

# Scottish Environment Week 2010

## Evaluation Report

### Introduction

Scottish Environment Week is an initiative of Scottish Environment LINK, begun in 2005. Its purpose is to celebrate the contribution that the environment makes to Scotland's wellbeing and economy, to raise awareness among parliamentarians of the value the environment has for those and live and work in it, and to showcase diverse ways of living more sustainably.

The Week brings together MSPs, government, civic Scotland, business and environmentalists to celebrate Scotland's environment. Since its inception, the Week has become a popular fixture in the Parliamentary calendar, and MSPs from all parties have attended events highlighting the many facets of Scotland's environment.

Scottish Environment Week 2010 on the theme *Scotland's Environment – It's Great!* marked the sixth year that the Week has run in the Scottish Parliament, and demonstrated the high importance that continues to be attached to the Week, by parliamentarians, environmental NGOs and other sectors.

This year's Week was condensed by comparison with previous events. It was held strictly within the Holyrood Parliament.



Minister for Environment Roseanna Cunningham, SEW Sponsor Elaine Murray MSP and LINK President Helen Zealley OBE.

### Theme

The theme, *Scotland's Environment – It's Great!*, was chosen to re-focus the Week on its original, celebratory function and to re-establish the idea that for one week of the year the message for Scotland's Parliamentarians is not hard-edged advocacy but a celebration of all that is good for Scotland in connection with its environment. The events provided the perfect showcase to highlight some of the work undertaken by LINK member organisations across Scotland; in particular we looked at those with a emphasis on citizen involvement.

"What better way than to encourage direct public involvement in the doing, rather than just making people stand on the sidelines as impotent – and soon bored – observers of what is being done by experts, supposedly on their behalf?"

Excerpt from Speech made by Noel Fojut (Historic Scotland) during Scottish Environment Week

## Planning

Planning for the Week began in spring 2009 with the establishment of a LINK steering group which settled on the theme, structure and potential financing. Thereafter, detailed planning was hampered by not knowing the exact dates for the Week until late October and by uncertainties around financial sponsorship. The programming issue has been resolved for 2011 as the Parliamentary Events Team have now confirmed provisional dates and arrangements. This has influenced LINK's timeline for planning the programme and funding arrangements for future Weeks.

## Liaison with Parliament

Once the dates for the 2010 Week had been established in late October, co-operation with the Parliamentary Events Team began in earnest. The working relationship established with Douglas Millar from the Team was excellent and the assistance and helpfulness of Parliamentary staff and caterers much appreciated.

Unfortunately, the delay in confirming the dates had meant that there was no space in Parliament for a LINK stall in the Garden Lobby for the Week and no opportunity to mount a display feature in the Upper Garden Lobby – important parts of the overall programme in previous years. This left the Week lacking a visible focus during the Parliamentary day and may have had an effect on the impact of the Week as a whole, and the attendances at events in general. Again, this is being addressed with the Events Team for next year.

Unfortunately, you cannot get in the way with the Parliamentary timetable. A Crofting Bill visit to Caithness for the Rural Affairs and Environment Committee meant last minute programme changes and many MSPs missing all of Tuesday's and some of Wednesday's events. Similar misfortune befell the Thursday events with the arrival of heavy snow across Scotland.

## Publicity

Due to last minute changes in details, the Programme for the week was distributed eight days before the Week began. This was too late to maximize its effectiveness in placing events in MSPs' diaries. In future years the programme will be ready for distribution at least four weeks in advance and will be available in draft for discussion with members and financial sponsors in the late autumn of the previous year.

## Sponsors

This year saw a fall in the sponsorship available to the Week, largely as a result of a tightening of budgets in Government agencies. We were most grateful to receive support for SEW as part of our grant-in-aid from Scottish Natural Heritage. We are indebted to Historic Scotland for a grant towards the costs of the 2010 Week, and for committing a further three years support through its Voluntary Sector Fund. We thank the Scottish Environment Protection Agency for covering the costs of an event during the Week.

SEW provided a Parliamentary showcase for these sponsors in co-operation with LINK.

