

# minutes

**Meeting:** Cross Party Group on Scotch Whisky  
**Location:** Committee Room 4 Scottish Parliament

**Date Held:** Thursday 31 January 2019

**Present:** **MSPs:** Bill Bowman MSP, Murdo Fraser MSP, Rhoda Grant MSP, Rachael Hamilton MSP, Tom Mason MSP, Colin Smyth MSP,

**Other attendees:** Susy Atkinson (Edrington), Campbell Evans (Whisky direct), Karen Freel (Perspectiva Consultants), Alison Galbraith (SWA), Keir Greenway (GMB), Annie Hill (Institute of Brewing and Distilling), Kenny Junner (Unite), Christopher Miles (Edinburgh Distilling), Beatrice Morrice (SWA), Alan Park (SWA), Emma Pollock (Diageo), Heather Pritchard (Diageo), Moira Stalker (Food and Drink Federation), David Williamson (William Grant), Alan Wolstenholme (Scottish Distillers Association).

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Murdo Fraser MSP chaired the meeting and welcomed attendees.

## 1. Scotch Whisky, Skilled Workforce

Beatrice Morrice, SWA, provided information on the Scotch Whisky STEM Ambassador Network. Launched in December 2018 in collaboration with the Food and Drink Federation, the initiative aims to encourage Scotch Whisky companies to engage with local schools and colleges and record the work already underway by many companies. Recording and mapping this work will enable the Association to identify areas where engagement could be stepped up and share good practices among members.

Moira Stalker, Food and Drink Federation, stated that it was important for companies to engage and talk about jobs and career opportunities at local schools as it brings the sector to life and can provide a pipeline for the future workforce.

Susy Atkinson, Edrington, and Heather Pritchard, Diageo, provided examples of the excellent work carried out by both companies with regard to training and engaging with local schools in Scotland. Examples include work placements, internships and events that provide practical examples to inspire young people.

## 2. Protecting Scotch Whisky Brexit and Beyond

Alan Park, Director of Legal at the Scotch Whisky Association, gave a presentation on the protection of Scotch Whisky and implications of Brexit. He underlined the need for EU Spirit Drinks Regulation to be brought into UK law and provided information on how Scotch Whisky is currently protected around the world. He explained that Scotch Whisky is protected as a Geographical Indication under EU law and called for a UK GI framework post Brexit and continued protection through EU agreements with others.

The issue that the Scotch Whisky industry would no longer have input at the table during EU negotiations was raised in addition to concerns regarding a no deal Brexit.

## Action

SWA to report back on STEM engagement early 2020.

### 3. AOB

- Kenny Junner, Unite, suggested asking SPICE (Scottish Parliament Information Centre) to produce a report on the Scotch Whisky industry as their last report was published in 2009, 10 years ago. An MSP underlined that it is expensive for SPICE to produce a report. Beatrice Morrice pointed out that SPICE had published a report in October 2018 on Brewing and Distilling in Scotland. Members agreed to review the report then decide whether to approach SPICE. Full report:  
<https://digitalpublications.parliament.scot/ResearchBriefings/Report/2018/10/11/Brewing-and-distilling-in-Scotland---economic-facts-and-figures>
- The next meeting will be held on 29 May 2019 at 6-7.45pm, Committee Room 5.

SWA to  
circulate  
SPICE report  
from  
October  
2018 to  
members.

For more information please contact Beatrice Morrice [bmorrice@swa.org.uk](mailto:bmorrice@swa.org.uk) or call 07432 605 387.