



OFFICIAL REPORT
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

Thursday 23 February 2017

Session 5



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Thursday 23 February 2017

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STANDARDS, PROCEDURES AND PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE
4th Meeting 2017, Session 5

CONVENER

*Clare Adamson (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Tom Arthur (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)

*Clare Haughey (Rutherglen) (SNP)

*Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)

*John Scott (Ayr) (Con)

*Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

*attended

THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:

Richard Lyle (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Douglas Wands

LOCATION

The Mary Fairfax Somerville Room (CR2)

Scottish Parliament

Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

Thursday 23 February 2017

[The Convener opened the meeting at 10:00]

Cross-party Groups

The Convener (Clare Adamson): Good morning, and welcome to the fourth meeting in 2017 of the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee. I remind everyone to switch their electronic devices to silent.

The first agenda item is evidence on two proposed cross-party groups, the first of which is on dementia. I welcome to the meeting Richard Lyle MSP, the proposed convener of the group, and invite him to make an opening statement.

Richard Lyle (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP): Thank you, convener, and good morning committee members. I will not take up much time with my remarks, but I want to cover two broad areas: first, the reasons why the previous cross-party group on dementia did not re-establish itself in time for the deadline; and, secondly, the general purpose of the CPG moving forward, if the committee approves it.

The previous CPG on dementia did not re-establish itself in line with the Parliament's guidelines because no MSP members of the group, with one exception, remained as MSPs following the election in May 2016 for the fifth session of the Scottish Parliament. The one exception was a returning member who declined an invitation to act as secretariat to the group and continue as a member. Therefore, in essence, the support organisation Alzheimer Scotland—Action on Dementia was required to carry out work to meet MSPs and gather the required cross-party support for the group. Unfortunately, it was not possible for that to be done in time to meet the deadline for re-establishment as a previously existing CPG. However, I can inform the committee that we held a very successful and incredibly well-attended initial meeting of the proposed CPG on 31 January 2017. I am excited at the prospect of being involved with such a fantastic mix of individuals and organisations—41 people attended that night.

I will highlight briefly the key areas that support the re-establishment of the CPG on dementia. This year will see the publication of the Scottish Government's third national dementia strategy, and I am sure that members will agree that the re-

establishment of the CPG is timeous as it will provide a forum for discussing that work in the years and sessions ahead. The group will also look to work with other CPGs in relevant areas to avoid duplication. For example, there is tentative agreement to hold a joint session with the cross-party group on palliative care, which I believe demonstrates the benefits of our group's recognition of interdisciplinary engagement. There are, of course, other strands of work taking place in relation to dementia that it would be useful for colleagues in Parliament and, indeed, wider stakeholders to be aware of, and I believe that the group will be an excellent conduit for discussing those issues.

Again, I thank the committee for its time. I am happy to be guided by you, convener, on questions.

The Convener: Thank you, Mr Lyle. It seems that there are no questions from members. I am sure that many cross-party groups will be interested in the subject of dementia and will be able to work with you and what will be a worthwhile CPG. However, the committee will make its deliberations on the proposed CPG shortly and you will be informed of our decision as quickly as possible.

The next item for the committee's consideration is the proposed cross-party group on beer and pubs. I welcome Patrick Harvie MSP, who is a member of the committee, to the other side of the table as a witness. He is the proposed convener of the CPG, and I invite him to make an opening statement.

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): Thank you very much, convener. It is lovely to see committee members from this angle.

Scotland has had a huge resurgence of independent brewing. Many members will recognise that that is happening in their constituencies, changing part of the way in which the alcohol industry operates and changing many people's patterns of consumption.

A range of concerns and issues arise in relation to the alcohol industry, but I hope that many members feel that there is a lot of merit in there being a focus on quality rather than volume consumption, and a focus on the kind of businesses that make a living from providing and producing quality rather than volume sales.

There is a need to discuss among members the impact of pubs—particularly well-run, community-owned and community-operated pubs and licensed venues—as well as the role that they play in communities, their value in the social life of a community and the importance of ensuring that they are well run and operated responsibly.

