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SWA JOINS NATIONAL BOARD SET UP TO UNLOCK SCOTLAND'S £1BN FOOD TOURISM POTENTIAL

SWA has joined a national board established to oversee the delivery of an ambitious plan to boost food tourism in Scotland by £1 billion.

Made up of leaders from organisations including Scotland Food & Drink and the Scottish Tourism Alliance, the board will aim to significantly increase visitor spend on food and drink.

Launched by First Minister Nicola Sturgeon on the Isle of Arran last summer, the first-ever Food Tourism Action Plan sets out a bold ambition to increase visitor spend on food and drink and outlines a vision to become a globally-recognised food tourism destination.

The SWA is proud to sit on the new national board for Scotland's food tourism strategy, aiming to unlock Scotland's £1bn food tourism potential.

Colin Smith, SWA chief executive

The joint initiative between the Scottish Government and industry represents a significant commitment from the country's leading sectors – food and drink and tourism – to capitalise on their respective strengths and the global demand for destinations to offer quality food and drink, with clear provenance, and real, memorable experiences.



Chaired by Marc Crothall of the Scottish Tourism Alliance (STA), the board will oversee the development and implementation of the plan, with a clear responsibility for ensuring that the actions are delivered, and the ambition realised.

SWA chief executive Colin Smith commented: "The SWA is proud to sit on the new national board for Scotland's food tourism strategy, aiming to unlock Scotland's £1bn food tourism potential. Helping to deliver growth to our members collaboratively with other trade bodies and experts, we aim to increase visitor spend on food and drink."

Find out more at: <https://scottishtourismalliance.co.uk/food-tourism/>



ENGAGING WITH THE WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE

THREE representatives from Dunns Food and Drinks attended Hamilton school John Ogilvie High's recent careers fayre. Julie Dunn, operations director, finance supervisor Karen Robertson and Justine McCready, admin assistant spoke to pupils about potential careers in the wholesale industry.

Dunns takes an active role in the community and has also engaged with other schools including Calderside Academy and Kear Campus, South Lanarkshire's resource for pupils who have additional social, emotional and behavioural needs.

The wholesaler also offers work experience to pupils from local schools, providing an insight into various areas of the businesses. Dunns has also worked with Developing the Young Workforce/ Skills Development Scotland.

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE AT DUNNS

WORK on a major warehouse expansion project at Dunns Food and Drinks is under way. This £1.5 million investment at the wholesaler's headquarters in Blantyre will provide additional on-site storage, improve the goods in, goods out processes and create a new access road around the main building. Work commenced early in January and will be completed this summer.

TAKING YOUR VIEWS TO THE HEART OF GOVERNMENT

AS the Brexit crisis continues SWA have been in regular contact with Scottish Government ministers and officials.

Fergus Ewing MSP, the Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy, attended the SWA Council Meeting on 7th March, where he heard about Wholesaler's concerns over Brexit and how they are preparing.

Following on from this Colin Smith and Margaret Smith held a further meeting with Mr Ewing to discuss the implementation and scope of the proposed Deposit Return Scheme, the Workplace Parking Levy and the recent consultations on Products High in Fat, Sugar and Salt (HFSS) and the Out of Home Strategy. SWA raised concern at the cumulative effect of the volume of consultations and policy initiatives which are currently impacting on the food and drink sector while we deal with a potential No Deal Brexit.

We made clear that SWA members are keen to work with the Scottish Government on the development of an incentivised and targeted food and drink programme aimed specifically at helping the wholesale sector.



BREXIT MEETINGS

The SWA meeting with Michael Russell MSP, the Cabinet Secretary for Government Business & Constitutional Relations, concentrated on the impacts of Brexit on the sector with a particular focus on:

- Sustainability of supply
- Stockpiling
- Impacts on Rural/Island communities and hospitality/tourism
- Public sector contract resilience
- Need for specific support for SMEs

Following the meeting, Colin Smith has been in regular contact with officials on a range of Brexit issues including the scope of the Government's Brexit Support Grant and the impacts of stockpiling. Colin and Margaret are also taking an active part in the Government's Food Sector Resilience Group Meetings. Access information about the Grant and other relevant information at <https://www.prepareforbrexit.scot/>

CANADIAN FOOD EXPORTERS VISIT SWA MEMBERS



CANADIAN exporters visited two SWA members during a recent trade mission to Scotland to identify opportunities for exporting products.

