



SCOTTISH LAND COMMISSION  
COIMISEAN FEARAINN NA H-ALBA

## **Minutes of the meeting of the Scottish Land Commissioners held on Tuesday 18 April 2017 at Longman House Inverness**

**Present:** Andrew Thin (Chair), Dr Sally Reynolds, Lorne MacLeod, Prof David Adams, Megan MacInnes (Land Commissioners), Dr Bob McIntosh (Tenant Farming Commissioner), Hilary Pearce (interim CEO), Scott Strachan (interim HR Manager), Claire Bremner, Posy MacRae, Caron Munro (Scottish Land Commission).

### **1. Minutes of meeting held on 28 March 2017**

The minutes of the meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record subject to the following clarification:

- Page 2 that the possibility of procuring research contracts was discussed with a view to ensuring tenders for initial work/thinkpieces had been received and were ready for work on before the Head of Policy and Research for Land and the Head of Policy and Research for Tenant Farming are in post.

Actions arising had all been completed or were underway. **(Action: Hilary to amend the minutes)**

It was discussed that by the next Commissioners meeting the Heads of Policy and Research posts may be filled and the Land Commission should have an emerging view of how they would prioritise spending the research contracts budget. **(Action: Hilary to contact the Environmental Analytical Services Team in Scottish Government to discuss their capacity for research contracts and to determine how best to move forward with the tendering process)**

### **2. Interim Chief Executive's Report**

It was agreed that Hilary will report to the Commissioners regarding the budget at each monthly meeting. It was noted that the Information Commissioner for Scotland is interested in the Land Commission as a new body and there may be a need for FOISA training. **(Action: All board members to receive FOISA training)**

The Commissioners were provided with a communications and events update. A number of 'Meet & Greet' events have been organised to take place throughout the year. A press release is to be issued this week promoting the events. They will also

be promoted across social media and stakeholders have been asked to raise awareness of the events through their channels. The Communications Manager is looking into holding a land reform conference at the end of September to launch the Commission's Strategic Plan. It was advised that Highlands & Islands Enterprise (HIE) are planning a community development conference in the Autumn. **(Action: Hilary and Posy are to look in to options for a conference, including Ministerial involvement. Hilary to report at the next meeting regarding options for the Land Commission to be involved in the HIE community conference and also Community Land Scotland (CLS) and HIE involvement in the land reform conference)**

The 2017-18 budget allocation was discussed. It was suggested that the Land Commission should look into how much of the yearly expenditure is fixed. **(Action: Hilary to indicate on the next budget plan how much of the annual expenditure is fixed)**. It was discussed that the Commission will need to look at the budget after the first quarter. **(Action: Hilary to report against the corporate plan for future meetings)**

### **3. Tenant Farming Commissioner's update**

The Tenant Farming Commissioner advised Commissioners that an advisory forum is currently being setup with representatives from industry bodies. It was also shared that there may be a news announcement calling on people to delay rent reviews due to the uncertain implications of Brexit. There has been a healthy level of interest from the press following the launch of the Land Commission with an article being published in the Press and Journal focussing on the work of the Tenant Farming Commissioner.

It was confirmed that all Commissioners have received information relating to Tenant Farming as a brief on the role of the Tenant Farming Commissioner and an insight into their work.

### **4. Internal audit provision – recommendation**

It was noted that the Audit and Risk Committee had met with Tony Forteza from the Scottish Government to discuss the options for internal audit going forward. It has been advised that if the Land Commission were to go to an external company to carry out the audit there would still be a requirement for assistance from the Scottish Government due to restrictions on certain systems which would incur an additional cost. It was agreed that the Land Commission therefore use the Scottish Government for the internal audit for 2017-18.

### **5. Any other business**

The chair has circulated the 'On Board' manual to all Commissioners. It was confirmed that attendance at On Board training is mandatory for all Commissioners

and anyone who cannot attend the training on 22 June will be required to attend training at a later date.

It has been agreed with Bridget Campbell that as the Commissioners were appointed in December their appraisals will take place in September 2017 and in the April of any following years.

The Commissioners discussed the invitation to the Scottish Green Network Forum on 15 June. It was decided that it was optional to accept or decline this invitation.

It was suggested that it would be beneficial for the Land Commission to work in connection with the Scottish Human Rights Commission in regards to the Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement, although the Scottish Human Rights Commission's response to the statement has not yet been made public. It was suggested that it may be beneficial to invite the Scottish Human Rights Commission to one of the Land Commissions monthly Commissioners meetings. **(Action: Hilary and Posy to discuss which bodies should be invited to the August, September and October Commissioners meetings and invite representatives from the Scottish Human Rights Commission to attend the Land Commission's Meet and Greet event in Edinburgh.)**

Concern was raised over the need to reinforce that the Land Commission is interested in both urban and rural land. **(Action: Posy to ensure we raise awareness on the focus on both urban and rural land. Posy to also look into the possibility of attending any urban focused events)**

## **6. Strategic context, vision and priorities workshop**

The Commissioners held a workshop with staff to discuss and develop a strategic plan for the Scottish Land Commission. **(Action: Andrew to develop a draft version of the strategic plan)**

**Date of next meeting: Tuesday 23 May 2017**

Scottish Land Commission  
April 2017  
(Minutes agreed 18 April 2017)