

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Cross Party Group on Food held on January 28th
2020 in Committee Room 4 of the Scottish Parliament**

Present

Mark Ruskell	MSP (Chair)
Gail Ross	MSP
Lorna Dawson	James Hutton Institute/SEFARI
Aoife Behan	Soil Association Scotland
Mary Lawton	CPG Secretariat
Craig McCormack	Green City
Emily Harvey	Forth Environment Link
Martin Morgan	SAMW
Ann Packard	RSA
Hamish Macdonell	SSPO
Alistair Williams	Macsweens
Marie-Amelie Viatte	Connected by Nature
Gillian Campbell	FSS
Angela Lamont	Independent
Liezel Tipper	Merck
Lesley Stanley	Independent
Sarah Jones	SRUC
Patrick Hughes	AHDB
Seton Steele	Apetito
Claire Slipper	NFUS
Ray Lorimer	Kafoodle
Caitlin Plank	Obesity Action Scotland
Anna Gryka-MacPhail	Obesity Action Scotland
Sara Smith	RHET
Christine Fraser	Food Training Scotland
Ann Conacher	Scottish Public Health Network
Jennie MacDiarmid	Rowett Institute/SEFARI
Julia Mitchell	Rowett Institute/SEFARI
Tracy McCollin	Scot Gov (Good Food Nation)
Anne Gebbie Diben	NHS Health Scotland
Janet Foggie	Nourish Scotland
Jon Wilkin	Abertay Uni
Athina Tziboula-Clarke	Abertay Uni
Karen Barton	Abertay Uni
Eleanor Kay	Scottish Land and Estates
Sue Whittle	CIWF
Wendy Barrie	Scottish Food Guide
Bosse Dahlgren	Consultant
Courtney Peyton	Crown Estate Scotland
Simon Kenton-Lake	Nourish Scotland
Keesje Avis	Nourish Scotland
Cat Hay	FDF Scotland
Amy Glass	FDF
Rachel Mirfattahi	Independent
Tierney Woods	Propagate/Glasgow Comm Food

Rosa Holt-Smith	Independent
Stuart Forbes	Scottish Food Coalition
Denise Walton	Peelham/Nature Friendly Farming
Martin Hunt	Tartan Silk PR
Ian Muirhead	AIC Scotland
Douglas Bell	QMS
Angela Mitchell	Diabetes Scotland
Madeleine Beveridge	Edinburgh Uni
Malcolm White	Scottish Public Health
Pat Abel	Transition Edinburgh South
Liz Barron-Majerik	LANTRA
Gordon King	SFMTA
Jackie McCabe	REHIS
Wendy Wrieden	RBGE volunteer

1. Apologies for Absence

These had been received from Graeme Findlay, Jeff Justice, David Thomson, John Whitehead, David Lonsdale, Martin Meteyard, Julian Mercer, John Armour, Bill Gray, Pete Ritchie, Eve Keepax, Tony McElroy, Gary Stephenson, Abi Mordin, Andy McGowan, Martin Irons, Brenda Black, Steve Brown, Chris Peace, Archie Gibson, Lynne Stevenson, Viv Collie, Kirsten Leask, Anne Lee, Daniel Barrie, Laura-Alexandra Smith, Moyra Burns, Uel Morton, Colette Walker and Max Coleman.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting.

These were agreed with the correction on page 5 for a leaving date of 31.1.20.

3. Matters Arising

Brexit

Mary Lawton (ML) gave an update from FDF following the last meeting;

The UK will leave the EU on 31 January and enter a transition period until 31 December. During this time businesses will be able to trade with the EU on the same terms as they do now.

Before 31 December the UK and the EU must negotiate a trade deal (or else a 'no-deal' Brexit will become a reality). Early signals from the new government, in particular around regulatory autonomy and the desire to make trade deals with other countries, indicate that any deal with the EU will be quite far from a customs union and common legal standards. This suggests that there will be a reasonable amount of 'friction' (paperwork, rules and checks) for EU trade when previously there would have been none. This is likely to increase business costs for importers and exporters.

The timescale of 31 December seems incredibly short, and if both the UK and the EU agree it can be extended by a year. The UK Government have been adamant that they will not ask for an extension of this deadline.

Businesses will have to start to prepare for December 31 as early as possible; however as the trade deal is not yet agreed there are many elements which are critical to businesses where there is no clear guidance. Organisations from across the UK food and drink supply chain have published a [policy paper](#) outlining common themes the Government should use to develop future trade policy.

Mark Ruskell (MR) suggested that the CPG should have a further meeting on this.

