

The LINK Newsletter



Update from Scottish Environment LINK
Winter 2011-12

LINK President Succession

Ross Finnie is LINK's next President, succeeding Helen Zealley whose three year term was celebrated at a reception during the Members' Congress in November. Helen received a gift in appreciation for the excellent support she has given the network, far beyond the original remit. In her reply to Deborah Long's tribute to her endeavours, Helen spoke movingly about the commitment of members, particularly within the task

forces, to contributing positively to Scotland's future. We look forward to her continuing involvement as an active Honorary Fellow.

Ross Finnie's succession as LINK President was announced at the festive reception on 14 December. We anticipate that Ross's extensive experience of bringing diverse interests together in pursuit of a sustainable Scotland will be of tremendous value to the

network and beyond in the years ahead.



Deborah Long, Ross Finnie and outgoing President Helen Zealley at the Congress

Members' Annual Congress

LINK's 10th Annual Members' Congress, on the theme of sustainability and success in leaner times was held in Birnam on 17 November. Dr Hans Friederich, Regional Director for the IUCN Pan-European Programme, provided an international perspective. He encouraged LINK, among other Scottish IUCN members, to use this powerful global network more fully, whether by secondments to provide specific expertise; citing best practice and solutions elsewhere to encourage progress at home; or taking forward valuable projects (eg the IUCN Peatland Programme, see below). Stuart

Brooks (JMT, and LINK representative to IUCN) and Jonny Hughes (SWT and LINK trustee), members of the IUCN UK Committee, anticipate more input from members to that agenda

Dr Alison Elliot, Convenor of SCVO and member of the Christie Commission on the future delivery of public services which [reported](#) in June, spoke about the work of the Commission in relation to improving outcomes, and issues that arose during the consultation, which she and other commissioners considered to be still a 'work in progress.' Dan Barlow, Head of Policy at WWF Scotland,

outlined what 'preventative spend' might mean in practice, with budgets more clearly aligned to desired outcomes of the [National Performance Framework](#) (NPF), a useful Government initiative which could benefit from wider scrutiny. Journalist Iain Macwhirter, member of the Carnegie UK Round Table which produced the report [Beyond GDP: measuring what matters](#), considered one of the major challenges ahead is unemployment driven by advances in technology; sharing paid work more equally is one practical suggestion for the future.



Panellists

Various roles available to civic society in holding government to account, preparing the ground for politicians to act and communicating complex ideas effectively with different

Governance Matters

LINK's discussion paper, [Governance Matters: the Environment and Governance in Scotland](#), follows up some of the issues explored at the 2010 Congress on Environment and the Law. It goes further and deeper to review the network's experience of working with all branches of government since Devolution. *Governance Matters* offers a series of recommendations on reforms and improvements to the methods and processes of government which LINK hopes will lead to a wider debate on governance, and help to bring about change. *Governance Matters* was launched at a

Acting Locally



audiences were discussed; a very stimulating and inspiring afternoon gave a good basis for LINK's Strategic Planning meeting on the following day.

The Minister for Environment & Climate Change, Stewart Stevenson, joined the gathering for dinner (pictured) and met members over the course of the evening.

LINK is grateful to Perth & Kinross Council for a grant which kept the event costs

well-attended discussion event during the SNP conference in October (pictured), and has been circulated across the third sector, agencies, and other relevant interests. The report, though comprehensive and ambitious in its scope, is concise at just 38 pages. It was drafted by Andy Myles (LINK Parliamentary Officer) working with trustees, task forces and members who have been highly appreciative of LINK taking a wide perspective about the context in which they all operate, something that is very difficult for member bodies to address individually.

LINK has been ahead of the pack in producing its manifesto for the Local Government elections (1 May 2012) in Autumn 2011. LINK's manifesto [Acting Locally](#) focuses on the role that local authorities have in implementing sustainable development. The manifesto

down for participants, and to all the speakers who gave their time freely.



Congress dinner

Members have prioritised some areas within the report for LINK to pursue in 2012, overseen by a group involving FoES, JMT, RSPB, WWF and new member body Planning Democracy.

Governance Matters is available on the [website](#) or please contact the Perth office if you would like a hard copy.



has been produced primarily to help Councils improve their environmental performance; to help the political parties as they establish their policies for the next four years - and to assist them in putting sustainability at their core; and to help Council political groups

writing local manifestoes.

