

LINK eBulletin April 2009

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Task Force Updates

Agriculture TF: [Katrina Marsden](#), [Carey Coombs](#) (Joint Convenors) and [Jonathan Wordsworth](#)

SRDP: The ATF sent a letter to the Cabinet Secretary outlining ATF and BTF's views following the announcement of the SRDP first stage review. ATF convenors met with Peter Cook (the external consultant carrying out the SRDP review) and submitted a written response. We are hopeful that the review could provide an opportunity to improve delivery of environmental goods through the SRDP but it also presents risks, for example that funds could be diverted from the more targeted agri-environment scheme.

Less Favoured Areas (LFA): LINK was also represented on the LFASS-CAP stakeholder group where means to tackle the rapid loss of livestock from Scotland's hills were discussed.

CAP 'Health Check': The ATF has also been engaging with the implementation of Health Check changes in Scotland. We were represented on the Scottish Governments groups on set-aside and GAEC and hope that these could provide some opportunity of improving environmental delivery through the first pillar of the CAP.

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Biodiversity TF: [Deborah Long](#)

The BTF continues to actively contribute to the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and the new structures. In the future, SOAs, climate adaptation and the proposed natural heritage bill will be the main focus for BTF.

Climate TF: [Sam Gardner](#) and [Corinne Evans](#)

The CTF have developed their workplan for the year and the first two actions have been duly completed: written evidence was submitted to the Scottish Government on the consenting process for thermal power stations, with particular reference to an Emissions Performance Standard for new coal power; and written evidence was submitted to the Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee on the Climate Change (Scotland) Bill.

Deer TF: [Duncan Orr-Ewing](#)

Focus of activity has been around two issues, the SNH/DCS merger and proposed Natural Heritage Bill 2010, which will include new deer legislation, and various discussion meetings have been held with the Scottish Government, SNH, DCS and the SNH/DCS Merger Reference Group.

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Freshwater TF: [Andrea Johnstonova](#)

Flooding Bill: This passed Stage 1 in January and Stage 2 in March (committee scrutiny) and is now at Stage 3 (parliamentary scrutiny).

Landscape TF: **Convenor (Vacant)** and [Jonathan Wordsworth](#) (Deputy)

LTF has continued to support development of the Scottish Landscape Charter and Placebook Scotland. Delays on this have been disappointing but we are hoping for a positive outcome shortly.

LTF was active in promoting discussion by the wider LINK network on Scotland's National Parks.

LTF continues to have concern over the impact of renewable energy developments within Scotland's landscapes, especially but not exclusively in areas of 'wild land'. Several LTF member bodies are also active through the PTF in expressing concern over the impacts of the proposed National Developments on Scotland's landscapes

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Marine TF: Calum Duncan

Marine Ecosystems Objectives: The Convenor attended the final steering group meeting on behalf of LINK.

UK Marine Bill: Two members attended the Defra Marine Strategy Framework Directive meeting on how to transpose and implement the MSFD.

Scottish Marine Bill: The MTF submitted **three responses and three comments** to the Scottish Government on SEA, RIA, MEO, MPA issues, and a **press release** was quoted in the Scotsman newspaper.

A LINK **briefing** was distributed to all MSPs and researchers for the Parliamentary Debate on the Marine Bill in February. We were greatly encouraged by the debate, which covered a range of our concerns, raised by MSPs from several different parties, and LINK and MTF members were quoted in relation to almost every main point raised.

SEW 2009 and Spring Party Conferences: Ten MSPs, representing all parties, attended the SEW Marine Reception, and our five exhibition panels, highlighting the economic value of marine biodiversity, were well-received. Two MSPs and MTF members spoke at the well-attended Marine Fringe events at both the Labour and Lib Dem spring party conferences in March.

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Planning TF: Aedan Smith

The PTF agreed to focus on the tight timetable put in place for parliamentary scrutiny of the "National Planning Framework 2". PTF Members attended a meeting with civil servants in February to discuss the "consolidation but not review" of the Scottish Planning Policy documents. The PTF will review the proposed SPP against the list of policies LINK member organisations seek to retain from the previous SPPs.

Written evidence on NPF2 was submitted to the Local Government and Communities Committee and a briefing note was circulated to all MSPs.

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Scottish Environmental Fundraising Forum (SEFF): Steven Gardner

The two main items at SEFF's recent quarterly meeting were finalising the SEFF response to the BIG consultation and a presentation from HLF. Also, a member, Pauline Jewett (NTS) organised a very successful meeting on SRDP funding, and this SEFF sub-group may continue to meet periodically depending upon feedback received.

