

## Task Force – Updates and Looking Forward

### Access, Ian McCall

The Access task force has not been active and is currently reviewing its future work programme.

### Agriculture, Mandy Gloyer and Carey Coombs

**SRDP:** The ATF work has been primarily directed towards the finalisation of the Scottish Rural Development Programme for 2007-13, particularly the funding arrangements for it. We successfully engaged in all stakeholder discussions, prompted a number of parliamentary questions, and briefed MSPs for debates. The ATF met with Michael Russell, Environment Minister, to discuss our concerns about the SRDP and the outcome is a funding package that represents something of a compromise arrangement, but LINK's involvement here has certainly resulted in both additional funding for the SRDP, and an increased awareness of the need to address its environmental objectives.

**RDCs:** The ATF has also been involved in developing the implementation of Rural Development Contracts (RDCs), which will be the delivery vehicle for much SRDP funding. We have held bilateral meetings with SEERAD officials, and maintained our stakeholder group involvement. On issues such as the regionalisation of RDCs, we have been successful in getting our concerns addressed but much remains to be developed, once the new administration's full direction becomes clearer on this.

**Scottish Biodiversity Strategy:** through our membership of the Rural Working Group, we have input to the new SBS Implementation Plans, including detailed actions. Our suggestions have been well received.

**LFASS:** Our involvement in the review of LFASS for 2010 has continued through the stakeholder group, and discussion at European levels with DG Environment and DG Agriculture officials and also at UK levels.

**Economic value of natural heritage:** in discussion with SNH about the future of the economic work, and our suggestions are now likely to form part of a wider research proposal, led by them.

### Biodiversity, Deborah Long

At the end of May, the BTF held a LINK seminar on the ecosystem approach to develop a common understanding among LINK members; a statement of the seminar, currently in being finalised, will be soon available on the members' page of the website and will be circulated to attendees and the wider LINK membership. The task force will be meeting in early August to review priorities and identify here best to focus its energies.

### Climate, Clifton Bain and Richard Dixon

During May, the CTF produced a joint LINK and Stop Climate Chaos Scotland **response to the UK Draft Climate Change Bill Consultation** and a **Climate Action Plan**. We have been working with the joint UK Links on a biomass statement. We met with the Executive to discuss the forthcoming Climate Change Bill for Scotland, and held a policy brainstorming session at the end of June to look at key asks for the Bill for Scotland. We wrote to Stewart Stevenson, Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change to initiate future meetings

### Deer, Duncan Orr-Ewing

The main area of activity was participation in the current review of DCS's Deer Strategy. In a change of direction to previous approaches, this is a joint DCS, SNH and FCS strategy. One bi-lateral meeting was held with DCS where the Deer Strategy was the main agenda item.

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**Freshwater**, Andrea Johnstonova and Mike Donaghy

**Diffuse Pollution:** The regulations on diffuse pollution were withdrawn from Parliament before the elections. We are now awaiting further announcements on draft regulations, and on the establishment of diffuse pollution implementation group.

**Sustainable flood management:** informal meetings were held with the Scottish Executive, SEPA and SNH on the transposition of the EU Flood Risks Directive. We would like to see the Directive implemented through a primary piece of legislation, which could address the inadequacies of the current Scottish flooding legislation, at the same time as transposing the new requirements of the Flood Risks Directive.

**WFD standards and classification:** We are awaiting the release of a consultation on the second phase of environmental standards for WFD, which will include nutrients, temperature, salinity, turbidity and compensation flows. We will alert the relevant taskforces of the consultation on its release.

**Coastal flooding report steering group:** a SNIFFER project on coastal flooding commenced in early June for a year. It will look at the current trends in coastal flooding, investigate future trends and impacts of climate change and recommend measures to allow for sustainable adaptation to the impacts of climate change.

**Landscape**, Helen McDade

Most members of the LTF are involved directly or indirectly in the on-going Beaulieu-Denny Public Local Inquiry into 220km long, 65m high 400kV electricity transmission line. The LTF hopes to meet with SNH to discuss SNH guidance on renewable projects and landscape.

