



Note of Scottish Environment LINK Networking Meeting held Thursday 27 January 2011 LINK Office, Shore Road, Perth

Chair: Deborah Long

Present: Deborah Long (LINK Chair, Plantlife, BTF), Vicky Swales (RSPB, SLUS TF), Lisa Webb (RSPB (FWTF), Jonny Hughes (SWT, LINK Trustee), John Mayhew (APRS, LTF, PTF), Lloyd Austin (RSPB, LINK Trustee, W&NE), Jenny Mollison (SAGS), Denis Mollison (HWDT), John Rosser (NTS), Dan Barlow (LINK Trustee, WWFS), Andrew Fairbairn (LINK Trustee, WTS), Ruth Grant (SCRA, SOA TF), Helen Zealley (President), LINK Staff: Jen Anderson, Andy Myles, Susan Guest, Alice Walsh, Sarah Archer, Lindsay Roberts.

Apologies: Eila McQueen (Trustee, AS), Elizabeth Leighton (WWFS, Aedan Smith (RSPB, PTF), Maggie Keegan (SWT, PTF, SOATF), Paul Ritchie (Treasurer), Jim Densham (RSPB, CATF), Craig MacAdam (Buglife).

Before business started John Mayhew (elder statesman) presented Alice Walsh (to her complete surprise) with an exceedingly generous present and a lovely card, and bottle of champagne from people in the network, recognising her 20 years employed with LINK.

1. Updates

From the Board meeting

Following November Strategic Planning meeting: The Board had noted capacity issues, there is some uncertainty around members resources for work deemed to be priorities for collective action at the Strategic Planning meeting in November, especially parts in the forward plan table (circulated beforehand and on the website), coloured green. In some cases leadership needs to be identified. The Board requested members/task forces to be realistic about capacity and report back by end March. In some cases staff can assist these discussions. **Action: TFs, identified leads, staff.**

Cairngorms National Park: Francoise van Buuren had contacted the LINK Chair to request an informal meeting between CNP and LINK boards (before June) , and a workshop with members from June on the content of the new CNPA local plan, which opened for consultation then. CNPA would also be responding to LINK's report by Tamsin Bailey, which was critical of it. The LINK Board had decided to accept a meeting on the basis of strategic discussion about the spirit of the legislation and the way in which the Act is being implemented. They would note that there is concern among a number of member bodies, that some are taking action, that LINK Board understands these frustrations, even if LINK itself is not involved. The Board will indicate that engagement on the detail of the consultation is an issue for members, and is likely to be by members' local area staff and local groups and that they will be looking for improvements on the last round. LINK Board will keep members updated. **Action: Board, staff**



Drennan Watson had sent an email which was read out: in brief that CC, BSCG, and SCNP have lodged a court case against the CNPA's decision to set aside the recommendations of the reporter in the local inquiry into the current local plan, and sought support from other member bodies. Members were asked to get in touch with Drennan if they are interested and can offer support.

The Board drew members' attention to two valuable pieces of LINK work; Tamsin Bailey's report *Scotland's Environmental Laws since Devolution; from Rhetoric to Reality* and Andy Myles paper *Protecting the Environment in a time of cuts*; requesting that members draw on these in their advocacy with MSPs etc, as the more these are used the greater their effect. There are also clear messages that taskforces can use. It was agreed that member bodies should also flag these resources up with their own memberships.

Action: Members, task forces

Vicki Swales and Lisa Webb noted that some civil servants had been concerned that the Legislation report was either wrong or not right in parts, and that a 'heads-up' was not given to civil servants about it, with whom LINK works, which caused friction. Vicki and Lisa were asked to seek feedback on errors identified within the report, for the steering group to take on board. The report had not been press released, was sent in draft to those coming to the Congress although not civil servants as they had not come. The lesson of ensuring that colleagues in the statutory sector are aware of LINK initiatives in good time was noted.

Action: Staff, Vicki, Lisa

Operating Plan third quarter report

Those present were asked to comment from the perspective of identifying key success and integration needs. Please refer to the OP (website) for the content of updates.

Agriculture: There are likely to be more stakeholder groups spawned from the CAP reform/Pack report process. There is an option to ask for more places for LINK to give stronger voice to environment, **if capacity exists within members other than RSPB**, which also has its own place.

