

**Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Cross Party Group on Food held on
November 3rd 2021 at 6pm**

Present

Jim Fairlie	MSP (Chair)
Rhoda Grant	MSP
Claire Baker	MSP
Rhoda Grant	MSP
Brian Whittle	MSP
Sarah Millar	QMS
Colin Smith	Scottish Wholesale Assn
Abi Mordin	Propagate /Glasgow Food Policy Partship
Mary Lawton	CPG Food Secretariat
Cat Hay	Food and Drink Federation Scotland
Liz Barron-Majerik	Lantra
Emily Dewar	Lantra
Ruth Watson	Scotland the Brand
Louise Cameron	Scottish Government
Charlotte Maltin	Biomics Ltd
Vivian Maeda	Business in the Community
Josephine Heger	SRUC
Lesley Stanley	Consultant
Allene Bruce	New Nutrition Business
Athina Tziboula-Clarke	Abertay Uni
Martin Meteyard	Consultant
Jess Sparks	Seafish
Liezel Tipper	MSD
Sara Smith	RHASS
Alistair Trail	SAC
Margaret Gilmour	Soil Assn Scotland
Orchid Lui	UK/Chinese Times
Rachel Mirfattahi	IFST
David Johnston	Food Standards Scotland
Phoebe Williams	Food Standards Scotland
Gillian Purdon	Food Standards Scotland
Julie Hesketh-Laird	Food Standards Scotland
Patricia Abel	Transition Edinburgh South
Dan Yaxley	Scottish Food Coalition
Marie-Amélie Viatte	Connected by Nature
Claire Campbell	SEPA
Yvonne Traynor	PHS
Claire Hislop	PHS
Margaret Smith	Caledonian Public Affairs
Iain Clunie	Zero Waste Scotland
Jackie McCabe	REHIS
Samm Swain	The Company Shop
Wendy Wrieden	Edinburgh Community Food
Paul Swarbrigg	SOSE

Sue Whittle	CIWF volunteer
Tilly Robinson-Miles	Eatwell Agewell
Jules Griffin	Uni Aberdeen
Mads Fischer-Moller	SRUC
Ewan Macdonald-Russell	SRC

1. Apologies for Absence

These were received from Graeme Findlay, ,Eve Keepax, Archie Gibson, Debbie McCreath, Finlay Allmond, Wendy Barrie, Bosse Dalhgren, Kerry Hammond, Mark Ruskell, Annie Wells Alistair Williams, Martin Morgan, Miranda Geelhoed and Colette Walker.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

There were proposed by Rhoda Grant MSP and seconded by Alistair Trail SAC Consulting.

3. Matters Arising

- a. Mary Lawton (ML) reported that the CPG Food had received official status and the Parliamentary website was being created.
- b. ML said that Allene Bruce was awaiting UK data on whether there was transference of spend to food during lockdown. This would be circulated when received.

ACTION: AB/ML

4. Achieving Net Zero in Scotland's Food and Drink Supply Chains

There were presentations from across the food chain by the following;

- Scotland Food and Drink (SFD) Net Zero—**Sarah Millar, (SM)** Director of Market Intelligence and External Affairs Quality Meat Scotland/ SFD Net Zero Task Force Member
- Decarbonisation of the Wholesale Industry – **Colin Smith (CS)** CE, Scottish Wholesale Association
- Glasgow City Food Plan - **Abi Mordin (AB)** -Co-Founder Propagate and Glasgow Food Policy Partnership

The presentations would be circulated with the minutes. Scottish Wholesale Association's Decarbonisation documents are available [here](#). NOTE: the Scotland Food and Drink Partnership Net Zero Commitment has been published and available [here](#).

Open Debate

Brian Whittle MSP was interested in local food production and procurement, particularly public food procurement where SWA had a central role and asked about the current situation. **CS** said it was patchy and regional depending on the Local Authority. SWA are keen to work with them to promote local and sustainable food and be involved in discussions on this including the Good Food Nation Bill. **SM** agreed and said that QMS with partners in the Red Meat Resilience Group had published a position paper [Increasing Opportunities for Scotch Assured Red Meat Within Public Sector](#) **SM** said the situation was not clear following Brexit but there was an opportunity to build a regulatory system more fit for purpose that gave more opportunities for business and provided good food for citizens. **AB** agreed it was patchy, but there was good practice out there such as Ayrshire. **AB** felt there need to be more local production and processing.

Sue Whittle CIWF Volunteer asked if the speakers agreed that in order to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and meet UN Sustainable Development Goals, we needed to reduce out meat and dairy consumption. We also needed to move to higher welfare, nature friendly agriculture to help reduce our biodiversity loss. Greenhouse gas emissions from the livestock sector accounted for 14.5 % of global total caused by humans. **SM** responded that the Scottish red meat industry is one of the most sustainable industries in the world. Scotland has a natural resource base that is ideally suited to red meat production and that gives us the opportunity to capitalize on this and produce calories for our citizens. It was important to provide people with a healthy balanced diet. **SM** said one food group should not be pitted against another and people should eat the best red meat they could afford. With regard to greenhouse gases, we need to be aware of livestock's place in the natural ecosystem. We did not want to decimate our natural environment and we needed to be aware of the role of the red meat sector in social sustainability. **SM** offered to provide a position paper on the net zero journey.

