



**Date:** Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020

**Time:** 18.00

**Location:** CR2

**Attending:** George Adam MSP, Paul Edgeworth (CAMRA), Patrick Harvie MSP, Paul Hegarty (Westminster Parliamentary Beer Group), Dave Lannigan (Ride Brewing Co. – representing SIBA), Gordon Macdonald MSP, Graham Simpson MSP, Paul Togneri (Scottish Beer and Pub Association).

**Apologies:** Neil Bibby MSP

**Minutes:** minutes of the last meeting were agreed with no amendments.

#### **Deposit Return Scheme:**

Dave Lannigan outlined concerns small brewers have about the cost implications of the Deposit Return Scheme, including impact on having to produce different labels for products going to Scotland and elsewhere, and that this would make cans from Scottish brewers more expensive for consumers. It is estimated that DRS would see his products cost an extra 89p per can.

A scheme that reflected economies of scale and the volumes produced would help smaller brewers to be able to cope with the introduction of the DRS.

Dave Lannigan also expressed brewers' frustrations at the inability to plan and that a lot of questions posed to Zero Waste Scotland are awaiting decisions from the scheme administrator.

There have been reports that many English brewers would stop selling their products into Scotland if the regulations are too costly and complicated.

Paul Togneri reiterated concerns that separate labelling and registration costs, and a producer fee of 3.5p per container, as well as potential cashflow issues, were serious concerns for the industry.

Hospitality UK, the SLTA and SBPA have written to the Minister requesting a closed loop system for the hospitality sector, and for handling fees to properly reflect the time and services of staff in the hospitality industry, as this staff time and cost is accounted for when it comes to the groceries sector. Paul Togneri is able to share this letter with the CPG.

It was noted that the Westminster Government is due to consult on a Deposit Return Scheme for England, Wales and Northern Ireland later this year, with planned introduction of a scheme in 2023.

There was agreement that the industry and this CPG were in favour of a Deposit Return Scheme, but that the scheme needs to work for everyone.

It was agreed that the CPG would write to the Minister to support the DRS in principle but to reinforce concerns raised in this meeting and in the Committee's report, urging the committee's recommendations in relation to measures to help small businesses and to reiterate point 16 in the Government's beer and brewing strategy.

**Action:** Patrick Harvie to draft a letter to the Minister and ask CPG colleagues to co-sign the letter.

### **Business Rates:**

There was a discussion on the burden of business rates for pubs, and about the Uniform Business Rate as part of the Non-Domestic Rates (Scotland) Bill.

It was suggested that the CPG may like to look into the issue of Business Rates after the Bill has finished its passage through the Parliament, with a view to party manifestos and looking ahead to the next Parliamentary session.

### **Permitted development rights and pubs:**

Paul Edgeworth raised the Government's consultation on permitted development rights, and concerns that this didn't include giving pubs better protection from demolition.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-governments-proposed-work-programme-reviewing-extending-permitted-development-rights-pdr-scotland/>

### **Tied Pubs (Code and Adjudicator) (Scotland) Bill:**

A statement from Neil Bibby MSP was shared to update the CPG about the Bill:

- Thank you to all those who have taken part in the development of the Tied Pubs Bill, from the consultation stage through to discussions over the past several months as the Bill has been drafted.
- My intention remains to legislate for a Tied Pubs Code, enforced by an independent Adjudicator, to ensure there is fairness for tenants and choice for consumers in the tied pubs sector.
- Where appropriate, my drafting instructions have reflected feedback received and key learning points from the experience of tied pubs legislation in the rest of the United Kingdom.
- The Draft Bill is complex for a Member's Bill, however, it is also simpler than the legislation in place in England and Wales.
- We are approaching the point at which the Bill will be formally introduced. At that point, I intend to engage all relevant stakeholders, including members of the Cross Party Group, ahead of Stage One proceedings in the Scottish Parliament.

### **Future meetings, events and CPG work plan for 2020:**

Paul Hegarty outlined how the Parliamentary Beer Group at Westminster worked and the type of events that they run.

There was agreement that the CPG should run more outward facing events, as well as trying to increase industry attendance at the Group.

It was agreed that Paul Hegarty and Paul Edgeworth would put together planned events for the CPG for 2020 including:

- Brewery visit
- Launch of 'Brew with your MSP' scheme
- CPG reception
- Pre-election industry event with party spokespeople
- Chairman's dinner with guest speaker

**Action:** Paul Edgeworth and Paul Hegarty to produce a plan for events for 2020, for approval at the AGM on 5<sup>th</sup> February.

### **AOB:**

There was a discussion about improving bottles and cans of beer available in the Parliament, with a suggestion of a bottled beer of the month promotion allowing MSPs to promote bottles from a brewery in their constituency.

It was suggested that this Group could propose a question to the corporate body, to coincide with the CPG's reception later this year.