

# The LINK Newsletter

The quarterly update from Scottish Environment LINK  
Summer 2007



LINK

## Marine capacity strengthened

Thanks to funding from the Tubney Trust and the Esm e Fairbairn Foundation, LINK is stepping up advocacy towards marine legislation, in terms of preparation in Scotland for a Scottish bill and working to ensure that Westminster legislation takes Scottish factors and needs fully into account.

In Scotland, the Marine Task Force (TF) appointed Alan Wells and Ylva Haglund as Marine Bill Research Officer and Marine Bill Campaigns Officer respectively, in mid-June. Alan has come to LINK from SEPA, where he analysed data relating to monitoring of marine fish farms. Before that he was employed in academic research, latterly at the University of St Andrews. Ylva has spent the last year as Coordinator for LINK's everyone Holyrood election campaign. Her background is in international relations and communications, PR and marketing.

Alan and Ylva are working (respectively) from WWFS and RSPB Scotland offices where they have the support of the policy, press and campaigns staff of these organisations. Their work will also be supported by LINK's Parliamentary Officer. Management of the project, so as to deliver the collective goals of the Marine TF, is guided by an agreement signed off by LINK's Board. Calum Duncan, Marine TF Convenor, will manage the posts and the TF will develop the strategy and direction for the project. An initial campaign strategy meeting was held in June, with subsequent meetings held during July.

LINK welcomed the [announcement](#) by Environment Cabinet Secretary Richard Lochhead, in June, that the Scottish

Government intends to introduce a Scottish marine bill. Calum Duncan, on behalf of the Marine TF said he was "*delighted that the new government recognises that Scotland's seas are in a guddle and need urgent attention. A Scottish marine bill must urgently deliver effective planning and protection for our coasts and seas, linking closely to the UK marine bill.*"

Much of Scotland's marine life, including sea birds, sea grass beds, fish species and horse mussel reefs are in decline and in urgent need of proper protection. Most pressing is the need for laws to designate and protect sites with good examples of marine habitats and species important to Scotland, in addition to existing sites of European importance. There are pressing international commitments to establish a complete network by 2010. The recommendations of the Ministerial Advisory Group on the Marine and Coastal Strategy (AGMACS), which reported in March, are strongly supported by LINK, particularly commitments to a statutory system of Marine Spatial Planning, effective Marine Nature Conservation measures, a Scottish Marine Management Organisation and a suite of Marine Ecosystem Objectives.

With unprecedented cross party support for streamlining legislation and improving the way we manage our seas, LINK looks forward to helping Government turn the rhetoric of effective protection and management of our seas into a reality.

LINK [responded to the consultation](#) on the UK Marine Bill White Paper *A Sea Change* supporting its publication as an important step towards an ecosystem approach to managing UK waters and underlining the need for a Scottish marine bill incorporating the AGMACS recommendations.

## 20th AGM and Birthday Party

There was a good turnout of members for LINK's 20th AGM, held in the grounds of Falkland Palace, linking with the Falkland Festival of Stewardship. Fred Edwards stood down after his three years as LINK President, though was immediately elected as an Honorary Fellow. Jill Harden, past LINK Treasurer and Board member, was elected an Honorary Fellow and Jonathan Hughes (SWT) was elected to the Board of Trustees.

In the evening around 80 members and guests assembled to celebrate 20 years since the official birth of the network, with champagne a vegetarian supper and ceilidh. Drennan Watson, founding Chair whose multiple skills as 'bus-driver' (as he described the role) for the diverse membership were fundamental to subsequent achievements, spoke very movingly about why LINK was formed, what it is, and the necessity for intelligent action now at this window in history.

Simon Pepper, Honorary Fellow, who supported LINK's development and growth from its beginnings reminded the gathering of some landmark moments and opportunities ahead. Fred Edwards reflected on LINK's position in civil Scotland, making no apology for his reiteration that the environment is the context for all other policy decisions, a concept beginning to be more widely understood. LINK Chair, John Mayhew, spoke for all in appreciation of Fred's tireless ambassadorial work over the past three years.