LINK's manifesto asks are framed within the context of the Concordat between national and local government and Single Outcome Agreements. Each subject area has a section on preventative spend, illustrating how to avoid creating problems later on which will prove expensive to fix. The subject areas include Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation, Education, Health & Wellbeing, Communities,

Historic Environment, Crime and Policing, Transport, the Economy, Energy, Land Use, Biodiversity Action, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Environmental Justice, and Marine Strategy.

Acting Locally was overseen by LINK's Local Governance taskforce, and developed from LINK's '[rolling manifesto](#)' of core issues with environmental aspects and policy asks agreed by the network and related to the relevant election in the

cycle of EU, Westminster, Scotland and Council. This has assisted members in their advocacy and provided clarity for the political parties.

LINK is adapting its guidance on holding election hustings for use in the run up to May. This will be available soon on the website along with a list of hustings type events organised across Scotland by LINK members and colleagues in the Stop Climate Chaos coalition.

Scottish Environment Festival

LINK's programme to celebrate all things environmental has some changes in 2012. The theme is Exploring Scotland's Environment. There are two events planned within the

Parliament: *Exploring Scotland's Past* sponsored by Historic Scotland on 1 March, and an evening reception in the Garden Lobby on 7 March, sponsored by SNH, which will

again feature food and drink produced in the National Parks. There will be a pub quiz on 8 March sponsored by Calor Scotland. Please keep an eye on the [website](#) for details.

More Network News

[Agriculture](#) The taskforce (TF) joined sister Link bodies across the UK in producing the position paper *Crunch Time for CAP: Choosing the right tools for a richer countryside*. The paper outlines ten key outcomes that the 25 supporting organisations consider Government should make the basis of its negotiating position with EU partners. TF convenor Jonathan Wordsworth (Archaeology Scotland) attended the launch in Westminster on 8 November.

The TF produced a [briefing on reform of the CAP](#) and its subsequent implementation in Scotland for MSPs, following publication of the Commission's proposals in October. These do not go far

enough to ensure provision of environmental goods and services that the market fails to deliver and the TF will be using LINK's position on the CAP Stakeholder Group to promote its views as negotiations proceed.

[Economics](#) Seven member bodies met in November, following the August economics seminar, to prioritise LINK action in relation to the current debate on national 'success'. LINK plans to produce an advocacy document in the Spring to articulate network views on a flourishing Scotland with sustainability at its core, and appropriate measures.

LINK [wrote to](#) Cabinet Secretary John Swinney after

its November Congress where there were grave concerns about draft Scottish Budget proposals for spend on active travel, within the transport budget. Along with many public health, transport and climate mitigation interests. LINK supports an increase from the proposed c.1% of this budget to 10% by 2014, which would have multiple, long-lasting benefits for Scotland's health, economy and environment. The Minister's reply was detailed though not encouraging.

[Marine](#) The TF is beginning to see the lines of the new Marine Protected Areas and eagerly awaits the full consultation on the National Marine Plan. 2012 promises to be an exciting and busy year.

[Local Governance](#) LINK gave [evidence](#) to Parliament's Local Government and Regeneration Committee on 14 September as part of its round table evidence session on planning policy.

A meeting has been arranged in January with officials, on the National Performance Framework. Following LINK's work investigating how sustainable development commitments are being implemented through Single Outcome Agreements, LINK is exploring the potential for secondment from Government to clarify duties for councils and monitor progress on sustainable development.

[National Parks](#) LINK and the Cairngorms National Park Authority jointly hosted a meeting for LINK members, CNPA staff and board members on 16 November which formed part of the public consultation on the CNPA's National Park Plan and the National Park Local Development Plan Main Issues Report. The discussion was a very useful opportunity to explore some of the underlying concerns about the relationship between the Park Authority and member bodies, and aimed to contribute to stronger and improved relationships, agreeing ways to improve communication, mutual understanding and ways of working together. One to one meetings on specific issues are being organised by ENGOs and the CNPA as a result. The TF has also submitted [initial proposals](#) on objectives and actions for the Park Plan.

On behalf of LINK, TF convenor Bill McDermott (SCNP) will examine housing policy in National Parks in England, to see what may be helpful to Scotland.

[Woodland](#) Fifteen member bodies supported the LINK response to the Woodland Expansion Advisory Group's call for views, submitted on 6 January. LINK considers that the Land Use Strategy offers a means to address land use conflicts and is hopeful that the Action Plan (published 21 December) will help improve matters. The response calls for an integrated sustainable land use approach to woodland expansion, with 35% native species, to deliver fully functioning habitat networks with proper regard for priority species and habitats, public access, landscape, and the historic environment.

