

minutes

Meeting: Cross Party Group on Scotch Whisky

Location: Committee Room 5, Scottish Parliament

Date Held: Wednesday 6 June 2018

Present: **MSPs:** Bill Bowman, Murdo Fraser, Rachael Hamilton, Tom Mason, and Gordon MacDonald.

Other attendees: Terry A’Hearn (SEPA), Susy Atkinson (Edrington), Rebecca Badger (SEPA), Blair Bowman, Peter Finnie (SEPA), Karen Freel (Perspectiva Consultants), Morag Garden (SWA), John Hill (Edinburgh Distilling), Graham Hutcheson (Edrington), Graeme Henderson, SEPA, Fiona Johnstone, (SEPA), Orchid Lui (Chinese Times), Christopher Miles, (Edinburgh Distilling), Beatrice Morrice (SWA), David Ogilvie (SEPA),

Murdo Fraser MSP chaired the meeting and welcomed attendees.

1) SEPA – Scotch Whisky Sector Plan

Terry A’Hearn, SEPA CEO, gave a presentation on the new Scotch Whisky Sector Plan. He highlighted that Scotch Whisky is one of the best sectors with regard to compliance. He underlined the positive relationship that has been built up between SEPA and the Scotch Whisky industry and stated that SEPA aims to encourage partnership working across the whole supply chain for industries. He provided background on SEPA with regard to its dual approach to help stop bad things from happening and help facilitate good things to happen also.

Graham Hutcheon, Managing Director of Edrington and Chairman of the SWA’s Environmental Committee, explained that the industry is committed to environmental sustainability. He underlined huge investments being made across the industry to improve energy efficiency, packaging and water use. He also stated that the Scotch Whisky industry is proud to be one of the first sector plans to be published and that the industry looks forward to delivering the plan in conjunction with SEPA and stakeholders.

He highlighted that innovations are shared widely across the industry with regard to the environment and that the SWA’s environmental strategy demonstrates the industry wide commitment to environmental sustainability. He stated that the industry is pleased that the sector plan confirms SEPA support for the sector’s strategy targets. He concluded by underling that the SWA already shares best practice across the Scotch Whisky sector and that the hope is for the sector plan to facilitate the widening out of these types of discussions across all business sectors.

2) Update on the Scotch Whisky industry

Beatrice Morrice provided an update on the Scotch Whisky industry. She

underlined that the new SWA Brexit Briefing had been updated and mentioned that the SWA was speaking to the UK and Scottish Government regarding US Tariffs.

Beatrice also provided information on the Islay Summit, held on 4th April, at which the Scotch Whisky industry committed to help improve the ferry service by working collaboratively with the community, Calmac and Transport Scotland. She also highlighted to members that the Scotch Whisky Action Fund is open for applications for future funding until 30 June 2018.

She explained that seven new distilleries had opened over the last 12 months and that established sites were continuing to invest. Graham Hutcheson, Edrington, spoke about the new Macallan distillery that opened in May. Members were informed that the SWA will be holding a reception on 4th September to mark the growth of the Scotch Whisky industry. All CPG members will be invited to attend.

AOB

Murdo Fraser MSP thanked the SWA for arranging the joint All Party Parliamentary Group and CPG visit in May. The group of MPs and MSPs visited the Scotch Whisky Research Institute, the Scotch Whisky Experience and the SWA to hear about the industry the issues relating to Brexit.

The group heard that Unite Union had expressed an interest in attending a future meeting of the CPG. Members agreed to extend an invite to them.

The convener stated that future meeting dates will be circulated shortly and that the next meeting in September will be the AGM.