



Report on the LINK Members' Congress held in Perth 27 November 2014

# Environmental Development: Integrating, Mainstreaming, Raising the Game.

Helen Todd, LINK Chair, welcomed delegates, member bodies and guests, and explained the aims of the day – to hear from our speakers their views in relation to their topics about: Where we are now; where we want to get to; the extent of agreement, and what LINK (and members and others) can do to improve environmental outcomes, to provide the context for delegates to discuss the issues further in the 4 workshops, covering network interests – uplands, lowlands, marine and urban. We are here to learn from each other and what we can do to work better with others, including land managers, and to increase public support for ecological recovery.

We asked Aubrey Manning, Emeritus Professor of Natural History at the University of Edinburgh, to give the scene setting talk. Other speakers are active within the network. Mike Daniels is Head of Land and Science at JMT, working with LINK's Deer taskforce. Paul Walton is Head of Habitats & Species at RSPB, a LINK trustee and member of the Wildlife Forum; John Thomson since he retired from SNH volunteers with SCNP and APRS, leading LINK's Landscape taskforce, contributes to the Agriculture and Sustainable Land Use taskforces; Calum Duncan, Scotland Programme Manager for MCS, leads the Marine taskforce and manages LINK's Marine project, and its 2 staff.

Alan Laidlaw, Crown Estate, was to give a perspective on long term sustainability of rural & coastal Scotland, but was unable to attend. Please see his [article for the LINK newsletter](#) which pertains.

**Scotland's Environment in the Global Context**     Professor Aubrey Manning. [See slides](#)

LINK - Raising the Game - yes! Environmental groups are coming of age as a movement and we need to raise the game. Diversity brings strength and also problems. With lots of short term aims we do want to keep an overall picture. *Think Global Act Local*. There are not many gaps in LINK, though no geology organisations.

There is a grotesque imbalance between humanity and its needs and the rest of life. Population does matter. Economists are important, but they are not dealing with an exact science. There needs to be more biological input into economics.

Numbers matter, and we need governments to take that on board. Society should not be reluctant to talk about numbers. In the UK now 64m people, projected to increase to 70m by 2030.

As LINK's Referendum Challenge paper says, yes we need more measures than GDP. In Government's view more people equals more consumption – a good. We must pursue other ways of measuring progress, including interaction with the natural world, one way that increases happiness. As a society we are floundering, trying to keep the faith, waiting for the economy to get back on course, to pursue getting richer and richer – at such times cracks appear and LINK and others can push. In the last 45 years there has been much more recognition of the importance of the natural world, eg on human health, we should make more of this. See the [Journal of Environmental Psychology](#).

Sheffield Wildlife Trust has good hard evidence of the benefits – natural system services concept that the planet is providing us with life and we threaten our natural capital at our peril. This year August 14 was the day we consumed resources that take a year to regenerate – push these facts harder.

New York water catchment example of cost effectiveness of working with nature vs purifying water downstream and building dams – more examples of good environmental & economic practice are needed. The message that nature is not nice to have, but is crucial to economic prosperity (Tony Juniper), needs to get out there – we have a lot to sing about.

Tragedy of the Commons – people will grab more resources than they need. Fishing, farming industries have a powerful cultural and emotional hold.

We will note many things which require more attention. Scotland has a problem. Land ownership was 7:84, now its 4:50 – 4% own 50% of land. Some are onside, many are not. Community buyouts are a good thing. We should help where we can.

SWT's conference on Scotland's Natural Capital involved business people, getting across the message of the preciousness of the natural resource. Are we really ready for change? There is little sign of it, and the environment appears at many stages, then disappears off the agenda. It is blamed on the electorate, as politicians believe we prioritise our personal circumstances. It is government's responsibility to keep in mind basic long term problems. The Goldsmith blueprint for survival published in 1970 looked 100 years ahead.

What kind of environmental considerations are going on in the Middle East? Here in the UK we are in an extraordinarily good position, and Scotland in particular.

