

minutes

Meeting: Cross Party Group on Scotch Whisky
Location: Room TG20/21, Scottish Parliament
Date Held: Wednesday 12 September 2012
Present: MSPs: Claudia Beamish, Annabelle Ewing, Hugh Henry, John Park, Mary Scanlon,

Other attendees: Lloyd Austin (RSPB), Amanda Brown (Scotland Food and Drink), George Burgess (Scottish Government), Morag Garden (SWA) Jack Gemmell (Chivas Brothers), Rosemary Gallagher (SWA), Graeme Henderson (SEPA), Julie Hesketh-Laird (SWA), Brian McLeish (Scottish Enterprise), Eilidh Macdonald (Assistant to John Park), Beatrice Morrice (SWA), Siobhan Paterson (SWA), Mike Rose (the Edrington Group), Devin Scobie (Caledonia Consulting), Neil Watt (Scottish Government), Aileen Weurman (Assistant to Mary Scanlon)

Apologies: Jenny Faichney (SEPA), Rosemary Gallagher (SWA), Andy Rosie (SEPA)

Mary Scanlon, Chair of the meeting, welcomed attendees.

1. Minutes

The group agreed the minutes from 14 June 2012 would be formalised in due course.

2. The Environment and Scotch Whisky discussion

The Group heard from an expert panel on what the industry is doing to achieve greener results.

Julie Hesketh-Laird, Director of Operations and Technical Affairs, Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) was the first speaker on the panel. Julie introduced the CPG to the work the Scotch Whisky industry has been doing with regards to Environment over the last 3 years and explained the recent achievements set out in the Environmental Strategy Report 2012.

The long-term strategy sets stretching targets through to 2050 and focuses on five areas: energy (reducing reliance on fossil fuels and energy efficiency), water management, packaging materials and waste, casks and supply chains. The Report outlines some key examples of where Scotch Whisky companies are working hard to reduce their reliance on fossil-fuel use, by investing in renewable energy schemes as well as reducing packaging waste to landfill.

Mike Rose, Technical Services (the Edrington Group) was the next panel speaker and he highlighted the work the Edrington Group was doing to increase recycling content in flint bottles and reducing the weight of their packaging by developing light-weight glass bottles for some of their iconic brands. Mike brought some examples of light weight embossed glass bottles which have been developed specifically for the Edrington Group. Previous to

Action

SWA to circulate June minutes by e-mail to be formalised

SWA to send a copy of the Environmental Strategy Report to all MSPs

this work the industry believed it was not possible to light-weight embossed glass containers. He also provided examples of wrap around cases used by his company which again reduces the weight of packaging and removes the need for cardboard inserts. Mike highlighted the importance of working with other Scotch Whisky companies, as well as the supply chain, to share best practice within the sustainability arena.

Lloyd Austin, Head of Conservation Policy (RSPB) was the third and final panellist and he gave an overview of how RSPB welcomes the Scotch Whisky industry's efforts to become more sustainable and set ambitious environmental targets. Lloyd commended the industry's transparency with regards to progress and barriers identified, as well as all the good work in sharing best practice within the sector. Lloyd also highlighted that the industry was a great example for others to follow suit and that more needs to be done to ensure the protection of Scotland's environment.

The floor was then open to questions from the CPG.

(A copy of the Environmental Strategy Report 2012 is available on request for external Group members)

3. Any other business

Members agreed the next CPG meeting would take place on Wednesday 5 December 2012 and would be chaired by John Park MSP. It was also agreed that the meeting topic would look at exports and trade.

Siobhan Paterson (SWA) highlighted that as part of the SWA's centenary celebrations, a large scale exhibition will go on display in the Scottish Parliament's main entrance which commences from the 29 November 2012 until the 25 January 2013. The exhibition, entitled "Scotch Whisky: From Grain to Glass" will look at the last 100 years of Scotch Whisky and include a range of artefacts looking at history, production, art, marketing relating to Scotch Whisky. MSPs will receive invitations to the exhibition launch (28 November 2012). The exhibition will be free and members will be able to tour the exhibition after the next meeting.

The next meeting of the CPG on Scotch Whisky takes place at 13.00 on Wednesday 5 December 2012 in Committee room 1 and the topic will be on exports and trade.