Action SM/ML

AB's view was that we needed to reduce but not eliminate meat and increase nature friendly practices, such as by decreasing stock densities and looking at agroforestry. There could be land sharing practices and farmers moving to more diverse and integrated forms of land production such as growing vegetables as well. **AB** realised that this was not appropriate everywhere, for example in the uplands. A balanced approach was required as **SM** had said and less but better meat consumed. **AB** also noted the danger in looking at global emissions figures which were based on US feedlot systems, which is a totally different farming system to Scotland. **Jim Fairlie MSP (JF)** agreed that Scotland had its own unique farming system with 85% of Scotland classified as "Less Favoured". **BW** also expressed concern about global generalisations and thought there should be further discussion via the Good Food Nation Bill that should include ongoing innovation in Scotland. He did not agree with calling for meat reduction and thought that Scotland had high quality food produced in an environmentally friendly way.

Ruth Watson Scotland the Brand thought that if people wanted to eat meat, it should be the meat that Scotland produces. RW suggested there should be a food labelling giving meaningful carbon footprint labelling. For example, she was pointed out that a sheep reared in a field next to her, had a lower footprint than lentils shipped round the world. The labels need to be provable and not “greenwash”. **AB** agreed that this was a good idea but thought that many farmers did not know their on farm carbon footprint and there were different ways to calculate it. We needed to collect the data for Scotland and then any labels be quality assured. **SM** said there was data at farm level but not supply chain data. This work was on-going as they wanted to make tangible impacts at farm level and agreed there should be no greenwash. **SM** noted the work of [Foundation Earth](#) an Irish, independent, non-profit organisation established to issue front-of-pack environmental scores on food products, enabling consumers to make more sustainable buying choices. This has a pilot eco –labelling scheme looking at lots of sustainability metrics, not just carbon. Front of pack labelling is part of the UK environmental strategy and the SNP had committed to developing a single marketing brand for all Scottish produce – Sustainably Scottish – available to all Scottish-based producers, manufacturers and suppliers. **SM** pointed out that QMS also had assurance schemes that underpinned Scotch Lamb, Scotch Beef and Specially Selected Pork. It was important the consumer understood what they were buying. **JF** agreed noting that consumers only took a few seconds to look at the labels. **CS** said it was important to understand the recording point of what the labels took into account. There was complexity in how the product reached the consumer, whether straight from the factory or via a distribution hub and whether it was imported. SWA were expecting that their members will have to record their emissions and he could see that that these might be requested by retailers at some point in the future, similar to how they now gave frozen temperature readings at point of delivery.

Martin Meteyard Consultant said he remembered issues with trucks often coming back empty after delivery runs. He asked whether more local supply chains would allow wholesalers to combine deliveries and pickups and whether there was the potential for collaboration with different businesses. **CS** said it was something they were working on this. He referred to their Delivering Growth through Wholesale programme with SAOS and SFD looking at local and regional partnerships. A lot of work was needed and new technology, this cost money and needed Scottish Government support.

Vivien Maeda Business in the Community (VM) asked when drawing up the Glasgow City plan, whether cost had been discussed. **AB** said yes they had asked how the 76 actions would be resources. There was no magic money tree and different funds were tapped into such as Community Food Network and the National Lottery Community Fund. They also worked with Local Authorities and education services. Creativity and collaboration were needed with money coming from different places.

Marie-Amelie Viatte Connected with Nature thought that planning for land should also be included in these discussions; prime agricultural land should not be used for

housing. **MV** also asked if future planning was part of the conversation and the vision for 10 years' time regarding nature based farming. **SM** said that the vision for her was using our natural resource base to regenerate and provide a range of outcomes. Firstly and foremost to produce food and feed people, keep social structures and move to net zero as well as maintaining biodiversity. The last two were separate entities. You could manage a herd of cows for net zero, but that would be a different way to managing your land for the benefits of nature. There needed to be a balanced approach. Scotland is a good place to produce food, we have a natural abundance of rain water, grass that grows and we should turn that into energy that feeds both us and the economy.

Mads Fischer- Moller SRUC agreed a balanced approach was needed, but commented that we needed to know the current balance. At the moment only 4% of land was used for plant production for direct human consumption, the rest was for crops for whisky and animal feed. He felt we needed to look at what other countries are doing and re-think the balance. The sector is doing well with greenhouse emissions but is only on a par with other European countries. Also our traditional markets are maturing and meat consumption is going down and plant protein consumption going up. We need to think about what the market will be in 10 years and consider this in the Good Food Nation Bill. **JF** thought that people were starting to look to the future and being innovative.

Iain Clunie Zero Waste Scotland said that the climate crisis could be significantly helped by reducing food waste. Scotland produced all this wonderful food and then wasted a third of it. If food waste was a country it would be the third biggest emitter behind USA and China. The vast majority of food waste ended up in landfill and released methane. Scotland has a national target of 33% food waste reduction by 2025 which was set in 2016. This is an area where there could be quick significant wins. **JF** agreed and noted innovative ideas such as a Swap Shop rather than a food bank. **VM** asked about leftovers from caterers and the regulations that stopped them being re-used. NOTE: This question has been sent to FSS and an answer circulated separately.

ACTION: ML

5. AOB

There was no AOB.

6. Date of Next Meeting

There was no indication yet whether meetings would be allowed back in the Parliament. The next date was tentatively agreed as January 26th at 6pm on the theme of Good Food Nation. This would be confirmed.

ACTION: ML

NOTE: The meeting on January 26th has to be held virtually.