Michael Scott, Honorary Fellow and past LINK Chair, was commissioned to write a history of LINK to mark the 20 years, for which he immersed himself in LINK archives and interviewed players from staff, officers, task force convenors, members and individuals with whom LINK has worked over the years. His summary, *A Strong Coherent Voice* was distributed in draft form to members at the AGM. The publication will be finalised shortly and made available on the LINK website, with a small printed circulation primarily for members.

## Green Footprints to Government

On 27 June, before the end of the school term and the Parliamentary session, pupils from Firrhill High School, Edinburgh presented [everyone's petition](#) of 2,000 green footprints to the Scottish Parliament to convince our politicians to help everyone in Scotland leave a greener footprint.

Richard Lochhead MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment and Stefan Tymkewycz, MSP for the Lothians, received the petition, and afterwards engaged in discussion with Class 2B3 on environmental and political issues. The pupils pressed for answers about the government's plans to cut carbon dioxide emissions and its strategy for energy generation. Please see the website [everyone.org](http://everyone.org) for a sample of the petitioners' artistic talent, and of the handover of the petition to Parliament.

The campaign has now closed though **everyone** will continue to watch how the parties act in relation to their environmental manifesto commitments, until the next election.

## Climate legislation ahead

LINK joined with Stop Climate Chaos Scotland in [responding to Defra's consultation](#) on the draft UK Climate Change Bill. The response fully supported the submission of Stop Climate Chaos at UK level, adding supplementary points from Scotland's perspective, including:

- the bill should match Scotland's commitment to reduce carbon dioxide levels by 3% per annum and by at least 80% by 2050;
- devolved administrations be adequately represented on the committee on climate change and a similar committee be set up in Scotland;
- civil society stakeholders be involved during passage of both bills, for wider public engagement, monitoring and reporting on implementation of the legislation.

# News and Views from Members

The next four pages contain articles from LINK member bodies and guest contributors

## **Kinfauns—the aftermath**

*Helen Todd, Ramblers Association Scotland*

In June Stagecoach founder Ann Gloag won her legal case against Ramblers Scotland & Perth & Kinross Council in the first test case of the Land Reform Act. She was also awarded her costs.

The sheriff ruled that 4 acres of woodland remote from and mostly out of sight of Kinfauns Castle, were part of Mrs Gloag's garden. We had argued that, according to the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, access rights apply on woodland which is part of the policies of large houses. Unfortunately, the sheriff gave little regard to the Code, despite this being approved by Parliament and based on widespread consultation. We believe the Code is of critical importance in the interpretation of privacy issues for large country houses.

We decided not to appeal the judgement but to bring issues raised by the Kinfauns case to the attention of the Parliament and others with an interest in the implementation of the land reform legislation. To prolong the Kinfauns dispute through appeals, perhaps eventually leading to the European Court, would take several years. A sheriff court judgement is not binding on other courts, so no precedent is set, although the result may encourage other landowners to enclose large tracts of woodland behind high fences, claiming such areas are needed for their privacy.

In May we were again in court opposing a similar application by Euan Snowie to remove 40 acres of his Boquhan estate, near Kippen, from the statutory right of access. Stirling Council also opposed the application and we are hopeful this time the sheriff will rule in our favour. A decision is expected later this year.

On the issue of the costs award, we do not yet know the actual amount, but press speculation has suggested Mrs Gloag spent up to £200,000.

These are the kind of costs one would expect in a case that has gone to the House of Lords, not Perth Sheriff Court. If substantial costs are awarded against ourselves and the Council, it raises serious concerns over access to justice for local authorities, communities and NGOs. It also may deter other local authorities from taking legal action in access cases.