White van man – environment is not a key aspect of his life. We need to communicate better with the unengaged. Some do this well, for example Planning Democracy has a good lever, highlighting inequities in the planning system. Vast inequities can galvanise people. It is really a matter of integrating our efforts. Give wildlife a chance and it will come back, push up to the edges. Urban wildlife is very important. We have to get back to human ecology.

May LINK flourish!

## Environmental Development in Scotland – a review

Uplands      Mike Daniels, John Muir Trust [see slides](#)

Where are we now? It is not great, degraded landscapes, with burning or high density grazing, even in our National Parks. Looking at it from a broad perspective we are not doing it very well. Outside of National Parks, pressure from wind energy developments, small scale hydro and their infrastructure, hill tracks for all of these, churning up peat. Scotland has got a huge responsibility for carbon storage in peat. Wildlife persecution abounds. In the current picture it is hard to be optimistic.

Native woodland is our climax habitat. We practice shock and awe forestry, machine trees in, fence them off. It is challenging but there is some hope:

JMT's success on the wild land map for Scotland, though limited to planning policy

After years of talking we are starting to get our concerns recognised on deer.

Rewilding – new way of regenerating and restoring the ecosystem. Beaver trial decision in May. SNH will be reporting to the Minister. We need to get our thoughts in there.

Coigach Assynt Living Landscape – opportunities there, and challenges too.

Raised political awareness with Scottish people becoming more engaged than ever before - opportunities there, Land Use Strategy, Peatland Plan, Land Reform agenda, noting that community ownership does not in itself necessarily leads to better environmental management.

### Where do we want to get to?

The Scottish Green Party 1989 publication 'A Rural Manifesto for the Highlands' states:

*"The starting point for a modern land use strategy must be the ecological realities of past and present. It is these which must guide the economic development of the region prescribing the wisest and most sustainable usages of the land.....And so the forest economy could be created, transforming one of Europe's most severely ecologically and economically most disadvantaged regions into one of great prosperity and beauty; one of lasting ecological and social stability. Transforming a distantly-governed and grant-manipulated society into an economically viable, self-determined and just one."*

A lot of it is still relevant. The second great wood of Caledon is the climax vegetation for a large part of the Highlands. Examples of Knoydart where 30 years ago there was planting and fencing, some woodland is coming back; Carrifran wildwood, Glen Feshie and Mar Lodge – all encouraging signs. Tay Beavers are on the brink of coming back. Next Lynx, wolves! We are happy for other countries to have scary creatures.

### Extent of Agreement:

The Wild Land map is an interesting challenge – big hole in the middle of it from large wind farm, the battle is never over.

Deer – events last year sent some shivers down the landowning sector, though nothing has changed. There is a long way to convince people on deer management and wildlife crime.

SLE is not enthusiastic on rewilding. NFUS has a different take, and doesn't like beavers.

### Challenges and opportunities:

Landownership is part of the mix, though not all of it.

Incentives – turbines today, forestry in the past.

Culture – Victorian view of the uplands prevails, stuck in a time warp.  
Concern that we don't lose sight of the intrinsic value of the environment with talk of economic benefits. If the capitalists get hold of nature, what will they do with it?

Lowlands      John Thomson, APRS/SCNP. Handout [here](#)

Most people live in the lowlands. It is the countryside on people's doorstep.

Since the recession we have been going backwards. Pendulum swung to food security. There is a policy problem in the UK with the cheap food objective. Agriculture been seen as an industry like any other, focus on efficiencies, fails to reflect its multiple functions.

Where do we want to get to:

Some talk of smart intensification, less pesticide use, reliance on better husbandry, and more mixed farming. Doctors and vets need to get together on the antibiotics issue.

Ecological focus areas in CAP – part of the answer.

More flood plain restoration softer coastlines, better access provision, reconnecting people with the environment, adding more value at local level.