[New Member](#) Members welcomed [Planning Democracy](#) to LINK in November. Main representative Clare Symonds is already active on LINK's Planning TF and Governance group. See Iain Thom's article below on current work.

[Liaison](#) The first official meeting with Stewart Stevenson, Minister for Environment & Climate Change, was held on 27 October with discussion mainly on the Spending Review. Deborah Long represented LINK at the regular NGO heads' meeting with the Minister on 9 January where SRDP, Climate Change, Habitats Regulations and Marine issues were discussed. The Minister attended LINK's festive

reception on 14 December where he met many members and guests from across the environmental sector.



LINK Festive Reception December

LINK has organised meetings for members and TFs with environment spokespeople from the political parties over the Autumn, and with researchers from the Scottish Parliament Information Centre. Andy Myles represented LINK at the European Environment Bureau AGM in October. Staff met Green Alliance and Wildlife & Countryside Link colleagues in September to discuss improved engagement with EEB at UK level. Elizabeth Hiester, a solicitor with ClientEarth, has taken over from Green Alliance to represent the UK and welcomes input from Scotland. LINK trustee Jonny Hughes (SWT) will represent Scottish concerns at a meeting between the ENGOs and the DG Environment later in January.

On LINK's behalf Jonny Hughes has been working with other sectors in Scotland to mark the 20th anniversary of the Rio Earth Summit (June 2012) with a report on Scotland's top ten celebrations and ambitions.

[Development](#) LINK is very pleased to have been awarded three year grants from the Gannochy Trust and the Esmée

Fairbairn Foundation. These enable LINK to plan with some confidence. A survey of member bodies is underway to assess satisfaction with services and activities and inform a refreshed corporate strategy for 2012-15.

The network's Strategic Planning meeting in November identified priorities for collective effort for the year ahead, relevant to LINK's particular strengths and to upcoming opportunities. Among a wide spread of work, we plan to pursue governance

and scrutiny of Scotland's environment, greening of economics, and have agreed the network's referendum strategy. A number of issues were also noted for consensus building within LINK.

News and Views from Members and Guest Contributors

2012 – A Year to Move from Words to Action

Tom Ballantine, Chair, Stop Climate Chaos Scotland



We have our Climate Change Act with emissions reduction targets, policies, proposals, and a public engagement strategy. We have the beginnings of an international road map with plans for a new legal agreement to be concluded by 2015 and come into force by 2020. We have a First Minister prepared to talk to China and the rest of the world of the 'overwhelming case for climate justice'...so not much to be done then for Stop Climate Chaos Scotland? Well not quite!

We have had words and promises but if there is an SCCS call for the next year it will be please put your words into action. With 60 members representing about 2 million people and covering all sections of Scottish society (environment and international development organisations, students and trade unions, faith and community groups) - we will be heard abroad and at home.

Abroad we were proud when civil society in Denmark was 'inspired' by the Scottish and UK example in pushing for their own 40% cut in emissions by 2020. We liked having our Scottish example out there in Durban and talking across Europe to NGO networks and politicians about how Scotland got to where we are. In 2012 we will continue to carry our message - more money for adaptation and quicker, tougher agreements on emission reductions.

At home the road from environmental heroes to international zeros could only too easily be paved with good intentions and imperfect action; to avoid that SCCS will continue to push the Scottish government to properly fund its own plans to meet our climate change targets: to think differently – for instance replacing an unthinking infatuation with road building, planes and cars with a long term love affair with low

carbon or no carbon alternatives.

All of the above needs an engaged civil society. SCCS is looking at how to help our members and supporters play their part in reducing emissions. We will make alliances across Scottish society in asking government to achieve action; not just by telling people action is needed, or by stressing different values, but by countenancing hard changes on finance, regulation and incentives to make it easier/cheaper/faster for all of us to tread softly rather than keep clumping down a big carbon boot.

The aims of LINK and SCCS are closely interwoven. Throughout 2012 we will look forward to advancing our shared agenda on things like alternative measures of prosperity and the role nature can play in helping to reduce emissions. Still a little to be done then for all of us!

Adopt-a-Monument

Cara Jones, Adopt-a-Monument Project Officer, Archaeology Scotland



August 2011 saw the re-launch of Archaeology Scotland's Adopt-a-Monument Scheme – a scheme which helps facilitate local communities who wish to play a leading role in conserving Scotland's cultural heritage. Funded for the next five years, this new AaM scheme will build on the experiences gained by Archaeology Scotland, who have run the programme for the last 20 years. Many archaeological sites and monuments across Scotland are in need of care but few have owners with the resources to make this happen. Equally, there are people who wish to step in to do something to help protect and interpret these monuments.