As a result, we may have to take up this issue with the Scottish Executive to investigate whether there should be some kind of Protective Costs Order for right to roam cases. This kind of protection already exists in certain public inquiry situations, and in England when parties are acting in the public interest.

Overall, the Kinfauns case has provided an opportunity to examine the effectiveness of the Land Reform Act. It has led to the loss of access rights over just 4 acres of woodland. Yet we hope this and the Snowie case will bring about a better understanding of how the legislation is supposed to be applied. We have been pleased by the public and political reaction to the Kinfauns decision and are confident the Scottish Parliament and Executive will act sooner, rather than later, to ensure the loss of access rights there will not extend to similar situations elsewhere in Scotland.

More information on [www.ramblers.org.uk/scotland](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/scotland).

## **Get Out on Your Local Beach for Beachwatch 2007**

*Anne Saunders, Marine Conservation Society*

Twenty thousand! This is the astounding number of cotton bud sticks that were picked up on just two Scottish beaches during the Marine Conservation Society's Beachwatch 2006. Beachwatch is the annual litter survey and clean-up organised by MCS. Over 3

4,000 volunteers on 358 beaches around the UK took part during Beachwatch 2006 (16-17 September). 187 km of coastline was surveyed and over 370,000 litter items removed. Beachwatch has recorded increasingly high litter levels, with a staggering 1,988.7 items per kilometre in 2006, and has found that litter on our beaches has increased by 90.3% since 1994.

The two heavily-littered beaches were East Bay, Helensburgh and Saltings to Bowling, West Dunbartonshire, both on the Clyde. With a new Scottish Projects Officer in post, the MCS hopes to tackle beach litter issues in the Clyde area and raise the public's awareness of where their litter ends up. MCS will be attending events, giving talks and holding workshops throughout southwest Scotland. A new outreach project is also beginning soon. COOL Seas is aimed at families and children, teaching them about Scotland's amazing marine environment and how we can all help to protect it.

So why not do your bit for the marine environment, and get along to your local beach for this year's Beachwatch event, over the weekend of 15-16 September 2007. Check if your favourite beach is already registered at [www.adoptabeach.org.uk](http://www.adoptabeach.org.uk). If it is not, why not adopt it yourself? Adopting a beach is a great project for schools, community groups and businesses. To register as an organiser or volunteer please contact Anne at MCS now on 0131 226 6360, or email [anne.saunders@mcsuk.org](mailto:anne.saunders@mcsuk.org) to make 2007 the biggest event yet!

## **Stop Climate Chaos Scotland**

*Ruth Cameron, Campaign Coordinator*

**Stop Climate Chaos Scotland** is the Scottish arm of Stop Climate Chaos - a broad coalition that aims to create a popular public mandate for political action to stop human-induced climate change. As well as environmental NGOs our many members include development organisations such as

Oxfam, Christian Aid, Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund, Tearfund and the World Development Movement, along with student societies, trade unions, faith and women's groups, and community councils.

Following May's election, SCCS has been working jointly with Scottish Environment LINK on preparing for the imminent Scottish Climate Change Bill. A Policy Brainstorm seminar was organised to provide an opportunity for members across SCCS and LINK to highlight their key asks for the Climate Change Bill. A joint policy group has now been tasked with developing briefings on each of these. Similar collaborations of SCCS and LINK members' advocacy and parliamentary staff are expected as the Bill timetable becomes clearer.

At a UK level, the coalition has been focusing on mass public engagement. They gathered 70,000 supporter sign-ups at Glastonbury, and more are expected from the recent collaboration with Live Earth. Product partnerships with Penguin, Ecover and Stoneyfield yoghurt over the last year have also helped increase awareness of the coalition's work.

Our public engagement work in Scotland has been slightly less glamorous on the celebrity front – but certainly not lacking because of that! We are in the process of training around 50 Al Gore-a-likes – equipping our volunteers with the skills and knowledge to go out into their communities and communicate the need for urgent action on climate change. In the last couple of months we have also collaborated with Edinburgh Council and Edinburgh Youth Services to put on two full day conferences on climate change, and secured 3,000 supporter sign-ups at a very muddy T in the Park.

