

**Scottish Environment LINK's**

# **Manifesto**

***for the Westminster***  
**General Election, 2015**



Scottish  
Environment

**LINK**

Scottish Environment LINK is the forum for Scotland's environment organisations facilitating and enabling informed debate, information-sharing, discussion and joint action.

This manifesto has been prepared for use by all political parties and candidates seeking election to the House of Commons in May 2015. It is the product of consultation across the LINK network and its publication is specifically supported by members published on the last page.

---

# 1. Measuring the success of our society intelligently

*We want to live in a country where economic, social and environmental successes are equally valued and measured in terms of their long-term sustainability - and where we live within nature's environmental limits. We want to escape from the position where economic growth is given primacy. We want our prosperity to be related to the common wealth of the planet we live on.*

- Sustainable development principles should underpin UK laws, regulations and policies.
- In order to enable citizens to measure the success of government in balanced social, economic and environmental terms, Westminster should adopt a National Performance Framework (NPF) for the UK. It should be based on Scottish, UK and international experience, and should be built around the concept of sustainable development.
- The NPF should replace Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as the main tool for measuring our success, and if GDP remains within the NPF as an economic indicator, it should be significantly qualified so that it reflects environmental and social externalities.
- The UK Government should bring forward circular economy measures which will require manufacturers and retailers to ensure that options for the future repair, re-use and recycling of materials in products are built into product design. The Government should champion the idea of the circular economy within the European Union (EU).
- Serious consideration should be given to reforming the tax system so that it stimulates more environmentally beneficial behaviour and reduces pollution.

**LINK members offering expertise in this area:**

Friends of the Earth Scotland; RSPB Scotland; Scottish Wildlife Trust; Froglife

## 2. Tackling climate change successfully, and using a precautionary approach to all development

*We want to live in a world where average temperatures have been kept below dangerous levels and where the UK has played a leading role in the delivery of this aim. We want to have learned from our experience of climate change, damage to the ozone layer, and other environmental near disasters, that we must take a precautionary approach to all economic, social and environmental development, and weigh the consequences of developments with great care.*

- We want to see a clear commitment to achieving the UK's climate change emission reduction targets, as set out in the independent Committee on Climate Change's UK carbon budgets.
- Commitments should be made to continuing to deliver a science-based approach to the de-carbonisation of the economy.
- We want all parties to recognise the severe financial dangers represented by the over-valuation of the assets of fossil fuel companies, based as they are, in large measure, on known reserves of oil, gas and coal which cannot be burnt without causing catastrophic climate change. The Government and the Bank of England should work with financial institutions in the UK to remove the severe risks caused by this "carbon bubble" to the financial sector - through managed divestment from fossil fuels.
- The UK Government should recognise that climate change imperatives dictate a swift transition to a low-carbon, sustainable economy. It should redirect subsidies and incentives away from fossil fuels as an energy source (and all other such sources of climate harming emissions) , and towards energy efficiency and renewable energy - taking care to ensure that this fundamental development must respect the principles of sustainability at both local and global levels.
- The UK should show leadership on the international stage in making progress towards securing a fair, strong, legally binding, global climate deal which limits temperature rises to below 2°C.
- Our country should follow the precautionary principle with regard to development – particularly in relation to unconventional fossil fuel extraction - and recognise that there is a fundamental contradiction between unilaterally increasing the UK's fossil fuel extraction and fighting climate change.

### **LINK members offering expertise in this area:**

Friends of the Earth Scotland; RSPB Scotland; Scottish Wildlife Trust; WWF Scotland; Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society

### 3. Benefiting people's health through the natural and built environment

*We want our natural and built environments to promote good health amongst all citizens. We want threats to health prevented and a strong appreciation of the huge and diverse benefits to physical and mental health that come from an unpolluted, accessible, high-quality natural environment and a built environment that promotes activity and well-being.*

- Protecting, maintaining and creating beautiful landscapes should be a key test of the type of society that we want to create.
- We should share best practice from across the UK and the rest of the world, and advance the adoption and promotion of sustainable food and farming systems.
- The UK Government should ensure a common approach for UK-wide issues such as food labelling.
- Domestically and internationally, the UK should champion the role of National Parks and natural protection designations in promoting sustainable development and climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- To this end, the UK Government should work with Scottish Government on potential cross-border National Parks in the Cheviots and on the Solway Firth.

