Networking meeting 25 June 2009 – Discussion and Action Points

PRESENT

Helen Zealley (President)

John Mayhew (LINK Chair & APRS), Ian McCall (RAS, LINK trustee), Lloyd Austin (RSPB, LINK trustee), Andy Fairbairn (WTS, LINK trustee)

Jon Wordsworth (Archaeology Scotland), Beryl Leatherland (MCoS, LTF member), Maggie Keegan (SWT, PTF Depute), Vicky Junik (NTS, PTF and LTF member), Calum Duncan (MCS, MTF Convenor), Roger Powell (SCRA), Drennan Watson (Cairngorms, LINK Hon Fellow), Adam Harrison (WWFS)

Jen Anderson, Hugh Green, Susan Guest, Adean Lutton, Andy Myles, Alice Walsh – Staff

1. APOLOGIES

Received from Deborah Long (Plantlife, BTF convenor and LINK Vice-Chair), David Downie (WWFS, LINK Treasurer), Eila Macqueen Trustee, Dan Barlow Trustee, Sam Gardner WWFS & CTF convenor, Katrina Marsden & Carey Coombs RSPB & ATF convenors, Steve Gardner SEFF Convenor, Andrea Johnstonova FWTF Convenor, Duncan Orr-Ewing DTF Convenor, Helen McDade JMT, Jenny Mollison SAGS, Craig Macadam Buglife, Paul Kirkland BCS, Jolin Warren NTS, Sarah Dolman WDCS, Gordon Gray Stephens SNW, Corinne Evans FoES, Alistair Beeley NEMT, Carrie Hume WWT and Angus Yarwood WTS.

2. BOARD UPDATES

Inquorate Board meeting, with decisions to be homologated by email.

John Mayhew to stand down at AGM to follow. Ian McCall had offered to take the chair, either with RAS support, or freelance, depending on outcomes of operational changes at RA. Ian had served on LINK's Board since 2003 and earlier on Management Team.

Deborah Long and David Downie were willing to continue as Vice Chair and Treasurer. Active effort was underway to identify a successor for David as Treasurer from 2010.

Much of the Board's morning discussion had focussed on the Operating Plan Q1 report.

Board had agreed a rise in level of discretionary project funding for TF and other projects to £15,000 for the year to March 2010.

3. TASK FORCES

3.1 Marine Project Update

The two charitable Trusts had committed further funding to March 2010 and were inviting a bid from the four Links for continuation funding through to 2012 to enable eNGO engagement in implementation of new legislation for the UK.

3.2 TF review, evaluation and forward plans

AGRI TF – leading in relation to the SRDP, the main funding route for rural development including forestry. Also responding to CAP healthcheck aiming to ensure as much as possible is targetted to environment. TF leads on soil strategy also. Interested in Food and Drink strategy and likely to lead on this (production, procurement). Aware of work of Brian Pack for SG on distribution of EU subsidy and would make contact. Will watch assessment of Single Farm Payment after 2013. Working with SEFF on funding via SRDP and potentially doing a joint workshop on agriculture and climate change with Soil Association Scotland. (**Actions: Katrina)**

Various interests round table noted in relation to food security as an issue Scotland must address. For both the ATF and the proposed workshop on sustainable land use strategy. **(Actions: Katrina, SLUS group)**

BIODIVERSITY TF – To input to LINK SOAs steering group. Contributing to LINK work on proposed WNE Bill. Plans a conference with local authority biodiversity officers in September about implementation of the duty, exploring obstacles to implementing LBAPs through the SOAs and good examples of conservation. Wants info on what is happening.

Discussion points - Local development plans hardly refer to biodiversity. Minister had written to all LAs to remind of the duty, though at meeting with LINK could not offer more in the way of central support and encouraged LINK to shadow SOAs work and engage locally. Landowner/management showing worrying patterns. BTF may have advice for CTF on how *to avoid* a process foundering.

CLIMATE TF – Bill completed S3 on 24 June. Good progress with agreement on a 42% target for 2020 (not later), though no annual measurement before then. Pressure needed on Government and parties to achieve implementation. Legal duty included for all public bodies to pursue targets, though again, needs NGO follow up. Final package includes cumulative totals with aviation and shipping and all GHGEs counting to the target. Carbon auditing required of Ministers re procurement, policies, expenditure and budget influence. Power to introduce schemes to reduce carbon tax if individuals do energy efficiency. Powers to issue fines. SCCS coalition over the Bill meant LINK members able to pursue good set of objectives powerfully, and final Bill a lot better than when introduced. Work starts now to secure implementation!