Ways forward – some tools, and initiatives, though an uphill struggle. Public awareness needs be raised, Agree with Aubrey that people care about their environment when they feel it is threatened - a huge transformation of numbers responding to planning applications.

We need to link the food and agriculture agendas, support the principles of the Land Use Strategy, Land Reform agenda – a huge cultural change needed in those managing our land.

Urban      Paul Walton, RSPB, [see slides](#)

Aubrey's talk – Loved it though disagreed that we cannot get a culture shift going more quickly. Scotland's Referendum turnout showed that people are interested. What forces change is people becoming mobilised, rare enough. Our sector has to understand that and grasp the opportunity now. We can export a new and enlightened view of how humanity relates to the environment.

Efforts in urban greening have not much changed in flavour and scale in decades, we have not taken it to the appropriate scale yet. There is a big change in the number of people living in cities, even more profoundly in the developing world. What matters is putting people in touch with nature in their everyday lives. Urban green planning is not working at the right scale, currently it is a mess.

Chicago wilderness – over 300 organisations managing a lot of land by volunteers in a very industrial part of the US, spanning 3 states, when 10m people live. Worked with planners to build nature into people's lives. Can we do it here?

The challenge is for us to marry the social and environmental justice agenda. It is happening, see People's Vow from recent Radical Independence Conference:

- *We promise to make Scotland a model country for the 21st century by combining social and environmental justice.*

- *We will endanger neither the health of our citizens nor the infinite beauty of the natural world. There exists a fragile ecosystem, stretching from the child whose lungs are threatened by pollution to the basking shark giving poetry to our shores.*

Let's catch up with this and lead it. Most of us can back it. We can export it too, like the influence of Patrick Geddes.

## Marine

Calum Duncan, Marine Conservation Society, [see slides](#)

Shared Paul's optimism on the opportunities.

Perspective from the seabed- Not a lot of thought is given to it. People connect with the sea through eating seafood, visiting beaches. We have very rich habitats around Scotland, rocky reefs, maerl beds, nurseries for fish/shell fish.

### Where are we at?

In the Global context Scotland's seas are under the highest levels of pressure (see global map and Scotland's marine atlas) – Not good. Now we have a network of Marine Protected Areas, after 14 years of sustained effort. We should be glad for this, but what is really going on? There are not a lot of pristine areas left inshore. A gigaton of carbon is tied up in seas around our coasts. The real challenge is in terms of ambition for recovery. Management is not ecosystem based, instead focussed on individual features. While it used to be thought the payback was in the tropics, temperate closed areas are now proven to give a high payback in biodiversity examples of recovery of scallops, Isle of Man. Lamlash No Take Zone. A healthier seabed gives an overspill of benefits beyond the protected area.

### Where do we want to be?

Well managed MPAs in 2016, Good environmental status in 2020, Ecosystem based marine planning. Living within our environmental limits, recognising that the environment is the context in which human prosperity sits.

See the LINK campaign – Don't take the P out of MPAs [video](#) and [online action](#).

There are other pressures beyond fisheries – aquaculture where there are problems in some sea lochs, and renewable energy developments – support these, though in the right places, (not the Forth Banks).

### Extent of agreement:

There is broad agreement within LINK, and a broad agreement among all stakeholders on the principles. The devil is in the detail.

Aquaculture expansion to double by 2020.

Existing entrenched thinking is that dredging of the seabed equates to ploughing on land – it is not.

## General Discussion points

Doom and gloom engenders paralysis. Optimism vitalises.

Don't forget the role of Power – carry a big stick.

Mindset prevalent that nature is for humanity's use.

Can we move beyond our focus on the 'win-wins' to reverse declines? If our vision makes sense and

is communicated with confidence it will be acceptable, example of the smoking ban. We have to be assertive, we have the expertise.

