

4th Cross Party Group on Independent Convenience Stores Meeting

23rd May 2017

The Scottish Parliament, Committee Room 5

Minutes as approved on 12th September

See appendix A for attendance list

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Convenor (Gordon MacDonald MSP) had given his apologies and the meeting was chaired by Richard Lyle MSP who welcomed attendees and then there was 1 minute's silence for the atrocity which had occurred in Manchester the previous evening.

2. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES AND ACTION POINTS

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved and no action points were raised.

3. MAKING STORES SAFE FOR RETAILERS, CUSTOMERS AND COMMUNITIES

John Lee gave some background on the possible Protection of Shop Workers Bill. He explained that Daniel Johnston had been keen to take this forward by way of a consultation on a draft Members Bill. The Crime Sub Group has also been taking this forward in conjunction with other organisations.

3.a RETAILERS AGAINST CRIME

Maxine Fraser, Managing Director of Retailers Against Crime (RAC) explained what RAC are, that the organisation is 20 years old and that they focus on deterring and detecting crime in the retail environment. Over 1,500 stores are members across Northern Ireland, Scotland and the North West of England. She said most crime is linked to addiction (to drink/drugs) or organised crime. She explained that the sentence rarely fits the crime and part of the work involves going to speak to young people in schools about how crime affects people.

It was said that sometimes shopkeepers don't report crimes because they don't think anything will be done. Retailers are reporting because they are being encouraged to but the justice system doesn't deal with the criminals harshly.

There was further comment made that violence is dealt with more seriously than theft and an example was given whereby a customer was drunk and racially abusive and when this was reported to the police this was dealt with properly.

It was said that there is a problem with 14 and 15 year olds because they can't be charged as an adult.

Pete Cheema, Chief Executive of the Scottish Grocers Federation (SGF) said that he hoped that the Bill would be passed as everyone has been putting up with crime for too long and that we saw that when the new hate crime law came in, it had a big effect on this for shop keepers.

It was reiterated by another member of the group the problems shop keepers have with young people.

Maxine explained further about their work with young people which is based on surveys and they will try to follow the children further from primary to secondary to see if their work has had an effect.

They start with P7s and it was asked if anyone would like to recommend one of their local schools to take part.

It was said that some parents think its okay if a small child takes something small, others do tell their children that its not okay and tell the shopkeeper or speak so other adults in the shop can hear.

Rory McPherson commended the legislation which DJ is attempting to take forward.

Further support for the legislation was given by a member of the group, and it was said that some of the things that happen in store are unbelievable and then there is no update on what's happened after calling the police.

Richard Lyle MSP commented that he was a shopkeeper and understands the issues well and as police go into schools regularly maybe they could talk to the children about retail crime. He also said that he was a Justice of the Peace at one time and he fined people on many occasions and advised retailers to get to know their local police officers.

3.b UNDER AGE SALES

JL explained that this is now a recognised qualification.

Anne-Marie Canham explained that she is a Business Manager for Under Age Sales and she trains staff to achieve the qualification.

She said that there are 238 age restricted products so it is important that shop workers understand the regulations and this training helps them to deal with the challenges implementing the law brings.

Anne-Marie provided a presentation which is attached. She also said that the law should be changed so that workers are protected.

It was asked what was the cost of training, which is £42.00 per member of staff.

Annie-Marie said that take up has difficulties but an e-learning platform is being introduced which might make it easier for people.

It was also said that retail crime can be seen as less of a priority than household crime. A member of the group said that in his area he didn't see as many police on the beat and there was a disagreement on this as another member said that he saw more police in his area.

It was said that there is a lot of under-reporting and there was general agreement on this. It was said that it can take hours to give statements to the police and then you might have to go to court which is a day's wages and then the perpetrators are dealt with very lightly.

A representative from Scotmid mentioned statement packs which are much easier to deal with at a time that suits the retailer, then the police can come and pick them up. Scotmid has piloting this but it is hoped that it will be rolled out.

John Lee mentioned that SRBC are part of the crime sub group and they are hoping to take crime reporting packs forward.