Managing SEW as a project is a significant part of the LINK year and in our planning for SEW 2011 we will consider funding and partnership options in order to meet a percentage of the staff-time and overhead costs.

## Event Hosts and MSP Attendance

LINK acknowledges the support of Parliamentary sponsors for events during the Week. Thanks go to Sarah Boyack MSP, Nanette Milne MSP, Elaine Murray MSP, Bill Wilson MSP, Robin Harper MSP and Alison MacInnes MSP. MSP attendance at individual events varied from one to five over the course of the Week and with sixteen known to have attended the Reception.

## Events

Themed lunchtime and evening seminars on environmental issues were organised in the Parliament during the Week, with backing from across the political spectrum. The celebratory theme of the Week saw Holyrood opened to a wide range of LINK members, all highlighting public engagement projects that help to improve Scotland.

The events all proved good networking opportunities with plenty of space for cross-sectoral discussions. In particular *Scotland's environment – It's Great for explaining Scotland's History* was praised by several MSPs as one of the best they had attended in their time at Holyrood.

This year's events were organized by groups of LINK member organisations (as compared to LINK task forces in previous years) and broadly the view is that this has worked well. Fifteen LINK bodies helped devise programmes and organize these events, most making presentations during the Week and all noting the value of these opportunities to profile projects for a parliamentary audience.

Thanks to those organisations for the considerable effort that went into making a success of the Week.



The 'hands-on' Scotland's History event

## Media

The steering group had taken the strategic decision that media coverage of the Week in previous years had been problematic, partly in that media interest was limited, and also in that it created the impression of a series of open, public events. The reality is that tight security in the Parliament buildings dictates that the events are by invitation only. As the Week had not presented any great story for journalists or resulted in much coverage in previous years the decision was not to encourage media coverage in 2010. Some participants used the opportunities in the Week to gain media coverage locally which is encouraged. The approach is reviewed for each succeeding Week.

## Evaluation

A thorough evaluation has followed the Week, examining the Week's success over a number of different areas and taking on board comments from financial sponsors, LINK members and MSP sponsors. Feedback has been largely positive and a number of useful suggestions for future years were made. Events organisers were generally pleased by the response to invitations and considered that this year's approach of more informal networking, with less emphasis on formal speeches, worked well for everyone including the audience. The value of a wide range of organisations working together to celebrate the environment, away from the detailed policy discussion forums where stakeholders more usually meet, was noted by guests at several of the event. Feedback has been used extensively to inform this report.



Participants at the event: [Scotland's Environment – Its GREAT for Scotland's Young People](#)

## Moving forward

Our evaluation and the feedback received confirms that SEW is good for the environment, good for the reputation of those working in the environment and confirms respect for the work of Scotland's eNGOs within the Scottish Parliament - but our assessment noted a number of areas for change or development.

Planning for Scottish Environment Week 2011 is underway and we are conscious that this will run just two months before the Scottish parliamentary elections.

Through early communication with Holyrood Events Team, we have succeeded in shifting timing of the Week to early March with Tuesday 1st to Thursday 3rd March 2011 provisionally scheduled in the Holyrood Diary. Discussions are afoot with the Events Team to ensure that appropriate exhibition space is available in Holyrood during the Week.

Approaches to sponsors to secure the necessary financial support for this project are afoot and meetings with current and potential sponsors are planned in May and June.

LINK members are assessing appropriate projects with a view to identifying a title by June and with effort to encourage smaller and newer LINK members to engage.



LINK is re-assessing capacity to offer a calendar of site visits for MSPs, possibly offering opportunities to see issues and projects on the ground across Scotland, which could form part of the programme as well as being maintained through the year.

We are reviewing the possibility of reviving an event designed to encourage MSP involvement, such as the Photography Competition held in conjunction with SEW 2009.

The programme for 2011 will be in draft by the autumn, and ready to circulate with invitations in the early new year. Developments are planned for invitation lists and all events will be badged by organizers.

