



## **NEWS RELEASE**

**Use: Immediate**

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### **Highland and Moray Social Crofting Network grows with launch of website and social media pages**

Following on from a successful inaugural event at Glachbeg croft on the Black Isle, the Scottish Crofting Federation's social crofting initiative moved to Elchies in Moray to take the next steps to making this groundbreaking scheme a reality. Jointly funded by Moray Leader and Highland Leader this project furthers the principle of green care – the promotion of social, mental and physical wellbeing through working the land. The initiative seeks to develop the inputs from crofters and others who are interested in developing a formal network to explore this emerging labour market as an opportunity for diversification.

Attendees at the meeting came from across the country – Lochaber to Lossiemouth – and the hosts, Elchies of Speyside, multiple award winners for their high quality goat meat and mutton, gave an overview of their business model which includes a number of community targeted activities including work with local schools and children of all ages and abilities. Presentations were then given by Stephen Wiseman and Ruairaidh Milne from N4H (Nature for Health, for Happiness, in the Highlands) who explained some of the research into benefits which people can receive from outdoor activities. Focus groups then explored what the project could set out to achieve to help crofters enter this field of activity before a final word from Karrie Marshall - author, international speaker and founder of Creativity in Care, a community arts company working with a wide range of people.

Julie Comins, of Elchies, said 'it is wonderful to be able to host initiatives like this. Our ethos is to make farming accessible and understandable to everyone and today we have seen that there are real benefits to be had both for crofters and those who can experience, in whatever small way, the provenance of our food through the land we live in.' Ailsa Strange, Gaining Ground Project Administrator with the Scottish Crofting Federation who launched their new social Crofting digital hub today, said 'Elchies presents a very different perspective on social crofting to the model we experienced at Glachbeg – both are valid and both are exemplars that can signpost what we are trying to achieve through this project. We are looking forward to creating some real, usable and valuable resources from the outputs of these meetings which will inform and guide crofters into this emerging opportunity'. For further information visit our website: <http://social.crofting.org/>

END

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**Notes to editors**

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