It was said that it is good if something is done rather than children being let off, through partnership working the police could speak to their parents which might stop them offending later.

Maxine explained that they keep a database of offenders, who become known because their images are passed around the stores and then they become displaced. She offered to send information to retailers on the methods of organised gangs which would help them greatly.

3.b PROTECTING SHOP WORKERS

John thanked Rory McPherson for the work he has done on the draft bill which is now being taken forward by TLT Solicitors. Michael McDougall from TLT explained the reasoning behind the bill. This is that there are many duties put on shop workers to enforce the law and so they should be protected when they are carrying this out. Especially as shop workers are at risk of losing their job if they get it wrong. He explained that there have been attempts to bring legislation which has failed and this proposed legislation is narrowed to when a shop worker is carrying out a statutory duty.

Daniel Johnston said that he was a retailer who employed 25 staff and he understands the importance of safety for staff and that the impact of retail crime is huge. He mentioned that the previous draft bill by Hugh Henry failed and this may have been due to scope and a lack of differential from existing assault law. We therefore have to show that our draft bill is different. He said that we will be able to get everything correct through the process of the consultation, ie who should be covered by the law. Daniel is aiming for the legislation to be ready by the Autumn. He said he will be doing this with SGF and USDAW as he is a member of this union.

John thanked Daniel for his work and support. He said that they are trying to build a coalition of organisations who will support the legislation.

Pete thanked Daniel on behalf of SGF members, he said that there have been 16 new pieces of age-related legislation since Hugh Henry's bill failed.

Richard Lyle commented that he would support the bill.

Pete went on to say that in the States there is a culture of carrying ID but that doesn't happen here and we definitely need this legislation. It was also said that it was vital that the retailers write into the consultation and contact their MSPs asking them to support it.

4. UPDATE FROM SUB GROUPS

4.a ECONOMY

Professor Leigh Sparks spoke about the local multiplier effect. Unfortunately, they had been unable to find a PHD student to do this work but instead they are going to do a smaller piece of work with 5 shops which will take a lot less time. This will be done in the next 3-4 months and anyone who could take part in this should e-mail John Lee.

4.b COMMUNITIES

There has been some progress on this sub group and it will be meeting imminently.

5. PUBLIC PETITION – PE1642: SALE AND MARKETING OF ENERGY DRINKS

John explained that we will draft a submission for this and send this round retailers for comment.

6. AOB

Pete mentioned SGF's upcoming networking event on Thursday 8 June at the RBS Conference Centre, Gogarburn.

John raised the issue of a deposit return scheme and Daniel Johnston mentioned that he thought that there would be costs involved for the industry.

7. DATE AND TOPIC OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is 12 September and will focus on deposit return schemes.

Cross Party Meeting 12/09/2017

Independent convenience stores attendance list

NAME	COMPANY
MSP Members	
Maurice Golden	
Daniel Johnson	
Gordon Lindhurst	
Richard Lyle	
John Mason	
CPG Members	
Begley, Antony	SLR
Cheema, Pete	SGF
Lee, John	SGF
Gordon, Mike	Scotmid
Leonard, Mike	United Wholesale Scotland
McNee, John	Scottish Grocer
McLean, Colin	Scotmid
Williams, Dennis	SGF
Williams, Linda	Broadway Premier
Neil, Kathryn	HLP
Ahmad, Billy	B.Ahmad R and R ScotlandLtd
Akmal, Mohammed	UWG
Ali, Zulfqar	UWG
Bagah, Mukesh	UWG
Slaven, Tom	UWG
Sha, Sohail	UWG
Shad, Waseem	UWG
Sparks, Leigh	Stirling University
Ugarte, Irati	SGF
Non-Members	
Canham, Anne-Marie	Under Age Sales
Doyle, Clair	Muller
Fassen de Heer, Peter	Scottish Government
MacDonald-Russell, Ewan	SRC
MacDougall, Michael	TLT
Morrish, Charles	Muller
Peace, Heather	Food Standards Scotland
Rybaczewska, Maria	Stirling University
Weldon, Melanie	Scottish Government