

Minutes

Cross Party Group on Beer and Pubs

Meeting of 6th December 2022

Attendance:

Craig Hoy MSP (Convenor); Miles Briggs MSP; Finlay Carson MSP; Douglas Lumsden MSP.

Lachlan Bruce (Office of Craig Hoy MSP); Paul Edgeworth (CAMRA); Stuart Falconer (Metal Packaging Manufacturers Association); Paul Hegarty (Parliamentary Beer Group); Matthew Hill (Ashai); Rita King (Parliamentary Beer Group); Andrew Lawrence (Scottish Beer and Pub Association); Jamie Mackie (Scottish Grocers Federation); Joseph Meaden (Portman Group); Stephen Montgomery (Scottish Hospitality Group); Margaret Smith (Scottish Wholesale Association); Paul Togneri (Scottish Beer and Pub Association); Anne Toms (Budweiser); Barry Watts (SIBA); Matt Wilson (ASA).

Apologies:

Fergus Ewing MSP; Liam Kerr MSP; Graham Simpson MSP; Paul Sweeney MSP; Sue Webber MSP; Annie Wells MSP.

Colin Wilkinson (SLTA)

1. Craig Hoy welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. Briefing by Matt Wilson of the Advertising Standards Authority

Matt Wilson, Media and Public Affairs Manager at the Advertising Standards Authority, gave a presentation about the ASA's remit in keeping UK alcohol advertising responsible, in particular how the ASA is harnessing technology to monitor online ads to ensure children and young people are protected.

The presentation included information about:

- The ASA's dedicated rules on alcohol advertising designed to significantly reduced exposure of alcohol adverts to children
- Targeting and scheduling rules
- The ASA's recent work in Scotland, including with venues advertising on social media

Following the presentation, the Convenor invited comments and questions from the floor on the issue of alcohol advertising and the Scottish Government's recently published proposals in this area.

Douglas Lumsden MSP raised the point that some companies who use social media may not realise that they may come under the remit of these rules.

In response to queries raised by Stephen Montgomery, Matt Wilson explained the ASA's role on social media advertising when a business adopts an individual's post on a social media platform, as opposed to an individual making a post on their own social media channel.

Lachlan Bruce asked if the ASA could look to engage with Licensing Boards across the country to see if information and training could be beneficial for licencees.

In reply to queries raised by Anne Toms, Matt Wilson explained that the ASA is a politically neutral regulator that stood ready to administer any changes in the law; and that the ASA believes the current regime it administers is proportionate and evidence-based.

Douglas Lumsden MSP asked whether the Scottish Government's proposals may impact on English sport being allowed to be shown on TV in Scotland, and the need to fully think through the proposals which may raise unintended consequences and/or cross-border issues. The issue of sponsorship is outside of the ASA's remit, and is instead governed by the Portman Group.

In response to a question from Paul Togneri, Matt Wilson confirmed that the ASA has had ongoing discussions and dialogue with the Scottish Government on this topic and will continue to do so. The ASA are also looking to start a regular newsletter to MSPs covering issues of interest.

Margaret Smith raised concerns about the cumulative effect of regulation and new policies, including these proposals on advertising. Further concerns were raised about the development of the Deposit Return Scheme not fully considering the impacts on business and that these proposals on advertising may follow a similar path as they are developed by the Scottish Government.

The CPG agreed to engage with the Deputy First Minister who is conducting a piece of work on the regulatory burden on business.

Craig Hoy MSP agreed to consider tabling a written Parliamentary Question asking what assessment ministers have made on the likely impact of DRS in changing consumer behaviour.

3. Close

Craig Hoy thanked everyone for attending and called the meeting to a close.