Workshop reports: [Uplands](#) [Lowlands](#) [Urban](#) [Marine](#)

## Uplands

Facilitators Mike Daniels and Sarah Robinson. Reporter Mike Daniels

### Common vision for where we want to get to:

- Richer wilder uplands, more woodland
- Better soils
- Better adapted / resilient to climate change
- Integrated land use – not all one vision

### Issues:

- Currently high input high output system
- Designations for species and habitats can't cope with natural processes or climate change
- Better adapted / resilient to climate change
- Need statutory maximum deer numbers
- CAP tangible biodiversity outcomes aren't measured – no way of knowing what money is buying / achieving

### Building a common cause:

- Need to take local communities with us – challenging when rural jobs based in status quo
- CAP reform
- Payment for ecological services

### What can we do to strengthen our voice?

- Give recognition / reward for those doing good management, shame those who are not
- Be bolder in our message
- Increase ecological literacy about the upland – degraded, overgrazed, over burnt
- Tell success stories – Creag Meagaidh, Glenfeshie
- Sell the sizzle about rewilding rather than obsess about the detail

## Lowlands

Facilitators John Thomson (SCNP/APRS), Beryl Leatherland (SWLG). Reporter Rea Cris.

(see also [handout](#) circulated to workshop participants)

### Workshop 1

- Landscape restoration projects. Is the Central Scotland Green Network delivering? Public awareness seems low, projects fragmented (from published report)

- Power of farmers since WWII high and increasing with concerns of food security globally. Power of agriculture is a major policy area but public not aware of it. Also gap between consumer and production of their food, need for education and awareness raising.
- What is CAP trying to incentivise?
- Power of supermarkets. Common cause with farmers against retailers. Consumers have a lot on their shoulders too.
- As LINK – laying down positive vision of Good Food Nation and embedding environment and dispelling myths. Policy changes to deliver those changes. Strong and compelling narrative around food. Doing more to debunk food security myths and open the discussion. Square Meal Report –make a Scottish version?
- Beef subsidies exist but to reduce climate change need to reduce beef production.
- Specialization of farmers makes them more vulnerable and susceptible to market forces
- Sustainable communities in marginal areas – farming advisory services?
- Public procurement and role it plays, and how to influence. They are easier to change. Role to educate and change culture.
- Yield of Agricultural Ecosystems Report – changes nature of dialogue.
- Community Gardens and Allotments – in Land Use Strategy but little action from Government
- Broaden out who we're engaging with as LINK; NHS, Nutritionists, Health Professionals
- Come from a different angle? 'Fat tax' – what more can be done with income tax power? Hard as LINK to take a stance but partnerships?
- Someone changing their behaviour in one areas more likely to change it elsewhere too
- Food for Life connection with tourism industry – issue of scale of commodity farming.
- Biodiversity – everyone aspire to X amount of habitat even if not organic and save money too

## Workshop 2

- Vision is abstract as each lowland habitat is different – can't be too prescriptive.
- What we're trying to achieve in lowlands is ecological re/creation
- Danger of creating something 'generic' – common species. Places at a premium to lead to biodiversity zones – more spread out. Wildlife corridors – reduce wildlife isolation
- Problem of continuity of management. Keeping continuity where incentivising farmers.
- Amenity value – ecosystem services i.e. floods
- Breakdown people vs wildlife argument – general principal is wrong in public consciousness.
- Individual might not see overall benefit but 'stepping stone network' makes a huge impact as long as not all homogenized as they are now – work with landowners.
- Decision of lowland management falls outside of planning system, supplementary planning could be translated out.
- What farming environment do we want to achieve these environment objectives?
  - There is also forestry industry/strategy.
  - Farming departments don't insist on EIA
  - Changes to allow public interest safeguarded
- Counter argument to food security (genuine crisis is everyone's thinking).
- What alternative vision embedding farm environment are we presenting to counter this and key trick we need to capture. This is where environment and farming agenda crosses with social justice agenda.
- Non-farming use of land compatible with biodiversity – i.e. tourism and local economy
- Lack of knowledge and lack of means
- Age of farmers- 50/60 – training 30 years out of date – no biodiversity. Recruitment rate slow. Need of good free advisory service.

