

LINK eBulletin January-February 2008

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Task Force Updates and Future Priorities

Agriculture TF: Mandy Gloyer

SRDP: SRDP stakeholder and bilateral meetings were held with the Scottish government and liaison with EC officials. It is expected to be formally approved by the EC Rural Development Committee in February and the Schemes will hopefully open in March/April.

RDCs: The ATF has also been involved in the on-going development of Rural Development Contracts which will provide the delivery vehicle for SRDP funding, including the agri-environment programme. RDCs will be delivered on a regional basis, and work to set up the regional priorities for 11 Scottish 'On the Ground' regions continues. LINK has been involved at national level in meetings with Scottish government, and is represented where possible in the setting of regional priorities.

Climate change and agriculture: The ATF gave a presentation of LINK views to the Agriculture Strategy sub-group on Climate Change and agriculture.

EU CAP 'Health Check': The latest round of CAP reform has begun with EC proposals for the so-called 'Health Check'. LINK submitted a response to the EC's first public consultation and is in the new Scottish government CAP Reform stakeholder group.

LFAs: An ATF member attended a LFA Stakeholder meeting in January.

Biodiversity TF: Deborah Long

The BTF held two meetings November and January, completed exhibition images for SEW and a Case Study report briefing is almost finished.

In November, the BTF gave a response to BRIG (Biodiversity Recording and Information Group) consultation on UKBAP and future delivery and now has a place on BRIG.

During January, the BTF gave a response to SNH contract on biodiversity delivery mechanisms in Scotland, emailed a briefing on biodiversity to all MSPs, attended and circulated a press release on the biodiversity debate in Parliament.

The BTF convenor represented both LINK and WCL at the UKBAP conference 2007 in Aviemore in October and contributed to BRIG workshop on the future of UKBAP. In November, the BTF attended a steering group meeting for two SNH contracts on UKBAP Targets and UKBAP 2005 Reporting. The deputy convenor presented a LINK BTF statement on the parliamentary report to Parliament in December.

Climate TF: Clifton Bain

The Climate Change Bill consultation is underway and everyone, individuals and organisations are encouraged to respond.

Deer TF: Duncan Orr-Ewing

The Deer TF met to discuss their response to DCS Strategy for Wild Deer which will be submitted in early February. Also, the DTF met with SNH and had liaison with Scotland's Moorland Forum and Association of Deer Management Groups, SRPBA and BASC about the strategy. A DTF representative will attend a DCS conference on urban deer in late January.

An announcement by Scottish government of a merger of DCS with another government agency such as SNH or FCS is anticipated.

Freshwater TF: Andrea Johnstonova or Mike Donaghy

SWT and Buglife now active members of the FTF.

Flooding Bill and Parliamentary Flooding Inquiry

The Freshwater task force submitted written evidence to the Environment and Rural Affairs Committee's flooding inquiry and is expected to give oral evidence to the Committee on 6 February. The Committee's inquiry will run in parallel with the consultation on the Flooding Bill, which will be introduced in Parliament in June 2008. The FTF are members of the new advisory group on the Flooding Bill (FBAG) and consultation on the principles of the Bill is expected in February 2008.

Water Framework Directive

SWMI Reports: LINK was involved through national and area advisory groups in the drafting of the Significant water management issues in Scotland (SWMI) report which SEPA has now issued for consultation. These reports are extremely important in that they will underpin the first River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) in Scotland, and will therefore form the baseline for identifying improvements needed to resolve these problems. The consultation process provides an opportunity for all stakeholders to influence the draft management plan and the measures to be considered. LINK will be responding to this consultation, and a briefing has been emailed to LINK members asking for their input.

Restoration: The FTF is on a steering group of a SNIFFER/SEPA project on WFD and restoration which will report back in May 2008. This is a first initiative on restoration and aims to provide a broad tool for the assessment of restoration priorities within a catchment. We are expecting a consultation by the Scottish government on restoration guidance in February.

