

Meeting Notes- Wildlife Subgroup meeting 11th December 2018, Dolphin House, Edinburgh

Present- Allan Bantick, Arina Nagy-Vizitiu, Bruce Wilson, Calum Langdale, Craig Macadam, Daphne Vlastari, Dilraj S Watson, Gus Jones (phone), James Nairne, James Stead.

Apologies- Alistair Whyte, Beryl Leatherland, Elizabeth Ferrell, Paul Walton, Stuart Brooks

1. Approval of previous minutes

2. Updates

- ELUK conference- LINK members and staff attended the ELUK conference in October, the focus was on how the UK is delivering on sustainable development goals, in the context of Brexit and the Voluntary National Review of progress of the SDGs, where we are with Aichi and what might come next. Presentations were given by Katriona Carmichael (Scottish Government), Marie Navarro and Emma Williams (Defra). Conference notes available here- <http://www.scotlink.org/private-docs/notes-from-eluk-conference-october-2018/>
- Meetings with SNH: A series of SNH/LINK meetings have taken place – these have led to important follow-ups for LINK in terms of working with SNH on post-2020 biodiversity policy. These SNH liaison meetings were held on the following dates-
 - 29th March 2018: Meeting was on biodiversity and its funding and was attended by, from LINK: Paul Walton (RSPB), Stuart Brooks (NTS), Bruce Wilson (SWT), Alison Connelly (SEFF, RSPB), Steven Gardner (SEFF, RSPB), Alice Walsh (LINK staff). SNH attendees were: Francesca Osowska (CEO) for the first half, Sally Thomas (Director of Policy and Advice).
 - 4th July 2018: Meeting included discussions on protected areas, biodiversity and NEN and was attended by, from LINK: Charles Dundas Chair, trustees Craig Macadam, Beryl Leatherland, Helen Senn and Clare Symonds; Bruce Wilson, Jen Anderson and Daphne Vlastari. From SNH Francesca Osowska, Sally Thomas, Clive Mitchell (Strategy), Roddy Fairlie (South Scotland Manager); Morag Williamson (Forestry and Environment) – shadowing Francesca.
 - 8th of November 2018: The meeting aimed at developing a shared understanding of evidence base for biodiversity reporting and the deficit of a strong environmental champion in government. Meeting was attended by, from LINK: Charles Dundas, Craig Macadam, Paul Walton, Diarmid Hearn, Jen Anderson, from SNH: Francesca Osowska, David O'Brien, Ed Mackie, Sally Thomas.
 - Notes for all the liaison meetings and the evidence base paper developed to inform the discussions on the 8th of November are available here- <http://www.scotlink.org/member-docs/external-meetings/>
 - Francesca Osowska has now agreed that while it is important for LINK and SNH to agree on the science around biodiversity, this should not be a pre-condition for working together on post-2020 biodiversity policy.
 - Francesca has asked LINK to send our proposed ideas for a governance structure for developing post-2020 biodiversity policy which would ensure ENGO involvement (Action: ongoing).
 - Francesca was also keen that ENGOs and LINK develop a common narrative for nature. Jen (LINK) has reached out to the SNH comms lead to set up a meeting.

- It is also expected that with SNH involved in the steering board of the State of Nature 2019 report, this will help smooth any differences on the interpretation of science.
 - SNH are looking for a public campaign to create a 'movement for nature': this was requested by the CabSec potentially in response to Chris Packham's Walk for Wildlife. At the meeting SNH staff in attendance included (Debbie Bassett, Sally Thomas, Francesca Osowska and Des Thompson). LINK members in attendance (RSPB, SWT, Buglife), suggested possible ideas beyond 'window boxes'. This potentially remains an open door for LINK to submit concrete ideas.
- Connecting People with Nature: held on the 26th of November this was an SNH organised event, with senior SNH staff (Eileen Stuart, Nick Halfhide) led the sessions. The talks were useful, in the end it felt that SNH were genuinely looking to work with ENGOs. There were interactions with SNH on key issues-
 - How do we engage on post 2020 strategy in Scotland? Push for dual approach on National Ecological Network and Protected Areas. SNH are not clear on their idea. Sally Thomas is recommending that current governance structures run in parallel to post 2020 processes.
 - How does the science and data work together? SNH now recognise the issue of shifting baselines, and they are involved in the state of nature 2019 group which is reflecting on this.
- Biodiversity Challenge Fund: announced in the Programme for Government (September 2018), there is now a funding pot of up to £2 million to support projects across Scotland focused on creating and improving habitats for key species and, where appropriate, encourage increased access to nature'. But there is not much clarity beyond that in terms of timeframe and the structures. The Fund is expected to launch in April.
- Revive launch in the Parliament: On the 6th of November Revive Coalition, which is a coalition for grouse moor reform, was launched. The Revive coalition includes Common Weal, OneKind, Friends of the Earth Scotland, League Against Cruel Sports and Raptor Persecution UK. The launch saw the introduction of the new report on the case for reform. If there is a need for LINK to engage with Revive, this can be also done through their new status as a LINK organisational supporter. More information on Revive is available here- <https://revive.scot/>
- Brussels EEB conference: Francesca Osowska and Ian Jardine attended the annual EEB conference, Daphne was there as LINK. At a dinner hosted by SNH over the same days, it appears that the European Commission will be supporting a similar position to LINK in terms of post-2030 biodiversity, in terms of well-managed protected areas and connectivity. It was good that SNH heard NEN and protected areas also being highlighted at the EU level.
- Natural Capital Coalition: Bruce Wilson (SWT) attended an event in Paris on Biodiversity and Natural Capital. Implementation gap is coming through regarding biodiversity being a fundamental element to the Natural capital.

