

minutes

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

Date Held: Tuesday 21 January 2020

Present: **MSPs:** Murdo Fraser MSP, Gordon MacDonald MSP, Tom Mason MSP.

Other attendees: Stacey Adam (MSP Assistant), Howell Davies (Interface), Peter Finnie (SEPA), Karen Freel (Perspectiva Consultants), Jack Gemmell (Chivas), Orchid Lui (Chinese Times), Beatrice Morrice (SWA), Mairi Spowage (Fraser of Allander), David Williamson (Wm Grants).

Murdo Fraser MSP chaired the meeting.

1. The minutes from the last two meetings, held on 29 October and 11 September 2019 were approved.
2. **Scottish Budget**

Beatrice provided information on the Scotch Whisky Association's Scottish Budget submission that sets out the priorities for the industry. She explained the impact of the imposition of the 25% tariff on US imports of Single Malt Scotch Whisky and Scotch Whisky Liqueurs that is resulting in significant pressure for the industry and underlined how investment in areas including infrastructure, sustainability and skills would boost investment and productivity for the industry and the wider economy.

Mairi Spowage, Deputy Director at Fraser of Allander, provided an overview of the Scottish Budget process. She explained that the economic situation is healthier than in 2016 but that the timing of the UK budget presents challenges for the Scottish Government. She said that an increase in social security powers, replacements for EU funding, economic outlook, demographic change and the role of the local government all need consideration as it is yet unknown the impact that these will have on the budget.

A discussion on competitiveness, capital spending and broadband followed.

3. AOB

DRS - The Convener highlighted that a response to the Deposit Return Scheme letter that the group sent to Roseanna Cunningham MSP, Cabinet Secretary for the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, had been received. The letter has been circulated via email to all members but if anyone would like to discuss this further, let Beatrice know. Karen Freel, Perspectiva Consultants, underlined that meetings were ongoing between the glass industry and Ministers to highlight concerns.

US tariff - Beatrice provided an update on the US tariff that was introduced on 18th

October, for Single Malt Scotch Whisky and Scotch Whisky liqueurs. The group agreed to write a letter to the UK Government underlining the seriousness of the issue and the impact it was having on Scotch Whisky companies to encourage them to support the industry going forward.

Next meeting - The date of the next meeting will be circulated shortly. Anyone with a specific topic or issue they would like to be raised should please make their suggestions to Gordon, Beatrice or Murdo.

For more information, please contact Beatrice Morrice: bmorrice@swa.org.uk