

Crofting Commission Election 2017 – Candidate Statements

East Highlands Constituency

John McMorran

The forthcoming election presents the opportunity for a fresh start – much needed after the recent discord which has attracted media attention for all the wrong reasons. Crofting needs an effective governing body with Commissioner's representing all areas and interests within crofting. No easy task, given the geographical spread of the crofting counties.

I am standing because I believe crofting is a valuable part of our rural fabric, contributing to the retention of people and the economy of the Highlands and Islands. Aside from my own crofting experience and role as Grazing's clerk, I was a Director of the Scottish Crofting Foundation (2003-2005) 3 years on the Sutherland Partnership and six years on the Brora community council.

My extensive experience in crofting, land management and community engagement has given me appropriate insight and knowledge, making me a suitable candidate to represent the East Highland constituency as Crofting Commissioner.



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Archie MacNab

I believe a lifetime of practical experience in crofting, agriculture, rural affairs seasoned with a professional career in the delivery of crofting regulation and support schemes for crofters equips me to face the future challenges in crofting. I believe I can make a substantial and productive contribution to protect the future of the crofting system for crofters, their families and for future generations of crofters.

If elected to represent the East Highland I shall undertake the role with the same passion and commitment that I brought to my previous service to crofting, to serve crofters and their families, to protect and nurture crofting by listening and championing it as a relevant form of land use, publically and within the corridors of the Scottish Government and beyond.

I am committed to bring my knowledge and understanding of crofting issues to the new Board of the Crofting Commission.



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Rod MacKenzie

An active lifelong crofter I live and work on my croft outside Beaulieu mainly with suckler cows and sheep.

An auctioneer to trade, now part time, I am also the Secretary of the Black Isle Show and enjoy what is known nowadays as a "portfolio career".

Crofting has evolved from an essential activity for many families in the not too distant past to nowadays, a lifestyle choice.

It is not the fundamentals which have changed but the times in which we live. There are many opportunities out there to enhance the income from crofting and also to invest in assets through many government funded schemes. I feel crofting has to revert to basic practical principles which have been the backbone of this way of life for centuries.

I see the challenge and way forward as how we make this a sustainable way of life in a rapidly changing rural environment.



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West Highlands Constituency

Peter O'Donnghaile (Donnelly)

Active crofters keep townships alive. They make the difference between working communities and leisure villages. The commission must regulate to support active crofting, protecting croft land and enabling the next generation of crofters to raise families on working crofts.

In 2013 Scotland had the opportunity to bring crofts of 0.4 ha into the new CAP basic farm payment scheme but instead excluded holdings below 3 hectares. I am on public record as having argued for the lower limit.

Crofting needs fair and effective regulation. We are all aware of serious conflicts within the commission in recent months. It is vital that the new commisioners address any residual conflicts within the organisation and then build the confidence of the crofting community.

The commission's role is regulatory. Elected individuals may however make the case for crofting development to support the wider rural economy. If elected I intend to do that.



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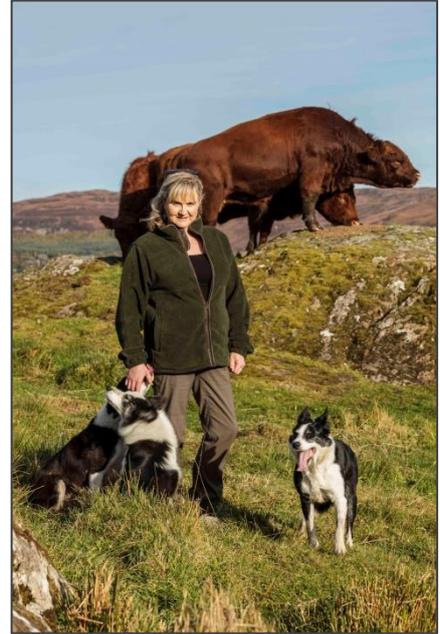
West Highlands Constituency

Mairi Renwick Mackenzie (53)

I was born and brought up in Inverbroom, near Ullapool, and have been involved in farming and crofting all my life. I also run a busy 4 star Bed and Breakfast. I have helped neighbouring farmers and crofters complete annual IACS/SAF forms for over 20 years.

I think that crofting has a hugely important part to play in the infrastructure and economy of the Highlands. In addition, the croft is vital for preserving not just the natural habitat, but also the heritage of the area and our way of life.

My background, contacts and experience make me an ideal candidate for election to the Crofting Commission board. I would value the opportunity to be part of a team which is instrumental in shaping the future of crofting and in helping the commission to be a more effective regulator. To that end, I would appreciate your vote in the forthcoming commissioner elections.



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West Highlands Constituency

Jonathan Hedges

We moved to the Highlands nearly twenty years ago, I am a crofter and postman in Rogart. We have a small flock of sheep and are improving the croft. I am active within the Community Council, Development Trust, Scottish Woodlot Association and the Grazings Committee.

The Crofting Commission is now purely a regulator. When effective, this encourages active crofters. Traditionally crofters have regulated themselves. Neighbours expected you to be an active crofter. We need to make sure that this positive tradition continues. I appreciate the frustrations with rules and regulations, but the fundamental rules are simple. I believe having a croft is a privilege, with this there are responsibilities.

