

LINK Members' eBulletin February 2009

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LINK POLICY NEWS

Climate Change Bill - Take eAction

The Climate Taskforce encourages (urges) you all to take **eAction** calling on the Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee to strengthen the Climate Change Bill. We should not underestimate what can be achieved with this legislation and the impact your message could have. The Committee are also encouraging people to get in touch, the deadline is Friday 27 February.

National Parks

Recent workshop for LINK and BEFS members on the current National Parks consultation was a useful round-up, noting the missed opportunity to assess whether our Parks are delivering, agreeing to ask Government when and how this will be done, and addressing many of the questions in the consultation. A note of key points for internal circulation only is available on request.

Funding for the Environment - Note from Deborah Long, Convenor, Biodiversity Taskforce

If you are talking to or communicating with MSPs, would you ensure they are aware of our concerns about funding. This statement is for internal purposes only and is for your information. " At no time has it been more urgent or necessary for Scotland to take the lead in environmentally sustainable policy and action. Funding for the environment is under severe stress. Current budget proposals to build environmentally damaging engineering projects, while at the same time cutting budgets for environmental protection and conservation will damage Scotland's ability to meet international and national targets.

With climate change and the continuing and accelerating loss of habitats, Scotland's environment requires well targeted action to build and maintain healthy ecosystems that support Scotland's people and its biodiversity. Further cuts in funding to take this work forward in partnership with Scottish environmental charities would be inappropriate and would jeopardise Scotland's future. "

LINK Climate Communications

Subsequent to LINK's August Gathering, a small group met in November to identify areas on which climate messaging could be developed for LINK member bodies to use in their own communications with their memberships. The next step will be to develop these ideas in discussion with Comms Officers in the network. Details from [Jen](#).

LINK NEWS

Update on SEW 23-27 February 2009

The mid-week reception will be Wednesday 25 February in the Garden Lobby, with Michael Russell MSP and Sarah Boyack MSP. See the [Programme](#) for all of the week's events or contact [Susan](#).

LINK Ministerial Meeting, Notes of Meeting with Michael Russell MSP, 4 February 2009

LINK Board and Network Meeting, January 2009

Our Networking meeting scanned horizons, heard updates from Taskforces and considered LINK political strategy. We agreed that we need to invest more in holding government to account and also monitoring the implementation of legislation which

we have lobbied for. **Meeting Notes** The main action points for Staff are to contact Reps and TF Convenors to:

- gather critical text from existing Scottish planning policy in relation to the proposed new single SPP
- canvass views for the Audit Scotland study on the environment
- identify the level interest in a workshop on access to justice
- report on proposals for new 'natural heritage' legislation for 2009/10 and seek views on what might be included in such a Bill
- seek views towards the brief for work which LINK may commission to analyse/assess Single Outcome Agreements

LINK Budget 2009-10

The Board approved **LINK's budget for 2009/10**; not surprisingly, its fairly flat.

LINK Corporate Strategy 2009-12

The Board endorsed the revised (draft) corporate strategy for 2009-12 and this will circulate in February to member organisations for endorsement.

LINK Scotland Office Liaison Meeting, 29 January 2009

LINK gave positive examples of its work and assurance of its non-partisan autonomy. A possible seminar hosted by Anne McKechnin MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Scotland Office to facilitate the exchange of views between UK level decision-makers and LINK members is being considered. **Meeting Notes**.

LINK Annual SNH Liaison Meeting, 26 January 2009

The Board reps met the Chair and CEO of SNH recently for annual liaison meeting linked to the Agency's grant aid for LINK. **Meeting Notes**.

LINK SEPA Liaison Meeting

Board Reps hope to meet with the new Chair and CEO of SEPA during February 2009.

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New Delegates

Audit Scotland Environment Overview Study, Project Advisory Group: Lloyd Austin (RSPB) and Dan Barlow (WWFS)

Highland Environment Forum: George Robertson (RSPB) and Hebe Carus (MCofS)

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Parliamentary Officer's Report, [Andy Myles](#)

The LINK Parliamentary Office has been exceptionally busy this month – with preparations for Scottish Environment Week in February and with a great deal of legislative work passing through Parliament.