The Campaign for Real Ale has held an annual reception in Parliament for several years, and I have been privileged to be the host of that event. Discussions there and elsewhere have recognised the merit of a cross-party group to bring together members with an interest in beer and pubs, with a focus on the independent sector.

CAMRA has offered its services as the secretariat for the group, and is the only external member at this initial stage. The Scottish Licensed Trade Association, the Society of Independent Brewers Scotland and Plunkett Scotland have been approached and have given positive indications that they would like to take part. That has happened since the initial meeting between members, but has not been formally agreed. There is a wee typo on the registration form in that regard: the note on external membership should say that the additional external members noted towards the end of the form have been invited to take part as members and have shown interest, but that decision has not yet been formally signed off by the MSP members of the group. I know that the committee has an interest in ensuring that CPGs keep in touch with the standards committee clerks about additional external members, which we will be keen to do.

The Convener: Thank you, Mr Harvie. Do members have any questions?

Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): There is no doubt, as Mr Harvie indicated, that Scotland has a quality product, which is recognised across the sector within the trade. It is good to focus on that. I am pleased that Patrick Harvie has engaged with the SLTA and others, because they have a role to play in promotion.

How will the cross-party group promote the industry within the Parliament?

Patrick Harvie: It will be up to the members to set the agenda. Potential discussion points that we have talked about in the initial phase include pub company reforms and community ownership. When licensing issues are debated at a legislative level by Parliament, it will be important to ensure that a wide range of voices are heard, so that the impact not only on multinational producers and big chain pubs but on the smaller and independent sector is discussed.

At a smaller level, I am keen to ensure that we celebrate good-quality, Scottish-produced beer in Parliament on more than the one day a year when CAMRA holds its reception here. I would like us to showcase that product with more confidence.

Clare Haughey (Rutherglen) (SNP): I thank Patrick Harvie for his explanation of the cross-party group. Why is the focus specifically on beer? We have other alcoholic beverages, some of which—gin, for example—are produced in small

batches; that has been a booming industry in Scotland recently.

Patrick Harvie: There is a cross-party group on the Scotch whisky industry; we did not want to overlap with that group or duplicate its work. Gin—I might be misinterpreted in saying this—is a very interesting product. Whisky distilleries and breweries are diversifying into producing gin, so the production end occupies a space in the middle of the industry.

I am sure that we would want to discuss those issues. However, the resurgence of small independent breweries deserves particular recognition and celebration in its own right. That particular group of businesses has not had access to a forum for parliamentary discussion, particularly among members who represent constituencies and regions with independent breweries in their local areas. There is a bit of a lack there, which is why we have taken that focus.

Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab): The issue is very interesting, not least because of the nature of the product: we all take an interest in beer. There are key commercial issues. The industry is marked by particular commercial practices that relate to tenanted pubs. There are also issues to do with the way in which the rates system works for the sector. Will the group take up those issues? I am interested in knowing more about what you propose to have on your agenda. In particular, do you have any plans to engage with the Barclay review and look at rates reform for the pub sector?

Patrick Harvie: Those two issues—the non-domestic rates issue, on which there have been recent announcements around the hospitality industry, and the pubco issue—came up in the initial exploratory discussion that members had. I know that one of Daniel Johnson's party colleagues who is a member of the proposed CPG has proposed a member's bill. We will not seek to duplicate the work of the relevant committee in scrutinising that bill when it is introduced, but a forum that brings together those who represent independent brewers and independent pubs with members would, I hope, be a useful extra forum for discussing those issues and any other issues that come up on Parliament's formal agenda in the future.

The Convener: As there are no further questions, I thank Mr Harvie for attending the meeting and for giving us his time.

Under agenda item 2, we will consider approval of the two proposed CPGs.

As members have no comments to make on the proposed cross-party group on dementia, are they content to approve it?

Members *indicated agreement.*

The Convener: As members have no comments to make on the proposed CPG on beer and pubs, are they content to approve it?

Members *indicated agreement.*

The Convener: We now move into private session.

10:13

Meeting continued in private until 10:26.

This is the final edition of the *Official Report* of this meeting. It is part of the Scottish Parliament *Official Report* archive and has been sent for legal deposit.

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