3. Climate Bill

- The LINK/WWF report on climate change impacts on Scottish biodiversity is nearly ready and will be launched on the 3rd of January with engagement on social media and other media platforms, by LINK and WWF. WWF is leading the communication strategy on this. The social media and other engagement will be linked with species champions work, on

social media and engagement with MSPs. As part of the launch we will also be engaging with the ECCLR committee, SG and SNH stakeholders working on climate change and biodiversity. In January we will be working on briefings and requesting meetings with MSPs.

4. National Ecological Network Workshop

- NEN workshop held at RSPB offices on the 10th of December, and attendees included members from Scottish Biodiversity Strategy (SBS) groups. There seems to be agreement among members of the SBS working groups that a NEN offers an opportunity to focus, prioritise and incentivise habitat creation, habitat management and species conservation. However, there isn't much clarity on what the implementation of NEN means in practice.
- The aim of the workshop was to create a series of summaries of what the NEN means. Five themes looked at- What NEN could do? How it looked like for decision-makers? What information was needed for landowners? What tools are needed? How the NEN looked like in practice?
- The meeting was held on Chatham House rules and Zoe Clelland is leading on the development of a 'prospectus' for the NEN.
- It was also mentioned in the workshop that Debbie Bassett is meeting Keith Connell and Fiona Simpson and will be pitching the NEN to them, and one of the key points will be the scalability of NEN across the breadth of Scotland. Language on how the NEN is promoted to the Scottish Government was also discussed where Debbie Bassett made a point about not using the word "network". Main concern is that the NEN is not seen as an ENGO issue. ECOCO life project, is used as an example of doing the NEN, putting together a protocol on how those decisions are made. Local projects such as Cumbernauld landscape or Beeline projects were discussed projects that give a sense of coherence.
- Points were also made that the focus of the NEN should be on ecological coherence, so a distinction between connected networks, and functional networks need to be clear. Case studies are being written some of the workshop attendees. Discussion arose from this update that the NEN needs to be on the agenda of other groups and organisations.
- SWT helped develop a PhD proposal on the NEN. Concept around wider ecosystem health, how the NEN overlays itself, while woodland might not be connected but there are other habitats will be connected. Bruce Wilson will be overseeing the PhD candidate.
- Woodland Trust update: The woodland book on rewilding is being given to MSPs.

AP: Craig Macadam, Arina Nagy-Vizitiu, Bruce Wilson and Paul Walton have volunteered to be part of an advocacy working group to steer the work on NEN and PA. Dilraj and Daphne to develop a workplan to guide the activities for the working group, workplan to be ready for the beginning of February.

AP: Craig Macadam and Bruce Wilson to feedback on the output from the RSPB NEN workshop post mid-January.

5. Scottish Biodiversity Strategy Governance

- The group spent some time discussing SNH structures on biodiversity:
 - EELS Group (Environment and Economy Leaders Group): this sits at the top of the hierarchy. This includes only senior civil servants and agency representatives; no external stakeholders. This group is not attended by the Cabinet Secretary and that is one of the things we would like to see- greater buy in at the top.