**Marine**, Calum Duncan and Kara Brydson

The MTF received project funding for marine bill advocacy, and under LINK auspices, has recruited two new posts of Marine Research Officer, (Alan Wells, based with WWFS in Dunkeld) and Marine Campaigns Officer, (Ylva Haglund based with RSPB in Edinburgh). Both will be line managed by the MTF convenor, Calum Duncan. An initial Marine Campaign Strategy meeting, hosted by NTS, was held at the end of June, with three meetings (parliamentary and campaign staff; campaign staff; and full MTF) being planned for July.

The MTF submitted a Scottish LINK **response to the UK Marine Bill White Paper** and contributed to the lengthier WCL response to the UK Marine Bill White Paper. We prepared a **press release** welcoming Richard Lochhead's announced commitment to a Scottish Marine Bill. Calum attended the Joint Links marine meeting in London.

Work continued on finalising the NIMAs report.

**Planning**, Anne McCall and Paul Gallagher

The PTF met once to discuss priorities and it was agreed that a 'horizon scanning paper' would be produced by the convenor. In the interim it was agreed that work on the National Planning Framework (NPF) would be a priority and to this end, a joint meeting with other task forces was convened which resulted in a LINK discussion paper. Also, a number of representatives had a constructive meeting with the Scottish Executive team working on the NPF, and the PTF is now seeking task force sign up so that the final LINK statement can be submitted to the Scottish Executive.

The PTF has nominated two representatives to sit on the Scottish Executive advisory group overseeing the review of National Planning Policy Guideline 14: Natural Heritage. The first meeting of this group was on 3 July.

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### **SEFF**, Steven Gardner and Susan Watt

The Scottish Environmental Fundraising Forum (SEFF) meeting in early May at Dunkeld included a talk by Jane Dalglish on Environmental Volunteering; a demonstration of wealth searching software by Harry Walker of Bureau Van Dijk; and an interactive presentation by Jacqui McDowell from Evaluation Support Scotland entitled 'Who are we What do we do How can we help you'. Jason Watts from SNH reported back on the HLF Land and Biodiversity Group. A further meeting with speakers planned for September.

### **Sustainable Scotland**, Dan Barlow

**Parliamentary:** The SSTF met with a Parliament senior researcher to discuss the environment committee inquiry into scrutiny of sustainable development in Parliament and the parliamentary processes for doing this. Information was exchanged on SNP proposals/ commitments on integration of sustainability and economic growth. The SSTF contributed to joint letters from member groups of the task force to Parliamentary Bureau members about structures in Parliament for enhancing delivery/scrutiny of sustainable development.

**Planning:** Participated in planning task force meetings internally and with Scottish Executive about the opportunities available through the development of the National Planning Framework to deliver sustainable development. Further work is on-going between task forces to refine the LINK position.

### **Woodlands**, Angus Yarwood

The WTF met once in the last three months to discuss organising our input into the Scottish Forestry Strategy Three Year Implementation Plans, due for consultation later this year, and also to consider the implications of SRDP on forestry. We are also working with the Climate Change Task Force to establish a clear line on bioenergy issues.

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## LINK News

### **Parliamentary Officer's Report**, Jane Herbstritt

Parliament is now in recess for the summer, but a programme for government has yet to be unveiled by the SNP. We are clear on some of the legislation to be brought forward: a climate bill and a marine bill have both been promised, although we might have to wait until at least November 2008 before they reach parliament. Parliamentary Office priorities will include pre-legislative work on both these bills, and we will be working closely with Stop Climate Chaos lobbying for a good climate bill. A new 'everyone's watching grid' is currently being discussed and we are hoping to organise a parliamentary forum reception in October 2007.

### **Campaign Officer's Report**, Ylva Haglund

An evaluation report of this year's campaign was completed and circulated. A hand over of the 2000 footprints petition to Richard Lochhead took place at the end June with students from the Firr Hill High School, Edinburgh who asked him questions on the environment.

### **Development Officer's Report**, Alice Walsh

Activities this month included organisation of the LINK 20th anniversary reception on 15 June at Falkland, together with the LINK AGM at the Falkland Festival of Stewardship. Members and staff past and present and some 85 guests toasted LINK's history and future with champagne after short, heartfelt speeches from our Honorary Fellows. Ceilidh dancing in the Big Tent helped us all keep warm after supper, and we were mostly undaunted by the rain.

