

Cross-Party Group Annual Return

Name of Cross-Party Group

Cross-Party Group on Rural Policy

Date Group Established (the date of establishment is the date in this parliamentary session that the Group held its initial meeting, where the office bearers were elected and not the date that the Group was accorded recognition. All Groups should hold their AGMs on, or before, the anniversary of this date.)

16th November 2022

Date of Most Recent Annual General Meeting (AGM)

4th December 2024

Date Annual Return Submitted

18th December 2024

Date of Preceding AGM [this date is required to aid clerks in verifying that the most recent AGM has taken place within 11 to 13 months of the previous AGM]

5th December 2023

Group Meetings and Activities

Please provide details of each meeting of the Group including the date of the meeting, a brief description of the main subjects discussed and the MSP and non-MSP attendance figures.

Details of any other activities, such as visits undertaken by the Group or papers/report published by the Group should also be provided.

Tuesday 5th December 2023 (AGM)

Attendance: 4 MSPs, 92 Non-MSPs

Topic Discussed: Carbon credits, carbon trading, and natural capital markets

Guest speakers:

- **Professor Mark Reed**, Director of the Thriving Natural Capital Challenge Centre, SRUC
- **Ben Law**, Forestry Consultant, SAC Consulting
- **Josh Doble**, Policy Manager, Community Land Scotland
- **Annette Burden**, Blue carbon lead, UKCEH

Tuesday 4th June 2024

Attendance: 4 MSPs, 54 Non-MSPs

Topic Discussed: Decarbonising Rural and Island Scotland

Guest speakers:

- **Catriona Mallows**, Research Associate, University of Highlands and Islands
- **Dr Robert Price**, Research Fellow, University of St. Andrews
- **Matthew Club**, Chair, Nesfit
- **Jo Wright**, Insight & Innovation Adviser, Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park

Wednesday 2nd October 2024

Attendance: 3 MSPs, 84 Non-MSPs

Topic Discussed: Community Benefits, Tax, and Land Value Capture

Guest Speakers:

- **Kathie Pollard**, Policy and Practice Lead, Scottish Land Commission
- **Rob Davidson**, Strategy Manager – Community Wealth Building Strategy, South of Scotland Enterprise
- **Neil MacKinnon**, Development Manager, Galson Estate Trust (West Side Estates Group, Isle of Lewis)

Wednesday 4th December 2024 (AGM)

Attendance: 5 MSPs, 86 Non-MSPs

Topic Discussed: Land Reform Bill: "Does Part 1 of the Land Reform Bill address land reform issues or not?"

Guest Speakers:

- **Hamish Trench**, Chief Executive, Scottish Land Commission
- **Steven Young**, Head of Policy, Scottish Land and Estates
- **Andy Wightman**, self-employed writer/activist

MSP Members of The Group

Please provide names and party designation of all MSP members of the Group.

Finlay Carson MSP (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party)

Brian Whittle MSP (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party)

Jamie Halcro Johnston MSP (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party)

Ariane Burgess MSP (Scottish Green Party)

Mercedes Villalba MSP (Scottish Labour)

Colin Smyth MSP (Scottish Labour)

Tim Eagle MSP (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party)

Rhoda Grant MSP (Scottish Labour)

Non-MSP Members of The Group

For organisational members please provide only the name of the organisation, it is not necessary to provide the name(s) of individuals who may represent the organisation at meetings of the Group.

Individuals	
Organisations	A Heart for Duns Development Trust, Aberdeen University, Aberdeen University, Advice Direct Scotland, AIC, Angus Council, Arthouse Galleries, Barnardos, British Association of Landscape Industries (BALI), Buccleuch Estates, Built Environment Forum Scotland , Cairngorms National Park Authority, Centre for Rural Health, UHI, Chair, RSA Fellows Scotland and MCICH Network, Citizens Advice Scotland , CNPA, Crichton Carbon Centre , Dormont Estate, Dot Rural Aberdeen University, Dumfries and Galloway LEADER, Forth Valley & Lomond LEADER, FSB, Group Manager FRBS, SAC Consulting , Head of Economic Development and Strategic Transportation, Argyll and Bute Council, Here

	<p>We Are Project, Heriot Watt University, HIE, James Hutton Institute, Landmaps Ltd, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, MAKAR Ltd, RSABI, RSPB, Rural & Islands Housing Associations Forum, Rural Matters, SAC Consulting/SRUC, SAOS (Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society), Scottish Association of Young Farmers, Scottish Churches Rural Group, Scottish Crofting Federation, Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Government, Scottish Land and Estates, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Pilgrim Routes Forum, Scottish Rural Action, Scottish Rural Health Partnership, Scottish Wildlife Trust, SRUC, Stirling University and the Cooperative Group, Change Mental Health, The Horticultural Trades Association (HTA), James Hutton Institute, The Stove Network, Dumfries, The University of Edinburgh, UHI, University of Edinburgh, Urban Animation/Dhu Rural, Whitehill Design Studios, Whitmuir Community Farm Ltd, Whitmuir Organics Limited, Woodland Trust</p>
<p>Group Office Bearers</p> <p>Please provide names for all office bearers. The minimum requirement is that two of the office bearers are MSPs and one of these is Convener – beyond this it is a matter for the Group to decide upon the office bearers it wishes to have. It is permissible to have more than one individual elected to each office, for example, co-conveners or multiple deputy conveners.</p>	
Convener	<p>Emma Harper MSP (Scottish National Party)</p> <p>Edward Mountain MSP (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party)</p>
Deputy Convener	

Secretary	Rural Policy Centre, SRUC (Scotland's Rural College)
Treasurer	

Financial Benefits or Other Benefits



Please provide details of any financial or material benefit(s) the Group anticipates receiving from a single source in a calendar year which has a value, either singly or cumulatively, of more than £500. This includes donations, gifts, hospitality or visits and material assistance such as secretariat support.

SRUC's Rural Policy Centre (RPC) provides the Secretariat for the Group. Funding to enable it to do so (e.g. to cover SRUC staff time at Full Economic Cost, T&S expenses for speakers, etc.) comes from the Scottish Funding Council's Universities Innovation Fund funding allocation to SRUC and from Scottish Government Strategic Research Programme 2022-27 funding. The RPC makes an annual application for the SFC funding to undertake a range of knowledge exchange activities of which the CPG Secretariat is one. The cost of running the Group is estimated to be approximately £8,000 per annum.

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE CONVENER

COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 6 OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT
(Please tick all boxes that apply)

I, Convener of the Cross-Party Group on <X>, hereby declare that, in line with the requirements of Section 6 of the Code of Conduct, this CPG has:

5 MSP Members from 3 different political parties	
Held at least 2 quorate meetings in the last 12 months	

Held an AGM within 11-13months of the date of registration or the last AGM	✓
Submitted an annual return form within 30 calendar days of the AGM	✓
Provided Standards Clerks with 10 calendar days' notice of all meetings	✓
Provided minutes of all meetings	✓
Signed	<i>Edward Muntan /</i>
Date	<i>18 December 2024.</i>