

minutes

Meeting: Cross Party Group on Scotch Whisky
Location: Committee Room 2, Scottish Parliament
Date Held: Thursday 9 January 2014
Present: MSPs: Mary Scanlon and Dennis Robertson

Other attendees: Craig Bradshaw (Pinsent Masons), Jack Gemmell (Chivas), Francis Johnstone (Assistant to Dennis Robertson), Lauren McArthur (SWA), Douglas Meikle (SWA), Brian McLeish, (Scottish Enterprise), Beatrice Morrice (SWA), Jennifer Ross (Assistant to Liam McArthur), Douglas Ross (Assistant to Mary Scanlon), Margaret Smith (Caledonia Consulting), Mike Yeomans (Assistant to John Lamont), Aileen Weurman (Assistant to Mary Scanlon).

Apologies: Annabelle Ewing, Claudia Beamish, Bruce Crawford, Jackie Baillie, Murdo Fraser, Hugh Henry, Rhoda Grant, Margaret Mitchell, David Stewart, Andy Rosie (SEPA), Alistair Ross (Pinsent Masons).

Mary Scanlon, Chair of the meeting, welcomed attendees.

1. Minutes

The group approved the minutes from 12 September (circulated 5 November 2013).

2 Scotch Whisky Action Fund

Douglas Meikle, Alcohol Policy Manager, Scotch Whisky Association, and Helen Wray, Client Services Manager, Foundation Scotland provided a presentation on the new Scotch Whisky Association £500,000 fund, (£100,000 a year between 2014-2018) to support and develop projects that work to reduce the impact of alcohol-related harm in Scotland's communities.

Douglas informed the group that this initiative followed research, conducted by the SWA, that identified a gap in funding for new and existing projects in Scotland to tackle alcohol misuse in the following three areas: under 18s, families and communities. The SWA appointed Foundation Scotland, an independent charity, to manage the fund and an awards panel will allocate the funds based on criteria set out by the SWA.

Helen Wray stated that Foundation Scotland has promoted the fund to all 32 Local Authority funding officers and to all 32 Third Sector Interfaces. They have also sent out direct approaches to just over 100 groups on their database that fit the funds criteria. Dennis Robertson suggested contacting Health Boards and using social media to increase awareness of the fund also.

Douglas informed the group that funds can be awarded to both new ideas and existing projects, but not for core funding or treatment that should be carried out by a statutory body and that the first deadline for applications is 31 March 2014.

Action

Several questions followed the presentation which identified areas where funding could and could not be allocated. Members were assured that any applications that did not fit the criteria would be given guidance by Foundation Scotland or advised about alternative funds that may be available.

The CPG agreed that the group would be keen to receive an update at future meetings and Douglas informed the group that an annual report would be produced to highlight the projects that had been awarded funds. The report would also identify lessons that could be learned as well as good practice.

The CPG agreed to write to all MSPs to encourage them to highlight the fund in their constituencies and regions.

MSPs

3. Date of next meeting and AOB

The next meeting, which will be the group's AGM, will take place on Thursday 29 May at 1pm in TG20/21. Please note that the February meeting, originally planned to be held on 27 February, has been replaced by a Scotch Whisky tasting evening event, date to be confirmed.

The group agreed that the meeting in May will focus on the use of Draff and also include a presentation from Visit Scotland on what the organisation does for Scotch Whisky.

The group also agreed that the Scotch Whisky tasting evening reception will cover lesser known malt Scotch Whiskies and that the date will be circulated shortly.

If you need additional information, please email bmorrice@swa.org.uk or call 0131 222 9247.