

NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE USE

New Partnership to Drive Forward Woodland Crofts

Three community-based organisations are joining forces in a new push to promote and develop woodland crofts.

The Scottish Crofting Federation, the Community Woodlands Association and the Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust plan a number of measures over the coming months.

These include the establishment of a Woodland Crofts Register of Interest, being launched today, which will be used to match up those who wish to obtain a woodland croft with those who have them to offer – or plan to develop them. The expectation is that the evidence provided by the register will help stimulate the creation of new woodland crofts.

Later in the autumn a dedicated website for woodland crofts will be launched, at www.woodlandcrofts.org, which will cover not just the legalities and practicalities of woodland crofts but also the philosophy – why small-scale, holistic management of woodland under crofting tenure can be an answer to many of the pressing rural problems of the 21st century.

Alongside this a programme of three knowledge-share events will be held, each hosted by one of the project partners and highlighting a particular woodland crofts theme, though providing general information too. These will take place in Tighnabruaich on 25 October, Gairloch on 22 November, and Dornoch on 12 December. Booking details for these will be publicised nearer the time.

A registration form for the Woodland Crofts Register of Interest is available from any of the partner's websites and can be returned by those wishing to be included in the register by e-mail to info@woodlandcrofts.org (Word versions), or by post to the HSCHT office in Inverness (paper copies). HSCHT is hosting the Register of Interest on behalf of the partnership.

Ends

Notes:

1. Copies of the registration form are attached to this message in Word and PDF format.
2. A woodland croft is a registered croft with sufficient tree-cover to be considered woodland. More information on woodland crofts can be found at: www.forestry.gov.uk/woodlandcrofts
3. Funding support towards the measures outlined above is being received from Forestry Commission Scotland. Forestry Commission Scotland is part of the Scottish Government's Environment & Forestry Directorate www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland.
4. The Scottish Crofting Federation is the only member-led organisation dedicated to promoting crofting and it is the largest association of small scale food producers in the UK. Its mission is to safeguard and promote the rights, livelihoods and culture of crofters and their communities.
Tel: 01599 530 005, E-mail: HQ@crofting.org.
5. The Community Woodlands Association is the direct representative body of Scotland's community woodland groups. It helps community woodland groups across the country achieve their aspirations and potential, providing advice, assistance and information, facilitating networking and training, and representing and promoting community woodlands to the wider world. Tel: 01309 674 004, E-mail: admin@communitywoods.org.
6. The Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust is a registered charity helping rural communities secure long term solutions to their local housing needs. It represents a wide range of interests including communities, local government, landowners, crofters and housing associations. By helping rural communities meet their needs for additional affordable housing it plays an important role in actively supporting their long term viability. Tel: 01463 233 549, E-mail: info@hscht.co.uk
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