

# Slow Food Scotland

Good, Clean and Fair



## **First Annual General Meeting of Slow Food Scotland SCIO 45764**

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2016

At Parklands Hotel Perth.

### **Members Present**

Donald Reid (Chair), John Cooke, Andrew Marsden, Walter Mowat, Gillian Rodger, Amy Rankine, Wendy Barrie, Vivian Maeda, Bosse Dahlgren, Brenda Mowat, Mike Wilson, Pam Rodway, Lindsay Cochrane, Craig Byiers, Alan Glass, Lily Simpson, John Kelman, Rob Ashlen, Bob Donald, Janet Anderson, Ross Anderson, Wendy McCombes, Neil Forbes, Sascha Grierson, Sarah Winnington-Ingram, Alice Gordon, Jenny Hogan, Federico Lubrani, Jane MacNaughton, Pavn Harper, Vicky Manning, Nick Rodway, Caroline Rye, Richard Ross (34)

**Host** Graeme Pallister

**Guests** Shane Holland (SFUK)

**Apologies** Steph Marsden, Denise Walton, Howard Wilkinson, Fiona Richmond

### **Agenda**

- **Welcome**
- **Minutes of previous meeting, matters arising**
- **Trustee Report**
- **Finances/Funding Plans**
- **SF in UK**
- **Membership/convivia development**
- **Food-sharing**
- **Convivia Highlights**
- **Ark of Taste**
- **Chef Alliance**
- **Terra Madre**
- **Slow Food Youth Network**
- **Priorities for 2017**
- **Formal processes and votes**
- **Questions/AOB**
- **Thanks and close**



## 1. Welcome

The formal meeting was preceded by an excellent Slow Food lunch that was introduced by the chef, Graeme Pallister. Donald Reid opened the proceedings by welcoming the members and thanking the hotel and especially Graeme for the lunch.

## 2. Minutes and matters arising.

There were minor corrections to the Inaugural General Meeting Minutes, Howard Wilkinson and Brenda Mowat were added to the attendees. The primary action to appoint office bearers from the Trustees elected at the Inaugural GM took place during the first SFS Board meeting. Donald Reid was appointed Chairman, Walter Mowat Secretary and Treasurer.

## 3. Trustees Report

The board has met quarterly through the year. (The minutes are circulated to Convivium leaders and available to all on request.) The first board meeting was also an education session run by Josiah Lockhart to ensure that the trustees were aware of their responsibilities as trustees of a registered SCIO. The trustees monitor the activities of the SFS working group, who provide a regular progress report. This forms a major part of the board meetings – reporting on membership and convivia development and the major project areas of Chef Alliance, Ark of Taste, Education and Terra Madre. The Youth Network also provides an update on their activities.

John Cooke and Pam Rodway (who along with Andrew Marsden were the founding trustees) have both intimated that they would stand down from the board, to focus more on the working group and Ark of Taste activities respectively. Donald thanked both for their contributions in getting SFS up and running.

On the working group, Andrew Marsden and Fiona Richmond are stepping down, whilst Josiah Lockhart has also left to focus on his Gorgie Farm work. Again, the contribution all have made to the working group has been significant, with Josiah's in particular being key to establishing the SFS organisation. All are still going to be active in Slow Food in Scotland.

Finally, Donald thanked all the members, supporters and volunteers who have helped get us to the position we are in today.

## 4. Finances and Fund Raising

A Finance report was circulated in advance of the meeting, which outlined that through the year, SFS had accrued a significant deficit, but that it was covered by the reserves. The reason for this is that we continued to spend as in previous years, but the incoming revenue took a substantial hit due to unforeseen expenses at the Slow Food in the UK level (see later). An expense freeze has been put in place to control discretionary spends, and the budget for this year will reduce the deficit substantially. However, the reserves will not last forever and if SFS wants to invest in its projects, revenue will be required beyond the membership revenues received at present.

The Finance report outlined some revenue raising opportunities, all of which will be pursued, but getting external grant funding is likely to be the most effective option.



It was reaffirmed that there was no intent to raise revenue by increasing the membership fees. For SFS, any increase would require a general meeting vote from the members as per the SFS constitution.

The possible confusion if SFS, local convivia and SFYN all applied for the same grants was raised, and it could only be avoided if there was adequate collaboration between the groups. When both SFS and SFYN both considered applying recently for the Scottish Government Good Food Nation fund, they met to agree boundaries to avoid this.