For more information on [Stop Climate Chaos Scotland](http://www.stopclimatechaosscotland.org) please contact campaign coordinator Ruth Cameron on [ruth@stopclimatechaosscotland.org](mailto:ruth@stopclimatechaosscotland.org) or telephone 0131 311 6500.

## **Bracken – a scourge or an asset**

*John Parrott, Scottish Native Woods*

In recent years, [Scottish Native Woods](#) and Forest Research have been working together to test methods for establishing woodland on sites occupied by bracken.

In June 2006, Scottish Native Woods, Forest Research and Butterfly Conservation Scotland (BTS) jointly organised a workshop on the management of bracken in native woodlands. The event was attended by over 60 farmers, crofters, foresters and conservation advisers from throughout Highland and Argyll.

Bracken is regarded by many land-managers as an invasive weed. Farmers lose hill-grazing as it encroaches on grassland, while native woodlands struggle to regenerate through bracken stands. It does however have some virtues, too. Bracken used to be highly valued as bedding for livestock, while its ash was used both in soap manufacture and as a fertiliser. And, as Dr Tom Prescott of BTS explained, it is also essential for the survival of one of Scotland's rarest butterflies.

“The Pearl-bordered Fritillary has declined dramatically in recent years. The caterpillars need to sun themselves in early spring to get warm enough to feed. Bracken provides the perfect sun-bed. The species' ideal habitat is a warm sheltered slope with a light cover of bracken, violets (the larval food-plant) and nectar flowers for the butterflies once they emerge in May.”

However, where bracken occurs in continuous dense stands, it may be of little use to wildlife and may hinder the development of native woodland.

These trials have been a great help in deciding what measures are needed to expand the woodland at Coill an' Rìghe. We know that controlling the bracken will allow trees to establish by natural regeneration and that removing the dead bracken litter or disturbing the topsoil will provide an even better seed-bed, though it may encourage other species

such as foxgloves, whins and broom.

Participants also viewed some of the techniques available to land-managers for controlling bracken. A HillCat ATV was first used to pull a rotary weed-wiper, and later a mechanical bracken-bruiser.

There are many ways to manage bracken: aerial spraying, weed-wiping, mechanical bruising, mob-stocking with cattle or pigs and hand-swiping. When planning to control bracken, land managers need to consider a range of factors: objectives, environmental benefits, site characteristics and possible collateral damage to non-target species. The choice of method varies from site to site. If in doubt, take advice.

If you would like to view the trials at Coill an' Rìghe, contact John Parrott at [john.parrott@scottishnativewoods.org.uk](mailto:john.parrott@scottishnativewoods.org.uk) or tel: 01456 486426.

## **Bioenergy in the UK**

*Summary of Links policy paper*

The policy paper [Bioenergy in the UK : turning green promises into environmental reality](#) was published in July by the 4 UK Link organisations. These recommendations are informed by a report from Land Use Consultants on the potential environmental impacts of increased bioenergy production and use in the UK commissioned by Wildlife & Countryside Link in 2006. The report and policy paper are on [www.wcl.org.uk](http://www.wcl.org.uk)

The production of bioenergy in the UK is set to increase as a source of low carbon energy for heat, power, and transport. This will have serious effects on land use, and as a consequence, on biodiversity, landscapes, historic environment and our soil and water resources.

The nature of the impacts will depend on a combination of factors including type of feedstock, crop management, previous land use, scale of development and spatial distribution.

Government policies designed to support the

bioenergy sector continue to develop rapidly. But a greater focus on managing changes in land use is essential, if the growth of bioenergy production and use in the UK is to take place in a way that provides genuine greenhouse gas savings, contributes to the achievement of other environmental goals, and avoids damaging impacts. The multiple pressures on land in the UK—to provide food, other commodities, wildlife, recreation, beautiful landscapes and ecosystem services—present a policy challenge to manage both the size of the bioenergy market, and the wider environmental impacts of bioenergy developments.

