



## **NEWS RELEASE**

**Use: Immediate**

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### **CROFTING CONCERNS RAISED WITH MINISTER**

The Scottish Crofting Foundation recently met with the crofting Minister Michael Russell MSP to consider the pressing issues facing crofting and wider Scottish culture.

The SCF Chair, Norman Leask said “The bull scheme was top of the agenda, but until the Shucksmith Inquiry reports and the economic appraisal is complete, no satisfactory progress can be reported. We wait with bated breath. On the theme of the remit of the Crofters Commission, discussion took place on the possibility of completing a map based register of crofts and common grazings. This has been a long standing bone of contention as the lack of accurate records is causing all sorts of problems and hindering development. However, we appreciate that it can not be rectified overnight, but crofters do need to see progress on this.

“We then moved on to the proposed Road Equivalent Tariff trial. It appears to assist some short journeys but longer journeys will see little or no benefit. It seems to me that since the EU has a mechanism for levelling the playing field for the peripheries, i.e. the Less Favoured Area Support Scheme, we must look seriously this time at how the scheme can support outlying areas and islands. I thank the Minister for these and other assurances on LFASS”.

Leask continued, “It was agreed that in the new year meetings will be held on regionalisation. Should, God forbid, another foot and mouth or similar outbreak occur it should be easy to control movements of livestock in and out of islands but we also feel the whole Crofting Counties could be contained as a bi-security unit. Also a much stronger Scottish border could be put in place so that we are not flushed down the toilet by the Westminster government again.”

“We finished off our discussions agreeing that Ally Bain was right (when he spoke so eloquently on BBC Scotland in support of the Lemon Tree in Aberdeen) that for forty years he and many others have kept the concept of nationhood alive with traditional Scottish music. I stressed that I believed further to this that ever since the ‘45 rebellion, crofting, its people, traditions and music had held

this nation state together despite the attack on our people, culture, dress, language and way of life.”

Leask concluded, “It is inspiring to be dealing with a Minister who clearly has so much knowledge of and commitment to crofting. It has been really humbling for a poor dyslexic crofter to be treated so courteously by probably the most astute politician I have had the privilege to know”.

END

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**Notes to editors**

Picture can be found at: [http://www.croftingfoundation.co.uk/index.php/contact\\_headoffice](http://www.croftingfoundation.co.uk/index.php/contact_headoffice)