



NEWS RELEASE

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Crofting Federation plans for the year ahead with new chair

The Board and Council of the Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) held its first meeting of the new year on Friday, at which a new chair was appointed and the priorities for 2021 were set.

"As the only organisation dedicated to campaigning for crofters and fighting for the future of crofting," said SCF's chair Donald MacKinnon, "this year is going to be busy with many fronts to cover on behalf of crofters. Leaving Europe, the single market and the customs union, will bring many challenges with regards to trading livestock and meat, and croft production generally. A new agricultural support system is being developed for UK and Scotland now that we are no longer in the Common Agriculture Policy, and crofting must be represented, especially for support to the more challenged and fragile areas. It is absolutely imperative that crofters join together under one banner to protect our rights." Mr MacKinnon added. "We have had some significant wins in the past year, not least our campaign that got the convergence funding more fairly distributed, but we still have the second tranche to fight for. The benefit to crofters of this increased share of the rebate alone will pay for their SCF subscription many times over."

Donald MacKinnon crofts on the West Side of Lewis, where he keeps Blackface and Cheviot sheep. He has led the SCF young crofters for many years and has been vice-chair of the organisation for the past two years, before being elected chair.

He went on to say, "The climate emergency is going to dominate all we do and crofters have an important part to play, having a very sound record in good management of our environment. A significant proportion of high nature value areas in Scotland are under crofting tenure, for example the machair, known for its incredible biodiversity, and peatlands, which are the best ecosystem for sequestering carbon. Crofting is starting from a good position, but we can always do more to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, measures such as restoring degraded peatland and reducing inputs are just some of the many ways that crofters can help tackle the climate crisis.

"The National Development Plan for Crofting is due to be finalised in this session of government and there is much at stake in this for crofters. Also, whilst crofting law reform has been put on hold for now, it is important that we press for recommencement after the election.

"Many things that effect crofting are discussed in 'stakeholder' meetings and are therefore open to competition from other sector representatives," Mr MacKinnon concluded. "It is essential that crofting is represented by the organisation set up by crofters, run by crofters, for crofters."
END

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Notes to editors

Please contact SCF office for high resolution photos