

Dear Members,

The last two years in my role as Breed Secretary have been enormously hard work, challenging but most importantly enjoyable and rewarding. I have met a huge amount of people, established a great many friendships and have developed a great love of the Highland Breed.

As many of you know 2017 has presented many personal challenges for me as my father has decided to retire, we have sold the land of my family farm and are about to disperse our herd of Pedigree Aberdeen Angus on 23 October 2017. This herd was established in 1992 following our move to Scotland but my family bred Angus' in the 1960's under the herd prefix of East Down. As a small herd we have been fortunate to experience huge success over the years both in the show and sale ring and 2016 / 2017 has been what can only be described as a 'fairy-tale' ending.

These events have been life changing for all the family and when such events occur in your life as an individual you start to re-evaluate your life and what you want to do with it.

With this in mind I would like to inform you that I gave formal notification to Council of my intention to resign as Breed Secretary on 25 August 2017. I have given the full notice period so I will not leave the Society until 28 February 2018.

Whilst I have your attention I would like to give you my thoughts for the future.

For the Highland breed to thrive I believe the Council needs to focus, select a few key priorities and work together to achieve these objectives. I believe you have one of the biggest opportunities on your doorstep with Brexit where we have already been asked to feedback on particular carcass grading systems. People are looking for low input systems and other breeds including native breeds have gone too big and could be about to feel the pinch.

The Highland breed needs to be ready to seize the moment, capitalise where others can't and there is already evidence of this with increased interest in the Highland Breed in Wales.

I wholeheartedly believe a pedigree market without a commercial base is like a house on dodgy foundations. A healthy commercial market will automatically lead to a buoyant, pedigree trade and the focus of your Council and you as members should be to establish and grow these commercial markets.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Janet and Helen, we have had an enormous amount of fun working together. They made the transition into the role of Breed Secretary easy and enjoyable. Janet especially has been an absolute 'rock', she is an enormous asset to the Highland Society and should be valued at all times. Thank you Janet.

Finally I would like to thank each and every one of you for the pleasure and honour of representing you as your Breed Secretary and I would like to wish you all the very best of luck in the future.

Sian