

minutes

Meeting: Cross Party Group on Scotch Whisky
Location: Committee Room 1, Scottish Parliament

Date Held: Thursday 14 December 2017

Present: **MSPs:** Richard Lochhead, Bill Bowman, Peter Chapman, Tom Mason.

Other attendees: Peter Finnie (SEPA), Karen Freel (Perspectiva Consultants), Morag Garden (SWA), Jack Gemmell (Chivas), Graeme Henderson (SEPA), Graeme Littlejohn (SWA), Beatrice Morrice (SWA), Emma Pollock (Diageo), Devin Scobie (Caledonia Public Affairs) Neil Sinclair (Scottish Government) and Alan Wolstenholme (SCDA).

Apologies: Jackie Baillie MSP, Murdo Fraser MSP, Blair Bowman, Brian McLeish, Campbell Evans, Annie Hill, Liam Hughes.

Richard Lochhead MSP chaired the meeting and welcomed attendees.

1. Scotch Whisky environmental sustainability

Morag Garden, Head of Sustainability and Innovation at the SWA, gave a presentation on the Scotch Whisky industry's commitment to the environment. She provided information on the SWA's Environmental Strategy, that was launched in 2009 and refreshed in 2016, that includes a set of ambitious commitments to cut greenhouse gas emissions, use more renewable energy and increase recycled content in packaging.

The SWA is currently analysing the latest dataset and plans to publish a progress report in early 2018. Members will receive information on this update after the new year.

A number of examples of how member companies are assisting in the delivery of the strategy include investment in a biomass boiler at Tomatin distillery, solar panels at Benromach distillery and Chivas utilising cold foil packaging for their Art of Hosting Brand.

The group then went on to discuss packaging and the transportation of Scotch Whisky. Morag also provided reassurance that while some Scotch Whisky companies have embraced renewable energy production from by products, the industry remains committed to continue to produce animal feed also.

2. Scotch Whisky Overview

Beatrice Morrice (SWA) provided information on the recent CPG on Brexit meeting at which the SWA presented. She informed members that a discussion was held on customs, Geographical Indication (GI) protection and trade deals. Following the meeting, it was agreed that the joint conveners of the CPG on Brexit will send a letter to the UK Government to underline the importance of Scotch Whisky GI protection.

Action

SWA to provide update to CPG members

Beatrice also informed the group that a reception will be held in the Scottish Parliament on 27th February at 6pm on the *Contribution of Scotch Whisky Tourism*. Members were encouraged to attend. More information will be issued in the new year.

Beatrice also informed members that David Williamson, Director of Public Affairs and Communication at the SWA, who worked at the SWA for nearly 20 years, has left the Association. He was formally thanked for his involvement in the group. Thanks were also given to Lauren McArthur, who helped organise group meetings, as she is also shortly leaving the SWA.

3. AOB

Alan Wolstenholme, (Scottish Craft Distillers Association) informed the group that they will shortly be announcing that Scotland Food and Drink will provide support for the SCDA. This will build on help the SCDA has already received from Interface, Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society Ltd and Scottish Enterprise.

The next meeting of the CPG on Scotch Whisky will be held on 28th February in Committee Room 1.

For more information please contact Beatrice Morrice bmorrice@swa.org.uk or call 0131 222 9247.