- Enforcement a key tool and SEPA willing to use it when required.

## Marine

Facilitator: Calum Duncan (Scotland Programme Manager, Marine Conservation Society, and LINK Marine Task Force Convenor)

Reporters: Nick Underdown and Esther Brooker (LINK Marine Policy Officers)

*Those who attended the marine planning workshops will be added to LINK marine taskforce Marine Planning circulation list for occasional updates on related project work in 2015. If you would prefer not to be on this list, or you would like any more info/involvement, please contact LINK marine policy officers Esther Brooker ([esther@scotlink.org](mailto:esther@scotlink.org)) and Nick Underdown ([nick@scotlink.org](mailto:nick@scotlink.org))*

The workshop was opened and the context for the discussion was set.

- Scotland's Marine Atlas gave a detailed assessment of the current status of Scottish seas and indicated a highly degraded marine ecosystem with few areas of seabed remaining in good condition
- A new planning system – National Marine Plan/Regional Marine Plans – are being introduced to simplify and improve the way developments are carried out in the marine environment and to reduce user conflict.
- The LINK marine taskforce will push for this system to be as robust as possible to help achieve our vision for the marine environment: healthy, well-managed seas, where wildlife is flourishing, ecosystems are protected, connected and thriving, and coastal communities are sustained

The following questions were addressed in a group discussion:

1. What are our visions/views on marine planning? Do we have common cause with other sectors?
2. How can we make marine planning more interesting/engaging to other sectors/communities/members of the public
3. How could we get local communities more involved/empowered to input into marine planning?

These notes summarise the points of discussion from both the workshops, as both had common themes throughout.

### 1. Vision/views

- Sustainability
  - Fishermen's short-termism – how can we **change this mind-set**? Clyde 2020? CSP and fisheries mediation? IFGs/IFMAC?
  - Public response – e.g. discard campaign ('Hugh's Fish Fight') – people understand the issues and do engage with it. It's about **inspiring people**, which is fundamental to success, and putting pressure on politicians.



- Environmental priority
  - Environment seems to come down the line in planning (after social needs) – but some of these may end up being against the law (depending on the objectives of the legislation).
  - **Environment should come first** (first ‘hoop’). Things need to be done from a science and a policy perspective. Environmental groups should be engaged much earlier to help influence.
- Opportunity to plan using constraints
  - **Map the constraints** for different activities and **develop around it** - this is how the system should work. Still opportunity to influence these things through the RMPPs. Need to balance a lot of other stakeholder views.
- People
  - Do we have a polarised view of who we are trying to engage?
  - Need to work out **who we want to engage** and what their vision is (e.g. communities – can include fishermen).
  - Some have more of a desire to raise their voice than others – need to consider how to **stimulate those that are not as vocal** to put forward their view.
  - What is the likelihood of getting people more engaged by continuing to push for a marine national park? Easier to get your head around an MPA/MNP if you’re actually involved in it – policies don’t necessarily mean anything to average people.
  - Selling it to communities – help them to see what the benefits to their community will be of the MPA. Not easy to see what is being achieved, as it’s underwater (cf Cairngorms).
  - Communities have to be engaged without letting national organisations get in the way
- Competing interests
  - E.g. wildlife watching vs fishing vs renewables – incompatible activities at an environmental level. How are these things decided at a high level?
- Fish farm community concerns.
  - Can we make more links to other lobbying groups (e.g. salmon angling)
  - How can communities voice their concerns/learn more about how these developments might affect them?
- Stakeholder/community incentive
  - Is this just greed in the case of fishermen? Are these people really greedy or just considering their needs (e.g. family, mortgage) – should we be **influencing banks and financial institutions** to help them to understand what they are funding (i.e. expensive fishing vessels and equipment) and what the environmental consequences are?
  - What are the economic drivers? Newer boats are more fuel efficient and have technological improvements which have environmental benefits. How do we balance our environmental goals?
- Need to ensure that our planning system **doesn’t export unsustainability** (e.g. aquaculture to South America)
- Integration with land-based planning
  - **Innovation and new thinking** is needed (e.g. land-based aquaculture).

