

Meeting with Derek Robertson Keep Scotland Beautiful, 26 Sept 2013

Derek had visited LINK and some members in a 2011/12 round of meetings he had organised when taking up post as KSB CEO. Then, he was explicitly seeking appropriate mission for KSB going forward.

Last week's discussion was different in tone. Derek stressed the changes to the organisation over recent years and esp. the last couple, with what he feels has been a very thorough review and revision of mission and values, and (now) their absolute independence from government. Notwithstanding KSB's history of strong governmental direction (and Arms' Length Executive Organisation) KSB is now a different beast. (KSB dates back to the 1960s when Government put funding into WRI-driven initiatives to keep Britain tidy - under the UK level auspices of the Tidy Britain Group.)

WRT LINK's concern about the greying of boundaries between citizen-established and led voluntary initiative, and government-established bodies under charitable status, Derek reiterated the change in KSB's status and role. He would like to collaborate with as many environmental organisations as possible in pursuit of their ambition of seeing Scotland become the cleanest and most sustainable county in Europe.

As far as possible he and the board aim for KSB to be free from Scottish Government funding which they see as unhelpful to reputation and standing going forward. On this their website states "We operate independently of all levels of government – local authorities, the Scottish Government, HM Government and quangos. We receive no core funding from government. Our survival depends on: individual donations; corporate support; the provision of services to purchasing bodies; and winning contracts and securing grant funding."

Derek outlined some of KSB's projects, in relation to which he sees them as the main Scottish champion and voice – not including the competitive issues of climate (where they provide the secretariat to the CCF and see that funding come in and go out on CCF objectives) or sustainability. KSB would like others to acknowledge and endorse on occasion the value of initiatives it takes forward, and would welcome coalition on some issues. He sees KSB occupying a space that other organisations don't take, supporting various things such as Young Reporters on the Environment, environmental quality (assessments, national litter awareness and tackling, creating opportunities for education about the environment.

KSB's key message is now "Keep Scotland Beautiful is the independent charity which campaigns, acts and educates on a range of local, national and global environmental issues which affect people's quality of life. We are committed to make Scotland clean and green, today and tomorrow." Their charitable purpose is 'To protect, preserve and enhance the environment of town and country in Scotland for the benefit of the public and to educate the public about the environment generally by promoting awareness of the ways in which the environment is at risk and the ways in which this can be minimised.' Their Vision - A clean, green, sustainable Scotland. Their Mission - Connecting and empowering Scotland's public, private and community sectors to achieve our sustainable development, environmental and climate change ambitions. Their activities are outlined overleaf. See more at <http://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/>

Looking ahead, KSB is giving thought to the question of who are their stakeholders, and whether they should 'test' a membership route. Their interested audience he feels are in all three sectors, but especially the wider Scottish public. Derek observed that if KSB could be a useful member of LINK they would be pleased to engage as such; he was aware that this is a decision for members to take.

We explained to Derek that until now at least, KSB would not have been considered eligible. We undertook to report back to the board and members on this meeting, however, and encouraged Derek to consider Organisational Supporter as the best avenue for developing dialogue between LINK and KSB at this point. He left with the intention of signing up online, and coming to Congress to meet members.

