**LINK Governance Group meeting**

**Tuesday 18 October 2016**

**WWF Scotland office, Edinburgh**

**Draft Minutes**

**Attending**: Lloyd Austin (Chair), Jen Anderson, Daphne Vlastari, Roger Downie, Charles Dundas, Robin Parker, Rea Cris, Lisa Webb, Joyce McMillan, Bruce Wilson, Sarah Dolman

**Apologies**: Mary Church

1. **Brexit**

There was a discussion about the upcoming LINK meeting with Brexit Minister Mike Russell on 9 November. Agreed that the delegation would include Charles, Daphne, Calum and Robin.

**ACTION: SWT to confirm whether Jo Pike or Maggie might also attend.**

There followed a roundtable update from those present about their organisation’s work on Brexit. Points to note – the Wildlife Trusts recently discussed Brexit issues, their focus will be on agri and fisheries policy; RSPB met with Marine Scotland fisheries team and is feeding back to Marine Group; WWF-UK mobilising the MP pledge; RSPB continuing with internal working groups on Brexit, met with Mike Russell, have MP pledge on their website; LINK submitted written evidence and met with David Miller. It was noted that the message from ScotGov officials is that we should be cautious about advocating any UK wide positions.

There have been stakeholder subgroup meetings to inform the Standing Council on Europe. These subgroups are based on the following themes: environment and climate change; social protection and human rights; economy and financial services; higher education and research; diplomacy and influencing. RSPB, SWT, FOES and WWF were all invited to the envt subgroup which was chaired by Anne Glover and included academics. LINK has been invited on to human rights subgroup, probably in error, yet it was felt worthwhile for Daphne to attend to raise issues including environmental justice.

**ACTION: Lloyd to send Lisa a note of the first envt subgroup meeting to circulate around Gov Group**

**ACTION: Daphne to ask Ian Mitchell at ScotGov for the minutes of group meetings**

Discussion about the Greener UK coalition, which was formed by Greener Alliance members to focus on Brexit. We need to have a process of being able to ‘check’ the outputs to ensure they are UK and Scotland relevant. Also discussed the 25 year plan and the need to emphasise that it is England focused, not UK. Need for a 4 LINKS joint working group. There was a suggestion that it would be very helpful to divide our asks into what applies to UK and what is England only.

It was also noted that the co-ordinator, Michael Ewing, of [Environmental Pillar](http://www.environmentalpillar.ie/) (Republic of Ireland’s ENGO coalition) had attended the Links conference and is interested in keeping in touch on policy areas as well as Brexit matters.

**ACTION: Jen/ Daphne to indicate to Greener Alliance that we’ve had this discussion and ask to be kept informed and ensure all 4 countries are recognised going forward.**

**ACTION: Future Governance Group minutes to go onto members pages for all to access.**

Regarding whether we need another full LINK network discussion on Brexit, it was agreed to review the situation at the end of the year.

1. **Autumn party conferences**

There was a discussion about members’ attendance at the conferences. Daphne attending SNP, Greens and LibDems as observer. Also, LINK and the Sustainability Hub had a joint event at the SNP conference. WWF are having stands at SNP and Greens but not LibDems. Woodland Trust Scotland had a Fringe event at the SNP conference, which was hosted by Clive Anderson. Rea attended the UK Conservative Party Conference as an observer and RSPB Scotland had a stand at the SNP and Greens and attending LIbDems as an observer.

1. **Legal Strategy**

The subgroup had met the previous day. Discussed plans for the afternoon workshop which will be held on 14 December. Speakers to include Tom Mullen, a law academic, Clare Symonds of PD and Paul Brown of the Legal Services Agency. Aiming for c40 participants and idea is to explore the potential for an envtl law centre in Scotland.

**ACTION: Bruce to provide name of his solicitor contact who may be interested**

**ACTION: Rod Campbell to be invited? Lloyd to discuss with Mark Lazarowicz?**

**ACTION: Lisa to ensure festive reception invite (also 14 Dec) goes to workshop invitees.**

The next meeting of the subgroup will focus on wider access to justice issues including PEOs, courts and Aarhus. Noted that Angus Macdonald had tabled a PQ recently to ask about next steps on from the envtl justice consultation.

1. **Local elections 2017**

Proposed to focus LINK advocacy on the undercapacity of local Government biodiversity officers and work; regional marine planning and regional land use planning.

RSPB is still considering its plans for the local elections but may again join forces with FOES for local hustings events.

**ACTION: Daphne to canvas members to ask what they are planning for 2017**

1. **AOB/ DONM**

It was noted that the Justice Committee has a call for evidence re COPFS and that this is of interest to the wildlife crime subgroup. Submission date is imminent ie 19 October.

**ACTION: Daphne to ask for extension and LINK to submit evidence.**

ECCLR also issued a call for evidence on the draft budget and scrutiny of funding for SNH, SEPA and Marine Scotland. Deadline of 31 October.

**ACTION: Daphne to email Group convenors for contributions to a submission.**

Agreed to have next meeting in mid-January which will be preceded by lunch with Clive Mitchell of SNH.

**ACTION: Lisa to Doodle for dates and coordinate with Clive.**