

MINUTE of MEETING of COUNCIL of  
THE SCOTTISH POTATO TRADE  
ASSOCIATION held in the ICE RINK,  
GLOVER STREET, PERTH at 2.00 p.m. on  
Thursday, 11th March, 1999.

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PRESENT: Messrs. A.M. Beattie, R.J.S. Doig, C.J. Herron, J.B. Hollywood, V. Lumb, J.R. McArthur, J. Macfarlane, J.L. Milne, A.B. Pullar, A.J.B. Redpath, J.O. Robertson, D.Y. Stewart, J.M. Swinton along with H.B. Edmond, the Secretary.

The Association President, Mr A.M. Beattie, occupied the Chair and welcomed those present at the meeting. He congratulated Mr A.J.B. Redpath on having become the proud father of triplets.

Before commencing the business of the meeting the Chairman referred to the recent death of another respected Member of the Trade, Mr Jim Smillie of J. & E. Smillie. The Secretary was instructed to write a letter to Mrs Smillie conveying Council's condolences to herself and family.

- (1) APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Messrs D.J. Harley, J.M. Marshall and K.A. McKenzie.
- (2) MINUTES: The Minute of the Meeting of Council of 28 January 1999 was taken as read, approved and signed.
- (3) MATTERS ARISING:
  - (a) Death of Past Trade Members: The Secretary reported that he had written to Mr M. Morris but as yet had not been able to obtain addresses for the relatives of Bill Grey or Donald Ross. Mr. J.O. Robertson thought he might be able to help.
  - (b) Millennium: Mr A. Pullar reported on his attempts to obtain an alternative venue to the Huntingtower Hotel for the annual dance to celebrate the Millennium. He had tried the Earl Grey Hotel and The Salutation Hotel but the popular opinion of Council was to remain with the Huntingtower Hotel for this year even although this would mean restricting the number attending and investigate other venues for future years. In addition to the two hotels mentioned above the Invercarse Hotel was also suggested as a possible contender.
  - (c) Subscriptions: The Secretary reported that £5,900 of subscriptions had so far been received which was approximately 40% of the total budgeted subscriptions.
  - (d) Association Investments: Arising from Item 6 it was agreed that now that the changes to the Constitution and Rules had been approved that the Secretary should go ahead and arrange the transfer of the investments to Greig Middleton & Co. Ltd. as the Stockbroker Nominees.
  - (e) Association Secretary/Treasurer: The Secretary reported that the bank mandates had all now been completed and that cheque payments were now being made in accordance with the terms agreed at the last meeting of Council.
  - (f) Item 16 Correspondence: Joe Swinton reported on the items of correspondence, which had been sent to him. He felt that no action was necessary.
  - (g) Curling: The Secretary reported that all the skips had been written to giving details of the date and time of the event. Gordon Henderson had made contact indicating that as he now lived in Banffshire he should represent the north. He

had however agreed to organise a team for this year, as it was the second round of the competition, which still had to be played.

- (4) BRITISH POTATO COUNCIL: A copy of the Minute of the meeting of the British Potato Council held on 2 February 1999 had been circulated by the Secretary. Mr Stewart gave a report on the meeting.

(a) Crop loss Policy: He indicated that the BPC had received claims for relief of levy contribution due to loss of crop by frost damage in the ground. There had been wide discussion on the subject but the decision was made to keep the present policy of allowing relief for flood loss in special circumstances only.

(b) Proposed new Levy Rates: He indicated that the proposed rates would bring in the same amount of money after allowing for inflation and the reduced area being planted. There would be no increase in spending. 95% of levies had been collected and legal action was being taken to collect the remainder. He also indicated that the consultation on the amended levy arrangements was being carried out by the 12 March in order to have it passed by Parliament before the implementation of the Scottish Parliament which could delay the amendments coming into force at the 1 July 1999.

(c) Sutton Bridge Experimental Station: There had been discussion on the future of Sutton Bridge and it had been agreed that the BPC would run the Station in the meantime while they continued to look for collaborative partners.

(d) Marketing Issues: The BPC had agreed to continue with the successful Earlies and Chip Week campaigns. It was announced that Ronnie McKay had left the BPC and the Council was recruiting a Team Leader and Field Managers.

(e) Other Matters: The British Potato Council's new website was up and running and D. Stewart recommended that members should have a look at it if they had access to facilities, the address is [www.potato.org.uk](http://www.potato.org.uk). He also indicated that the BPC had discussed the voluntary seed import ban and said they were willing to assist.

- (5) SCOTTISH SEED POTATO CONSULTATIVE PANEL: The Secretary had circulated The Minute of the meeting of 24 November 1998 and the Chairman asked for comments or questions. Concern was expressed at the increased extent of fields affected by PCN especially G. Pallida. It was decided that the subject including under grader testing should be an item for Council agenda in the future. The future of 50kgs bags was also a concern to Members. It was felt that the Health and Safety Executive would require two people to handle 50kgs bags and that the bag size may be reduced to 25kgs in the future.