ACTION: ML

Older People and Food

The Older people, Age and Ageing CPG plans to discuss food at its next meeting on March 11th at 1pm. **ML** would send details out once the Agenda was agreed in case members wished to attend.

ACTION: ML

Connecting Climate Change, Natural Capital and Health

MR noted the responses to the questions that had been circulated. These are also attached as an Annex to the minutes. There was a need and an opportunity to redesign our farming and food system so that it provided climate friendly and healthy food for all, without detriment to nature.

There were 2 speakers;

- **Prof Lorna Dawson (LD)** – Head of Soil Forensics, James Hutton Institute, SEFARI Gateway Knowledge Exchange Lead for Environment, RSA Food, Farming and Countryside Commission Scotland Inquiry lead
- **Aoife Behan (AB)** – Director, Soil Association Scotland

Their presentations are circulated with the minutes.

Open Debate

General questions on the presentations

Ann Packard RSA asked whether change should be by mitigation or mandation, the regional aspect, food fraud and whether the Soil Association (SA) analysis would be independent. **AB** said that [IDDRI](#) was an independent think tank and the Soil Association had simply done the translation. The SA has been engaging with Scottish Government (SG) about their [plans for Regional Land Use Partnerships](#). **AB** thought it an interesting model that could deliver. **LD** said that the Land Use [pilots](#) in both Aberdeenshire and the Borders had gone well and would provide valuable information. Food authenticity was paramount in all of this, must be of high quality and high standards maintained as we left Europe.

Marie-Amelie Viatte Connected by Nature asked if the agroecology approach also included the sea. **AB** said that seafood came under the sustainable food banner and should be included in the Good Food Nation (GFN) bill. **LD** said that 2020 was the

Scottish year of Coasts and Waters so it was important to include the sea and also other connected topics such as flooding issues, aquaculture and seaweed as a food and fertiliser.

Anne Gebbie-Diben NHS Health Scotland asked whether there had been learning from the new Nordic programme. **AB** said that there had been and she had visited Denmark. In particular **AB** thought the food policy of organic procurement targets had wide ranging effects. **LD** replied that SEFARI Gateway has been working with HIE to understand the opportunity that exists to engage with partners around the design, development, delivery, and participation in, an [Arctic Food Innovation Cluster](#) (AFIC) led by the University of Saskatchewan in Canada. This follows the endorsement of a proposal submitted to the Arctic Council Sustainable Development Working Group in January 2019, building on earlier work undertaken through '[The Arctic as a Food Producing Region](#)' (2016). A SEFARI fellowship has been set up to: understand the benefits for Scotland's participation in the AFIC with respect to food innovation and local economies; reflect on the strengths and contributions the Highlands and Islands and wider Scotland could make as an effective partner and good global citizen and illustrate possible approaches and models for engagement in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, including within the context of a global climate emergency.

Bosse Dahlgren Consultant noted the IPCC report and asked about ruminant farming. **AB** said that her concern was with sustained intensification of farming. The concept of land spare (high-yielding agriculture practiced, requiring a smaller area of land to attain the same yields and therefore leaving greater areas of natural habitat untouched) versus land share (low-yield farming enabling biodiversity to be maintained within the agricultural landscape) needed to be considered. In Scotland land share should be looked at. **LD** thought there was not one answer for all farming. Some land was ideal for grass fed cattle and also had benefits for carbon sequestration.

How do we move to and maintain a healthy sustainable diet?

Ray Lorimer Kafoodle referred to work he was doing taking sugar out of bakery goods and replacing with carrots and fruits such as blueberries. This challenged tradition but was an opportunity.

Jennie MacDiarmid Rowett Institute/SEFARI (JM) thought we needed to bring all sectors together to discuss a healthy sustainable diet. If we did not consider this as a whole there would be unintended consequences. It was vital that government policy was joined up. Action was needed.

Sue Whittle CIWF cited the [EAT: Lancet report](#) and said that we needed to change our diet to eat less but better meat and dairy and asked about a reduction in pork and chicken. **AB** thought more agronomic-analysis was needed for Scotland so we produced the right things in the right place and did not think intensive pig and poultry farming was necessarily the way forward. More research was needed so there could be a socio-political approach that was fair and just. **LD** said that there were good efficient pig and poultry units in Scotland that have excellent welfare standards and conditions and that all systems should be considered.

Malcolm White Scottish Public Health said that diet change was needed to address non communicable disease that also tied in with sustainability. He asked about Scottish government targets to change the balance of protein and amount of livestock required.