The Links have identified 6 priorities for Government action to ensure that the growth in UK bioenergy production maximises greenhouse gas savings and minimises damaging environmental impacts:

1. Undertake a strategic assessment of the role of bioenergy in the UK and devolved countries' energy mix, taking account of environmental constraints and the capacity of other kinds of renewable energy and energy saving measures.
2. Introduce minimum standards and certification of greenhouse gas savings and environmental impacts for all forms of bioenergy.
3. Ensure that the planning system is equipped to respond to the pressures on land use of bioenergy projects and provides appropriate policy and guidance.
4. Identify opportunities for bioenergy development to contribute to the achievement of other environmental goals, and ensure these are acted upon.
5. Actively promote small scale, local uses of bioenergy, particularly the use of biomass for heat and power, providing the production, processing and generation is undertaken in an environmentally sustainable manner.
6. Undertake further research to ensure bioenergy policy is based on a thorough understanding of the environmental threats and opportunities.

## **The Melting Pot: new workspace in Edinburgh**

*Claire Carpenter, Director*

The Melting Pot is an inspiring new work and meeting space for people involved in social innovation. Applications for membership and venue bookings are available to organisations and individuals working for social, environmental and economic wellbeing. Spaces can be booked by the hour, the week or the month and are DDA compliant. Doors open in September 2007.

The light and bright Rose Street venue is refurbished with high environmental standards. Our eco-funky design utilizes locally-made, bespoke, and re-furbished furniture, and changing art exhibitions for comfortable meeting, workshop, and flexible hot-desk spaces. The Melting Pot combines the best of your professional office base, home comforts, and your favourite café.

This is no ordinary corporate serviced office. It is a place to get your heads down or your heads together with a diverse talent pool. The Melting Pot encourages members to collaborate on projects, share networks and benefit from peer support. It also offers quiet places to think and dream about your projects on your own, and to be inspired by others through community building events.

The Melting Pot offers exciting opportunities for social innovators. We are ready for people to sign up for space and get involved from the start to help create the ethos and atmosphere of the new building. Edinburgh is part of a global network of similar offices.

Demand in other cities has been really strong, so we encourage any social entrepreneur, activist, consultant, NGO or charity who might benefit from flexible Edinburgh space to get in touch now.

Visit [www.themeltingpotedinburgh.org.uk](http://www.themeltingpotedinburgh.org.uk) or call Claire on 0845 4583211.

## LINK Task Force and other news

**Agriculture** Task Force (TF) activity focused on the finalisation of the Scottish Rural Development Programme for 2007-13 and particularly the funding arrangements for it. A period of intensive lobbying followed the election of the new Government, as one of the first decisions to be made by the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment was on the SRDP funding package. The TF was successfully engaged in all stakeholder discussions, prompted a number of parliamentary questions and briefed MSPs for debates. The outcome is a funding package that represents something of a compromise arrangement, but the TF's involvement certainly resulted in both additional funding for the SRDP, and an increased awareness of the need to address its environmental objectives.

The TF has also been involved in developing the implementation of Rural Development Contracts (previously Land Management Contracts) which will be the delivery vehicle for much SRDP funding. It has held bilateral meetings with SEERAD officials, as well as maintaining stakeholder group involvement. On issues such as the regionalisation of RDCs the TF has been successful in getting concerns addressed, but much remains to be developed, once the new administration's full direction becomes clearer on this.

The TF's involvement in the review of the Less Favoured Areas Scheme has continued through the stakeholder group, and discussion at European and UK levels.

**Biodiversity** The TF organised a LINK seminar on 29 May for all member bodies on *the ecosystem approach* to share information and develop a common understanding among LINK members. A position statement for wider LINK sign up is being developed.

