



NEWS RELEASE

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SCOTTISH CROFTING FEDERATION CALLS ON COMMISSION TO EXPLAIN EXTRAORDINARY DIRECTIVE

The Scottish Crofting Federation (SCF) has called on the Crofting Commission to explain its extraordinary decision to dissolve a grazings committee following a grievance raised against the convener.

"This is a very alarming incidence for crofting," Chief Executive of the Scottish Crofting Federation, Patrick Krause, said. "We are not in possession of all the facts that have led to the Crofting Commission taking the extraordinary step of dissolving a grazings committee, which is something unprecedented as far as I know. So SCF's concern is directed towards the broader issue of what this says for decision-making within the commission and what this does to the relationship between crofters and the regulator.

Krause continued, "The press made us all aware of the grievance raised by the Lewis Upper Coll grazings committee against the convener of the commission, Colin Kennedy, a few weeks ago. On the face of it, this looks like an appalling attempt by the commission to nullify the complaint. Whatever is actually behind their decision, it is a staggeringly clumsy exercise in public relations. We are struggling to maintain, and to form new, grazings committees as it is.

"There appears to have been no transparency in attempts to resolve the conflict" Krause continued, "and it rings very loud warning bells of a return to the old Crofters Commission regime, which was regularly accused of operating on a similar autocratic basis. We very much hoped that we would never see this sort of behaviour again.

Krause concluded "A direction of such gravity must have been sanctioned by the commissioners themselves so we call on them to explain the action and to reassure crofters that they have acted in the democratic and impartial way expected of a public body".

END

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Notes to editors

- Pictures can be found at: <http://www.crofting.org>