

## **CROSS-PARTY GROUP on CROFTING**

### **Meeting 1 of Parliamentary Session 4**

**Scottish Parliament, room TG20/21**

**Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2011 17.30**

## **MINUTES**

### **Present:**

Jamie McGrigor MSP (Chair)  
Patrick Krause SCF (Sec)  
Norman Leask SCF  
Russell Smith SCF  
Derek Flyn SCF  
Murdo MacLennan Crofters Commission  
Lucy Sumsion NFUS  
Jo Durno NFUS  
Jean Urquhart MSP  
Hugh Donaldson HIE  
Eleanor Arthur SCF  
Jim Lugton  
Rhoda Grant MSP  
Drew McFarlane-Slack Scottish Land & Estates  
Dave Thompson MSP

### **1. Welcome and Apologies.**

Jamie McGrigor welcomed everyone. Apologies received from:

Iain Dewar Scottish Government; Richard Frew SG; Bill Denholm SG; Murdo MacKay CnES; Rob Gibson MSP; Addie Doull Shetland Isles Council; Isobel MacCallum Highland Council; Alasdair Allen MSP; . Amy Corrigan RSPB, Nigel Miller NFUS; Sarah Anderson NFUS; Jean Balfour SL&E; Sarah-Jane Laing SL&E.

### **2. Cross party group official business**

The group agreed that Jamie McGrigor should be Convenor and that Rhoda Grant and Jean Urquhart should be Vice-Convenors.

### **3. Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting of 09 March 2011 were agreed with amendments for clarification from Richard Frew and Phil Burns (minutes circulated after this meeting).

### **4. Matters arising**

It was agreed that it would be useful to have someone from the woodland crofts project at a cross party meeting. **Action:** Patrick to arrange. A future topic of discussion to be creation of crofts on non-croft land.

SRDP to also be a future topic for discussion.

## 5. The Crofting Act 2010 – implementation update

Unfortunately the Scottish Government official was called away. Murdo MacLennan confirmed that implementation that involved the Crofters commission is on track.

**Action:** Richard Frew, head of implementation, to be asked to attend next meeting or send delegate.

## 6. Crofting Support

*grants / schemes*

*Livestock Improvement*

Paper on support to crofting agriculture deferred to next meeting.

*Tup Scheme.* It was agreed that the tup scheme was very useful and should be re-instated. There is much better facility to monitor now so a scheme would be measurable. Evidence should be available from NSA, QMS, Auctioneers, and SAC. Data needs to be gathered and a pilot scheme started with continual monitoring of market intelligence. It was pointed out that there is ground available at the bull-scheme stud farm – there could be shared costs.

**Action:** a letter to be sent from the group to the minister Stewart Stephenson asking for evidence to be gathered on quality of the Scottish flock since closing the scheme and whether the minister would agree *in principle* to the re-instatement of a scheme, especially for native / appropriate breeds such as Cheviot and Blackface.

**Action:** Norman, Russell, Jim and Lucy to form a sub-group and gather information and prepare a brief for next meeting.

*Bull scheme.* There has been a big push on stud farm development. It is unclear who will manage the scheme.

**Action:** Crofters Commission to provide full update on stud farm development and bull scheme management at next meeting.

## 7. AOB

*New crofts.* The woodland crofts project which had a project officer seconded from FCS and funded by HIE has come to an end. There will be a final report.

**Action:** circulate final report. Ask someone from FCS to next meeting to talk about the project and barriers to woodland croft creation.

**Action:** Murdo MacLennan to provide a report to the group for the next meeting on how many new crofts have been created and how much new land has come into crofting (i.e. non-croft land becoming croft land) since the 2007 Act. Has the Act been effective?

*Landholders act 1911.* Consolidation of the Landholders Act needed urgently. The Landholders Act is impossible to find, it is only referred to. The Landholders Act could be consolidated with the promised consolidation of the Crofters Acts.

**Action:** a letter to be sent from the group asking the Minister his intention to fulfil the previous minister's stated intention to consolidate the crofting Acts in the course of this Parliamentary session. To ask if he will include the Landholders Act 1911.

**Action:** Derek Flyn to write a brief for the next meeting.

*Renewables.* What will follow up on the croft renewables meeting organised by the previous minister for enterprise in January?

**Action:** SCF to liaise with Paul Smith, Scottish Government official for renewables.

*Common Grazings.* Attention drawn to the study 'Trends in Common Grazings' an HIE funded study. It was pointed out that much of Europe's peatlands are in Scotland, and much of Scotland's peatlands in common grazing land. The crofting counties could benefit from their management of peatlands – e.g. carbon trading.

*Meat inspection.* Attention drawn to opportunity for Scotland to manage its own meat inspection and to use the veterinary service more effectively to bring the cost of meat inspection down and to enable small-scale local abattoirs to be created.

## **8. DONM**

Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2011 17.30