



## Minute of the meeting of the Scottish Land Commissioners held on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May at An Lochran, Inverness

- **Commissioners present:** Michael Russell (Chair), Calum MacLeod, Craig Mackenzie, Lucy Beattie, Deb Roberts, Rob Black
- **In attendance:** Hamish Trench, Nikki Nagler, Kathie Pollard, Gemma Campbell, Julie Rostan, Scarlett Macfarlane
- **Apologies:** None
- **Declarations of interest:** None

### 1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 March 2026 were agreed as true and accurate.

### 2. Commissioners Updates

Commissioners provided an update on recent activity representing the Commission and other external matters relevant to our work. The board noted that the details of new ministerial portfolios were expected to be confirmed in the following week.

### 3. Quarterly Progress Report

The board considered the quarterly progress annexes in turn.

The board welcomed the delivery completed by year-end, noting there were no further changes or delays shown beyond those previously agreed. Nikki provided a further update on the end of year financial position, taking our underspend to under 1% and the board welcomed this successful outcome.

The board reviewed the strategic risks, noting and agreeing that uncertainty over the election period and new government priorities, together with uncertainties on implementation of the Land Reform Act, remain the biggest drivers of risk for both delivery and reputation. The board agreed that it accepts the risks associated with act implementation is likely to remain relatively high over the coming year, meaning our planning for the new Commissioner role and organisational implications is a high priority.

Rob provided an update on tenant farming casework and also confirmed that an appointment has been made to the new tenant farming officer post.

## **4. Community Ownership Advice**

Kathie, Gemma and Julie provided further background information on the findings of this work and our proposed advice.

The board welcomed the research findings and agreed the focus of the proposed advice. In particular, the board emphasised the importance of the Scottish Land Fund, agreeing that the Commission should be clear in advising of the value in retaining the fund, the impact it has, and improvements through multi-year funding and increased capital budget.

The board also supported the key role flagged for post-acquisition support, noting in particular the geographical differences that can arise due to differences in enterprise agency roles.

The board supported the proposal that specific arrangements may be required to support acquisitions of large landholdings, but asked that further thought is given to the practical way of doing this, recognising that ring-fenced funds could give rise to other practical challenges in managing a fund. The principle of exploring further potential of loan funding as well as grant funding was supported.

The board noted that the findings would be discussed with the Community Land Leadership Group, before a final report is prepared.

## **5. Land Reform Act implementation update**

Hamish introduced the regular update at each board meeting on progress in 2025 Act implementation. He noted that work has developed significantly, including agreed working arrangements with Scottish Government and internal working beginning to scope the approach to delivering the Land and Communities Commissioner functions.

He noted the proposed series of board discussions scheduled through the year on specific topics, which will begin with the approach to the new LCC functions, then look at individual topics and processes required.

The board emphasised the importance of considering the governance arrangements within the board and organisation, and the interactions of the new Commissioner role with other Commissioners, ahead of the appointment of the new Commissioner.

The board noted work underway, confirmed that regular time should be scheduled for more in-depth discussions on specific aspects of implementation, and noted that the Scottish Government has not yet confirmed the implementation timetable.

## **6. AOB**

Dates and locations of future meetings were confirmed.

Noting this is Calum's final meeting as a Commissioner, the board thanked Calum again for his contribution to the organisation over the last 18 months.

**Date of next meeting:**

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June

Langholm