

**Minutes of the AGM of the Cross Party Group on Food held in Committee
Room 4 of the Scottish Parliament on September 20th 2017**

Present

John Scott	MSP (Chair)
Mark Ruskell	MSP
Richard Lochhead	MSP
Iain Stewart	Edinburgh Community Food
Mary Lawton	CPG Secretariat
David Thomson	FDF Scotland
Tim Rycroft	FDF
Anne Gibson	NHS Health Scotland/CFHS
Anne Lee	NHS Health Scotland/hlaward
Aoife Behan	Soil Association Scotland
Graeme Findlay	SQA
Anna Gryka	Obesity Action Scotland
Jackie McCabe	REHIS
Pete Ritchie	Nourish
Anita Aggarwal	Pilton Comm Health Project
Joe Jones	Pilton Comm Health Project
Jeff Justice	Edinburgh Uni
Clara Walker	Forth Environment Link
Gordon Thomson	Lanarkshire Community Food
Karen Barton	Uni of Abertay
Helen Welsh	Uni of Abertay
Miriam Smith	QMU
Gillian Bell	Independent consultant
David Watts	Aberdeen Uni
Archie Gibson	Agrico
Ewan MacDonald-Russell	Scottish Retail Consortium
Vivian Maeda	BITC Scotland
Brenda Black	Edinburgh Community Food
Iain Millar	The Scottish Bee Company*
Neil Hay	Cyrenians
Atishay Mathur	UN House Scotland*
Neil Davidson	Scot Gov RESAS
Uel Morton	Scottish Food Commission
Pat Abel	Transition Edinburgh South
Lynne Stevenson	BDA Scotland

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

1. Apologies for Absence

These were received from Julian Mercer, Costas Stathopoulos, Wendy Barrie, Bosse Dahlgren, Martin Hunt, Paul Birkin, David Lonsdale, Jennifer Bryson, Claire Hislop, Wendy Wrieden, James Macsween, Laura Alexandra Smith, Rhoda Grant, Lorna Aitken, Sara Smith, Kirsten Leask, Helen Muir, Ian Collinson, Diane Whateley,

Jonathan Wilkin, Dave Simmers, Paul Swarbrigg, James Withers, Martin Meteyard, Viv Collie, Gordon Gilchrist, Brian Radcliffe, Moyra Burns, Sue Whittle and Stan Blackley.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting (26 April 2017)

These were approved with the correction of Ewan Macdonald –Russell’s name in the open debate.

3. Matters Arising

Mary Lawton (ML) updated the Group on malnutrition in Scotland which was discussed in January 2016 and subsequently letters sent to Ministers.

The Food Train had received £1.2 million of National Lottery funding from the Big Lottery Fund. The Eat Well, Age Well project will bring together voluntary groups, local and national government, private sector and health professionals to work together nationally to address malnutrition.

The Eat Well, Age Well project will test new ways of helping older people eat well across Scotland, while sharing the learning across the UK working alongside the London based Malnutrition Task Force.

ML noted that in announcing the funding the Minister had said they would consult on a new Diet and Obesity Strategy in the autumn .Of relevance to the meeting today was the commitment “We will be considering how we can support everyone to access enough food, access the right food, and support everyone to make healthy choices at every step.”

Lynne Stevenson (BDA Board member Scotland) said there would be strong links with the UK Task Force which had run pilots and some of these may be adapted for Scotland.

4. Election of Co-Conveners and Secretariat

There was an election for Co-Conveners and the following were proposed by Ewan Macdonald-Russell, seconded by Uel Morton and duly elected:

John Scott (Conservative)
Richard Lochhead (SNP)
Mark Ruskell (Green)
Rhoda Grant (Labour)

John Scott proposed Mary Lawton FDF Scotland as Secretary, this was seconded by Richard Lochhead and she was duly elected.

5. Food Access –Using Food as a Catalyst

Iain Stewart, Chief Executive of Edinburgh Community Food (IS) gave a presentation which is attached. This was followed by an open debate.

Open Debate

John Scott MSP (JS) asked whether there was a definition of a food hub. **IS** said there were many different sorts including a physical warehouse used for distribution.

Neil Hay Cyrenian (NH) said that a food hub at a set venue could be a burden. Conversations with their stakeholders had indicated that they wanted something to eat and someone to eat with at a given place. They are setting up community cook clubs which are open to all. They had found people were very keen to get into the kitchen and learn skills and also engage as volunteers. A befriending service was also available.

Jeff Justice Edinburgh Uni (JJ) said that he worked in a student's accommodation hall and they had a food hub so students had to mix and be more sociable and this was very successful.

Archie Gibson Agrico (AG) noted the wider community aspects of a hub. Examples were using renewable energy to supply fruit and vegetables to a community and also crofting communities using poly tunnels. There was a social aspect bringing communities together.