## 5. SF in the UK.

The finance discussion merged into SFUK as a number of issues were raised about the structure of SFUK and SFS and the tax implications. Shane made some observations about the membership collection process

- It is set up to offer yearly or monthly payments by direct debit. The direct debit process incurs charges, both for the setup and for each payment. These charges mean that unless the membership is above a certain threshold (of the order of 800 members), the cost of direct debit processing will exceed the membership subscriptions.
- Even with the whole UK membership using the direct debit scheme, the “low income” memberships (those at £1 per month) were almost costing us money.
- Using the SFS charity status to raise revenue by reclaiming VAT and utilising gift aid on subscriptions is currently not possible as membership monies are collected by SFUK Trust, and Supporters money by its trading arm. SFS could collect directly but would not be financially viable due to the DD costs as discussed above. SFS will still be able to reclaim any VAT on expenses we incur directly.
- SFUK has applied for Charitable status to become a CIO, the English equivalent of a SCIO, but has been refused due to the tighter conditions applied by the English charities body. (This might also impact SF Wales). However, they are still pursuing this as it would benefit all the countries through the potential to reclaim VAT and use Gift Aid. Shane will keep us informed of progress.
- Donations (rather than Supporters Scheme or membership subscriptions) could in theory be made directly to SFS and once the bank account is in place and we are registered with HMRC, Gift Aid and VAT recovery could apply.
- Donations to convivia who were not charities could in theory be made to SFS, Gift Aid claimed and if properly planned, the proceeds could be passed to the convivium.
- The unexpected HMRC expense mentioned in the Finance report is assumed to be the only one that has impacted SFUK, and there will be no further financial surprises of this nature. However there has been a downturn in the donations made to SFUK, and this will impact the revenues. SFUK and all the countries will need to focus on revenue raising to meet the shortfall.
- SFUK only accepts donations from organisations that fit with the ethics of Slow Food, and have refused donations in the past.

## 6. Membership and convivium development

John Cooke reported good growth both in the number of convivia (three new through the year - Glasgow, Tayside and North Fife, Aberdeen City and Shire) and growth in the overall membership. There is interest in new potential convivia in Inverness, Argyll and the Isles. All in all, very healthy.



To assist in setting up new convivia, a handbook is being developed to provide guidelines and give templates for a constitution, useful contacts, current Slow Food project areas etc.

## 7. Food sharing

Each convivium was asked to bring something that represented their convivium in a Slow Food context

- a. Aberdeen City and Shire brought local “rowies” or “butteries”, flat rolls described as salty, squishy croissants that have evolved to be easy for fishermen to hold and eat under difficult conditions at sea. They are researching historical recipes and looking for bakers to produce these to Slow Food standards and get into the Ark of Taste. Samples were supplied!
- b. Lindsay from Tayside and North Fife showed a slide presentation of a sample of their local products, from Arbroath Smokies to Sair-heid cake.
- c. Edinburgh showed the “Big Table” – the popular monthly dinners that form the focus of the convivium along with the many supporting restaurants.
- d. Glasgow is a city of immigration, with many people originally from rural backgrounds in the Highlands or Ireland. Their focus was on the street food well known to most Glaswegians – the Jeely Piece. Again samples were provided using home-baked sour dough bread and jam.
- e. The West of Scotland brought Ayrshire traditional Dunlop cheese from Stewarton.

## 8. Ark of Taste

Before Wendy Barrie gave her update on Ark, Donald mentioned the situation with Errington’s Cheese and the threatened closure of the business, posing a potential threat to all artisan cheesemakers and other small producers. SFS has formally sent a letter of support and will offer any help it can to ensure that they can re-establish trust in their cheeses. There is a “Just Giving” fund that one can contribute to help them with their legal costs.

(<http://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/joanna-blythman>)

Wendy had an extensive presentation that we will publish on the website. In summary, over the year we have gone from 13 to 39 products boarded onto the Ark, some of the more recent being the Colonsay bees, Fife and Ayrshire farmhouse cheeses, the mountain hare, artisan crowdie and so on.

The Ark has been featured on several food-related radio programmes and the press, and Wendy also presented it to the cross-party committee on food of the Scottish Parliament.

Workshops have been run with most of the convivia to help them identify and present their own candidates.

## 9. Terra Madre

Vivian Maeda, who was one of the five SFS delegates (the others were Steph Marsden - SFYN, Rachel Hammond - Charcuterie, Donal McKinnon – young crofter from Lewis, and Marcin Medregal – a Contini chef) gave a presentation outlining what she and the other delegates experienced at Terra Madre.