**LINK members offering expertise in this area:** National Trust for Scotland; Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland; Nourish Scotland; Ramblers Scotland; RSPB Scotland; Scottish Wildlife Trust; Butterfly Conservation; North East Mountain Trust; Woodland Trust Scotland; Froglife; Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society; Amphibian and Reptile Conservation; Whale and Dolphin Conservation; Scottish Campaign for National Parks; Archaeology Scotland

## 4. Integrating, and making sustainable, the uses we make of our land, seas and air

*We want to live in a country where – at the same time – people enjoy and explore the world around them; carefully utilise the riches and benefits of the land, sea and air; and protect and enhance the ecosystem we share with all other forms of life.*

- The protection and stewardship of the land, sea and air - and all the many species of life we share this space with - should be enshrined in a written form within any constitutional settlement for the UK and Scotland.
- Cross-border planning and environmental policy concordats between the UK and devolved administrations should be strengthened.
- The implementation of Common Fisheries Policy, with timelines for achieving sustainable fisheries, is vital and should be a priority for government. At the same time, priority should be given to ensuring that our aquaculture industries are genuinely environmentally sustainable.
- The UK government must work with the devolved administrations to achieve their commitment to implement an ecologically coherent network of well-managed protected sites at a UK level by 2016 that actively contributes to an improvement in the ecological health of the UK marine area.
- The UK Marine Policy Framework should be revised to ensure that it achieves Good Environmental Status (GES). The UK Government should ensure that all National Marine Plans within the UK achieve GES.
- The UK should negotiate a better, fairer deal for Rural Development funds (for all of the UK countries) within the next Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) round.
- The UK Government should aim, domestically and in EU negotiations, to ensure that CAP funds for agri-environment can be increased from the current levels.
- A decent level of co-financing of European programmes should be ensured on a long term basis.
- The long term reform of CAP funds should be linked with the better delivery of the common good and the public interest.
- All public policy subsidy and fiscal arrangements for land use should balance economic, social and environmental concerns.

### **LINK members offering expertise in this area:**

Buglife; Friends of the Earth Scotland; Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust; Marine Conservation Society; National Trust for Scotland; Plantlife Scotland; RSPB Scotland; Scottish Wildlife Trust; WWF Scotland; Butterfly Conservation; North East Mountain Trust; Woodland Trust Scotland; Froglife; Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society; Whale and Dolphin Conservation

## 5. Protecting and enhancing our ecosystems and all the species in them

*We want a proper appreciation of the importance of all the species that share our land, sea and air. We want to see an end to species extinctions and the degradation of ecosystems at home and abroad and, instead, a concentration on the manifold benefits of protecting and enhancing the fullest possible biodiversity.*

- The UK should support an EU Soils Directive and ensure it is effectively implemented, and encourage further EU-wide research to understand ecosystem services from soil.
- The Government should introduce a UK-wide ban on peat extraction for horticulture.
- The UK should continue to provide funding for the National Wildlife Crime Unit.
- Our country must properly implement EU regulations on Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS).
- The UK Government should continue to fund research into better valuing the services provided by ecosystems.
- The UK should sign the Ballast Water Management Convention at the earliest opportunity.
- A UK-wide monitoring scheme should be developed for wild pollinators.
- Our landscape provides a vital cultural service, and good quality landscapes should be regarded as an essential component of any ecosystem or ecosystem service-based approach.
- The UK must ensure sufficient monitoring to achieve Good Environmental Status under the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive.
- The UK must support the retention, and if possible, the enhancement of the EU Birds and Habitats Directives during the current "refit" review.

### **LINK members offering expertise in this area:**

Buglife; Friends of the Earth Scotland; Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust; Marine Conservation Society; National Trust for Scotland; Plantlife Scotland; RSPB Scotland; Scottish Wildlife Trust; WWF Scotland, Butterfly Conservation; North East Mountain Trust; Woodland Trust Scotland; Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society; Amphibian and Reptile Conservation; Whale and Dolphin Conservation; Archaeology Scotland

## 6. Taking decisions as close to people as possible, with openness and public participation central features of our governance.