- Planning system can incentivise innovation.
- Can we learn from what has happened on land?
  - e.g. **community ownership** of wind turbines – income stream for coastal communities to encourage buy-in.
  - There are mechanisms through Crown Estate '**local management agreements**' – we should be encouraging that.
  - Opportunity - in light of Smith Commission's recommendation to devolve control of Crown Estate - to establish governance/licensing/decision-making framework that better engages democratically accountable bodies at a regional scale around marine planning
- Enforcement
  - How do we enforce planning and regulation? Government is seeking a culture of compliance/commitment culture. Should we be driving measures to help **improve understanding of why marine areas should be protected?**
  - **Planning ↔ enforcement** – how do we communicate this concept?
- Offshore energy development
  - Offshore energy developments are going to change natural ecosystems – for worse, better or no different?
  - Evidence for artificial reef structure – possible fishing hotspots? Does it balance out with displacement of cetaceans and seabirds? Should we be asking developers to **release data/survey information** to support environmental development vision?
- Funding
  - Is there **money available that is not being spent** on decommissioning (because it's too expensive and environmentally damaging) that can be funnelled into marine planning?
- Data
  - TCE marine data exchange
  - Current data not great from industry for environmental monitoring, as not at right spatial scales and standardisation etc, therefore difficult to track change. This needs to change!

## 2. How can we make marine planning engaging?

- Stop calling it 'marine planning'!
  - 'Marine national park' (or similar) sounds more engaging.
  - Simplify what is being talked about. E.g. SIFT work on public attitude towards fisheries in Clyde.
- Fundamental need for **public education\***
  - Successful public engagement schemes include cameras on seabird colonies (e.g. Bass Rock) – can we not do something similar underwater?
- Raise awareness about schemes they can benefit from (e.g. The Crown Estate 'local management agreements')\*
- Participatory rural appraisal techniques\*
  - Emerged in overseas development work, but has been used domestically) – prioritising, using green mapping (e.g. via community drop-in sessions) – could develop '**blue-mapping**' for marine.

- Children's eco-city in Edinburgh (example) – created big public and press interest.
- Species champions
  - Can we do more with them?
  - Get them to **engage more** with their species e.g. through site visits – 'seeing is believing'.
  - Winning over political minds. Linked in to economic development. May lose votes if they allow their species to decline.
- Local authority councillors
  - Similar species champion scheme? (To get them clued up about local species/habitats issues)

\*Also links to (3)

### 3. Involving/empowering communities around marine planning

- Empowerment
  - LINK organisations have a huge visibility to people/communities – **create/use tools to engage the membership in marine planning**, give confidence to put their views forward.
  - Communities don't necessarily know how to engage on marine issues (land is easier and more well understood), governance framework is not in place yet.
  - Communities might not understand that **they own land/sea**, which is managed by TCE
  - Communities need to learn how to get support from government (e.g. Fair Isles etc) before they lose faith in their own proposals.
- Research needs
  - Need more on rural coastal communities – 'rural' is considered to be terrestrial (e.g. farm land)
  - RESAS currently being revised, opportunity to engage there and help with research priorities.
- Communication of criteria and policy
  - Find a way to **relate people to marine planning** (e.g. bathing waters).
  - Appeal to people **everywhere**, not just those who live by the sea.
  - Encourage people to have their say about what their taxes go towards (e.g. better managed marine environment). Regional marine planning will need to be resourced and re-prioritisation of national budgets will need justified/driven by public debate
  - Prevention of recovery through on-going damage – need to get this message across to the public. Monitoring is being focused on poor quality/damaged water; good quality is being over-looked and we may miss damage being caused.
  - Differentiate between marine issues – i.e. overfishing is different to sea floor damage etc. Different actions are required for different issues.
- 'Flora Celtica' - idea for a marine version which could be made into a website (e.g. 'Marina Scottica') – to aid understanding around **cultural importance of marine environment**.