National Planning Framework

The 60 day Parliamentary discussions of the National Planning Framework started before Christmas and LINK representatives (or member bodies) were called to give written and oral evidence to the Rural Affairs & Environment Committee (RAE), the Energy, Economy and Tourism Committee (EET) and the Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee (TICC).

Whilst generally welcoming the introduction of the national framework, serious concerns have been expressed about individual elements.

Flood Risk Management Bill

This Bill continues its Parliamentary progress and with LINK making significant inputs to the Stage 1 debate in the form of both oral and written evidence to the RAE Committee. Almost all of our ideas were incorporated in the Committee's Stage 1

report to Parliament. The Freshwater TF are in discussions about amendments which might be required to improve the Bill at Stage 2 during the Spring.

Climate Change Bill

LINK Members are playing a full part in the Stop Climate Chaos Scotland campaign and, with coalition allies from the international development organisations and trade unions, gave written and oral evidence on the main elements of the Bill to the TICC Committee early February.

LINK Members have submitted written evidence to the RAE Committee with regard to the Sections of the Bill dealing with waste. The Woodlands TF have made a submission on the controversial proposals on leasing 25% of the forestry estate, and the Convener will give oral evidence on 11 February.

Marine Bill

Written evidence was given to the RAE Committee on the Legislative Consent Motion (LCM) giving Holyrood's agreement to Westminster to legislate on several devolved matters in preparation for the separate Scottish Marine Bill. Giving evidence to the Committee, Environment Minister Richard Lochhead thanked LINK for pointing out a serious mistake in the Bill concerning enforcement provisions between 12 and 200 nautical miles and promised Government amendments to rectify the matter.

The Marine TF and LINK staff are preparing for the Stage 1 debates on the Scottish Marine Bill which is likely to be introduced in the Spring.

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New LINK Outputs

[Report on LINK Congress, October 2008](#), A Greener Scotland - Are We On Track?

February 2009

LINK Woodland Taskforce [Written Evidence to the Rural Affairs and Environment Committee on the Forestry Proposals in the Climate Change Scotland Bill](#)

January 2009

Climate Change Taskforce [response to Consultation on the Consenting Process for Thermal Power Stations in Scotland](#).

Woodland Taskforce [response to the Climate Change and the National Forest Estate Consultation](#) on forestry provisions in the Scottish Climate Change Bill

Freshwater Taskforce Briefing for [Stage One Flood Risk Management \(Scotland\) Bill](#)

Agriculture Taskforce Briefing on the [Common Agriculture Policy Health Check](#)
Planning Taskforce [Evidence to the Local Government and Communities Committee](#)

Agriculture and Biodiversity Taskforce [Letter to Richard Lochhead MSP, Cabinet Secretary giving concerns about SRDP](#).

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News from UK Links

Northern Ireland Environment Link (NIEL)

In the last quarter of 2008 NIEL ran six major conferences and planned for a very important international conference in January on climate change which was highly successful. We also produced a Fact Sheet on Food, Farming and the Environment which is available on our website, participated in a number of conferences and events and began the work on our major policy document for 2009. We continue to comment on roughly three government consultations per month and are developing detailed plans for work through all task forces. Funding was secured for the Northern Ireland Archaeology Forum from the NIEA, Heritage Council and CBA, and for Sustainable NI through Esmee Fairbairn Trust. We have begun a liaison with trades unions, offering environmental training to members.

Wildlife and Countryside Link (WCL)

WCL was delighted with the introduction of the Marine and Coastal Access Bill to Parliament in December and we are busy working on a number of amendments that need to be made to ensure that the Bill is fit for purpose to deliver its aims and objectives. The Planning Bill, containing some welcome amendments received Royal Assent in November and Link members are now focusing on the passage of the Local Democracy, Economic Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill through Parliament. We are also looking ahead to the draft Floods and Water Bill, which will be subject to pre-legislative scrutiny in the 2008-2009 session.

