

**Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Cross Party Group on Food held at 6pm on
February 3rd 2021**

Present

John Scott	MSP (Chair)
Gail Ross	MSP
Rhoda Grant	MSP
Bill Bowman	MSP
Mary Lawton	CPG Food Secretariat
Moira Stalker	Food and Drink Federation Scotland
Sara Smith	Royal Highland Educational Trust
Mary Holland	Developing Young Workforce
Jennifer Robertson	Quality Meat Scotland
Alix Ritchie	Quality Meat Scotland
Douglas Bell	Quality Meat Scotland
Janet Foggie	Stirling Uni
Cat Hay	Food and Drink Federation Scotland
David Thomson	Food and Drink Federation Scotland
Graeme Findlay	Scottish Qualifications Authority
Helen Muir	Dawnfresh
Alistair Williams	Macsweens
Laura Wilson	Food Standards Scotland
Tanya Olmeda-Hodge	Food Standards Scotland
Liz Barron-Majerik	Lantra
Miesbeth Knottenbelt	Nourish
Susan O'Mahony	Propagate
Jackie McCabe	REHIS
Joe Lowit	St Pauls Youth Forum
Chris Mantle	Edinburgh Community Food
Brenda Black	Edinburgh Community Food
Tierney Woods	Edinburgh Community Food Network
Iain Clunie	Zero Waste Scotland
Denise Connelly	Zero Waste Scotland
Viv Collie	Vivid Solutions
Colin Smith	Scottish Wholesalers Association
Lesley Stanley	Consultant
Jacqueline Farrell	The Princes Foundation
Kate Fry	Office of Rhoda Grant MSP
Wendy Wrieden	Edinburgh Community Food Trustee
Fiona Bird	Hebridian Forager
Ruth Watson	Keep Scotland the Brand
Christine Fraser	Food Training Scotland
Jonathan Wilkin	Uni of Abertay/ IFST
Rosa Holt	Robert Gordon Uni
Steve Brown	Edinburgh Social
Frances Meek	British Nutrition Foundation
Julie Edgar	Scottish Salmon Producers Assn
Andrew Fry	Scottish Salmon Producers Assn
Sue Whittle	CIWF volunteer
Lorna Dawson	SEFARI

Luisa Gillies
Jacqueline Charters
Ian Land
Natasha Martins
Baukje de Roos
Wendy Barrie
Bosse Dahlgren
Gillian Anderson
Craig McCormack
Jennifer McLachlan
Ann Packard
Seton Steele
Jayne Whitaker
Gerry McBride
Gordon King
Peter Brown
Martin Morgan
Sam Eccles
Sally Wake
Lynne Stevenson
Laura-Alexandra Smith

Edinburgh Uni
Member of public
Seafish
London Sch Hygiene & Trop Medicine
Rowett/ Uni of Aberdeen
Scottish Food Guide
Consultant
Education Scotland
Greencity
Scotland Food and Drink
RSA
apetito
apetito
Skills Development Scotland
Scottish Craft Butchers
The List
Scottish Assn Meat Wholesalers
Farmers for Stock Free Farming
The Company Shop
BDA Scotland
Royal Society of Chemistry

1. Apologies

These were received from Patrick Harvie, Abi Mordin, Kirsten Leask, Julia Mitchell, Christopher Trotter, Moyra Burns, Arianne Knowles, Miriam Smith, Ceri Ritchie, Alison Nimmo, Pat Abel, Ray Lorimer and Miranda Geelhoerd.

2. Minutes of the last Meeting

These were proposed by David Thomson and approved.

3. Matters Arising

There was no news yet on the Food and Drink Sector proposals.

ACTION: ML

4. Learning about Food and Drink- Resources and Pathways

Members of the Group had submitted resources which had been collated into one paper which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

There were presentations from,

- **Introduction and Context** - Moira Stalker, Skills Manager, FDF Scotland
- **Food STEM and Sustainability** - Sara Smith, Royal Highland Educational Trust Learning and Development Co-ordinator
- **Collaboration Examples** - Mary Holland, Director, Developing Young Workforce North East
- **Farming Foodsteps** - Jennifer Robertson, Health and Education Manager, Quality Meat Scotland

Copies of the presentations would be sent out with the minutes.

John Scott MSP (JS) thanked the speakers and noted the overriding theme of collaboration and the need to not “reinvent the wheel”.

Open Debate

Rhoda Grant MSP (RG) thought the speakers captured the fact that young people often didn't understand what a career in the food industry could mean, but once they had the information were enthused and had high expectations. **RG** asked how we could further bring these opportunities alive to people. **Mary Holland DYW North East (MH)** noted that their event had not been a one off. They were building on it and different regions were continuing to work with local food and drink companies. There were partnerships with schools, for example with Mackie's Ice-cream. In normal times, teachers and pupils were taken to the facilities but now there was work ongoing to make materials accessible on line for all.