## Urban

Facilitator Paul Walton (RSPB), reporter Jen Anderson.

### Workshop 1

Group agreed vision is needed as well as mechanisms. It should be simple and inspiring. Linking people and place and green access is part of that and sells in terms of health concern but should consider Singapore's post-war ambition to be a garden city (now achieved) and set a 50-100 year vision for the urban environment which goes beyond people and place, against which to track whether things are travelling hopefully in the right direction. Is it about people interfacing with nature in everyday lives and not losing contact with what nature and environment provide? Could LINK help create vision which requires nature/environment to be featured more, in plans which the development drivers have so far dominated? Planning and performance frameworks must refer to vision for urban areas and include more environmental outcomes linked to social benefits. The voice of multiple organisations such as those present would pack a punch.

Understand people's motivation and link 'asks' to urban populations: land reform is an urban issue too. Urban land/resources could be managed much better: but we have had degradation of urban environment, ownership challenges, lack of access to land (eg for allotments); LA responsibilities vs. banking of brownfield sites and problems of freeing up and greening them.

Planners are key; the planning system is in place and understood by many, with much achievable through it, though a big diminution in planners and planning expertise. But we should hold political feet to the fire ensuring sufficient volunteers step forward locally to complement planner input.

Community based planning can be holistic and there are levers to encourage this (Land Use Strategy, Scottish Planning Policy) and many economic arguments – food production, small enterprises, education and health benefits. Should there be more powers to community councils? England has Neighbourhood Act going to this bottom tier of planning policy. Economic growth is trump card and we need to raise the community game to match that of big business, engaging with developers to ensure certain types of acceptable development and local approval via local plan (examples of community gardens in Edinburgh illustrating will within the Council and among developers to help). The environmental justice argument needs articulated here (eg via CE Bill to press for the willing in LAs and among developers to consider opportunities).

City wide plans could take account of a whole suite of community plans and help these forward. CPPs are a way in, though communities of interest have not made use of this so far. Community planning offers eNGOs a conduit to local plan levels and 5-year visioning, where both developers and communities can voice aspirations, these then rest in legislation, with pre-application discussions having to take account, and developers having to pay for things to happen. That community level input could be better influenced than currently by a proactive national environment sector (through support and skills training).

If the quality of the local process and plans is poor now (community councils being mainly co-optees, moribund nature of many of these councils, and overall deficit of local planners), then there is more reason than ever to engage to flag benefits and threats and a job to be done in encouraging and supporting people to play a part in the councils and drive change.

### Workshop 2

Noted that the previous workshop had discussed the state of the urban environment on which the evidence base was growing, and the need to engage with the urban audience and reconnect people with nature, noting the common cause with health issues (open door with NHS seeking ideas, initiatives by SEPA and SNH), and the potential role for the eNGO sector.

Value of targeting change in transport strategies for Glasgow and Edinburgh to address air pollution via threatened-yet-with-so-much-to offer-greenspace messaging via planning system, zoning, policies.

Importance of vision reiterated – eg that infrastructure must be green infrastructure.

Importance of inputting via local plans again noted eg, around the maximum distance of population from quality greenspace, and other issues appropriate to different communities. London working to 'within a square mile' perhaps. Under-use and in some cases non-awareness of availability of parks to people noted and SNH's 'Near You/Simple Things' campaign. In this respect of course education (eco-schools, outdoor schoolrooms) is pivotal, rangers are critical though under resourced/appreciated. Opportunities to use technology to advantage noted, eg geo-caching. Central Scotland Green Network may have some lessons to offer.

