



NEWS RELEASE

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CROFTING FEDERATION APPOINTS NEW CHAIR

The Board of the Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) held its quarterly meeting last week, at which a new chair, Jonathan Hedges, a crofter from Rogart, was appointed.

"It is a great honour to be appointed to this important role" said Jonathan Hedges, SCF's new chair, "albeit a little daunting. I have to fill the shoes of our immediate past chair, Donald MacKinnon, and also follow on from an impressive line of previous chairs. However, they have all helped to build a vibrant federation that is the only organisation solely dedicated to fighting for crofting. We have our work cut out but we have a strong team to represent our members."

Jonathan Hedges crofts in Rogart, Sutherland, where he keeps sheep, producing meat and wool, cuts hay, has hens and a few pigs. He has also been planting trees strategically on the croft. A member of SCF for many years, he has been on the board for four years, before being elected chair.

Mr Hedges continued, "A new agricultural support system is being developed for Scotland now that we are no longer under the European Common Agriculture Policy, and crofting must be represented, especially for support to smaller units and the more challenged and fragile areas. It is absolutely imperative that crofters join together under one banner to protect our rights.

"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, extensive mixed grazing and planting low-density woodland are just some of the many ways that crofters can help tackle the climate crisis.

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

Please contact SCF office for high resolution photos