Brenda Black Edinburgh Community Food (BB) asked how many front line community groups the speakers worked with. ECF worked with some of the most marginalised families and young people in society who were often trapped in the attainment gap. There had been some real success stories with over 100 of their BME community passing the REHIS accreditation in the summer in the middle of lockdown. Some good work was available on evaluation which they would be happy to share if industry recognised communities as an educational resource. **Sara Smith RHET (SS)** agreed that this was not an area they had tapped in to yet, but the online training resource could in theory link with community groups and asked that **BB** contact her so it could be taken forward.

NOTE from chat box- **Susan O'Mahoney Propagate**. Education on food needs to include the topic of growing your own foods (as individuals and on a community level) to build a resilient food future. Propagate would like to be involved in these discussions.

ACTION: BB/SS/Propagate

Jackie McCabe REHIS added that REHIS Food Hygiene and Food and Health qualifications were available to schools in digital format. Details were given in the Resources paper circulated. REHIS had made a conscious effort to focus on areas of high deprivation. This was done with co-funding from REHIS and Food Standards Scotland (FSS). Anyone wanting further information should contact her. contact@rehis.com.

Sue Whittle CIWF Volunteer (SW) thought it good that children were being educated on the value of food and the need to avoid waste. It was important to celebrate Scotland's extensive free-range, high welfare farming and hoped this could go further with agro-forestry and nature friendly organic farming.

SW was concerned about the intensive factory farming of pigs, and felt it disingenuous of QMS's Farming Footsteps to state it recognises the five freedoms in relation to the use of farrowing crates, pens & mutilations. She was also concerned about sustainability, loss of wildlife and climate change with use of soya in feed. It was important to give children the full picture. **SW** referred to a recent report on [Food](#)

[System Impacts on Biodiversity Loss](#). **Martin Morgan Scottish Meat Wholesalers Assn (MM)** noted that the QMS protocol ensured independent inspection of pig farms by the Scottish SPCA farm for free, so they were totally independent. Standards were also revisited every year and widely consulted on.

MM asked the speakers what level of engagement they were getting from local and central government and the public sector. **MM** was particularly concerned with local procurement and also noted a recent tweet from FSS advocating a meat free diet which had not been well received by his members. **MS** said they worked with as many stakeholders as possible, trying to be even handed and provide young people, teacher and influencers a balanced overview with truthful, verified information so they could make their own decisions. It was important not to tell them what to think. **SS** agreed with **MS** and said they had a network of farmers across Scotland who opened their gates to schools so young people could make up their own minds. They aim to provide unbiased information. **Jennifer Robertson QMS (JR)** said they worked closely with Local Authorities on school visits and regarding local procurement they had worked with the Government on the Food Regulations for Schools and were part of a Subgroup on red meat trying to ensure local red meat was used in schools. QMS would be happy to be involved in local procurement discussions for other areas e.g hospitals. **MH** thought in terms of Local Government they worked well with their 2 Local Authorities in Aberdeen (shire and city) and they were key partners in the work on promoting farming, fishing and food manufacturing. The work was funded by Scottish Government. **MM** said the education initiatives were welcome, he agreed that diet was a matter of personal choice and had been surprised that FSS had tweeted advocating it particularly given the money red meat brought to Scotland. **Jacqueline Charters Member of Public** said all pupils should be given facts to allow them make an informed choice on vegan, vegetarian and free range food.

Jon Wilkin Uni Abertay/IFST asked that Health and Food technology be referred to as a STEM subject. He noted all the wonderful educational work and said that students had pathways, but the colleges were struggling to recruit people into HNC and HND courses in food science and technology. Universities were also undersubscribed for these courses. He would like to see more connection with the educational programmes. **MS** said that she and Gerry MacBride at SDS were working with the College Development Network to set up a Group to look at this. They were aware of issues and a lack of some progression routes and also the need for different levels of qualifications to enter the industry. She would keep him informed. **JR** said QMS did more on the hospitality side but would be open to working with colleges in this area. **SS** noted that they had lots of webinars to engage with teachers and wondered if there could be something similar with colleges.

ACTION: JW/MS/JR/SS

Wendy Barrie Scottish Food Guide (WB) said that all the excellent education initiatives would have healthy eating embedded and asked if the Eatwell Guide was going to be reviewed as she felt it was outdated. **Laura Wilson FSS** said the Eatwell Guide was reviewed in 2016. Public Health England leads on the review and she was not aware of plans at the moment to look at it again. The Scottish Dietary goals had been updated when further evidence on carbohydrates was published. **WB**

thought that 2016 was a long time ago and **LW** offered on the chat box to discuss this with her.