The Crofting Commission needs to provide clear guidance. The regulation needs to be accountable, transparent, understandable and as cost effective as possible.

Crofting is the future for my family. Crofting should continue to be the foundation for all our Highland communities.



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Western Isles Constituency

Iain Maciver

I believe my knowledge of crofting's complex legislation and my experience in dealing with the day to day tensions synonymous with crofting life can help contribute to what an effective Crofting Commission, and crofting needs at this time.

I feel the new Commission will have to work hard to earn the trust and respect of crofters through effective engagement in pursuit of sound judgements on many complex and diverse issues.

It must also seek to restore from Government its development function to better support crofters in fulfilling their objectives for the good of crofting.

The Government has promised crofting legislation reform during this Parliament, and the Commission should be focused on influencing an outcome capable of cementing crofting's future.

I would be hugely privileged if chosen to take up that challenge which I would approach with the same level of commitment which helped set the SCU on its epic journey.



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Western Isles Constituency

Alasdair MacEachen

My Environmental Health remit involves dealing with issues concerning the land, marine and built environments, extending to areas of public health, animal welfare and not least, an increasing involvement in the regulatory side of the food industry.

All of my professional working life has been spent on the Western Isles where I have lived on and worked the croft that has been in our family for several generations.

At times when I do travel off the island, I enjoy visiting other island communities to discover how other remote and sometimes sparsely populated communities meet the challenges of the twenty first century.

I trust therefore that, if elected to the Board, my knowledge and experience as summarised here will stand me in good stead to work as an effective Commissioner to serve the constituency of the Western Isles.

Cleachdaibh ur bhòt agus nì mi mo dhìcheall dhuibh.



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South West Highlands Constituency

Uilleam Smith

I am from an Islay crofting family, having worked for 9 years with the Department of Agriculture in Argyllshire, dealing with crofting grants, subsidies and regulation. I have been a member of SCU/SCF for 30 years. Before retirement, I was employed for 16 years with the Crofters Commission, especially attending to common grazings issues.

I was disappointed with the Crofting Commission's recent handling of common grazings cases and believe a change is needed, therefore I am a candidate in these elections.

If elected, I will

- * be responsive to the needs of crofters and crofting communities
- * promote the interests of crofting
- * help progress the 5 Actions for Crofting proposed by SCF, which have been broadly agreed by the Government, to conclusions beneficial to crofting
- * seek to ensure there is thoughtful land use, when development on croftland is proposed

Uilleam Smith can be contacted on 07788528067 or uilleamac2@gmail.com



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South West Highlands Constituency

Catherine MacKinnon

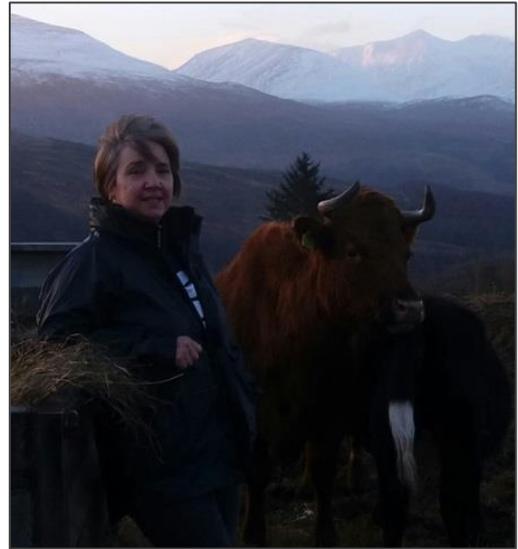
It is time for change.

VOTE CATHERINE MACKINNON

The Crofting Commission needs to move forward into a new era. We need at least one female voice on a Board of nine. We need a Crofting Commission that works for crofters, not against. We need positive PR. We need to put the past behind us.

Raised and now raising my own family (along with my husband who hails from the Isle of Barra) on the croft in Lochaber, I want to see a bright future for crofting and crofters. Nobody knows where Brexit will take us. We need to grasp the opportunities as they arise.

Previous employment: HIE/Lochaber Ltd/LEADER, UHI/Lochaber College. I have liaised widely with communities, agencies and individuals facilitating developments and negotiating funding. I initiated the croft entrant scheme in Lochaber in 1993. Qualifications: BSc Hons Geography, SVQ V Strategic Management, HNC Gaelic Language & Culture.



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South West Highlands Constituency

Billy Neilson

Together we can build a Crofting Legacy to be proud of.

Over the past year we have seen The Crofting Commission and the crofting community's affairs being played out in the media. What has this waste of time and resources achieved? Could it have been handled better and how has this reflected on crofting as a whole?

I am standing as a candidate for election to the board of The Crofting Commission 2017 because I believe my wide experience in agriculture, crofting and rural affairs can make a substantial contribution in strengthening the future for crofters, their families and the wider community.

We have a duty to ensure the people who carry traditional land based skills, which respect and care for their community and their environment are supported in every way possible, in order that they might hand over to the next generation a Crofting legacy to be proud of.