**Report ABM**

**May 2010**

## Programme for the Week

### Scotland's Environment... It's GREAT for Scotland's Health & Wellbeing!

**Sponsor: Nanette Milne MSP**

This event highlighted the benefits of the environment for good physical and mental health, with short presentations from LINK Members –

- **Living Streets Scotland** explained how our streets can be the first and best place for increasing physical activity levels amongst people of all ages and abilities;
- The **Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society** explained the physical and mental health benefits of allotments; and
- The **Mountaineering Council of Scotland** outlined some of the details of their mountain safety work;
- The moderator for the event was Sheila Beck, Principal Public Health Adviser with **NHS Health Scotland**.

### Scotland's Environment... It's GREAT for Scotland's Young People!

**Sponsor: Robin Harper MSP**

This event highlighted the benefits of young people experiencing our environment, with presentations from LINK Members –

- **Buglife Scotland** demonstrated their work in providing lessons and activities in schools and youth groups;
- The **John Muir Trust** explained the John Muir Award scheme which aims to encourage people to enjoy, connect with, and care for Scotland's wild places; and
- The **Woodland Trust Scotland** celebrated the success of the Branching Out West Lothian project, launch their Outdoor Learning Teacher Resource Pack and explain what it has meant to the young people involved;
- Guests from **Scottish Natural Heritage** and **Grounds for Learning**, who help schools and nurseries enrich childhood through developing and using their outdoor spaces, outlined their work.



Green MSP Robin Harper hearing from young people involved in the Grounds for Learning project

## Scotland's Environment..... It's GREAT for explaining Scotland's history!

**Sponsor: Sarah Boyack MSP**

This event allowed a Parliamentary audience to hear from community groups from across Scotland as they celebrate their past. They saw artefacts including a coin of Mary Queen of Scots found at Cousland Castle, medieval pottery, a briquette and part of an iron salt pan.



Rhona Brankin MSP chats with community archaeologist Dianne Laing

The event highlighted the important relationship between people and their environment in the past, with short presentations by members of community groups involved in rescuing the Brora Salt works from coastal erosion, recording the township of Spittal of Glenmuick, Ballater and Cousland Community Dig & East Lothian Young Archaeologists Club. There was also a display on work uncovering the 19th C. industrial remains from Prestongrange.

Inputs came from:

- Archaeology Scotland;
- The National Trust for Scotland;
- Scottish Countryside Rangers Association; and
- Scottish Native Woods;
- with support from Historic Scotland

## Scotland's Environment..... It's GREAT for Scotland!

**The Scottish Environment Week Reception**

**Sponsor: Elaine Murray MSP**

The Scottish Environment Week Reception provided an excellent opportunity for many of the players in the Scottish environmental network to meet and talk. The Speakers at the reception were Helen Zealley OBE, Link President; Elaine Murray MSP; and Roseanna Cunningham MSP, Minister for the Environment

## Scotland's Environment..... It's GREAT for Scotland's Businesses!

**Sponsor: Alison McInnes MSP**

This event highlighted the links between business and the environment movement, with presentations from LINK Members -

- "The Black Grouse" - **RSPB Scotland** explained the links between the conservation of one of our iconic species and the Famous Grouse's new brand of whisky - The Black Grouse;

- “Oatcakes and Orang-utans” - **WWF Scotland** set out how they have been working with Scottish businesses and those involved in growing, supplying and selling palm oil; and
- “Quality environment – quality talents” - **The Scottish Wildlife Trust** explored the key role of quality environments in fostering ‘cultural capital’ in Scotland’s city regions.
- Support was provided by **SEPA** and a presentation from SEPA’s Chairman, David Sigsworth was given.

## **Scotland’s Environment..... It’s GREAT for Our Communities!**

### **Sponsor: Bill Wilson MSP**

This event explored the ways communities and Scotland's environment organisations are working together to care for, learn about and enjoy their local environment, with presentations from LINK Members -

- “Working with Communities” - **Friends of the Earth Scotland** explained their work with local communities in Scotland and internationally; and
- “Beach-watch and Sea-search” - The **Marine Conservation Society Scotland** explained how their projects help coastal communities care for their local sea shores and marine wildlife.
- Support was provided by **Scottish Natural Heritage** led by Roddy Fairlie, Head of Engagement.