ACTION: WB/LW

Ann Packard RSA (AP) was surprised that venison had not been mentioned in the presentations and whether an SVQ qualification could be produced at speed and delivered as a MOOC during the pandemic. It could then be part of someone's portfolio of qualifications. **Graeme Findlay SQA (GF)** answered that there were VQs available in food and drink including meat based ones at level 5 and 6 that could be used across a wide range of products. **JR** said QMS worked closely with the universities including SEFARI and the Rowett. It was important to highlight research topics and different opportunities that existed.

AP thought that there should be something for younger children. **GF** said there were many courses available at a lower level that introduced them to food and practical cookery. There were also foundation apprenticeships with partners that introduced them to working life and the food industry. **JR** said they were very involved in working with young children and hoped visits would continue soon. The range of opportunities was highlighted including game keeping and venison. **SS** noted their programme covered venison and they tried to build on this knowledge mentioning it as a red meat alternative. There were a number of venison farmers who showed children round their farms.

Tanya Olmeda-Lodge (FSS) (TO) said they had resources on healthy eating and food safety for teachers and parents for nursery to lower secondary age groups known as Feeding Minds. They had found that one of the biggest barriers was raising awareness of these resources with teachers. There was no one place where teachers could go and look for them. **TO** asked whether an educational resources hub should be created. **MS** said that there should be and an action was in the [Scotland Food and Drink Recovery Plan](#) which would be taken forward. **MH** said My World of Work was at a higher level but they could possibly give a link in to a hub. **SS** suggested that the Food STEM and Sustainability platform could signpost teachers to a hub. **Gillian Anderson Education Scotland (GA)** agreed with the need to support teachers with the plethora of resources. Education Scotland has two national networks that support learning in Food Education – the National Health and Wellbeing network and the Home Economics Lead Officers network. These networks are used to collaborate, to provide professional learning, professional discussion and support for each other and for disseminating key information, resources.

Education Scotland (ES) had created a summary of food education resources as a 'one stop shop' on the National Improvement Hub. There you will find key information, resources, exemplification and links to resources on the National Improvement Hub linked to using food as a context for learning.

ES had also created a Wakelet for Health and wellbeing. This has a food education section which contains a collection of links to materials stored online. These links could take you to the National Improvement Hub, Glow, Websites, PDFs or YouTube. Like the summary on the National Improvement Hub, it was useful as it's easy to access materials from one place.

David Thomson FDF Scotland thought the discussion emphasised the importance of food and drink education to the food and drink industry. All the initiatives demonstrated that there are good careers available in the industry. Making the educational resources more accessible to teachers, young people and parents was paramount. The CPG Food meeting had been extremely useful in the sharing of information on resources and very important going forward given a likely recession. We needed to support people who may be looking to enter or move into the industry and develop their careers. The food and drink industry hopefully will be seen as a growing sector having quality produce with quality people.

Gail Ross MSP (GR) thanked the speakers and applauded the ongoing educational work. **GR** had some asks of Scottish Government. One was the shortening of supply chains by having more local abattoirs and more apprenticeships for butchers. **GR** also thought there should be more Home Economics teachers recruited.

JS asked what we should do with the collated Resources paper. **Mary Lawton (ML) (CPG Food)** said it had been updated and it would be re-sent with the minutes and that it would be very useful for those currently being home schooled. It was obviously a living document that would need maintenance.

ACTION: ML

MS offered for the food education partners to look at the issue. The Food STEM and Sustainability website could possibly be a temporary home and consideration then given to a longer term solution as it will need managing and therefore a resource to keep up to date.

JS thought there could also be an article about it in the press.

ACTION: Food Education Partners

5. AOB

Lorna Dawson (SEFARI) updated the Group on the Food Farming and Countryside Commission. A prospective work programme was being developed, building on the Scotland report (2019) which would be discussed and ratified by the new leadership group, involving key groups across the sectors in Scotland. It was likely to include work on affordability and accessibility of sustainably, 'locally' produced food especially in poorer, urban centres; mapping the understanding and spread of agroecology practices across Scotland (with SEFARI Gateway/SAOS/SAS) and connecting agro ecological producers directly with communities/consumers through novel technologies. This would be brought into view for COP26 (and also the food systems summit) in partnership with other organisations. Anyone wanting to be involved should contact **ML**.

ACTION: CPG Food

LD offered to update the Group after the election.

ACTION: ML/LD

6. Disbanding of CPG Food

ML reported that the CPG Food should be disbanded on 24.3.21 before the election. It would then be reformed. Currently there was no information regarding what happened if the election was delayed.