Woodlands TF: Angus Yarwood

The last three months have been focused on responding to the Climate Change and National Forest Estate consultation and the associated powers in the Climate Change (Scotland) Bill.

The TF produced a written response to the Forestry Commission Scotland consultation, written evidence, and oral evidence to the Rural Affairs and Environment Committee of the Scottish Parliament.

There was general opposition to the proposals but our arguments were particularly well featured in the Parliamentary debates both at the time and in the subsequent debate on 19 March 2009 – by which time the Government had agreed to drop the proposals.

As the March WTF forward planning meeting was cancelled, the Convenor will draw up the draft forward plan for email comment and sign up instead.

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LINK News

Chief Officer, Jen Anderson

There have been meetings of Board subgroups in relation to budget and subscriptions, meetings to take forward members proposals for joint work on various fronts - see below and various staff meetings. Preparation for Board and Networking meetings on 24 April are in hand. The Operating Plan for 2009/10 is in draft and will shortly be available on the members' pages of the website (email to follow).

A LINK delegation met SNH on 3 April (at their request) about their policy development. Plans are being made for a high level liaison meeting with SEPA and a further liaison meeting with CoSLA. Staff are shortly to meet SCVO's new Green Agenda Officer.

National Conversation: Gabby Pieraccini and John Mason are leading this for the RAE portfolio on the national conversation and would welcome input from LINK. Contact [Jen](#) for details.

Single Outcome Agreements: The LINK steering group proposes to seek members' contributions to prepare a 'most critical issues' list (for the environment), with ideal indicators and targets. This should be a useful tool for LINK members in assessing delivery of national environmental objectives in the years ahead, liaising with individual councils on particular issues, and inputting to manifestos for council elections in 2011.

Staff will shortly be in touch to invite your organisation's top three priorities. Results will be 'sieved' first by the taskforces and then given a final sort-through by the steering group.

Climate communications: A meeting of Communications Officers within LINK, and one or two external individuals with knowledge of behaviour change, is planned for May, to develop messages which member bodies can choose to use with their memberships about lifestyle and climate change. This follows up members' request at last August's 'gathering' for guidance on climate and behaviour change messaging. If your comms staff would like to take part, please contact the LINK [Perth office](#), telephone 01738 630804.

Health and Wellbeing: Several members are interested in engaging in the health and wellbeing agenda; at present, particularly in relation to active living, active travel. In a discussion meeting in March, SNH invited LINK to contribute to the work it is taking forward. The health/environment interface may be of interest to a number of members and a LINK discussion is planned for 26 May. Contact [Jen](#) for information.

Access to Justice/Protective Costs Orders: LINK workshop, morning Monday 11 May, Edinburgh. With Frances McCartney of the Environmental Law Centre and Aidan O'Neill QC. Briefing opportunity for environmental organisations on judicial review and protective costs orders (PCOs) and a chance to explore the types of case which

might justify a PCO. There are still places if you and/or colleagues wish to book up. Please contact the LINK **Perth office**, telephone 01738 630804.

'National Conversation': Scottish Government are inviting input from LINK and others. A LINK discussion is proposed. If interested please ask your LINK rep to watch out for a staff email about this shortly.

Wildlife and Natural Environment Legislation: A LINK egroup has been set up so that members interested in following development of the proposed Bill can liaise with each other, input to Scottish Government and its new Stakeholder Forum (which many LINK bodies have been invited to join). Contact **Andy** for further information.

Latest joint UK Links discussions covered: Economic downturn and impacts on eNGO sector; European engagement - potential for the Links to coordinate their engagement in the EEB, through EEB UK - to be discussed further; also criteria for joint work are back on the agenda.

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Parliamentary Officer, Andy Myles

See our one-page summary of the **current progress of legislation**.

Party conferences: We are in the middle of the spring party conference season with Labour and Lib Dem held in March, and the SNP at the end of April in Glasgow and the Conservatives in Perth, mid-May. LINK members have had good contact with members of all the parties.

LINK Political Strategy Report: Comments have been received from members and the final draft will be discussed at the Board and Networking meeting on 24 April. It covers relationships with the five political parties, the level of liaison with the government in the three areas of legislation, administration and judiciary.

LINK Parliamentary Training Day: Plans are being made for one-day workshop this summer, one-half will be introductory for inexperienced and one-half more detailed for experienced officers. More information from **Andy** and detailed will be circulated when finalised.

SEW 2010: an early start is being made for next year's events at Parliament, and please give your early ideas and thoughts to **Andy**. Also, there is still time to give your feedback on this year's event as the evaluation report is currently being finalised.