Anita Aggarwal Pilton Community Health Project (AA) said that different people needed different styles of help and hubs and it was important to listen to the community you were based in. Infrastructure needed to be there, often people did not have access to kitchens or cooking equipment, so being encouraged to save money by cooking in bulk and freezing was not useful advice. A report from their project Hungry for Change would be available next month and **Mary Lawton (ML)** offered to send the link to the Group.

ACTION: ML

Atishay Mathur UN House Scotland asked if a virtual hub had been explored by Edinburgh Community Food. **IS** said that they didn't currently have the resources to develop this.

ML said that the Cross Party Group on Food had looked at improving food access for disadvantaged communities in 2006 and set up a subgroup under John Scott. A Subgroup had been set up and research commissioned. This had looked at a virtual hub, a physical hub with warehouse and transport and a full service subsidiary with centralized operations for IT, purchasing etc. There had then been the economic downturn.

ML questioned, given the broad membership of the Cross Party Group on Food whether there was learning from the private sectors that could benefit the community food groups particularly in the area of community retailing and marketing.

Anne Gibson NHS Health Scotland said that Community Food and Health Scotland had worked with community food initiatives for a long time and funded research into issues affecting the sustainability of community retailers. A comparison of the key findings and recommendations in the pieces of research should be

published soon. The key issue that came out of this work was the need for collaborative working between community food initiatives, with other community networks and the public and private sector. **IS** was chairing a group of community retailers to see how to take this forward.

JS suggested that they approach James Graham SAOS and Sarah Deas CDS Scotland. **ML** confirmed that both would get minutes of the meeting as they were members.

ACTION: AG

Mark Ruskell MSP asked about the “right to food” in legislation and the difference this may make to community food work.

Pete Ritchie (Nourish) said that there should be a rights-based approach to food – with the Scottish Government making the commitments they had signed up to in international law a reality.

He felt our current food system needed change given factors such as climate change, obesity, population growth and food poverty.

IS suggested that the access to “good food” could be enshrined in law.

Richard Lochhead MSP asked how the community food initiatives would evolve going forward. It seemed that those with low income did not have access to food and those that did have access were not taking advantage of it. He asked how they could involve the whole community. **JS** added that for example the bereaved, particularly men were an audience that needed to learn how to cook.

IS answered that they had a run a successful programme for older men. They also worked on other issues such as malnutrition of older people and those with dementia. It was important to link in with other services and have partnership working to ensure relevance and impact. This needed co-ordinating as work could be long term.

Vivian Maeda BITC (VM) said that for her Food For Thought work, access to kitchens for teachers was a huge barrier. **IS** agreed and said there were issues with others needing to use the resources, and with the different Local Authorities it was difficult to get agreement.

Aoife Behan Soil Association Scotland said that normalising good food in the public sector was an opportunity at a national level.

Pat Abel Transition Scotland referred to the work they did with primary schools and expressed concern with the lack of Home Economics teachers and thought only 1 college was training them. **Graeme Findlay SQA** said there were 2 new courses in Perth and Dundee for Home Economics teachers.

AG Agrico noted the work industry was doing through the Future in Food programme and mentioned his work with primary schools on potatoes. Another example was Coca Cola's activity in Dundee helping single mothers.

Gordon Thomson LCFHP asked where community food fitted into the social and health care agenda, and suggested that people had "teachable moments". **IS** said that food work was a key theme within the Edinburgh Health Inequalities Framework and Edinburgh Community Food received funding through the Integrated Board as well as from the NHS Lothian Health Improvement Fund to deliver community food work. **GT** said that funding was an issue with there being 32 different Local Authorities and often being 1 year funding. A national strategic plan would be better and suggested this could be part of the Good Food Nation bill.

IS noted the role that access to food had with peoples dignity. **NH** agreed and said that research showed that people would often go without rather than go to a food bank. He thought the key was to offer other services and then engage with people. **PR** said that it was important to provide food with dignity and not patronize. The work of Fareshare in Scotland was also recognized.

Uel Morton Food Commission noted the good work discussed and said there would be a summit next week on Good Food Nation to hear the views of stakeholders and then a consultation would go out.

ML confirmed that minutes of the meeting would be sent to the Scottish Government.

ACTION: ML

David Watts Rowett Institute (Aberdeen Uni) said that he had taken over from Flora Douglas on Scottish-Government-funded food insecurity research and was keen to engage with those present. He was particularly interested in engaging with food hubs and undertaking longitudinal research into the lived experience of food insecurity.

ACTION: CPG Members

6. CPG Food Annual Return

ML said that in accordance with rules an annual return would be sent to the Parliamentary CPG Secretariat.

ACTION: ML

7. AOB

JJ noted that an Edinburgh Climate Refugee Forum was scheduled for Thursday, 9 November. There was a call for presentations by 21 October and further details were available: Dr Jeff W. Justice, jw_justice@icloud.com.

ACTION: CPG Members

VM announced that they would holding an event to celebrate their work with children and food on 14 March 2018. She would like to invite all CPG Food members and details would following due course.

8. Date of the Next Meeting

This would be 17 January 2018 in Committee room 5 on the synergies and tensions between Ambition 2030 and Good Food Nation.