

minutes

Meeting: Cross Party Group on Scotch Whisky
Location: TG20/21 Scottish Parliament
Date Held: Thursday 17 September 2015
Present: MSPs: Gordon MacDonald, Jamie McGrigor, and Mary Scanlon.

Other attendees: Fraser Allen (White Light Media, World Whisky Day), Susy Atkinson (Edrington), Blair Bowman, Victor Brierley (Liquor to Lips), David Frost (SWA), Rosemary Gallagher (SWA), Annie Hill (Institute of Brewing and Distilling), Simon Lyle (White Light Media, World Whisky Day), Lauren McArthur (SWA), Beatrice Morrice (SWA), Kate O’Neil (Liquor to Lips), Devin Scobie (Caledonia Public Affairs), Neil Sinclair (Scottish Government), Ian Smith (Diageo), Teresa Shutter (Interface Food and Drink), David Williamson (SWA) and Heather Woolfe (Office of Mike Russell MSP).

	Action
Gordon MacDonald MSP chaired the meeting and welcomed attendees.	
1. Minutes	
The group approved the minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2015.	
2. ‘Scotch Charter’	
Victor Brierley (Liquor to Lips) presented his proposal for a ‘Scotch Charter’ that sets out ten ideas around the promotion of Scotch Whisky. These include a whisky tourism strategy, a dedicated Scotch Minister, category ambassadors, and accredited training on Scotch Whisky to be introduced. He explained that he was happy to facilitate dialogue to get things moving.	Mr Brierley
The ensuing discussion covered a number of the ideas, with members agreeing that it is important the industry is promoted and its success not taken for granted. A strong digital presence and efforts to build whisky related tourism were considered important.	
The SWA noted it does not have a generic marketing remit, with its members asking it to focus on priorities such as market access, legal protection, and social responsibility initiatives. It would be for individual distillers to consider the merits of the ideas being suggested.	
3. Islay Ferry	
David Williamson (SWA) outlined several issues relating to the sustainability of the Islay ferry service. Local distillers believe it is important to ensure that Islay’s infrastructure is better able to support industry growth, the needs of residents, and the increasing number of tourists. Over the summer, the SWA had welcomed useful discussions with the Transport Minister and his officials, as well as the operators tendering for the Clyde and Hebridean ferry network.	

Members agreed to write to the Minister for Transport & Islands to underline the requirements of the industry. The SWA agreed to circulate a draft to members. Heather Woolfe, Assistant to Mike Russell MSP, informed members that Mr Russell would be happy to speak to anyone about this issue.

SWA

5. Next meeting

The next meeting of the group is on Thursday 3 December 1-2pm in TG20/21.

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