The Canadian Food Exporters Association visited Alfa Wholesale and Lomond – The Wholesale Food Co, both in Glasgow, accompanied by SWA chief executive Colin Smith.

Those visiting Alfa and Lomond included:

- Madhava Amerasinghe, senior vice-president at Tropical Link Canada, whose main products are dried cranberry, blueberry, cherry and fax seed oils in bulk
- Abdul Munim Sheikh, CEO at Al Safa Foods, one of the biggest halal brands in North America
- Terry Ackerman, director of business development at Riz Global Foods, an exporter of premium brands including confectionery, bakery and fine foods
- Manpreet Singh, president of Mampster Inc, an all-natural Indian food company manufacturing tamarind chutneys and Indian recipe snacks

SWA WELCOMES DECISION TO SCRAP NEW RATES LEVY ON OUT-OF-TOWN BUSINESSES

SWA has welcomed the news that the Scottish Government will not go ahead with a proposed new business rates levy on out-of-town premises.

The association was one of 21 of the country's leading business organisations that wrote a joint letter to Scottish Finance Secretary Derek Mackay MSP last November, urging him to scrap the proposed levy.

In response to a written parliamentary question published in February, the Scottish Government unveiled details of its planned Non-Domestic Rates Bill. The provisions in the Bill are subject to parliamentary approval.

Barclay had recommended that from 2020 a small number of local authorities would be able to pilot a new power to increase rates paid by out-of-town or predominantly online businesses.





BIDFOOD SCOTLAND BACKS HEALTHY OUT-OF-HOME FOOD AND DRINK

LEADING foodservice wholesaler Bidfood Scotland is taking significant steps to increase its healthy living credentials, particularly in the out-of-home (OOH) market. The wholesaler has announced plans to increase emphasis on healthy out-of-home convenience food and drink options – and is giving suppliers the opportunity to help them achieve their healthy living accreditation and attain a listing with Bidfood Scotland. Bidfood Scotland recently held a Scotland Food & Drink ‘Meet the Buyer’ event, which opened up 10 places for health-focused suppliers at its upcoming Bidfood Scotland Festival in Edinburgh. Attendees, including hotels, pubs and business owners, will vote for their favourite supplier based on product range and service offering – the top three will be awarded a listing with Bidfood Scotland.

Katie Sillars, Bidfood Scotland’s supplier development manager said: “Scots have become increasingly aware of the importance of seeking healthy food and drink options, and the out-of-home market is where we see a lot of opportunity to provide healthier choices for people. Food education and personal responsibility also have a part to play in the way the public make choices, but as a foodservice supplier we wanted to take a proactive approach to ensure we have a wider range of products lower in salt, fat and sugar for our customers.”

Bidfood Scotland’s ‘Grabbing Goodness on the Go’ campaign launches at the same time as the Scottish Government’s consultation on improving the out-of-home food environment.

DEPOSIT RETURN SCHEME

THE Scottish Wholesale Association, working in partnership with others within the food and drink supply chain, have been opposed to the introduction of a Scottish Deposit Return Scheme. We have engaged with Zero Waste Scotland and the Scottish Government to investigate the feasibility and impacts since Summer 2015 and are members of the DRS Implementation Advisory Group which met for the first time in February.



Decisions about the scheme design, which will have a major impact on implementation, will be taken by Ministers and it’s clear the implementation timetable is being driven by the May 2021 election deadline rather than by the reality of how long it will take to deliver an effective scheme.

SWA retains substantive concerns about the Scottish Government’s DRS proposals and are continuing to push for a single DRS system across Britain and a realistic implementation timetable.

We have also suggested that the scheme should not be mandatory for smaller retailers; fresh milk containers and fruit juice cartons should not be included due to hygiene issues and it should take account of Producer Recovery Note (PRN) reform.

BRAKES SCOTLAND AND WILLIAMSON FOODSERVICE SHOW SUPPORT FOR LOCAL PRODUCE

WHOLESALERS Brakes Scotland and Williamson Foodservice showed their ongoing commitment to supporting local produce in the Highlands as sponsors of the Skye & Lochalsh Taste Local Awards 2019.