Keesje Avis Nourish said it was not a black and white issue but one of diversity. We needed a variety of fruit and vegetables and livestock was also exported rather than eaten here. There was also the issue of how we produced our food. **Douglas Bell QMS** said that Scotland was self-sufficient in beef but did import pork. There was misinformation about the health benefits of meat which referred to when it was heavily processed. **Martin Morgan SAMW (MM)** said that one third of the lambs processed here in Scotland were [exported to Europe](#), mainly to France. Lamb that is traded within the rest of the UK is not regarded as export. He added that there had already been [a drop in livestock numbers in Scotland](#) while meat consumption had also gone down. **Alistair Williams Macsweens** suggested we should look at other protein sources, such as eating more rabbit, insects and to consider taking a nose to tail approach. **AB** said that feeding children well was important and money was needed in providing the infrastructure to provide good school meals, expose children to different foods and educate them. The consumption of good quality meat was part of a balanced diet, but just not every day. **LD** agreed education was important, such as in RHET, and also the role of exercise in maintaining a healthy weight.

Stuart Forbes Scottish Food Coalition emphasised that the low income were very positive about healthy sustainable diets but often couldn't afford one, so there needed to be an economic solution. **AB** thought the GFN bill offered an opportunity to make good food available for all and that the public sector should lead the way. Markets for sustainable food needed to be built up and those farming sustainably rewarded. **Jon Wilkin Abertay Uni** thought that junk food was too cheap and that healthy food should become the cheap option. **LD** said there was a question of what price food should be and also that there were other factors important for a healthy diet like fibre.

What changes should we make to food production?

Christine Fraser Food Training Scotland said foods should not be demonised and thought there was an issue with how food is portrayed to the public. For example dairy foods were important particularly for the young and elderly. **LD** agreed that work was needed with the media. **AB** said the issue of nuance of messages was difficult. **Gail Ross MSP (GR)** agreed and said that there was often misinformation particularly in social media around meat and vegetarian/vegan diets.

Eleanor Kay Scottish land and Estates said that [natural capital](#) must be understood and taken into account in climate change discussions. There was a link between environment and society delivered by the land that was not just foodstuffs and any changes must not be at the expense everything else that Scottish land management provided. **LD** thought that natural capital accounting was a difficult concept for the public including how to quantify farmer's role in increasing carbon sequestration, and maintaining the landscape and its role in tourism. There was no

consensus on this. **AB** noted that Savills were working on Natural Capital and the Soil Association also had a project on-going.

Denise Walton Peelham Farm said that access to abattoirs was a huge issue. There should be more small abattoirs available for local producers which would be good for carbon footprint, cost and animal welfare. Apprenticeships to learn to be skilled butchers should also be more easily available. **GR** agreed and said in Caithness they had a focus group set up to look at local abattoirs and **SG** was discussing mobile ones.

Claire Slipper NFUS said farmers were committed to continuing to improve and adapt and asked for thoughts on policy changes and influencing behaviour change. **LD** said new technologies had a role and research was on-going in areas such as advance breeding and resistance to pests and diseases. The Rowett were looking at diet and consumption and how to get the informed consumer to change and sustain behaviour. **JM** said it was important to join up across food systems and research was on-going. Work was needed in the middle of the food chain. **Cat Hay FDF Scotland** agreed there needed to be joining up, there was a challenge in that 95% of Scottish food and drink companies were SMEs; this was also an opportunity.

GR said that it had been a fascinating discussion and illustrated why a GFN bill was needed. In particular she thought procurement was an issue with shorter supply chains needed. Education was key, including having more home economics teachers and a discussion was needed on the price of fast food versus healthy food.

What one thing that Scottish Government should do?

- Martin Morgan – Act now!
- Janet Foggie Nourish – Support low earning businesses providing local food
- Ian Muirhead AIC Scotland – Champion farmers and produce, work with industry to build on what we have
- Martin Iron Tartan Silk PR – Educate young people, Counterweight programme
- Jennie MacDiarmid – Understand why people make food choices
- Jon Wilkin – Invest in Universities KE
- Marie-Amelie Viatte – Improve lives of working poor in agrifood sector
- Ann Packard – Determination of, and cost-efficient delivery of, rural skills and overall skills development, given demography of sector taken across agriculture, forestry, food processing etc and maintaining pressure on UK Government re migrant (permanent) and migrant (seasonal) labour
- Angela Mitchell – Make a better/stronger link between this agenda (i.e. climate change) and the work underway on healthy diets within the Healthy Weight strategy and the type 2 diabetes Framework
- Wendy Barrie – Stop using Eatwell plate and instead go for the Aoife Behan philosophy!
- Alistair Williams – Keep on supporting enterprises
- Eleanor Kay – Agriculture policy that keeps pace with climate change policy
- Sue Whittle – Animal welfare high on agenda
- Keesje Avis – Healthy soil and healthy communities

- Denise Walton – Joined up approach to agroecological farming
- Aoife Bevan – Agroecology
- Lorna Dawson – Link food, farming and rural communities and connect production closer to consumption.