Diffuse pollution: regulations are expected to be laid in Parliament in February. LINK was actively involved in all consultation stages, and the process is now moving towards the implementation issues and the need for a diffuse pollution strategy for Scotland. The FTF are active members of the project officer for water resource management (POWRM).

Coastal Flooding Report Steering Group

The FTF is on a steering group of a SNIFFER project on coastal flooding. The project looks at the current trends in coastal flooding, investigates future trends and impacts of climate change and recommends measures to allow for sustainable adaptation to the impacts of climate change, and is due to finish in June 2008.

Landscape TF: Helen McDade and Jonathan Wordsworth

The Landscape TF has been continuing to support the work of the Scottish Landscape Forum in promoting the European Landscape Convention into government policy and has continued to urge the Scottish Government that landscape is a fundamental concern for all.

Scottish Environment Week: LTF work has concentrated on developing Living Landscapes, a 'competition' for MSPs to identify the landscape most important to them. It is being undertaken by Bill Wright (formerly Director of APRS) as consultant with financial support from the LINK Board Decretionary Project Fund. The project will also produce a DVD presentation with images, music and a voice-over text extolling the values of Scotland's landscapes, read by Jimmy Macgregor President

APRS. Contact the **LINK office** for copies. A powerpoint display of all the MSP entries will be played at Holyrood during SEW. Also a banner display has been produced for use at SEW and for other future LINK events.

SPP 14 Natural Heritage: Monitoring of Landscape concerns in SPP 14 continues.

Wind Farms: During October, Brendan Turvey (SNH) gave a very useful presentation on the developing SNH policy on preferred areas and landscape capacity for wind farms.

Concerns: The implementation of the secondary legislation connected with the new Planning Bill remains a concern to the group, particularly with the expansion of General Permitted Development Orders and protection for designated areas both statutory such as National Parks and National Scenic Areas and non-statutory such as Designed and Landscapes Areas of Great Landscape Value.

Member bodies continued to raise landscape concerns at the Beauldy-Denny Public Inquiry and over the proposed Trump development in Aberdeenshire.

Marine TF: Calum Duncan

This has been a continuously busy period with members of the Marine task force attending or speaking at some ten events including for example autumn party conferences, the Atlantic Frontier Environmental Forum and the Marine Protected Areas Conference. Media coverage has been extensive both via the 'Scotsman Save our Seas' and the Holyrood Magazine and via our new website (www.savescottishseas.org), a marine calendar sent to MSPs and the **Finding NIMAs** report.

The MTF attended a UK Links Marine Officer's meeting in Edinburgh in December; the inaugural meeting of the new Sustainable Seas Task Force and the first of five workshops to be held this spring; a liaison meeting with David Wilson, Director of the Marine Directive in November and officers of the Scottish Government Marine Division in October and December; and also a variety of meetings with MSPs of all the main parties and their advisors.

The Marine Bill Research Officer has produced a series of six literature reviews on 'Evidence for damage to marine habitats', three policy papers and two discussion papers, ' Marine Protected Areas' and 'Models for a Marine Management Organisation in Scotland'.

Parliamentary Forum: Eilidh Macpherson

The Parliamentary Forum met in December and it was agreed that LINK would have a stand at the spring Party Conferences (SLD - early March, Aviemore; SLP - end of March, Aviemore; SCP - end of May, Ayr). Members discussed ways of holding all the parties to account for their election promises through a 'one year on' document; it would also be an information base for the next election. If this is agreed at the next meeting in February, then an application may be submitted to LINK's discretionary project funds .

Planning TF: Anne McCall and Paul F Gallagher

The Planning task force co-ordinated a press release and joint letter to Minister John Swinney expressing LINK member body concerns about the proposed golf course, housing and hotel complex on the Menie Estate in Aberdeenshire and asking Mr Swinney to delegate any final decision on the proposal to Reporter from the Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals.

NPF2: PTF members are currently reviewing the content of the second National Planning Framework and will give a Link response in March 2008.