This new phase of AaM is centred on developing a 'ground-up' approach to projects – we focus on increasing skills, understanding and confidence amongst participants, but all ideas

regarding their projects originate from the community. The new scheme is open to all, with no limits placed upon the choice of adoption - within the bounds of practicality and health and safety. The scheme reaches out to a large and diverse audience, and will also work with schools, informal education groups, charities and other heritage professionals.

We can help groups in a variety of ways – from training in archaeological fieldwork to assistance with funding applications for larger scale works. Despite the scheme only starting in August, we already have approximately 20 Adopt-a-Monument projects started, with a further 40 projects on our waiting list. The projects currently being considered range from a chambered cairn in Ross and Cromarty, a souterrain on Skye and a castle in Argyll – there really is no limit to what communities can adopt!

One of our projects is based on Mull, and below is an account from three of the participants:

'Kildavie, an under-investigated ruined township on our doorstep it awoke interest in visiting Archaeologists. It

spurred the development of the 100+ member Mull Archaeology Interest Group. Kildavie has an atmosphere and challenges emanating from it, crying out to be researched. The enthusiasm of four local schools, three SWRI groups and many Island visitors gives credence to exploration of this magical place.'

(Bill Patterson, Suzanne Patterson & Kevin Luscombe – Comhlan Croag).

Kildavie is just one of our projects, but by the end of the scheme we hope to have completed 40 Adopt-a-Monument projects, and 15 Outreach projects. More details are on [the Archaeology Scotland website](#).



For further information contact the [team](#) on 08458723333

IUCN UK Commission of Inquiry on Peatlands

Clifton Bain, Director, IUCN UK Peatland Programme



The enormous importance of our peatlands for people and wildlife has been highlighted with the recent publication of the findings of the IUCN UK Commission of Inquiry on Peatlands.

The 18 month inquiry was supported by one of the largest academic reviews ever undertaken for peatlands in the UK and involved over 300 individuals and 50 organisations. The findings present clear consensus on the multiple benefits of peatland ecosystems including biodiversity, climate change, water and a historic archive.

The Inquiry found that much of the UK's peatland area has been damaged, with consequent loss of biodiversity, largely due to past drainage, agriculture and forestry activities. As a result, a significant amount of carbon is leaking into the atmosphere. This is particularly alarming as a loss of only 5% of the carbon stored in peat would equate to the UK's total annual green house gas emissions. Damaged peatlands can also impact on the quality of drinking water at source, leading to discolouration and associated increased treatment costs for

water companies and consumers.

The good news is that this Inquiry has shown that peatland restoration not only benefits wildlife, but has measureable carbon savings, and can quickly reduce the cost of treating drinking water.

The Inquiry report identifies a clear strategy for action to bring our peatlands back from the brink, pointing the way forward to avoid the social and environmental costs of further deterioration. New opportunities for funding peatland conservation are identified but the need for a high level policy steer and coordinated action is also highlighted.

With support from the staff and members of Scottish Environment LINK we have worked closely with the Scottish Parliament which has shown strong cross party support for peatlands. The Scottish Government Minister for Environment & Climate Change, Stewart Stevenson, recently met the Inquiry team to discuss taking forward the Government's manifesto commitment "to take action to protect and restore peatlands".

There is an established case for investing in the future of our peatlands for wildlife and now we can see the even wider benefits for our economy. We know how to restore and enhance peatlands and really just need to get on with it. With Scotland supporting the majority of the UK's peatlands we have a great opportunity to show leadership.



Forsinard Flows, RSPB reserve, photo credit Norman Russell

The Peatland Programme management team which includes the Scottish Wildlife Trust, John Muir Trust and RSPB, plans to continue its work bringing together the various public bodies, NGOs, academics and land managing interests to deliver action on peatlands.

The inquiry report and contributing materials are available on the IUCN [Peatland Programme website](#).

Forest Policy Group update

Willie McGhee, Policy Officer, Forest Policy Group



The Forest Policy Group is an independent forum which analyses land use and forest policy and which produces research and informs policy. The group has a membership reflecting a broad spectrum of Scotland's forest and land use sectors, including social, environmental and timber processing NGO's, professional foresters, estate owners, small holders and farmers.