SCVO Policy Committee: Andy is a member of this high-level committee and LINK is working alongside other voluntary organisations in Scotland on policy issues.

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Other UK Links

Wildlife and Countryside LINK (WCL)

This quarter the **Blueprint for Water** coalition published their latest report, **2009: the time to act**, and undertook a public opinion poll on how people in England value water. We also launched our **third annual progress assessment** of the progress towards 'Halting Biodiversity Loss by 2010', which indicated that 2008 was not a good year for the campaign.

WCL were pleased with Hilary Benn's announcement that the first vaccine against bovine TB in badgers will be deployed next year in England, but were disappointed to learn that the Welsh Assembly Government intends to undertake a cull of badgers in North Pembrokeshire.

WCL's Marine Task Force has been working hard to influence the Marine and Coastal Access Bill as it passes through Parliament, submitting 49 briefings to Peers containing amendments to be tabled and debated during the House of Lords

Committee Stage. Link members have also tabled amendments to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill.

Link met with the Environment Minister, Huw Irranca-Davies MP, to discuss preparations for the 61st Annual International Whaling Commission meeting, and despite its postponement, we continue to work towards the 15th CITES Conference of the Parties.

This quarter we held our first meeting with the National Wildlife Crime Unit and took up the offer to sit on the Working Group of the Forestry Commission's study of the estate the Forestry Commission manages in England.

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Wales Environment Link (WEL)

WEL submitted responses to three Welsh Assembly Government consultations during February 2009: the Climate Change Strategy High Level Policy Statement Consultation, the 'One Wales: One Planet' consultation on a Sustainable Development Scheme for Wales and the Strategic Position Statement on Water consultation.

The Marine Working Group met the Minister for Rural Affairs in January to discuss the Marine Bill, the Wales Fisheries Strategy and the Future Management of Inshore Fisheries. More recently the group has been busy preparing for Party Conference fringe events and is also planning future events and activities such as their second Marine reception at the Senedd.

Regarding Bovine TB, WEL members were disappointed that the Minister for Rural Affairs announced that she still considered a badger cull would be necessary, alongside additional cattle measures within an Intensive Action Pilot Area (IAPA). The Minister has stated that North Pembrokeshire would be the preferred location for a pilot cull.

WEL's new Advocacy Officer and Policy Coordinator (a new post in WEL) will be starting at the beginning of May 2009.

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Consultations

You can sign up to [seConsult](#), the Executive weekly email alert service to tell you of new consultations and provides brief descriptions and web links.

In addition to the Scottish Government consultations:

30 April study - Benefits of natural	SNIFFER	Universities of Dundee and Stirling are undertaking the study to develop an evidence base for the benefits of NFM. They are asking for information from LINK members. They are not seeking copies of
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	flood management techniques	any raw data at this stage: just information about sites and activities which might help build the evidence base. Please respond to Roser Casas , Project Researcher, 01786 467869
12 June	Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution (RCEP)	Comments are invited on the RCEP study on the 'Environmental Impacts of Demographic Change in the UK'. Contact Adean if you wish to give any input.
26 June	Forestry Commission	Consultation on Red Squirrel Strongholds. www.forestry.gov.uk/strongholdsconsultation

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LINK Diary

2009

April	23	Quarterly Ministerial meeting, Edinburgh. More details from Jen
April	24	Board meeting, am. Board and Convenors/Members Networking pm.
May	11	Access to Justice workshop, Edinburgh. More details from Jen .
May	27	SNH Health and Wellbeing meeting,
June	25	Board meeting, am. Board and Convenors/Members Networking pm.
October	22	Board meeting, am. Board and Convenors/Members Networking pm.
December	16	Festive Evening Reception, St Augustine's Church, Edinburgh.

Other Seminars and Conferences		
17 April 10am Smith Museum, Stirling	Scottish Council for National Parks	AGM and talk by Michael Dower 'A European Perspective: national parks and national landscapes'. Register with Kate Walsham , SCNP Hon Secretary, 01538 431245.
28 April 6.30 – 8.30 pm plus canapes Signet Library, Parliament Square, Edinburgh	Sustainable Development Commission Scotland	A debate on SDC report Prosperity Without Growth? SSDC's report will be presented by Tim Jackson, SDC Economics Commissioner and Professor of Sustainable Development at the University of Surrey, followed by a debate between a panel of experts, and questions from the high level audience about the implications of our recommendations for Scotland. RSVP to Maria Bell , SDC Scotland , 0131 625 1880

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