



SCOTTISH LAND COMMISSION
COIMISEAN FEARAINN NA H-ALBA

Minute of the meeting of the Scottish Land Commissioners held on Tuesday 4th February 2025 at An Lochran, Inverness.

Commissioners Present: Michael Russell (Chair) Deb Roberts, Craig Mackenzie, Lucy Beattie, Calum MacLeod (Land Commissioners), Rob Black (Tenant Farming Commissioner)

In Attendance: Hamish Trench, Nikki Nagler, Emma Cooper, Gemma Campbell (for item 5), Annabel Davidson-Knight (for item 5), James MacKessack-Leitch (for item 3), (Scottish Land Commission);

Apologies: None

Declarations of interest: No declarations in relation to agenda items. Craig noted he is now a member of a Scottish Government Ecosystems Code Advisory Group.

Minutes of previous meeting 3 December 2024

The minutes from the meeting held on 3 December 2024 were agreed as a true and accurate record with no matters arising.

1. Commissioners Updates

The Chair welcomed the new Commissioners to their first board meeting.

Commissioners provided updates on their key activities and events since the last meeting.

2. Land Reform Bill

Hamish provided an update in relation to Part 1 noting the Commission's additional advice had been published and provided to the Parliamentary Committee. The board noted the parliamentary timetable for the expected completion of Stage 1, and the potential for an additional online board meeting in April if required.

Rob provided an overview of the TFC advice on Part 2 of the Bill. The advice was drafted by Bob McIntosh as outgoing TFC and is informed by discussions of the Tenant Farming Advisory Forum. Rob advised that the Forum had not been able to reach consensus on a number of aspects in the Bill and that the advice is therefore framed as TFC advice, not an attempt to represent collective views of the Forum.

The board recorded its thanks to Bob McIntosh for the updated advice provided as part of the TFC transition. Commissioners noted the background to the advice and the outgoing TFC's view that consensus on several parts was not possible to reach. The board agreed

the Commission should publish the advice and submit it to the NZET Committee, with the addition of an introductory section making clear it does not seek to provide a collective view of TFAF, but is the Commission's advice.

3. Quarterly Progress Report

Hamish introduced the Quarter 3 report.

The board welcomed the delivery progress and asked for updates in relation to Scottish Government's CPO Review, the Community Wealth Building Bill and the collaboration with Crown Estate Scotland on the Community Land Accelerator.

The board welcomed the improved budget monitoring information and noted the current position showing a projected outturn within the target of 3% underspend.

Commissioners noted the updated risk register reflecting the board's November discussion, and that the ARC will consider this in detail at its next meeting. The board discussed the likely timeframe for managing the risk associated with resourcing new obligations that arise from the land reform bill. Hamish advised the next review point of possible implications will be as the shape of the bill firms up in Stage 2 and Government provides updated information on the accompanying financial memorandum.

Commissioners noted good communications profile over the Quarter, particularly the successful webinar series. The board asked whether some year-on-year comparisons or benchmarking against others could be included in communications reporting to provide context.

Nikki highlighted the need for all Commissioners to complete online cyber security training, a risk addressed in the recent governance audit undertaken by internal audit.

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| Action 04022501 | Scarlett to review options to provide context for communications monitoring statistics |
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| Action 04022502 | All Commissioners to complete online cyber security training |
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4. Quarterly Casework Report

The board welcomed the overview provided by Gemma, noting the range of topics and the geographical spread of cases.

Emma provided brief updates on some recent cases for information and context.

5. Programme of Work

Hamish introduced the proposed Programme of Work, noting the opportunity it presents for the board to set a refreshed agenda for the coming 18 months. The board supported the priorities identified and raised the following for inclusion or amendment:

- Include reference to work to improve data on tenant farming;
- Include in scope possible work on the Land Use Strategy or Regional Land Use Partnerships, to be discussed with Scottish Government in context of the next Land Use Strategy review;

Commissioners also noted the importance of work on land information and data, and that the context of work on the 'land reformed Scotland' theme would provide an opportunity to bring together several of the priority areas over the coming 18 months.

Commissioners agreed that the Programme of Work should set out a focused programme of priorities. The board also emphasised the importance of remaining open and able to respond to changes in external environment over the 18 months, acknowledging that resource constraints means that additional work would require either additional resource or reductions in focus elsewhere.

Hamish noted that he is sharing the draft Programme with Scottish Government sponsor team colleagues for feedback.

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| Action 04022503 | Hamish to present final draft of Programme of Work for agreement at the March meeting |
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6. AOB

- All Commissioners to advise Nikki on travel and accommodation requirements for the next board meeting a month ahead;
- The board agreed to change the day of board meetings from May onwards to a Thursday. Nikki will circulate revised dates;
- The May meeting will be a board visit to Caithness to take place over Thursday 8th/Friday 9th May.

Date of next meeting:

Tuesday 4th March 2025

An Lochran, Inverness