SPP 14 Natural Heritage: The PTF is involved in pre-drafting stages for the review of SPP 14. Scottish Government planners are currently undertaking a scoping and literature review exercise and the PTF membership are giving input.

Scottish Environmental Fundraising Forum (SEFF): Steven Gardner

SEFF held a meeting at the RSPB offices in Edinburgh in December and was given a presentation on the Biffaward scheme by the Grants Officer and Assistant Fund Manager.

Sustainable Scotland TF: Dan Barlow

On-going developments are being monitored, but no specific actions or new to report.

Woodlands TF: Angus Yarwood

The Woodland task force met to prepare working policy briefing paper entitled 'Forestry policy and carbon sequestration in Scotland' for our meeting with Michael Russell, Minister for Environment at the end of January. The meeting was in response to a letter the WTF sent the Minister and the Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) last August expressing concerns about the Woodland Creation Challenge Fund which provided grant funding to tackle climate change objectives.

The briefing paper gave our view that, 'carbon sequestration should not be a primary driver of forestry policy, management of the National Forest Estate, and grant spending in Scotland.' The meeting was very positive with the Minister clearly stating that there was no intention for a policy shift away from multi-benefit forestry and that carbon sequestration was not a *primary* policy driver but a 'co-equal driver with a range of other drivers'. The Minister confirmed that he and the FCS are keen to have LINK input into climate change policy and he said he would be happy to make a site visit to the Scottish Borders to see local biomass production in action.

Chief Officer's Report Jen Anderson

A busy period keeping things moving forward – particularly on climate change issues and in January preparing for the Board Meeting.

2020 project: Supporting steering group; distributing LINK 'history report'; preparing for workshop with Government and Stakeholders; setting up Convenors' review of climate policy; commissioning guidance on emissions auditing, monitoring and reporting; liaising with the Board on how to support members take forward actions discussed at Congress and the September Gathering.

HR: Liaison with the Board's subgroups concluding our three-year LINK salaries review, updating employment procedures and staff handbook; preparing for the resource use planning meeting in February; and monthly staff team meetings.

Events: Following up various actions following annual convenors' forward planning meeting in November; inducting new trustee; and contributing to preparation for SEW events.

Finance: Helping forecast end year outturn and budget 2008/09; discussions with staff and Treasurer to inform fundraising; investigating with staff and funding subgroup whether our subscription income renders us liable for VAT, happily concluding not; contact with members about subscriptions; with other staff, meetings with grantors SNH in December and EFF in January.

Other: On-going contact with Government officers on arrangements for future ministerial liaison meetings; assisting with the on-going President search; planning for final months of associate membership; lease and office issues.

Joint Links: Planning has started for a second seminar on devolution for autumn 2008; the secretariats agree to teleconference more in place of erstwhile, regular meetings; and attended with other with MTF members a useful joint UK Links meeting on the four marine projects in December.

Development Officer's Report Alice Walsh

Fundraising: A first stage application to the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, a key core funder of LINK, was made in January in preparation for a meeting in Dunkeld with Danyal Sattar of EFF in late January, which five other member organizations also took part in.

Congress: Discussions at the Annual members' Congress in November on the challenges and opportunities of climate change and the role of member bodies and LINK in positively influencing public behaviour were captured in a report by Michael Scott which was sent to Congress attendees and member organizations at the end of January. It is also available on the **members' pages** of the LINK website.

Other work: The newsletter was written and circulated in December - rather late, and the LINK general information leaflet used during SEW and the spring party conferences has had minor updates and a reprint.

Meetings: Meetings attended include the joint LINK/Scot Government workshop *Making it Easy*; the Black Environment Network with the Board Diversity sub-group; Karen Wright of SNH on progress against our grant report. Assisting the work of the Board communications sub-group continues.