During 2011 the FPG produced a concept paper, entitled [Woods for People](#), which was distributed after the Scottish Election to the new intake of MSPs at Holyrood and formed the basis for a short meeting in September with the new Scottish Minister for the Environment, Stewart Stevenson.

The *Woods for People* paper contains a synthesis of ideas and practice from many groups and individuals who work in forestry, land use, timber processing and social land reform, and sets out a nine point manifesto for a new forest policy direction in Scotland.

The *Woods for People* work led to the production of [seven short briefing papers](#), these are;

1. Rural development – what do we think it means and how can forestry help?
2. SRDP grants – how can we make the current system simpler and more accessible for small land owners?
3. Forest ownership – who

owns our forests and what does it mean for the people of Scotland?

4. The National Forest Land Scheme – currently doing a great job, but can it be made more diverse and make more, smaller bits of forest available for purchase
5. Restocking – why is there so much Sitka being used in restocking and very little other conifers or native broadleaves?
6. Deer – they cost foresters and the Government a small fortune, should we consider new ways of managing them?
7. Quality broadleaves – why are we not establishing and managing quality broadleaves?

These papers have been written to give all those interested in how forest policy is developing in Scotland a flavour of the FPG thinking and to stimulate discussion on alternatives to the current status quo. The Group would welcome feedback from all comers on any of the topics.

In spring 2011 we lost our Chairman Rick Worrell, albeit for a sabbatical in the USA, and gained Simon Pepper as Acting Chair. Rick is putting the finishing touches to a paper on species composition in Scotland's forests which we hope to have published in the spring edition of *Scottish Forestry*.

The theme of land ownership, specifically forests, has been a

priority for the Group and to this end we commissioned [Andy Wightman](#), the author of *Who Owns Scotland* and *The Poor Had No Lawyers*, to do some targeted research and to do an outline paper on forest ownership in Scotland. The results of Andy's research are illuminating and provide plenty of scope for a wide ranging debate about the structure of forest ownership in Scotland and also the need for further, more detailed research. We hope to have a final version of Andy's paper available on our website soon.

Deer and deer management is a topic that all connected with growing and managing trees are acutely aware of. The FPG has started to develop a new strand of thinking on this topic and is attempting to inject some new perspectives on deer and land management, specifically in relation to Red deer and sporting estates in the Highlands. Volumes have been written on this topic and we are conscious that there has been little real progress in this often most polarised of debates and we hope to produce a consultation paper on deer management in the next couple of months.

The FPG [website](#) has a list of FPG members and copies of all our research papers. For further information on any aspect of the FPG please contact [Willie McGhee](#) on 07920811004.

Planning Democracy

Iain Thom, Trustee, Planning Democracy



Planning Democracy is a national charity established in 2009 with the aim of strengthening democracy by promoting greater public participation in the Scottish Planning system. We grew in response to growing concerns from individuals and groups who found that Scotland's planning reforms had made little difference to their ability to understand and influence the planning process.

We believe there is a democratic failure within Scotland's planning processes - many people feel disempowered and unable to influence what happens in their own areas. Our concern is that this situation leads to development being strongly dictated by market forces and has huge implications for social and environmental justice.

Planning Democracy wants to ensure the public is fairly and equitably involved in the

planning process which we believe will lead to more locally accountable, robust planning decisions, driven by need rather than profit.

The main body of our work falls into two areas. The first includes the Hunterston judicial review, which we initiated in 2009. We will be using the Hunterston case to demonstrate, for example through an Aarhus complaint, that key aspects of the new planning system are not delivering better public involvement and we will be working to ensure that the process of developing the next National Planning Framework 3 is fairer and more democratic.

The second workstream involves collecting case studies from around Scotland that illustrate the difficulty the public has in engaging with the planning system and influencing decision making. The work includes responding

to people who contact us with concerns, carrying out site visits, interviews and workshops with communities affected and writing up experiences that will form the basis of a policy advocacy paper to highlight where the system is failing.

We are also delivering a conference next April to launch the policy paper. It will commence a dialogue with key policy and decision makers. In addition communities and individuals, who have in the past stood alone against injustices in the planning system, will be brought together to share and explore their experiences and knowledge.

We have identified six principles that would need to be met to realise a more democratic planning system in Scotland. Read about them [here](#)

LINK Further Information

Task Force outputs are listed under the 'Work Areas' button on the [home page](#).

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Marine Policy and Advocacy Officers, Lindsay Roberts and Sarah Archer, are based at RSPB Scotland HQ and WWF Scotland.

All LINK staff emails follow the format firstname@scotlink.org

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