4. GDPR Compliance

ML had sent out an email to all members about GDPR. Nothing had changed in way the data was being held.

5. AOB

The Group were informed of a Food Systems Dialogue event was being held on 30.1.20 at University of Edinburgh.

6. Dates of the Next Meeting

These were;

- 1 April Committee Room 5 (50th meeting)
- 10 June Committee Room 4
- 23 September Committee Room 3 (AGM).

These will all be at 6pm.

Annex 1

Answers received by attendees, summarised by question

Comments received by 22 January 2020

1. How best to join up climate change, natural capital and health?

- Build on Food Commission's work on indicators to develop set of indicators and put in Good Food Nation bill
- Joined up government policy
- Business models for changes that are sustainable for health, climate and economically sustainable
- Improve transport links, encourage walking and make it easy. Encourage people to engage in their natural capital and to want to improve it, social prescribing
- Invest in active travel and public transport using natural corridors and green urban spaces, provide more allotments
- Better publicity/education given to types of rural jobs and professional careers available to young people
- Efficient food production and delivery of public benefits, joined up governmental policies with practical deliverable measures
- Use period to 2024 to pilot whole farm plans as set out in Climate Change bill and develop regional land use frameworks
- Recognise soil as an essential, non-renewable resource and place value on it, construction companies should retain and improve top soil
- Economic incentives to make good sustainable food the option of choice and cheap food should have economic disincentives. This should be for every sector including planning but done carefully to avoid food poverty
- Healthy livestock produce sustainable food - regulatory framework to promote responsible uses of medicines in agriculture
- Reduce meat and dairy consumption and intensive farming practices
- Encourage consumers to eat less but better quality meat and dairy
- Food systems approach – so no unintended consequences, e.g. processed vegan foods linked to environment, animal welfare but high in fat and salt
- More support for renewable energy and heating in new and existing homes

2. How do we move to and maintain a healthy sustainable diet ?

- Define a healthy diet so that consumers understands
- Have a nationwide campaign
- Invest in public food provision, especially school canteens, scrutinize fast food outlets, ban advertising for "children's food" support cooking skills and use of local and seasonal ingredients
- Scotland's farmland which is unable to be ploughed is ideal for grass which is converted by cattle and sheep to tasty nutritious beef milk and lamb. Grazing cattle and sheep helps biodiversity, conservation and creates iconic landscapes
- Promote education on Scottish agricultural systems

3. How do we make food production more environmentally sustainable and help limit impacts on climate change ?

- Reward farmers for sustainable practices through payment schemes
- Pricing structures, no more cheap food, support
- Preferentially support producers and consumers of environmentally sustainable networks to counterbalance multinational retail advantage (e.g. planning)
- Support increase of SME primary producers, increase organic production, adopt measures to reduce N₂O from muck spreading, pesticide/fertiliser tax
- Support better growing diversity in arable systems
- Understand and communicate what environmentally sustainable food production is
- Scottish agriculture has reduced emissions by around 1/3 since 1990 baseline and first to feel impact of climate change; need progressive policies to continue in sustainable and business efficient manner
- Scottish farmers/crofters help to conserve the landscape, improve biodiversity, plant trees, restore peat, improve water and soil quality and generate renewable energy
- Need support of Gov to do more
- Support for schools to provide practical food growing experiences
- Teach more environmentally friendly farming to college students

4. How do we help make food consumption more environmentally sustainable and help limit impacts on climate change ?

- Govt uphold domestic standards of production in any free trade talks
- Tackle food waste at all levels
- Pricing structures and making good food affordable
- Eat seasonally and locally, educate consumers and children

5. What are the barriers to the above?

- Legislation, public engagement, lack of consensus, funding
- Use Brexit and Exit from EU Common Agricultural Policy through supportive policy and funding framework
- Stakeholders must collaborate on this
- Not enough funding provided for sustainable agriculture research and too much funding / power given to Agri-tech and particularly Agri-chemical companies
- Misrepresentation of industry in mainstream press is affecting consumer opinion
- SG has twin priorities of doubling value of Scotland's food and drink industry whilst achieving greenhouse emissions targets. Support needed to do this simultaneously.
- Realities of Scotland's land use capabilities reflected in policy development and decision making
- Inertia of habit
- Power of multinational food companies
- Narrative that all food should be cheap to allow universal affordability rather than increase income for poorest