The companies supported the awards, which celebrate the use of local food by food and drink businesses in Skye and Lochalsh, as they seek to discover new local products and producers to add to their own distribution networks.

The Taste Local Awards are organised by the Skye & Lochalsh Food Link CIC in partnership with Skye Connect.





BIGGEST-EVER TRADE EVENT FOR WILLIAMSON FOODSERVICE

HOSPITALITY, catering and retail businesses from the Highlands and Islands gathered in Inverness for a major trade event organised by Williamson Foodservice.

The Inverness-based food and drink wholesaler attracted 65 of its key suppliers from all over the UK to exhibit, provide samples/tastings and explain how to get the best value and profit from their products.

Over 500 business owners, chefs and others attend the company's biggest trade event to date at the Kingsmill Hotel.

Gary Williamson, managing director of Williamson Foodservice, said:

"We have worked with a significant number of new suppliers over the winter months and many of these attended the show. We also organised two workshops as part of the event to help customers understand and profit from trends in the marketplace including vegan/vegetarian food and cocktails/mocktails."

Williamson Foodservice employs over 100 people at its Inverness, Stornoway and Glasgow locations. It operates a modern fleet of 40 refrigerated vans and lorries and won Top Chilled Distribution Haulier in the Transport News Scottish Rewards 2019.

GOOD FOOD NATION BILL

THE Scottish Government is proposing a straightforward framework Bill placing responsibilities on Scottish Ministers and selected public bodies with regard to food. SWA welcome the Scottish Government's decision to resist pressure to place similar requirements on private food-related businesses.

While some might question whether or not this legislation is required it's clear that the Scottish Government's approach will have less impact on business than was first feared.

The Government have also decided against the option of embedding a specific right to food in the Bill but they propose the legislation will focus on "embedding processes for ensuring that the substance of the right to food has effect as a matter of everyday good practice"

Scottish Ministers would be required to -

- Make a statement of policy to cover food production and consumption issues relating to, the growing, harvesting, processing, marketing, sale, preparation and consumption of food, and disposal of waste arising from this; and access to affordable, local, nutritious and culturally appropriate food, and food in the public sector. Compatibility with relevant EU obligations would be essential.
- Include indicators or measures of success. A number of food-related national indicators already form part of the refreshed National Performance Framework and could be further strengthened in this context.
- Have regard to the statement of policy on food in the exercise of their Ministerial functions.

Any further legislation in related policy areas such as diet or food waste will be brought forward in "targeted legislation".

The Scottish Government are not proposing to establish a new body to oversee the Good Food Nation policy.

The consultation on the Good Food Nation Bill has been extended until Thursday 18th April. The consultation can be found here - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/good-food-nation-proposals-legislation/>

SWA will shortly be sending out a Survey Monkey to ascertain members views and help us compile our response.

MINISTERS PUBLISH BARCLAY REVIEW FINDINGS

THE Scottish Government has published its final report of the Barclay Implementation Advisory Group and analysis of consultation responses on the Barclay Review.

This consultation, which was launched last June and ran until September 17, sought views on those recommendations which the Government's implementation plan identified as requiring primary legislation. Some 148 responses were received – 124 from organisations and 24 from individuals.

The publication of this report marks the culmination of the first stage of the Barclay Implementation Advisory Group, established to inform advice to Scottish ministers in respect of the implementation detail of a number of the Barclay recommendations. The current intention is that the group will continue to convene at key stages to monitor implementation progress and evaluate the effectiveness of the Barclay reforms.

Respondents to the consultation felt that non-domestic rates policy language needed to be clearer. Stakeholders also suggested there was a need for "fairness" between the UK and Scotland, specifically in response to proposals to give councils the power to levy additional rates.

Read the report [here](#).



WHOLESALE INDUSTRY RECOGNISED IN SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

ALEX Cole-Hamilton, the LibDem MSP for Edinburgh Western, lodged a motion in the Scottish Parliament recognising the importance of the wholesale industry and congratulating the winners of Achievers 2019.

