



NEWS RELEASE

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Crofting Federation endorses the formation of an expanded Scottish Land Court

The Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) has welcomed the unification of the Scottish Land Court and the Lands Tribunal for Scotland to form an expanded body dealing with land related litigation.

"It makes sense to amalgamate the Scottish Land Court and the Lands Tribunal for Scotland," said Donald MacKinnon, chair of SCF. "The two have many common functions and purposes and unification could enhance the powers and scope of one body that deals with land related litigation.

"The land court should take in the functions of the tribunal and an amalgamation must not dilute its powers in any way. The land court has always been respected by our members and recognised as a fair arbiter. Our members want it to continue to do site visits and convene in the townships."

Mr MacKinnon continued, "In addition, the new land court should take on environmental judgements as these are relevant to its remit and its reputation as a fair arbiter would be beneficial in such judgements. It would be appropriate to also take on march dykes, runrig and division of commonties. Likewise the sheriff court's role in land related cases should come under the jurisdiction of the land court, and the 'right to take responsible access' cases should also be transferred. We also agree that the land court would be a more appropriate forum for litigation on land reform. But we accept that it could make sense to merge the organisations and let it bed in before adding additional functions."

Mr MacKinnon concluded, "A single body devoted to the matters currently dealt with by both would have more coherence and efficacy. All things affecting crofting and land should reside with the new Scottish Land Court."

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