

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)

5th December 2023

Date Annual Return Submitted

6th December 2023

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]

16th November 2022

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.

Meeting 1: Tuesday 16 November 2022 (AGM)

Attendance: 4 MSPs, 59 Non-MSPs

Topic Discussed: Keeping Food Local

Guest speakers:

- Prof David Marshall from University of Edinburgh Business School discussed recent research on informal food networks in the Western Isles.
- Denise Walton from Peelham Farm in Berwickshire explained how they are coordinating with other organic farmers and retailers to develop routes to market.
- Sarah MacLean introduced us to Bùth Bharraigh Ltd, a community social enterprise providing a route to market for local produce and opportunities for local people.

Meeting 2: Tuesday 23 January 2023

Attendance: 4 MSPs, 40 Non-MSPs

Topic Discussed: Shifting the Narrative: Stories of Rural Resilience in a Post-Covid Era

Guest Speakers:

- Kira McDiarmid, Senior Policy and Public Affairs Office at the National Rural Mental Health Forum, opened with a summary of the state of mental health in rural Scotland.
- Associate Professor Leith Deacon, University of Guelph, discussed the outcomes of his 'Rural Responses to Covid-19' survey highlighting the findings on reported differences in individual well-being in rural Ontario before and after the pandemic.
- Ailsa Clark from Inspiralba and Lilia Sinclair from Positive Action / Heal Scotland discussed health and wellbeing challenges and responses from a rural community led perspective.
- Professor Liam Glynn, University of Limerick and practicing GP discussed his work around practicing healthcare in a rural context.
- Andreas Lundqvist (Head of The Centre for Rural Medicine) and Associate Professor Anette Edin-Liljegren from Glesbygdsmedicinskt centrum (GMC) in Västerbotten, Sweden shared exciting research activities at the innovation of rural technology and health.

Meeting 3: Tuesday 6th June 2023

Attendance: 2 MSPs, 51 Non-MSPs

Topic Discussed: Nature-based solutions in agriculture: addressing multiple policy targets

Guest Speakers:

- Hans Jensema, Biocel Agri spoke about their nature-based products;
- Gemma Miller, a researcher from SRUC spoke about work by her and colleagues on these products, particularly relating to methane reduction from livestock and
- Rebekah Strong, Nature Based Solutions Policy Adviser at the Scottish Wildlife Trust discussed the policy relevance and implications of nature-based solutions in agriculture and in a wider context.

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)

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	Barbara Kelly, Pat Neeson,
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 ,

	<p>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 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>
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Group Office Bearers

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>	<p>Emma Harper MSP (Scottish National Party)</p> <p>Edward Mountain MSP (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party)</p>
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Deputy Convener	
Secretary	Rural Policy Centre, SRUC (Scotland's Rural College)
Treasurer	
<p>Financial Benefits or Other Benefits</p> <p>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.</p>	
<p>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. The RPC makes an annual application for this 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 £10,000 per annum.</p>	
Convener Contact Details	
Name	Edward Mountain MSP
Parliamentary address	The Scottish Parliament Edinburgh EH99 1SP
Telephone number	0131 348 6143