

Appointment of Common Grazings Committees

The Crofting Commission has recognised the difficulties that Covid 19 causes for common grazings committees whose 3 years terms of office have recently concluded or will do so over the next few months. The retiring committee and shareholders will be unable to meet as required by section 47(1) of the Crofters (Scotland) Act 1993 to formally select a new committee.

To prevent any potential detriment to the management of these common grazings and to ensure continuity of business the Commission has agreed to use its powers under section 47(3) of the Crofting Act. This enables the Commission to appoint a grazings committee after such inquiry, if any, that it may deem necessary. Given the fact that these committee will have completed a term in office, the Commission is prepared to appoint them for a further term to undertake the same duties as previously.

The Commission considers this to be a pragmatic use of its powers in extremely difficult circumstances and, in doing so, will support the management and maintenance of common grazings and the crofters using them as much as possible at this time. As has been the process, grazings clerks of outgoing committees will be contacted and advised that the term of office is coming to completion. Instead of being invited to make arrangements for a meeting of shareholders to select a new committee, the grazings clerk will be asked whether he and the current members will be prepared to return for another term in office. The Act requires that that term will be for a further 3 years, but if a continuing committee did not wish to complete another full period they have the option to resign at later date. While generally, it will be simpler to appoint the existing members of a committee, the Commission appreciates that there could be individual circumstances that makes this difficult and such situations will be reasonably considered.

The Commission is aware that a number of common grazings had meetings advertised in local newspapers to take place towards the end of March and, indeed, some of these were for grazings that have not had committees in recent years. For those who were outgoing committees the same option of reappointment is available and for the others the Commission is aware of the intent to form a grazings committee and will work with the shareholders of these grazings to ensure that can still take effect. The Commission is also aware that other meetings were advertised earlier in March and that these meetings to appoint new committees will have taken place. The relevant details for such recently formed committees should be forwarded to the Commission, and the Grazings Officer who previously communicated on these matters remain contactable at their previously supplied e-mail addresses. Any inquiries regarding these matters can also made to Grazings@crofting.gov.scot