Other News

Funding Help for Communities

Rural Direct, launched in June 2008, is a free service provided jointly by SCVO and the Crofters Commission for constituted community groups in rural areas throughout Scotland to help them access funding including from the new Scotland Rural Development Programme (SRDP). Sign up for the [Rural Direct Monthly Update](#).

BP Miller Field Decommissioning

The public website www.bp.com/miller has been updated with the progress with Phase One decommissioning activity at BP's Miller field in the North Sea. The key tasks are plugging the wells, cleaning the process areas to make the installation 'hydrocarbon free'; and flushing the pipeline to St Fergus and the Boddam power station near Peterhead - this line will be preserved for potential future use.

The website also gives the Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report and a range of comparative assessment studies are being carried out to identify the best solution for dealing with the drill cuttings pile.

BP are not planning to hold any general stakeholder briefings on the Miller decommissioning project but would be happy to meet with individual organisations to

discuss areas of specific interest. BP's decommissioning programme will be submitted to the Government later this year, and at that stage, there will be a period of statutory public consultation for formal comments on our proposals. For further information contact **Richard C Grant** BP Political Affairs Manager, Scotland.

IUCN-UK: 2010 Biodiversity Indicators Partnership Survey

The 2010 Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (2010 BIP), launched in July 2007, brings together over 40 organisations and a suite of biodiversity indicators, allowing for a more comprehensive and consistent monitoring and assessment of global biodiversity, with a view to measuring progress towards the CBD's target to reduce the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010.

The 2010 BIP Secretariat is currently carrying out a **User Needs Survey**, to examine the interests of potential users of 2010 BIP outputs, and their preferences for the possible. It will be open until Thursday 12 February 2009.

More details of the IUCN are available from **John Henson Webb** or at www.iucn-uk.org and www.countdown2010.net

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Consultations

Sign up to **seConsult**, the Scottish Government weekly email alert service to tell you of new consultations and provides brief descriptions and web links.

25 February Dept of Culture Media & Sport **consultation on World Heritage Sites**.

If members are responding to the consultation, Peter Rawcliffe, leading for SNH, is interested in hearing from you, with a view to gain joint support for two Natura sites.

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LINK Diary 2009

February 23-27 LINK Scottish Environment Week, Parliament.

April 24 Board meeting, am. Board and Convenors/Members Networking pm.

June 25 Board meeting, am. Board and Convenors/Members Networking pm.

October 22 Board meeting, am. Board and Convenors/Members Networking pm.

December 16 Festive Evening Reception, St Augustine's Church, Edinburgh.

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Events and Seminars

16 February Launch of Perth & Kinross Council Community Waste Grant Scheme.
Perth Grants of up to £10,000 offered to eligible groups.

More details from [Kim Young](#).

17 February **Public Management and Policy Association (PMPA) Lecture - Sustainable Futures – Climate Change.** Key speaker: Professor Jan Bebbington.
BT Innovation Centre, 1 Lochside View, Edinburgh

To register email info.pmpa@cipfa.org, or book online at www.pmpa.co.uk.

18 February **Environmental Protection UK Seminar - Can The Environment Make Scotland Healthier?**
Glasgow Parish Halls, George Street, Glasgow

More details from [Clare Carruthers](#)

23 February **Scottish Government Stakeholder Workshop – Thermal Guidance – Carbon Capture and Storage and Carbon Capture Readiness**
Europa Building, Argyle Street, Glasgow

More details and to register, email [Lorna Orr](#), Energy Policy Unit, Scottish Government

17 March **SCVO Conference - Creating a Sustainable Third Sector**
The keynote speakers include:
John Swinney, MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth
Jane Ryder, Director, Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator
Debra Allcock Tyler, Chief Executive, Directory of Social Change
Dharmendra Kanani, Director, Big Lottery Fund Scotland
Lucy McTernan, Acting Chief Executive SCVO
Roxburghe Hotel, Edinburgh

For [more details](#) and to register.

19 March **SCVO European Policy Group meeting.**

SCVO, Edinburgh More details from [Thomas Curtis](#)