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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 on the proposed Climate Change Bill and National Planning Framework 2:

Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)	Revised draft guidance for meeting the charity test	7 April consultations@oscr.org.uk
Mountaineering Council of Scotland	Draft Strategy 2008-12 Copy sent to John Mayhew. Contact David Gibson for more details, davidg@mountaineering-scotland.org.uk	22 February 2008
Scottish Government Public Health Directorate	Taking Forward the Government Economic Strategy (GES) Discussion Paper on Tackling Poverty, Inequality and Deprivation Contact the LINK Perth office if you want to see the paper.	2 May 2008 mike.palmer@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

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LINK Diary

2008

February 14 Resource Use Planning meeting, morning, Perth. **Board/Staff**

March 27 Half-year Review and Forward Planning meeting, all day, Perth
Convenors/Deputies, Trustees, Member Reps
April 24 Board meeting, morning, Perth
June 26 am Board meeting - Venue TBC
June 26 pm Board and Convenors Networking meeting - Venue TBC
June 26 pm AGM late afternoon with buffet and guest speaker - Venue TBC

October 23 Board meeting, morning Perth. **All welcome.**
30 Annual Review and Forward Planning, all day - probably
 Edinburgh
November TBC Annual Members' Congress - Venue TBC
December 17 Festive Reception, evening, Edinburgh. **All welcome and**
Guests.

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Other Events, Seminars and Conferences		
27 February	National Grid E-Day	National Switch if Off day. The National Grid will assess what difference switching off un-used appliances makes to electricity consumption.
6 March Perth Concert Hall, Mill Street	SSDF Spring Plenary	<p style="text-align: center;">SSDF Spring Plenary</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Thursday 6th March 2008 0930 hrs – 1640 hrs</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“The Rural Economy & Tourism – Contributors to a Sustainable Scotland?”</p> <p>The Scottish Sustainable Development Forum’s Spring Plenary which will take place on Thursday 6th March 2008 at the Perth Concert Hall (Horsecross), Mill Street, Perth. The event is free of charge. The</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SSDF Spring Plenary</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Thursday 6th March 2008 0930 hrs – 1640 hrs</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“The Rural Economy & Tourism – Contributors to a Sustainable Scotland?”</p> <p>The Scottish Sustainable Development Forum’s Spring Plenary which will take place on Thursday 6th March</p>

		2008 at the Perth Concert Hall (Horsecross), Mill Street, Perth. The event is free of charge. The Rural Economy & Tourism – Contributors to a Sustainable Scotland? www.thirdwave.org.uk/ssdf.html Email: linn@i2detail.co.uk
6 March Pitlochry Festival Theatre	SNH Sharing Good Practice	Leading Edge Event: Rediscovering Rocks and Fossils Email: Karen.smith@snh.gov.uk
19-20 March Sheraton Hotel, Edinburgh	Scottish Renewables Annual Conference	How Scotland can maintain the momentum in renewables. Speaker: John Swinney MSP and Cabinet Secretary. www.annualconference.co.uk
26 March SOAS, London	CIWEM and Environment Agency	Critical Infrastructure and Flooding www.coastms.co.uk

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New Forum

Freshwater: Flooding Bill Advisory Group (FBAG) - Andrea Johnstonova and Mike Donaghy

Steering Group for SNIFFER/SEPA project on Water Framework Directive project - Andrea Johnstonova and Mike Donaghy

Marine: Sustainable Seas Task Force (SSTF). This is the successor forum to AGMACS that will have two meetings and five workshops and will close in April 2008. Delegates are Lloyd Austin, Dan Barlow to the meetings, and Alan Wells and other task force members to the workshops according to their specialist areas.

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Publications Received

New guide from the Faculty of Public Health.

It shows how organisations such as the NHS are ideally placed to use their immense spending power to make sustainable choices



SEPA and Scottish Government Better Waste Regulations report is a consolidation of the consultation responses received in 2007, and will be followed by an action plan in spring 2008.



A summary of the results from the 2007 Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey, started in 1988 and conducted annually since 1993 based on information from local authorities.



A monthly newsletter giving a selection of articles from the EC Environmental Technologies Action Plan (ETAP) website. This time 'The Potential Market for Eco Innovation' is featured.

