

BUILDING BETTER BRIDGES
between Scotland's communities of place and communities of interest

Thursday 28 November, Birnam Arts & Conference Centre, 1.00 pm.
(followed by AGM & Strategic Planning on Friday 29th).

Introduction:

There have been some really good, productive examples of Scotland's communities of place and interest working together on important local issues, with communities of place providing campaigning and action, and with communities of interest providing input from a 'national'/international level (eNGOs). There have been, also, some areas where we have got it badly wrong and ended up with misunderstanding, conflict and resulting mistrust between the two aspects of the community in which we live. LINK believes that communities will be at their most powerful and effective in the forging their own destinies and achieving sustainable development if we learn how to best work together – and how to avoid being split apart by economic and political interests.

Part 1 – Experiences of Working Together – the good and the bad

Panel speeches and Q&A: 1 or 2 speakers from organisations representing communities of place + 1 or 2 speakers from eNGOs.

Part 2 – The Thorny Issues – areas of past success and breakdown

4 workshops covering the issues outlined and asking the questions:

- Where are communities of place coming from?
- Where are the eNGOs coming from?
- Is there room for improving the understanding of our mutual interests?
- Do we have examples of working together well, or failing to connect, we should learn from?

a) *Fighting the Blights* - Communities of place have had serious fights to defend themselves from open-cast coal, aggregate extraction, power generation projects, landfill - and fracking is on the horizon. eNGOs have wide policy and advocacy expertise and experience in all these areas. *Central belt issues mainly.*

b) *Access to Justice* - Communities of place have found themselves almost unprotected in law, by reason of costs and sheer scale, when faced with externally generated major economic developments, complex planning issues and landscape level change. eNGOs have been campaigning for access to justice for communities of both place and interest, so that citizens groups can take on the power of industry and the state in the courts.

c) *Implementing 'national' and international policies in communities of place* - eNGOs have campaigned for laws and designations protecting and enhancing global and 'national' environmental interests. Communities of place have found themselves having to accommodate the resultant rules, regulations and designations at the sharp end of implementation when it takes place 'on the ground'. *Protected areas issues.*

d) *Understanding the Issue of Land* - eNGOs have been campaigning for good, sustainable environmental stewardship and integrated usage of Scotland's land - across all types of ownership. Communities of place have been pursuing social and economic empowerment in their localities, with an emphasis on legal rights and ownership.

Part 3 – How do the eNGOs move forward?

1/2/3/4 speakers? from the eNGOs and communities sector, reflecting on the days discussions and a Q&A. A way should be found to connect this to the earlier discussions without it being a simple "report back" from the workshops.

Summary:

A summation of the day's discussions and suggestions as to the direction LINK members might travel in.

Birnam Hotel for dinner and social evening.