

Cross Party Group on Welsh Food and Drink
Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday 24 March at 6.00pm - 7.30pm

Introduction

Introductions from

Nick Ramsay – AM
Jeff Cuthbert - AM
Matthew Phipps.

Nick Ramsay and Jeff Cuthbert elected co-chairs of the group.

Matthew Phipps elected Secretary.

There followed an introduction from all attendees namely:-

Welsh Assembly:

Rhun Ap Iorwerth
Simon Thomas
Rebecca Evans
Keith Davies
Alan Jones
Llyr Gruffydd
Nick Ramsay
Jeff Cuthbert -

David Shaw - Big Hand Brewing
Dominic Rowley - Felinfoel Brewery
Malcolm Harrison - Pub is the Hub
Paul Heggarty - All Party Parliamentary Beer Group
Emily Ryans - CAMRA
Kris Dungey - SA Brain
John Pocket - First Great Western
Simon Thomas - Street Food Cardiff
Katie Palmer - Food Cardiff
Matthew Phipps - TLT Solicitors

Apologies

Monty's Brewery
Evan Evans
Inn Bev
Molson Coors

Through the course of introductions a number of issues were raised around role, functions and objectives of the Group. It was generally agreed that the Group should look to touch on and develop the following, with an overall objective being the promotion of Welsh food and Welsh drink.

Points of particular interest for members included the following:-

- Responsible retailing of alcohol
- Development of small brewing and micro-breweries
- Recognition of the pub being at the heart of not just local (rural) communities but also responsible retailing of alcohol
- Role that agriculture plays in Wales
- Recognition that apart from beer, wine (with the development of vineyards) and cider (could and should feature as part of the Group going forward).

- Concerns also covered sustainable food, environmental concerns around food production and delivery.
- Food markets and food festivals recognised as playing an important part in the "food story" in Wales
- Health is to be a feature of the Group and its aims, and to recognise the importance of allergies and awareness of them (see comments about gluten and Montys Brewery below).

Objectives

The national and ultimately international promotion of Welsh food and drink is the key objective for the group.

Benefits to members

The opportunity for AM's to have direct dialogue with food and drink producers and suppliers so that they may understand the commercial and regulatory issues that they face.

Similarly an opportunity for food and drink producers and suppliers to have the ear of AMs,

Ongoing timetable and involvement

We generally considered that quarterly meetings (four times a year) would be appropriate.

It was anticipated that meetings would be seasonal (spring, summer, autumn, winter). One of those four meetings to be something of a social event with preference expressed for January (try-anuary rather than dry-anuary).

Anticipate next meeting in July (**7th appears likely date**), a further meeting in October but Assembly dates and timetables (and availability of AM's) to be a key consideration. In recognising a number of apologies for absence (see above) as much notice as possible for the Group to be preferred.

Meetings need not take place only in Cardiff Bay with Chris Dungey (SA Brain) confirming he would be happy to host the Group at the brewery (perhaps with a brief brewery tour).

Matthew Phipps explained that in his discussions with Monty's Brewery (whose gluten free beer particularly, was recognised by the Group members) expressing an interest in the Group, they hoped that some meetings may be held further north than Cardiff.

The Group discussed opportunities for development of membership with each attendee being asked (tasked?) with providing at least an additional nominee's contact details to Matthew Phipps, who will then contact to seek to include in the Group next time.

AM's to provide suggestions to Sandra Morgan, Nick Ramsay's PA.

Rhun Ap Iorwerth suggested that contact may be made with the Anglesey Food and/or Drink Collective (details to follow) who may wish to take an involvement in the Group.

Presentations

There followed the presentation by Paul Hegarty, Honorary Secretary of the All Party Parliamentary Beer Group. A full and comprehensive explanation of the work that they do, both in Westminster and in Brussels.

A recognition that Westminster Parliament benefits from the opportunity to have a larger number, of more directed groups, involved in food and drink. A recognition that the opportunity here is for a more diverse group, covering more generalist, but perhaps therefore more inclusive, cross section of industry and AM's. Paul articulated his belief that some of the success of the Group can be attributed to avoidance of divisive political issues (beer tie given

as an example) that from time to time may bedevil the industry and those who work (diversely) within it. The work of the Group variously involves dinners, tastings, beer and cheese matching, brewery visits, Chairman's dinners, policy briefings. Paul explained that the Group are always represented at each of the Party Conferences and there may be an opportunity to extend this group an invitation to attend in due course.

Second presentation by Simon Thomas, from Street Food Cardiff. Explanation of the development of street food in Cardiff across the last several years culminating, in part, in a two month residency for a number of food and drink producers and suppliers at "The Depot" Dumbals Road Cardiff through November and December 2014.

An explanation of the development of Cardiff's reputation for street food and the economic benefits that brings directly and indirectly to the city and the region.

Development of relationships with start-up producers, the help and assistance that have been provided, marketing and product placement as well as explanation of likely next steps and tie up with No Fit State Circus proposed for later in the year.

Networking and informal discussion

The formal part of the meeting concluded at around 7.15pm. Drinks and refreshments then being provided by Nick Otley (Otley Brewery). This part of the evening concluded at around 8.00pm.

Actions arising

- Matthew Phipps to produce and distribute Minutes.
- Meeting room and facilities to be booked for next proposed meeting (in first two weeks of July)
- Additional proposals for members and membership to be sent to Matthew Phipps
- Matthew Phipps and Simon Thomas to discuss social event (and proposals to be made at July meeting)
- Two further presentations by members to be agreed (several offers already made), NM and JC to confirm with MP

Any Other Business

No AON, but suggestions for Agenda welcome. Please direct them straight to Matthew Phipps.