- SBS Coordination Group: this sits under the EELS Group and is also composed of civil servants and agency staff. Once per year the SBS Coordination Group meeting also includes the Chairs of the individual Groups (see below).
 - To our understanding the following are the formal SBS groups:
 - Landscapes scale conservation – headed by Zoe Cleland
 - Habitats and Species – headed by Chris Ellis
 - Invasive Non-native Species Action Group – headed by Hugh Dignon from ScotGov, Paul Walton participates
 - Marine Conservation Programme Board
 - Natural Capital – SWT participate?
 - Protected Areas – RSPB and NTS are representing LINK
 - Science – Jerry Wilson of RSPB participates
- There is a disconnect with the groups, and previously there was a Scottish biodiversity committee which had NGO membership, currently there is no NGO membership at the highest tier. LINK should be looking to be part of the EELS group and the biodiversity coordination group

AP: Dilraj to ask Esther/Calum from MCS regarding Marine Conservation Programme Board and LINK membership

AP: LINK to consolidate views in the meeting and develop proposals for a structure to feedback to Francesca. Further feedback by members on issues with current structure and possible solutions to be sent to Dilraj by 6th February

Species champion

- Calum Langdale is currently looking at how to integrate species champion initiative with work being done beyond the subgroup, and how species champion can align with existing advocacy asks of these groups. Currently species champion is looking to connect on themes of NEN, Environment Act and Climate Change bill. The food and farming group, and the woodland group are the most likely species champion initiative will work with for the moment.
- Calum also submitted an abstract to Marine Scotland for the 2019 conference and the article looks at how Species champion can be used as an advocacy tool within MPA development (linking on the ground biodiversity issues with research and policy).
- Calum also called for members to engage Species Champions with a focus on the impacts of climate change on their species, through a meeting/site visit etc if capacity allows.
- Craig Macadam recommended that members engage as much as possible with their Species Champion MSPs in coordination with LINK staff. Some of the suggestions made in the meeting were:
 - More usage of the species champion brochures on climate change.
 - Approaching species champion MSPs for some climate focussed visit.
 - Link nature friendly farmers with interested MSPs.
 - Consider whether LINK member reserves such as Seaton Cliffs and others could be useful locations for meetings.
- Noel's email to Calum regarding a young people's species champion was discussed, whether young people could be champion for a species, and they would connect with the MSP.
 - The main challenge highlighted was capacity of members and how do we engage with young people (wide engagement or focused engagement): do we do one off events with

young people, rather than getting the MSPs to meet the young people. As some of the organisations have been doing this already, if we can integrate engagement of young people with the work that is already being done, that could be a way forward. Potentially do this as the next year's 100 days challenge event. Should the engagement be a bit more targeted and what would this entail?

- On another note Craig Macadam attended an entomology conference and used the species champion initiative as an example of making entomology accessible to wider public and is now writing an article on this. Bugs are on the rise!

AP: In January Calum will reach out to each MSP champion whose species is mentioned in climate change/biodiversity report – DONE.

AP: Calum to speak to some of the members by mid-January to flesh out ideas how the young people engagement can be taken forward with the species champion initiative by tapping into the existing engagement with members.

Discussion on Beavers

AP: James Nairne to contact Claire Baker through a meeting request and if that is declined we reach out to John Finnie (Species champion for Aspen), where RBGE, SWBG and SWT to meet with him to discuss becoming species champion.

Discussion on Parliamentary event

Suggestions were made by LINK staff for a MSPs parliamentary event, where the species champion work can be combined with other work such as climate change bill and explore the format in terms of what species can be brought into the event.

6. Future plans

- Subgroup workplan- The advocacy plan to be developed in line with CBD, species champion plan, post 2020 biodiversity plan and championing nature.
- CBD consultation- LINK has been invited to feed into a CBD consultation on the 'preparation, scope and content of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework'. IUCN has fed into this consultation and as such no additional input from LINK was needed.
- Engagement with MSPs - Through the species champion initiative we will be looking to engage with MSPs by having a stall in the parliament to publicize species champions and combine this with climate change report and the Climate Bill.

AP: Dilraj working on developing advocacy plan for subgroup in consultation with Daphne and working group, to be ready for beginning of Feb.

7. EU exit update

- Daphne provided with an update on EU exit Scottish statutory instruments for invasive species, and the birds and habitats directives. A meeting has been scheduled in January to discuss those. Paul Walton is working on non-native species for WCL and key points can be extracted from that work to develop a LINK position. Daphne is seeking input on our views with regards to the birds and habitat directives. All the instruments that are going on now are for a no deal scenario, the Scottish instruments are fewer as SG has decided to opt in to UK ones, a few on ETS and chemicals have already been published. As of January, anything in Scottish law will have to go through an SSI. Key overarching concerns are two-fold: existing transposition gaps will become a problem as with Brexit we would lose recourse to the original directive/EU law and we also need to track how EU legislation

will be replicated into the Scottish law, to ensure it does not compromise existing level of protection.

8. AOB

Ship to ship transfer has been dropped

Next WL subgroup meeting date to be confirmed through Doodle poll that has already been sent out.