Discussion points – Working through SCCS gave LINK access to more politicians, who acknowledged the breadth of voice. SCCS's next step is chasing implementation including Copenhagen, preparing for December rallies in London and Glasgow, public awareness raising for the rallies, and monitoring. LINK CTF should advise how the other TFs can contribute to the implementation phase and how individual members can lead on particular aspects (eg WWFS on food). CTF will also consider how it can cater for the LINK-only areas of interest. Adaptation strategy in Bill is good with public bodies required to contribute and act. Drennan Watson and others working on paper on planning for security. Clifton Bain will be replaced at RSPB by a Land use and climate change specialist. Role of LAs in fulfilling obligations needs monitored.

LANDSCAPE TF John Mayhew to convene the TF from its July meeting which will revisit aims and vision. TF recently met Minister on Scottish Charter, inconclusive discussion, though positive. TF interested in sustainable land use strategy discussions. SG have asked SNH to report on implementation of the EU landscape convention in Scotland and how to improve this – progress!

FRESHWATER TF – Just one active member now (RSPB) thus too tenuous to be a task force. Lots of opportunity ahead to pursue WEWS and Flood Risk Management legislation and RBMPs, if other member organisations want to engage with the issues, which relate to *all land uses*. The RBMP draft is poor, SEPA is aware of this, though hampered by funding and powers from Scottish Government and perhaps welcomes criticism in these circs. The task force was deemed to be resting, and the email list would be maintained. It was agreed that Andrea Johnstonova could continue as LINK's delegate on a number of related forums if she was willing. The meeting recorded a vote of thanks to the FWTF for the excellent work done in LINK's name over the last nine years. Reps to discuss with their organisations and let Andrea know of any change **(Reps).**

MARINE TF – Marine Scotland established 1 April to integrate remits shared by four agencies; a disappointment is that this is part of Government, rather than independent,

as LINK had proposed. Scottish Marine Bill introduced on 30 April and contains many powers LINK supports, though lacks context and purpose. LINK commissioned legal analysis to inform input. Thanks to Lloyd Austin for his evidence to the Committee on LINK's behalf. TF keeping eye on amendments to the UK Marine Bill. Recent Calman report makes significant points about powers in the marine environment. Royal Assent anticipated early 2010 with implementation work beyond, for which the 4 Links will bid to the two Trusts for further support through to 2012 (re OSPAR and other deadlines). LINK's marine advocacy officer, Ylva Haglund, had moved on to a new job. Research Officer, Alan Wells, was staying on with LINK. Thanks noted to both for excellent work for the project. Thanks to Andy Myles, Susan Guest and Julia Harrison on the parliamentary side. TF's recent meeting with Scottish Renewables raised concerns about development in the right places, precautionary principle, need for more data collection. Our marine renewables position (amended) is on the website. TF recently wrote Minister supporting S Barra and Mingulay as EU sites; subsequent questions by local resident about LINK's legitimacy to which TF reply will focus on national and international perspectives.

Discussion – SNH's review of designations may be less of a priority given recent change of Minister; at any rate the underlying issue appears to be how we communicate about designations, rather than whether they should exist. The MTF does use food security issue in dialogue with fishermen and others; responsible lobbyists grasp this now.

PLANNING TF – National Planning Framework being published that day, guiding next 25 years. LINK concerns with draft were its poor connection to SD (despite rhetoric) and little clarity re implementation in this respect; worrying inclusion of certain national developments; little or nothing about ecosystem approach. Meantime new draft SPP (consolidating all planning policies) is woeful on sustainable development and climate change, poor on context for policies on which planners rely, and has no glossary. LINK response submitted 24 June (thanks to Aedán Smith at RSPB). Andy and Aedán in touch with special advisers to remind them of promises that the spirit of the earlier planning policies would not be lost in the new SPP – response awaited. There are signs that developers and LAs are also concerned at the lack of support for the new SPP and the potential for division and controversy. The PTF will also be looking at progress with implementation of SEA in Scotland and is considering an environmental audit of several small developments.

WOODLAND TF – Sleeping. No forward plan provided so not covered in Operating Plan.

