



NEWS RELEASE

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Alignment on crofting issues bodes well for next session of government

The Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) held its hustings last night and found election candidates were remarkably aligned on key issues for crofting, despite expected policy differences

SCF's Russell Smith, who chaired the meeting, said "The meeting was very lively, with a good range of questions from the audience and interesting, if often predictable, responses from the candidates - Alasdair Allan, Ariane Burgess, Rhoda Grant, Edward Mountain, Molly Nolan, and Andy Wightman. The thing that really stood out was the degree of consensus on the main issues, for example having crofting law reform early in the next session; progressing land reform; resourcing the Crofting Commission adequately to do the job of crofting development; supporting growth of local produce; and the recognition of crofting being a low-impact system of managing land and producing food, a positive contributor to biodiversity and climate stabilisation."

Donald MacKinnon, chair of the SCF, added "There were some big issues that had alignment and which were relevant to our drive on increasing access to crofts; for example the need to create more crofts as well as freeing up unused ones, increasing supply of crofts to bring down the price, the idea that crofting legislation should be extended across the whole of Scotland and should include all smallholdings. There seemed to be a common theme of decentralisation coming out of the discussions: the localisation of decision making, the retention of locally-derived wealth, local government, community involvement, local input to crofting regulation and crofting development, and local food production, sale and consumption."

Mr Smith concluded, "This bodes well for getting cross-party support for crofting issues and legislation in the next session. Whichever party leads the government, it is very important that the parties and individual MSPs work together on developing this unique and widely acclaimed system of land tenure."

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