Biodiversity: severe capacity issues. The meeting on 8 Feb will determine future, TEEB is one potential area. It was also noted that this TF is one which involves many of LINK's smaller member bodies, who would otherwise not be on a TF.

Climate Adaptation: Jim Densham had emailed that the TF is putting together the response to the SG adaptation consultation helped with input from a number of LINK TFs and members on specific sectors which was good. The CATF would not be able to do this without this support and input. However, the consultation proves the low capacity of SG and sectors on adaptation action planning at present and we need to understand how we as LINK can best help to build this over the next 1-2 years before there is a statutory Adaptation Framework and SG work



programme, including stakeholder groups. **It will need all relevant TFs and members working on this issue - not just the CATF.**

Deer: Government opposed all amendments for W&NE bill though some will come back at Stage 3 (March), some success. Longer term the TF is having some beneficial influence on deer management training.

Environmental governance: Andy Myles (PO) is preparing a paper on governance covering experience of legislative, executive and judicial procedures. He asked all members to look at the architecture and furniture of government in terms of the founding principles of the Parliament and issues such as access to justice, members ability to operate within current structures, to identify barriers and how to remove them. This will be a broad and important piece of work coming to members in the next couple of weeks. **Action: Members to comment to Andy**

Economy: The section on the manifesto is to be completed. The Carnegie Commission report is due February. It is a fairly academic group looking at what indicators may help/assist/replace GDP and is a Scottish process. After that reports, LINK will assess what it can do in terms of media, advocacy work, as the findings may be discredited if not supported by convergence with coalition's happiness agenda. Allies across the UK include NEF, Green Alliance. The meeting noted that the next Scottish Government may want to review the national performance framework.

Freshwater: TF is meeting SEPA early Feb to discuss concerns about the large number of regional groups proposed for RBMPs, regarding effectiveness and members capacity to input. Lisa is also leading on LINK response to the Better Environmental Regulation consultation.

Members have been invited to contribute and sign up. The Water Industry investment programme for 2015 and beyond is important focus to ensure sustainability is included in the objectives. A consultation is out on developing Scottish Waters functions, to which the TF will respond.

Health: covered well in the manifesto, will keep plugging. Needs longer-term thinking beyond political terms.

Landscape: A lot has been happening (as shown in the OP report) though not necessarily promoted via the TF. Still awaiting a stakeholder group to implement the Scottish Landscape Charter. JMT has launched a petition on Wild Land Policy, backed by the TF.

Parliamentary Forum: Meeting Feb to discuss future work. If any members plan hustings, please **refer to the hustings calendar on the website to avoid clashes**. The revamped hustings pack will be on the site shortly.

Marine: Alan Wells had moved to ADFB. The meeting welcomed new MPAO Sarah Archer to LINK, based at WWF office. The TF had met the previous day to discuss national marine plans, and would be meeting ScotGov the following day. There may also be capacity issue for members



to input to all the stakeholder groups. A report from SAMS would be out shortly and a Parliamentary reception planned for that. **Some input from other TFs (Planning and Landscape) was needed for renewables work, Securing the benefits consultation.**

Planning: Good meeting was held in December with LINK's MPAOs. The TF is concerned at how developments get into the NPF and thereby become unquestionable, as LINK warned at the time. **TF will write to the Communities Committee (needs to be soon)**, with concern at impacts on communities for the legacy report for next administration.

Single Outcome Agreements: The Audit commissioned from CAG will be out shortly (2 Feb). The conference on 21 February may be the end of this strand of work, options are being discussed among members, again a capacity issue. There will still be a need for a watching brief on the National Performance Framework and SPAs at a minimum.

Sustainable Land Use Strategy: The RAE committee's scrutiny had resulted in a letter to R Lochhead critical of the draft strategy. Now waiting for the Strategy to be laid before Parliament.

W&NE Bill As reported in the OP and in Deer above. Follow up will be a code of practice and other implementation measures post Act.

2. Our future work plans

Draft Operating Plan for 2011/12 - focusing on areas coloured green and/or any updates to the plans contained there.

Energy: biomass includes the issue of shipping in wood to keep large scale plants functioning, eg Leith on which FoES is campaigning. Discussed need for LINK work on it and agreed it was useful to share positions, ensure that the network is not coming unstuck on it, and let some groups get on with it. Members should let Planning TF know of concerns, and it is also an issue for Landscape TF; share positions as they relate to energy. **John will take the issues back to L and P TFs. Staff to let FoES know.**

Freshwater: referring to the table circulated integration also needed with Marine, Agriculture and SLUS task forces.

