. He had seen a significant increase in training and knowledge of people coming into the industry. He thought this was due to the excellent campaigns such as by Seafood in Scotland and the fantastic partnerships and felt that industry was now reaping the benefits of this work.

David Thomson (FDF Scotland) noted that collaboration was critical and as a grant holder he could see risks to the current activity if funding was not renewed and asked the CPG for their views.

Laura-Alexandra Smith (Science Connects) explained that they run the STEM ambassador programme for the West of Scotland which is funded until 2018 by Parliament with no clarity after that. Any small changes could have a huge impact; if resources were more on line then this meant less face time conversations inspiring people. **CR** agreed and said there was also the additionality in delivering the Curriculum for excellence.

Note: there is a [STEM consultation](#) from Scottish Government which closes Jan 31 and all are encouraged to give their views.

ACTION: ALL

Viv Maeda Business in the Community said that the food programmes provided transferable skills useful in all careers and asked for clarity of funding to allow for planning. It was frustrating to build up excellent contacts and projects without being sure that funding would allow the work to continue.

Jackie McCabe (REHIS) said that REHIS has worked in partnership with Food Standards Scotland (FSS) for the past few years to make the Food Hygiene courses available to secondary schools all over Scotland with 10,000 pupils achieving the Elementary Food Hygiene qualification each year. Unfortunately, FSS indicated they were unable to co-fund the project this year however REHIS hopes this situation is under review with FSS.

Kim Newstead (NHS Health Scotland) noted that this food course was important for the work they did in low income communities and helping adults back into work. Many community food initiatives offer cooking sessions on learning to prepare

affordable, healthy meals .and Community Food and Health Scotland had a wealth of [resources](#).

Paul Swarbrigg (Beckford Associates) said that industry needed people and skills. If funding was cut this pipeline of qualified people would not be available for Scottish businesses and there would be huge problem.

KL said that it was important to learn for others such as Denmark and how they approached these issues. **John Cooke Slow Food** agreed and cited artisan food skills from Sweden.

Douglas Scott SFMTA said they supported and collaborated with the schools work but were concerned with the MA landscape and threat to providers. He noted the additional money coming back to Scotland through the Barnett formula and asked if this could be tapped into.

Gordon King Scottish Meat Training said that he saw the increased job satisfaction from the scheme and was concerned that the funding was not there for progression from Level 2 – Level 3. Four of his apprentices had been told to “wait and see” and he also questioned whether money could not come from the levy.

Note; after the meeting Gerry McBride offered to discuss this further with the meat sector.

ACTION: GM

It was agreed that a letter should be sent to relevant Ministers and Co-conveners of the Committees supporting the continued excellent work in skills and food education and raising the concerns about funding beyond March 2017.

ACTION: MR/ML

Lorna Aitken Education Scotland said they worked closely with the partners and noted that in order to plan and deliver effective programmes, food education funding should be for 3-5 years going forward, not for one year at a time.

Pete Ritchie Nourish said they were part of “[Peas Please](#)”, which is about increasing vegetables consumption by making them the easy choice. Nourish was setting up a Working Group and anyone interested should contact him.

ACTION: ALL

ML noted the recent Institute of Physics Report “[The Health of Physics in UK Food Manufacturing](#)”.

5. Date of the Next Meeting

This will be Wednesday 26 April in Conference Room 4 at 6pm.