



SCOTTISH LAND COMMISSION  
COIMISEAN FEARAINN NA H-ALBA

**Minutes of the meeting of the Scottish Land Commissioners held on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2022 at Dunecht Village Hall**

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

**In Attendance:** Hamish Trench, Emma Cooper, Sarah Allen, Gillian Brown (Scottish Land Commission),

**Apologies:** Andrew Thin (Chair),

**Declarations of interest:** No declaration of interest.

**1. Minutes of previous meeting 6<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate reflection of the discussion and all actions have been discharged.

**Action Tracker**

All actions discharged.

**Reflections on Dunecht Estate site visit**

The board had met with Stuart Young (Chief Executive) and George Pearson (Owner) at Dunecht Estate. Board members highlighted the value of the discussion and visit to understand more about how Dunecht Estates operate and hear their perspective on current context and challenges, including the land reform bill. Board members asked that similar visits are incorporated into the forward board programme.

**2. Diversification of Land Ownership Project**

Emma introduced the thinking behind the project in the context of the Commission's work to date and Charlie introduced the paper.

Commissioners supported the intended outcomes and focus of the project, welcoming the specific resource being allocated to this work. Discussion focused on:

- The challenge of ensuring focus and impact in a potentially wide area of work. Board members supported the need to focus and prioritise where effort is directed.

- The communications challenges and the need to be able to articulate clearly what this work is about, why it is important and raise awareness of it at the appropriate time. Charlie confirmed a communications plan will be implemented as part of the project.
- Value in reinforcing the message of the LRRS Protocol on diversification of ownership, encouraging land owners to regularly review land holdings and question whether there are opportunities to sell or enter into other collaborative arrangements.
- The potential value in influencing agents and advisors in driving change in practice.
- The wider question of what measures of success more diverse ownership will help deliver. It was noted this goes beyond the scope of this project alone, but connects to the Commission’s wider work and messaging about the drivers for supporting more diverse land ownership.

It was noted that progress with the project will be reported through normal business plan reporting processes.

### 3. Collaboration with Crown Estate Scotland – enabling community ownership

Hamish introduced the paper, noting that it takes forward a commitment made in our report on Land and Natural Capital. He confirmed that Crown Estate Scotland are also committed to the collaboration and that staff from both organisations are currently developing the project plan. Commissioners welcomed the collaboration, noting the need to explore the potential role of public land owners more widely. Discussion focused on:

- The potential role of some form of ‘bridging’ capacity to enable transfer of land into community control in shorter time than the land market currently allows.
- The need for clear criteria about the circumstances in which this model could operate, and the associated need to manage expectations about how and when this approach could be used.
- The need to consider what happens in the event that intended community transfer does not in fact take place and how these risks are handled.
- The value in a tightly defined pilot that explores the range of risks and how such an approach can work, from which others can also learn.
- The opportunity for innovation in governance models in public land owners beyond Crown Estate Scotland and how these can be encouraged, including the role Forestry and Land Scotland can play.

The board welcomed the collaboration with Crown Estate Scotland, noting the intention to establish a joint post that would be based within the CES team. It was suggested that joint board engagement with Crown Estate Scotland in due course could be beneficial on this and wider areas of mutual interest.

Action 22100401	Hamish to include consideration of joint board engagement with Crown Estate Scotland in planning future board programme
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#### **4. AOB**

Hamish confirmed the Head of Communications and Corporate Services post has been offered, with the successful candidate to be announced shortly. It is expected they will start in the New Year.

Bob raised an invitation to the Commission to speak at the Gillespie MacAndrew land managers day. Hamish to contact Mike Blair and respond.

Hamish confirmed the Commission's response to the land reform bill consultation had been signed off by Andrew following the previous board meeting and will be submitted ahead of the deadline.

The next board meeting will take place at An Lochran, Inverness on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November. There will be a board meeting followed by informal workshop discussions on scoping our next strategic plan.

**Date of Next Meeting: 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022**

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October 2022**