On fundraising, for SEW 2008 we have approached fewer sponsors for larger amounts, with no clear responses yet. An application to Perth & Kinross Council for computing equipment raised £1,000.

## LINK News

### Chief Officer's Report, Jen Anderson

#### Report on the Board Meeting, June 2007

The Board:

1. noted the 'Keep it simple in the countryside' press release from Michael Russell and agreed that they and the task forces would get ready to give a LINK statement or comment once the proposals from the nine agencies are known in September
2. noted the report from John Mayhew on the first meeting with ministers and other environmental NGOs and LINK would be following it up with a letter to the Environment Minister seeking a LINK liaison meeting
3. noted an interim report from Simon Pepper to the 2020 steering group (see below) about opportunities to consider work aimed at inspiring behaviour change; agreed to copy this to members, convenors and to the campaigns review group meeting in July; noted the focus of any work on this theme should be as much on decision-makers as on the public
4. discussed LINK's common energy position, and agreed to recommend that task forces revisit this and that a LINK-wide discussion, especially of communications strategy, be organised
5. approved the proposal for a small project under LINK's auspices to compile a report during August to the Freshwater Task Force on the recent TAG process for which WWFS was providing the income
6. discussed the paper prepared by Alice Walsh on the benefits of LINK membership and identified a subgroup to LINK's communications strategy to explore this further
7. discussed plans of the Parliamentary Forum on how best to monitor and hold the Government to account in the future
8. approved the conclusions of the sub-group on diversity that LINK should have an inclusive approach to all its activities and should seek information on good practice from amongst the membership and from BEN
9. agreed to explore the possibility of co-opting an active fundraising person on to the Board.

#### Summer Site Visits by Michael Russell,

Michael Russell, Minister for the Environment, is very interested in visiting environmental projects during the summer recess and LINK member organisations are encouraged to consider opportunities and contact the Executive

#### LINK Membership

During June, Jenny Mollinson and Judy Wilkinson representing new members SAGS (Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society) received a half-day induction from Adean and Alice, and in due course will be contacting convenors to find out more about their agendas and activities.

#### Marine Bill Advocacy

The two new marine bill advocacy staff, Alan Wells and Ylva Haglund are now in post, based at the WWF Dunkeld and RSPB Edinburgh offices and supervised by Calum Duncan. An agreement on management of this two-year project, to safeguard the collective goals of the marine task force, is in place. Alan and Ylva may call upon the task forces for information or to explore areas of potential collaboration.

#### LINK's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Following on from the successful ceilidh at Falkland Estate in June, the LINK 2020 steering group is planning an autumn reception at Edinburgh Castle; (LINK has now been granted the request for this, with details of timing, minister and guests, to be confirmed). Michael Scott's report *A strong coherent voice* will be published mainly on the LINK website, with a small circulation of printed copies. The group has commissioned Simon Pepper to explore with other networks and organisations the extent of interest in collaborative work around supporting and inspiring behaviour change and to report back on findings in August. His interim report has identified valuable themes for Congress in November. Further details are available from [Jen Anderson](#) or [Alice Walsh](#).

## SEW 2008

The theme of behaviour change, and how this can be supported and inspired by various interests, has been proposed by the SEW Steering Group and is being developed in discussion with task force convenors. For further information, or to discuss this, please contact **Jane Herbst** in LINK's Edinburgh office..

## Circulation of LINK Information

The main **type of information produced by LINK for Members** is available here and on the website.

## Joint Links Liaison Meeting, June in Edinburgh

The main points discussed were: the Marine Bills UK project and possible meeting in October once staff in all four countries are in post; recent effort by WCL to get sign-up from the other Links to a bio-energy paper; and better board-level liaison between the Links is still being sought.

## Staffing

Interviews were held during early July for a new administrator for the Parliamentary Office in Edinburgh, and final arrangements are being made for hand-over with Alex during late August.

## Next Board Meeting – 1 November, Perth

Please come and participate or send your rep!

