



SCOTTISH LAND COMMISSION
COIMISEAN FEARAINN NA H-ALBA

Minutes of the meeting of the Scottish Land Commissioners held on Tuesday 12th May

Commissioners Present: Andrew Thin (Chair), Sally Reynolds, Lorne MacLeod, Megan MacInnes, David Adams (Land Commissioners), Bob McIntosh (Tenant Farming Commissioner)

In Attendance: Hamish Trench, Sarah Allen, Posy MacRae, Shona Glenn, Emma Cooper, James MacKessack-Leitch, Caron Munro (Scottish Land Commission)

There were no declarations of interest.

The Chair welcomed Emma Cooper to the organisation as the Head of Land Rights and Responsibilities.

1. Minutes of previous meeting 3rd March 2020

The Commissioners agreed the minute of the previous meeting as an accurate record of the discussion and all actions have been completed.

2. Covid-19 Response and Implications

Hamish advised the Commissioners that the staff have responded well to the change in circumstances and move to working from home. He advised that the staff are currently working with reduced capacity due to responsibilities caring for children and others. He advised that the Commission continues to deliver the programme of work largely as planned with changes being made to the delivery plan for some projects to adapt to the changes in working. The Commissioners were asked to consider any impact the current circumstances may have on the next strategic plan.

Hamish advised that the Commission has continued a programme of communications and publications, while being sensitive to the current situation. He advised that going forward the Commission will look to how our work can best contribute to the recovery from the pandemic.

The Commissioners were advised that there was not expected to be any delay to the annual report and accounts for 2019-20 as a result of the situation and they will be presented to the Audit and Risk Committee in draft at their meeting in June.

It was agreed that the management team will keep the annual business plan under review, monitoring the work that has been done in the first quarter and review areas which are urgent.

The Commissioners expressed their thanks to the staff for their hard work during the current time. They expressed their concern over staff wellbeing and asked the management team to monitor staff wellbeing. Posy advised that the Commission were going to carry out a short survey to staff on the Covid response and their wellbeing. Results of this and the full staff survey will be shared with Commissioners.

It was noted that communication with some stakeholders had reduced over recent weeks due to changing priorities and some needing to focus on issues rising from the pandemic. It was agreed that the management team will monitor communications with stakeholders and ensure discussions are still taking place when relevant.

It was suggested that the Commission can learn a lot from current working from home practices and should identify learning that can be taken into new longer term ways of working.

The Commissioners discussed the Strategic Plan and any considerations which should be made in light of the current situation. It was suggested that the Commission could consider both the timing and the focus of the Strategic Plan and Programme of Work if appropriate.

Action 20051201	Hamish to speak with Scottish Government regarding the timing and focus strategic plan and the risks and opportunities involved.
Action 20051202	Add discussion on Strategic Plan to June meeting agenda

3. Quarterly Progress Report

Delivery

Hamish advised of good levels of delivery in the final quarter of 2019-20 and a financial out-turn on target.

Report from ARC Chair

The Chair of the ARC advised that the next meeting of the Committee will be held in June. He is satisfied with the year-end turnaround and the underspend in budget was expected as it was forecast in advance.

Strategic Risk Register

Hamish advised that the management team has been reviewing the risks to the organisation following the current situation.

The Commissioners discussed the risk register. It was noted that:

- the ARC will consider reframing risk 3 to reflect the focus on quality and not just quantity;
- in relation to risk 8, the Commission are actively keeping connections with all relevant directorates and are aware that many government staff are being redeployed to respond to the pandemic;

- the Commission will have a clearer view on risk 10 at the end of quarter 1; and
- the Commission has measures in place to review staff wellbeing in relation to risk 11.

Action 20051203	Add review of strategic risk register to June meeting agenda.
Action 20051204	Staffing and Remuneration Committee meeting to be scheduled for June

Communications

Posy advised that communications and events at the end of the quarter were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic causing a fluctuation in levels of communications and events.

4. Communications Strategy

Posy advised that the Communications strategy will enable the Commission to respond quickly to focusing its work supporting recovery, and includes a major public facing campaign in the second half of the year on the importance of land and land reform. There will also be a strong focus on internal communications, including a new intranet, particularly as all staff are currently working from home.

Commissioners asked why a new intranet is being developed. Posy advised it is part of the transition that the Commission has made to a new IT and filing system over the last year, which offers a more effective and user friendly option to replace the existing intranet..

The Commission will be benchmarking their social media strategy with like for like sized organisations. It was highlighted that the strategy is flexible and will adapt around the organisations work towards recovery.

Commissioners asked whether more focus is required on segmenting audiences, particularly to target those not already aware of the Commission the communications. Posy advised that campaigns will have targeted audience break-downs, and that the focus will be on both the importance of land to people, and in turn, land reform.

It was agreed that the communications team will consider how to ensure the details of the management team are visible on the website .

Action 20051205	Communications team to consider how to add management team visibility to the website.
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5. Climate Action Plan

The Commissioners were advised that the Commission is aiming for net direct emission by 2030, with interim targets for 2025.. The main areas in which the

Commission can make changes are scope 3 activities such as travel. Hamish advised that the Commission is hoping to be ahead of the targets set.

It was agreed that the Commission is restricted on changes at some levels due to the office building but agreed that the Commission will look to provide leadership to the Scottish Government as the landlord of the building on changes that can be made in order to reach targets.

Commissioners welcomed the targets, agreed the plan and reiterated the organisation's commitment to showing leadership in reducing our own carbon emissions.

6. Land Rights and Responsibilities Protocols Update

Sarah advised that there is a schedule of protocols being published over the next couple of months with a soft launch approach through stakeholders.

The Commissioners were advised that a plain English check has been introduced as part of the drafting process to ensure the protocols are accessible. It was agreed that Commissioners will be sent supporting documents as well as the draft protocols to help answer any queries they may have around each protocol.

Commissioners welcomed the progress being made and the programme for publication.

In relation to land rights and responsibilities Commissioners asked for an update on issues relating to transfer of land for housing on Colonsay that were recently drawn to the Commission's attention. Hamish confirmed that the Commission had offered advice and the issue appears to have been resolved.

7. Regional Land Use Partnerships Update

It was noted that the Commissioners will receive an interim report on this in July for agreement in September. It was advised that the Scottish Government continues to seek the Commission's advice in September and this therefore remains a priority for the Commission. Hamish advised there continues to be good engagement, and a stakeholder workshop is the next scheduled step.

In discussion Commissioners noted the following:

- The importance of partnerships being multi-objective – economic, social as well as environmental;
- The need to set out soon the basic shape of what the partnerships should look like;
- The need to add value and ensure impact;
- The range of perspectives on appropriate geographies and scale;
- The connections to wider land reform.

8. Any Other Business

The Commissioners expressed their thanks to the Communications team for the annual review document.

It was noted that the Commission has performed in an outstanding way since the end of March and the reduction in capacity is not obvious. The Commissioners expressed their thanks to staff for their handling of the current situation.

Date of Next Meeting: 9th June 2020

**Scottish Land Commission
May 2020**