- (6) STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS FOR POTATO PRODUCTION: The Chairman explained the background to the request for derogation and for his actions at the meeting on the 17 February. The SPTA had submitted one of four requests to the Scottish Office for derogation to allow the planting of twice saved seed in 1999. This was subsequently increased to two years. In the light of statistics presented at the meeting, the ware grower's survey carried out by the British Potato Council and the stance taken by the Scottish Office, the Chairman came to the conclusion that to press for a derogation for 1999 would fail and that the real problem will be in the year 2000. The SNFU had accused the SPTA of making a U-turn and the Chairman asked for the Council's support for his actions. L. Milne felt it was wrong not to hold the line agreed by Council. In the light of new evidence R. Doig considered it would be false to expect the Chairman to keep to instructions from Council. D. Stewart agreed that, as the Scottish Office was not going to give two years derogation anyway that the decision was the right one in the circumstances. After a lengthy discussion, Council agreed to support the

action of the Chairman. It was agreed that a letter be sent to Bill Reid of the SNFU in response to his of 24 February conveying the decision of Council on the subject. Correspondence from A. & P. Grewar on the same subject was considered. As the current season had highlighted a number of areas of dissatisfaction in the ware growing sector centred on controlled varieties and current legislation applied to maintain the 'Protected Area Status' there was a need to look at this whole area. It was agreed that a committee be set up to consider what can be done to resolve the problem. The committee would be chaired by Joe Swinton and was to include David Stewart, Logan Milne, Ron McArthur and Mike Beattie.

- (7) NASPM/SPTA MEETING: The proposal detailed in the report of the meeting between NASPM and SPTA on 11 February was explained by the Chairman. The proposition that a Joint Council with representation from both Associations be set up was unanimously agreed. The Joint Council would deal with matters passed to them by the two Association Councils whilst English or Scottish matters would continue to be dealt with by the individual Councils. It was felt there would be strength in this joint body, satisfying all NASPM and SPTA needs. A meeting of representatives from both Associations was to be arranged for April to formalise the make up of the new Council before a joint announcement would be issued.
- (8) POTATO INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL ORDER: AMENDED LEVY ARRANGEMENTS: The consultation paper was explained by the Chairman. He indicated that the proposed changes to include all handlers of potatoes cut out anomalies and would reduce the resentment felt at the way commission agents and producer co-operatives were treated. It was a simplified system and was preferred by most. It was unanimously agreed that the Association Council would support the proposals. The Secretary was instructed to respond by tomorrow's deadline by fax to the Scottish Office.
- (9) MEMBERSHIP OF COUNCIL: As requested Ron McArthur had prepared a proposal to reduce the size of Council. This was explained by Mr. McArthur. The President's view now was to leave well alone and not make any changes to the membership. He felt they all had areas of expertise useful to him and to the Council. A wide discussion took place with various suggestions but it was decided on a proposal by Jim Hollywood, that it should be reduced to 14 over a number of years by natural wastage. This was seconded by John Mcfarlane and all other motions were withdrawn.
- (10) ARBITRATION TRAINING SEMINAR: The Secretary informed Council that the seminar was going ahead on 17/18 June at York. The cost would be approximately £320 (now confirmed as £295 plus VAT per person). Details would be circulated to all members of the Association as soon as they came to hand. The Secretary was instructed to write to the SNFU with details when they became available.
- (11) CORRESPONDENCE: The Secretary reported that the following correspondence had been received:  
Letters from the Scottish Office headed:
- (a) "Consultation on Proposals for Emergency Temporary Relaxation of Statutory Requirements for Potato Production in Scotland". (Already issued to Council Members).
  - (b) News Release: "No Derogation on Seed Potatoes Required this Year".
  - (c) "The Food standards Agency: Consultation Seminars".
  - (d) "Mycotoxins - EC Permitted Levels".

- (e) "Meeting of the Seed Potato Consultative Panel – Friday 20 November 1998". (Already issued to Council Members).
- (f) "Potato Industry Development Council Order: Amended Levy Arrangements. (Already issued to Council Members).
- (g) "British Potato Council: Levy 1999/2000". (Already issued to Council Members).
- (h) Letter from Scottish Office, Public Health Policy Unit enclosing a copy of the report headed "Towards a Healthier Scotland".

Letters from Scottish Enterprise headed:

- (a) "Future Success for the Scottish Food and Drinks Industry – Action Planning Workshops 2/4 March 1999".
- (b) "Future Success for the Scottish Food and Drinks Industry, 2nd and 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1999 – REVISED TIMINGS".


Letters from the Pesticides Safety Directorate headed:

- (a) "Efficacy Testing : Rationalisation of Requirements for Taint Testing Pesticides".
- (b) "The Pesticides (Maximum Residue Levels in Crops, Food and Feeding Stuff) (Amendment) Regulation 1998".
- (c) "Revision of the Standard Black-Grass Warning Phrase on Herbicide Product Labels".
- (d) "Proposed Amendments to Pesticides Regulations".

EYEWITNESS Magazine from the British Potato Council with Seed Satisfaction Questionnaire enclosed.

Letter from the Event Director of International Festival of Fine Wine and Food at Olympia – 7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> October 1999.

- (12) DATE OF NEXT MEETING: It was confirmed that the next meeting of Council would be held on Thursday 6 May 1999 at Perth Ice Rink.
- (13) ANY OTHER BUSINESS: There being no further business the meeting closed with a vote of thanks to the Chairman.

AMS  
  
 6/5/99.