There were 3000 delegates, and 1000 volunteers at the event which took place across the whole of Turin, not just in one main hall. The weather was excellent, making it easy and pleasant getting from place to place.

Some details of the events and some photographs are included in Vivian's slides, which will be on the SFS website.

## 10. Slow Food Youth Network

The Scottish Youth Network was established with an "Eat-in" on the Royal Mile. It has gone on from strength to strength with a programme of activities that has generated considerable interest. These have ranged from their "What the Food" campaign through to film screenings, a Glasgow-based sensory supper, and a visit to the Pilot brewery. There was a particularly exciting visit from their Netherlands counterparts, which the Youth network (led by Gillian and Steph) hosted.

The Youth network are keen to engage with all of the convivia to generate interest from those involved in food related activities.

It should be noted that there is no membership requirement for the Youth network, and as such they have no formal funding and have requested assistance from SFS to help get themselves more formally set up, which is being met in part.

## 11. Formal AGM processes

The Chairman noted that the AGM also has a purpose to formalise some of the business of Slow Food Scotland and that there were two motions which required a vote from the members:

- a. To maintain the annual membership subscription fees at the current level and
- b. For SFS to continue to delegate administration of the Supporters Scheme and Chef Alliance to Slow Food in the UK.

Both motions were passed unanimously.

Donald also noted that the stepping down of Pam and John created two potential vacancies on the board, and members could vote in new trustees if there were any interested parties. However, no-one stepped forward. The current number of trustees is adequate, it leaves the opportunity to co-opt suitable candidates if necessary, but what we really need at the moment was volunteer assistance at the operational level on the working group and on the projects.

## 12. Chef Alliance

John Cooke stated that the Chef Alliance was successfully relaunched with a core of six chefs, one of whom is the AGM host, Graeme Pallister. The number has since more than doubled. The success here is due to Fiona Richmond, whose contacts have proved extremely helpful. She has also produced documents outlining how to approach chefs and "sell" the benefits of becoming a Chef Alliance member, what they need to do once they are accepted, and the overall process for getting chefs on board. The administration of take-on of the chefs, their entry into the SFUK and International organisation is being carried out by SFUK.

Fiona has stepped down now from her active role here as project manager/coordinator and we are seeking a replacement for her.



## 13. Priorities

John Cooke briefly stepped through what we needed to focus on for this year.

- a. Resources – both financial and staffing. If the right funding is secured, then there is the possibility of getting some aid staff.
- b. Increasing membership and convivia.
- c. Ark of Taste – target of 100 could be within reach if we have more submissions.
- d. Chef Alliance – both increasing the membership and also ensuring that it is not a dormant network. There has to be value for the chefs, and Slow Food – both SFS and the convivia - have to help with this.
- e. Supporter's Scheme – this needs to be established both to raise revenue, but also to ensure that Scotland pulls its weight in the scheme.
- f. Education – The Taste Adventure needs a strategic development plan and funding to expand and extend the reach.

## 14. Convivium Highlights

This item was moved to the end so that the formal parts of the meeting could take place before those with long journeys needed to leave. The convivia had been asked to discuss one thing that stood out for them in the year:

- a. Dundee & Tayside – the Ark of Taste workshop run by Wendy Barrie.
- b. Edinburgh – the Edinburgh Food Festival Slow Food stall for five days with a different food theme each day.
- c. Aberdeen – Slow Food themed feast with three SF suppliers at Café Bohème, with 45 guests and 5 suppliers aimed at raising membership. Very successful and planning one every two months.
- d. Glasgow – Let's Eat Festival with a social conscience. Taste Adventure success.
- e. West of Scotland – 15 members lost to the new Glasgow convivium, which they helped set up. 14 Farmers markets attended and several other events supported. May be scope for another convivium in Oban.

## 15. Questions/AOB

- a. Taste Adventure – request for updated kit and a new initiative for older children. Andrew Marsden pointed out that we were looking for more kits, and had made an unsuccessful request for funding for a kit for each convivium. Any initiative for older children could well involve Ark of Taste, even getting children to research and submit items.
- b. Slow Food Planet App status? – This is in progress for Edinburgh, being a sufficiently rich, but contained area to pilot the app. Edinburgh convivium can report on progress through the year. Vivian Maeda pointed out that Connect Local – a food and drink marketing advisory service was working on how to develop your own "Food Trail" which could complement the app.

## 16. Thanks and Close

There was a final thank you to all the attendees and speakers, and to Graeme Pallister for a fine lunch and to Scott and his team at Parklands for looking after us so well.