Is a quantitative leap needed in the scale of the ambition? To include wider factors such as property prices, behaviours (cutting grass or encouraging wild diversity), city level initiatives to spread thinking and capture national level attention (eg Chicago Wilderness, SNH Living Landscapes), linking active travel firmly into all of this with safer, nicer experience to encourage more walking and more cycling, and mindshifts away from reliance on engines and into new ways of living and moving around our towns and cities.

An objective should be to address the fact that relentless development of roads, shopping centres and business parks affects the poorer players in our towns and cities more than any others; nature needs built into all development plans so that greenspace and routes to/through that are integral. There is a lot of scope to exchange thinking on this with allotmenters, sympathetic allies, via Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society. Also scope to audit what is happening now in our cities via local group level activity which already exists and to audit what has been lost over 30 years in terms of urban greenspace and which parts of our society that is affecting most. Locked city greenspaces, stalled space: Greenspace Scotland's audit of all greenspace could be merged with that; and there are good stories to tell (Dundee) within the overarching story of negative change.

## Plenary discussion chaired by Sarah Robinson

What do we need to do to make our voice more effective?

*Upland.* Sell the sizzle not the sausage (of ecological restoration). Be bolder about praising the good and calling out the bad, and engage rural communities.

*Urban:* the environment must become central to the social justice agenda. Example of vanishing urban greenspace – suggestion that we investigate differences of loss between affluent and less affluent neighbourhoods? (May already be done, see Greenspace Scotland [report](#)). There is brilliant stuff going on though not at sufficient scale. Engage with local plans and community councils. Work with health and education sectors - a pincer movement between top down and bottom up.

*Lowlands:* We have to amplify our voice, some of this is about LINK itself, more about looking beyond LINK, eg SEPA, message about sharing more expertise among ourselves and with others. Into very big societal agendas – health, education and social justice. We should back initiatives that are going in the right direction even if they are not perfect. Encourage others, protect the special, think bigger about restoration and recreation, work with planners, the Land Use Strategy, things need doing in terms of co-ordination – it comes down to the people on the ground, facilitation, advice.

*Marine:* We have to make it relevant. LINK's Marine taskforce is organising a marine planning event in February, want to make it real to people living on the coast. In discussion of rural matters the coast often does not figure. Tapping into Scottish Rural Parliament, to local coastal partnerships, blue mapping. Tell good stories, like beaches, eating seafood. Previously there has been no democratic opportunity to engage, this is a great opportunity and it is up to us to foster connections.

Are we doing enough to link to different sectors? In context of school funding issues and cutting of teaching hours, can we help to fill gaps?

Audit what has been a waste of time for us. Recognise that we are not having the impacts we want (eg on CAP), sucked into talking to a narrow range of stakeholders, and consultations. How to make time and space is a challenge – means we stop doing some things.

Engaging people. People like stories, example of jellyfish survey which started out as research for a PhD, is now an annual event because it is popular, taps into wider society.

10 years ago we were trying to get more legislation (climate change, WESAS, etc). There is nothing like that on Government's programme partly because it has been done.

What do we want? Let us collectively think about that.

Wins may not be by more legislation, may be implementation (a LINK strategic decision to focus on that some years ago) or defence of what we have, ie the threat from Refit of EU Directives.

Upstreaming. We need to get our target audience to listen better, rather than always shouting louder. Issue of trained incompetence in some professions eg foresters, engineers. Worth investing time on education silos before narrowness of vision is embedded.

Consensus is not always the way, though strength is in the coordinated approach.

Impacts of LINK work on the Land Reform agenda and reversion from Sustainable Economic Growth to Sustainable Development in recent Government communications, though caveats of

interpretation of SD persist, and it is more talked about than its principles applied. SD is embedded in the law and has not yet been tested in the courts.

Charles Dundas summed up key points, and Helen Todd thanked everyone for coming.

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