4. EVALUATION OF ENGAGEMENT IN STAKEHOLDER GROUPS (inc. non task force)

Insufficient information had been received from delegates at this stage to usefully produce a spreadsheet. This type of information has been collected for several years to help monitor the 'in the tent or not' dilemma. Value of these LINK engagements in SG sponsored forums will be discussed with SG officials in the autumn with a view to ensuring our collective resources are usefully spent. Delegates were urged to feed back to Adean with information for the spreadsheet which will be put on the members' website. **Delegates/TFCs**

5. WIDER ACTIVITY

5.1 Elections preparation (UK and Holyrood) - Andy Myles was drafting 'asks' with Westminster, Holyrood, European and local government relevance highlighted. First draft to circulate to task forces and reps for comments and re gaps. The meeting supported the plan to maintain a rolling document to serve all these opportunities. **(Andy)**

The Parliamentary Forum was considering how best to influence manifesto preparation, obviously more achievable for Holyrood than for Westminster. Discussion with other Links is planned (25 September) about potential outcomes of the Westminster election,

given the possibility of a hung parliament and perhaps some scope to influence negotiations between parties on environmental priorities. **(PForum)**

Andy will write to member bodies shortly to seek member support in organising hustings across Scotland for the UK elections **(Andy).** The benefit of this as a campaigning tactic is that these are not difficult to organise, are very useful to candidates, and bring these players into discussion about important environmental issues with member bodies. They don't irritate (as other campaigning tactics can) and help to build relations. Reps encouraged to help ensure serious attention by their organisations **(Reps).**

5.2 Congress – on 19 November, followed by Forward Planning on 20 November, both in Dunblane (meeting supported this venue). Theme of environment and economics – looking at big picture with speakers Andrew Sims and Jan Bebbington. Aiming to attract policy staff, marketing folk, fundraisers and consider how the movement can help Scotland out of recession and itself survive.

5.3 SEW 2010 – Steering group has met and a draft programme has been circulated to member bodies, with request for their suggestions of projects to showcase. Andy to re-circulate his request **(Andy). Reps to respond asap.**

5.4 Workshops

National Conversation – important that we respond though members not favouring a workshop. Andy Myles to circulate suggested line of response for members' comment. This will form the basis for discussion between a few trustees, Andy, and Scottish Government officials in August. **(Andy, Reps)**

WNE – 2 July workshop to consider key issues to flag in LINK response to consultation on proposed legislation. Lloyd Austin has offered to coordinate pulling this together with inputs from Deer and Bio task forces and others determined at the workshop. **(Lloyd)**

Land Use Strategy – The previous meeting had agreed to organise a workshop for members to agree principles of a sustainable land use strategy. Staff to set up telecon for small steering group discussion of date, format and content - involving Katrina Marsden, Jon Wordsworth, Tony King, Andy Myles and perhaps Deborah Long. **(Jen)**

Agri & CC – Soil Association Scotland (no longer a LINK member) is leading on a seminar to which LINK Agri TF is invited to input. Carey Coombs (RSPB) is the contact.

5.5 Access to justice/Protective Costs Orders – Useful May workshop with lawyer Frances McCartney and QC Aidan O'Neill exploring where things are at in Scotland. Andy Myles has since drafted a briefing to inform LINK inputs as this debate progresses. The subject will hopefully become more relevant in relation to environmental governance as elections approach in Scotland. In the short-term, LINK will write to the Justice Minister when the Gill Review reports, and will frame a manifesto ask around this for elections. Very important issue; in England and elsewhere progress has been faster towards PCOs. Briefing to circulate to reps for info and comment **(Andy).**

5.6 Single Outcome Agreements – LINK steering group meets early July. Aim is to collate a set of key environmental issues with ideal targets and suggested indicators, which links to the National Performance Framework and to local indicators. To promote this with LAs and with national government. Progress has been slower than anticipated. Still relevant, as this will be an issue for the 2012 local elections.

5.7 Health & environment – LINK is mapping where its members interface with health/ wellbeing/ physical activity agenda, prior to autumn meeting with other networks. Aim is to identify what we can do as a network to add value to existing effort to raise this up the agenda. Meeting noted diet/food relates. Drennan providing reference **(RDW).**

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

6.1 Parliamentary Training Day – LINK staff offering training for members on 29 July – focussing on the strategic approach to advocacy.

6.2 Process management re WEWS Act – **RDW** sending reference for circulation.

6.3 Drennan Watson proposed that LINK members consider creating a Scottish Esmee Fairbairn-type Foundation to ensure core Scottish appeal to people with Scottish ties and interests worldwide, and to access funds such as those available via Homecoming. The meeting agreed this would be worth consideration by the Board **(Board).**

7. FUTURE LINK MEETINGS
See core meetings at
http://www.scotlink.org/clients/engaging/meetings.php#dates LINK/JA/Jul09