**Climate** LINK updated and circulated its Climate Action Plan to all MSPs before the summer recess. The TF has written to the Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and

Climate Change to initiate future meetings, and has met civil servants to discuss the forthcoming Climate Change Bill for Scotland.

LINK joined Wildlife & Countryside Link, and Wales and Northern Ireland Environment Links on a policy paper, *Bionenergy in the UK*, (see summary page 5) and plans to develop a Scottish biomass position.

The TF is working with Stop Climate Chaos Scotland towards the Scottish Climate Change Bill (see page 4).

**Deer** The TF is participating in the current review of the Deer Commission Scotland's Deer Strategy, represented by Bruce Anderson (RSPB Scotland) and Victor Clements (SNW). In a change of direction to previous approaches, this will be a joint DCS, SNH and Forestry Commission Scotland strategy.

**Freshwater** Regulations on diffuse pollution were withdrawn from Parliament before the elections. The TF awaits further announcements on draft regulations, and on the establishment of a diffuse pollution implementation group.

The TF held informal meetings with the Executive, SEPA and SNH on the transposition of the EU Flood Risks directive. LINK would like to see the Directive implemented through primary 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.

A consultation on the second phase of environmental standards for the Water Framework Directive is expected, which will include nutrients, temperature, salinity, turbidity and compensation flows.

Andrea Johnstonova represents the TF on a steering group of a Scotland and Northern Ireland Forum for Environmental Research project on coastal flooding. This began in June and will take a year to complete. It will look at current trends in coastal flooding, 7

investigate future trends and impacts of climate change and recommend measures to allow for sustainable adaptation to the impacts of climate change.

**Fundraising Forum** Members met in May for networking and information exchange. Jane Dalglish gave an overview of her report on Environmental Volunteering. There was a presentation from Evaluation Support Scotland on its services, a demonstration of wealth searching software from Bureau Van Dijk, and an update from SNH on the HLF Land and Biodiversity Group.

**Landscape** The Scottish Landscape Forum's report [Scotland's Living Landscapes](#), delivered to the Environment Minister in March, focuses on the European Landscape Convention which approaches landscape not from a designation perspective, but from an inclusive approach—recognising all landscapes are important and people's relationships with landscapes is important for health and wellbeing. LINK's representatives on the Forum will be contributing to its ongoing working groups.

**Planning** The TF convened a meeting with other LINK TFs to produce a discussion paper on the [National Planning Framework II](#). This was followed by a constructive meeting with the Scottish Executive team working on the Framework to discuss it as an opportunity to help deliver sustainable development.

The TF nominated two representatives, John Mayhew (NTS), and Anne McCall (RSPB, TF Convenor), to the Scottish Executive Advisory group overseeing the review of national Planning Policy Guideline 14: Natural Heritage.

**Sustainable Scotland** The TF met Graeme Cook, senior Parliamentary

researcher, to discuss the Environment Committee's inquiry into scrutiny of sustainable development in Parliament and the processes and architecture for such scrutiny. The TF wrote to the First Minister to support SNP proposals on integration of sustainability and economic growth.

**Liaison with Government** John Mayhew, LINK Chair, and Jen Anderson, Chief Officer, met John Mason, Head of Environment Group, in early June. John Mayhew attended an introductory meeting between environmental NGOs heads, ministers and civil servants later in the month, where arrangements for liaison with Government, and structures and processes for policy development were discussed.

LINK is delighted that the First Minister has agreed to a request for a reception in Edinburgh Castle to mark LINK's 20th year, which will take place in late autumn.

### Further Information

For information about reports and initiatives referred to in this newsletter please contact LINK or visit our website [www.scotlink.org](http://www.scotlink.org) Task Force outputs are listed under 'Work Areas' accessible from the [home page](#).

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For updates on the everyone campaigns see [www.everyonecan.org](http://www.everyonecan.org)

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