



NEWS RELEASE

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CROFTING COMMUNITY CAMPAIGN SHORT-LISTED FOR AWARD

The crofting community's campaign against the Crofting Reform Etc Bill, introduced in the last parliamentary session, has been short-listed for the prestigious Third Force News (TFN) "Campaign of the Year" Award.

The crofters' campaign, led by their representative organisation the Scottish Crofting Foundation (SCF), was in response to a Bill drafted by Scottish Executive civil servants with little crofting community participation or consultation. SCF Chairman Norman Leask said, "The community was dismayed and at first reacted with fatalism – they felt that it was a stitch-up. But crofters got together at the many SCF meetings we held and their dismay began to turn to annoyance and to action."

There followed a concerted campaign in the media and lobbying of MSPs which resulted in a Parliamentary Committee taking the unprecedented step of holding a series of evidence gathering sessions in the crofting areas. The resulting report of the Environment and Rural Development Committee was severely critical of the Scottish Executive's procedures and its attempts to force an unwelcome Bill upon a community. The Bill was then drastically cut and a Committee of Inquiry into crofting set up – the first in over 50 years.

The TFN Annual Charity Awards attracted a large number of very high quality applications in five categories and short-listed applicants will attend an awards ceremony in Glasgow on 24th May. The SCF will attend the ceremony as the crofters' representative organisation. Norman Leask concluded, "I feel it is a great privilege to be able to represent crofters and thank the communities, the volunteers and the staff who made the campaign such a success – this was really community participation in action".

END

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Notes to editors

Picture can be found at: <http://www.croftingfoundation.co.uk/contact.shtml>