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## LINK Future Meetings 2007 and 2008

<b>October</b>	<b>25</b>	Board meeting Perth
<b>November</b>	<b>1</b>	Annual Review and Forward Planning meeting, all day, Edinburgh
	<b>23/24</b>	Annual Members' Congress. <i>Date and venue to be confirmed.</i>
<b>December</b>	<b>4</b>	Media Networking and drinks, organised by FoES
	<b>12</b>	Christmas Evening Reception, Edinburgh
<b>January</b>	<b>24</b>	Board meeting, morning, Perth
	<b>24</b>	Board and Convenors' Networking meeting, afternoon, Perth
<b>March</b>	<b>27</b>	Half-year Review and Forward Planning meeting, all day, Perth
<b>April</b>	<b>24</b>	Board meeting, morning, Perth
<b>June</b>	<b>12</b>	AGM, <i>time and venue to be confirmed</i>
	<b>26</b>	Board meeting, morning, Perth
	<b>26</b>	Board and Convenors' Networking meeting, afternoon, Perth
<b>October</b>	<b>23</b>	Board meeting, morning Perth
	<b>30</b>	Annual Review and Forward Planning meeting, all day

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## Other Events

<b>September</b>	18-20	Solutions to climate-proof your business <b>Green Corp 2007 Conference</b>	London
<b>October</b>	4-8	Engaging with the politics of climate change <a href="http://www.schumachercollege.org.uk">www.schumachercollege.org.uk</a>	Dartington
	18-23	Business responses to climate change <a href="http://www.schumachercollege.org.uk">www.schumachercollege.org.uk</a>	Dartington
	29-31	Institute of Fundraising Conference <a href="http://www.scottishconference.org.uk">www.scottishconference.org.uk</a>	Glasgow
<b>November</b>	7-9	Biodiversity of Bust. BGEN Annual Conference <b>Botanic Gardens Education Network</b>	Carmarthen
	22	Climate Change in Scotland: Global to Local <a href="http://www.holyrood.com">www.holyrood.com</a>	Edinburgh

## Consultations

You can sign up to **seConsult**, the Executive weekly email alert service for new consultations. In addition, the following consultations have been received:

<b>Royal Society Edinburgh Inquiry.</b> Scotland's Hill and Island Areas Views are invited by RSE Chair, Professor Gavin McCrone.	20 August
<b>Public Consultation on Nuclear Power Generation</b> UK DTI	10 October
<b>Core Paths Plan Consultation</b> Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park	8 August
<b>Deposit Local Plan Consultation</b> Cairngorms National Park Authority	28 September
<b>Scottish Fossil Code Consultation</b> SNH	7 September
<b>East Coast Main Line Route Utilisation Strategy Consultation</b> Network Rail	21 September

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## Open Invitations

<b>SCRA</b>	World Ranger Day and premier of documentary film on rangers 31 July, Hopetoun or Glenmore
<b>Royal Society Edinburgh</b>	RSE Inquiry Committee Meeting Scotland's Hill and Island Areas 3 August, Edinburgh
<b>Orkney UHI</b>	Essence Project discussions on integrating culture and nature Email Dr Jane Downey ASAP
<b>EU Environment Policy</b>	Weekly alert service for scientific and research information relevant to DG Environment policy priorities

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## Publications Received

<b>Hill Phones 2007 Directory</b>	SNH Recreation and Access Division
<b>Carnegie Commission for Rural Community Development Charter</b>	Carnegie Trust UK
<b>RSPB Scotland Advocacy 2007</b>	RSPB Scotland
<b>New Priorities for Arable Plant Conservation</b>	Plantlife UK
<b>Breeding Bird Survey 2006</b>	BTO/JNCC/RSPB
<b>IUCN Newsletter 13/2007 Marine Biodiversity</b>	IUCN
<b>Carbon Costs: Corporate Carbon Accounting and Reporting</b>	Aldersgate Group
<b>Green Futures, July 2007.</b> The colour of money	Forum for the Future
<b>Could Try Harder</b> A mid-term report on the EC Environmental Record	Green 10 Group
<b>EEB Priorities for 2008</b>	European Environmental Bureau

Print copies of these and other publications received are available in the LINK Perth office.

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