Motion S5M-15883 stated:

Scotland's Wholesale Food and Drink Sector. That the Parliament recognises what it sees as the importance of the wholesale food and drink sector; understands that, in Scotland, this industry directly employs 6,300 people and contributes £2.9 billion to the economy; welcomes the Scottish Wholesale Association's prestigious Achievers Awards, which, each year, celebrate professionalism and excellence among wholesalers and suppliers; congratulates all of the winners at the recent 2019 awards, including JW Filshill, which fought off stiff competition to claim the Champion of Champions title, and the Newbridge-based Bidfood Scotland, which won both the Great Place to Work and the Best Delivered Operation (Foodservice) categories, and sends its best wishes to all of the winners and nominees.

WORKPLACE PARKING LEVY

THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT'S Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee will consult on a potential Workplace Parking Levy before the end of June. The Scottish Government has announced that it will support an agreed Green Party amendment at Stage 2 of the Transport (Scotland) Bill on the granting of powers to local authorities to introduce a workplace parking levy. The levy is currently in place in Nottingham where businesses face a £400 levy per parking space.

Many thanks to SWA members who took part in our recent survey of members on this issue. 100% of members who responded were opposed to the introduction of a WPL.

We have written to the Convener of the Committee requesting the opportunity to give evidence and highlighting the following:

- Many members have premises on out of town industrial estates
- These areas don't have good access to public transport or access out with normal working hours, especially early morning/late evenings.
- Wholesale margins mean members are unlikely to absorb this cost, employees thus face yet another cost to already tight budgets. The increase in NLW is totally negated. The likely outcome is that employees will take to parking on the streets all over the estate, creating congestion and increased risk of accidents to both people and vehicles. Or find alternative work where transport links are more easily accessible.
- Members already pay significant rates on their property and land. A charge to park on one's own property is preposterous!
- Reducing the availability of staff workplace parking would have implications for staff security and safety, especially those on night/backshift.



Sharing The Vision



"SHARING THE VISION" BULLETIN COMING SOON.

Collaboration . Consultation . Communication



SWA ANNUAL CONFERENCE ASKS 'WHAT'S NEXT?' WITH LOCAL AND GLOBAL THEMES

SWA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2019 | CRIEFF HYDRO, CRIEFF, PERTSHIRE | FRIDAY 31ST MAY – SUNDAY 2ND JUNE

PLANS are well advanced for the SWA's 2019 Annual Conference with Dawood Pervez, managing director of Bestway Wholesale, Colin McLean, chief executive of Dundee-based Spar wholesaler CJ Lang and Chieh Huang, chief executive of the US-based online wholesaler Boxed among the speakers.

Huang, chief executive of the US-based online wholesaler Boxed – which he launched out of his parents' two-car garage in suburban New Jersey in 2013 – is flying to Scotland especially to speak at the conference. In just five years, he grew the company from a start-up making \$40,000 in revenue to a household name valued at well over half a billion dollars in 2018.

This year sees a greater emphasis on enabling more business building opportunities between wholesale and supplier members.

The NEW format on Friday 31st will see us host a local Scottish producers and suppliers' exhibition, in collaboration with Scotland Food and Drink. This is an

opportunity for wholesale buyers to meet some of Scotland's newest companies looking to distribute through the wholesale channel.

Another innovation during Friday afternoon is our 'Networking World Café' where wholesalers and suppliers can meet and mingle within a fun and different networking session.

Attracting industry leaders, entrepreneurs and senior executives from all corners of the wholesale supply chain – both at home and overseas – the conference will also hear from Ross Mackay, co-founder of Daring Foods, a Glasgow-based start-up selling plant-based meat alternatives which secured its first distribution deal with Lomond Fine Foods earlier this year.

Other presenters confirmed include: Nigel Holmes, chief executive of the Scottish Hydrogen & Fuel Cell Association; and Fiona Speakman, client director, CGA.

The 2019 Annual Conference – entitled 'What's Next?' – will once again incorporate a number of panel discussions with business sessions designed to enabling greater business-building opportunities between members.

Colin Smith, SWA chief executive, explained: "It's all about ringing the changes and ensuring that our Annual Conference remains relevant to members and suppliers – their time is at a premium so we must provide a platform for networking and create an environment that is conducive to encouraging discussion and sharing information."

Three areas of focus for this year's conference are: technology, incorporating training; Scotland's future growth opportunities; and food trends.

All queries about the conference, which takes place at Crieff Hydro from May 31-June 2, should be directed to Joanne Mathieson on 0131 556 8753 or email Joanne at joanne@scottishwholesale.co.uk. Further information is available [here](#).