Governance: DB, LA and AM will work up the manifesto section, Andy's paper will be coming to members (see above), and there are tie ins with Tamsin Bailey's report. It was agreed to support the work on Access to Justice which FoES is leading.

Landscape: The TF thought of doing a project on the employment justification for major developments, applying to DPF potentially. A volunteer offer for desk based research work was one potential avenue. **John would follow up.**

Marine: also interested in ecosystem services, TEEB work.

Planning: ongoing work included how the planning act is delivering, engagement with MTF over the national marine plan, assessment of SNH's position/guidelines on casework, review of SEA. Staff would help set up a telecom for discussion of the workplan before the next meeting in March.
Action: Alice

SEFF: SEFF could suggest that we need more matched funding work with SNH. **Action: AW to speak to Steven Gardner.**

LINK work on local government

SOA TF had circulated a consultation to members on possible future work including mapping NGO engagement with local authorities, completing the list of LA duties for environment and SD, collating LINK asks of LAs for the 2012 elections, amongst other actions. To undertake the tasks outlined the TF would need more commitment from members and a new convenor. There had been low response to date, this could be a capacity issue and the TF would report back to the April meeting whether the work was likely to go ahead. Our SOA audit has raised some awareness within Community Planning Partnerships about their responsibilities for environment/SD, about 25% responded to the draft. Other planning partners have duties also which remain unfulfilled.

Action SOA TF.

SLU TF: TF was currently focussed on what's in the draft and on getting it called back and reopened by the new administration from May. The strategy has no spatial element and how far this is worth pursuing will be considered by the TF, having noted member interest in this in November. The TF's future depends a lot on content of final strategy, outcome of May elections, whether the new administration shelves this or whether there is active iteration through their strategies for land use. **The TF would report back in June.**

Sustainable Development/Economics – Several members were interested in pursuing work) and in harnessing arguments for biodiversity and more. MCS, JMT, SWT and WWFS were interested, MTF are discussing (LR to confirm in advance of BTF's meeting on 8 Feb which would also consider. **LINK work to be discussed post outcomes of Carnegie Commission**

Priorities on which to work with SNH

Simon Pepper had been very helpful to our relationship with SNH. The Board was working with him and Andrew Thin to be clear on roles and responsibilities and had agreed to have 3 strategic issues to jointly promote in appropriate ways. These were ecosystem health, marine recovery and the 'beyond the GDP agenda'. The Board will work up a draft proposal to take to SP and AT in May. These would not be extra commitments, rather better coordination of approaches between both organisations. The draft paper will be sent round to members and task forces. It was noted that SNH's new programme managers will be key. A note of discussions with Simon was on the website (included in the note of November's Strategic Planning meeting). **Action: Board, staff.**

Other events and opportunities ahead



SWT sought interest from the smaller member bodies in collectively funding trial membership of Scotland Europa. There was not any interest from members round the table, as capacity rather than lack of information was the main issue. Staff would circulate Jonny's proposal to members for them to respond direct if interested. Susan Guest had attended an EEB meeting in London in December to prompt EEB UK on our role and how we make the most of European work; with plans to reinstate NGO pre-meetings before the Council meeting.

Action: staff, members

3. Other business – including:

Working with Healthy Environment Network: Helen Zealley would be attending a meeting on 2 Feb, following a review of HEN to which LINK had input. Jenny Mollison was interested in more information.

Christie Commission on the future of public services Andy Myles was coordinating responses to that and asked members to input the following day as the deadline was short.

Scottish Environment Week: The programme was on the website. Keep the date, especially for the reception on **2 March in diaries**. Invites would be coming round soon.

Follow up to year of homecoming LINK Board had been asked to help determine strategic outcomes for the year of nature in 2013 and would respond positively. The paper would be circulated to members for information and comment. Ian Gardner of NTS was on the steering group.

Action: Staff, members

John Rosser, retiring shortly, was thanked for his involvement in LINK on behalf of NTS.

Thanks were recorded to Deborah Long and Helen Zealley for their support various to LINK.

Next Networking meeting would be **21 April, in Perth**