*We want to see real subsidiarity, where decisions are taken at the nearest appropriate and practical level to citizens, and where communities of place and interest can assess the long-term economic, social and environmental consequences for their lives and the lives of future generations before decisions are made. We want the methods and processes of government at all levels to be open and properly transparent and, as a matter of course, to include genuine representatives of our communities of place and interest in all political decision-making.*

- The Scottish Parliament should be given legislative powers over environmental protection in the marine environment out to 200 nautical miles.
- The UK Government should consider the needs of each devolved nation when thinking about the future of the Forestry Commission and a revision of the Forestry Act 1967.
- Reporting on Aarhus Convention compliance must be treated seriously for all parts of the UK, and the success of compliance across the four jurisdictions of the UK should be monitored.
- Legislation fully implementing Pillar 3 of Aarhus, as requested by the courts, and required by recent EU Commission decision should be introduced.
- The UK Government should ensure that legislation to devolve the management and responsibilities of the Crown Estate is completed, and includes provisions to ensure that the Estate contributes fully to sustainable development.

### **LINK members offering expertise in this area:**

Friends of the Earth Scotland; RSPB Scotland; Scottish Wildlife Trust; WWF Scotland; Woodland Trust Scotland

## 7. Learning from, and playing our part in, the rest of the world

*We want a UK that is outward looking, internationalist, co-operative and ready to learn from other nations, societies, and states – and ready to share our ideas, successes, and the lessons from our mistakes, with the rest of the world. We want the UK to implement international obligations properly, and our attitudes and behaviours to be set in full awareness of the global ecological impact of our lives and activities.*

- The UK should take a lead in Europe on the “beyond GDP” agenda, championing implementation of the five actions in the European Commission’s communication on ‘GDP and beyond’.
- The UK should make a major effort to achieve an ambitious, fair and equitable global deal at the United Nations’ Climate Change Summit in 2015 in Paris.
- When approaching EU-level talks and other negotiations for binding agreements in international law, there should be agreed, clear and open mechanisms for the determination of positions that reflect the conditions in the different UK countries.
- The rights of Ministers from the devolved administrations participating as part of UK delegations to the European Union, and other international bodies and conventions, should be properly defined in legislation, in order to ensure that all interests across the UK are properly represented.
- The UK must meet Aichi biodiversity target to “halt the loss of biodiversity in order to ensure that by 2020 ecosystems are resilient and continue to provide essential services, thereby securing the planet's variety of life, and contributing to human well-being, and poverty eradication”

**LINK members offering expertise in this area:**

Friends of the Earth Scotland; RSPB Scotland; Scottish Wildlife Trust; WWF Scotland; Butterfly Conservation; Amphibian and Reptile Conservation

Scottish Environment LINK is the forum for Scotland's environment organisations facilitating and enabling informed debate, information-sharing, discussion and joint action

Our 37 member organisations have cumulatively over 500,000 individual members, and represent a range of environmental interests with the common goal of contributing to a more environmentally sustainable society.

LINK assists communication between member bodies, government and its agencies and other sectors within civic society. Acting at local, national and international levels, LINK aims to ensure that the environment is fully recognised in the development of policy and legislation affecting Scotland.

---

**The following members of Scottish Environment LINK supported publication of this manifesto.**

- Amphibian and Reptile Conservation
- Archaeology Scotland
- Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group
- Buglife
- Butterfly Conservation
- Friends of the Earth Scotland
- Froglife
- Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust
- Marine Conservation Society
- North East Mountain Trust
- Plantlife
- RSPB Scotland
- Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society
- Scottish Campaign for National Parks
- Whale and Dolphin Conservation
- Woodland Trust Scotland
- WWF Scotland

© **Copyright Scottish Environment LINK 2015**

[www.scotlink.org](http://www.scotlink.org)

LINK is a Scottish Charity (SC000296) and a Scottish Company Limited by guarantee (SC250899). LINK is core funded by Membership Subscriptions and by grants from Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Government and Charitable Trusts