



Note of LINK Network Meeting 22 April 2010, held in Perth

Present: Ian McCall (Chair), Calum Duncan (MTF, MCS), John Mayhew (APRS, LTF), Helen Todd (SOATF, RS), Vicki Swales (SLUTF, RSPB), Steven Gardner (SEFF, SWT), Aedan Smith (PTF, SOATF, RSPB), John Campbell (NTS), Eila McQueen (Trustee, AS), Hebe Carus (PTF, LTF, MCoFS), Andy Myles, (PO), Kate MacColl (AIO), Susan Guest (PAO), Alice Walsh (DO).

Present for items 1 and 2: Lloyd Austin (Trustee, RSPB, BTF W&NE TF), Dan Barlow (Trustee, WWFS).

1. Apologies

Andy Fairbairn, Deborah Long, Helen McDade, Jonny Hughes, Ian Findlay, Vicky Junik, Mike Robinson, Mike Daniels, Roger Powell, Helen Zealley, Jenny Mollison, Alistair Beeley, Sarah Dolman, David Downie, Jonathan Wordsworth, (some others from Jen's sheet).

2. Actions from & Updates since January discussion

2.1 Board discussion points

Ian reported on progress with the Fred Edwards Trust, the Board supported allocation of £3k DFP funding towards the set up and launch of the Trust in October. Members were pleased about progress.

Organisational Supporter: the Board had approved proposals for a new category of affiliation to LINK for non-eligible organisations with an environmental focus. The benefits will be elements of the LINK service and not engagement in task force, and more information would be available soon.

SNH relations: Ian reported on discussions with Andrew Thin, SNH Chair and the board's plan to meet SNH board members to discuss current concerns about SNH's new corporate priorities.

2.2 Operating Plan 10/11

The plan captured TF's workplans, staff work, and aspirations of the planning meeting, and was yet to be fully discussed by the Board. TF's were asked to keep the tasks (in the second column) under review against changing priorities and realities as the year progressed and amend these as required.

Action: TF convenors

2.4 Scottish Environment Weeks (2010, 2011)

A report on this year's SEW would soon be available. We were hoping to firm up the date for 2011 very shortly. Andy had circulated an email and reminded all to respond.

Action: Andy to circulate report, members to respond email.

2.5 Inquiries & evidence (past, future)

Andy had circulated an email aiming to have topics to propose to relevant committees in the summer. Once ideas are received Andy will circulate again to prioritise, and check against LINK's workplan, and follow up with discussions with convenors and staff of the Committees. **Action: Members, Andy**

2.7 Annual evaluations from Planning, Marine and Agriculture TFs

Planning: The big focus was the Scottish Planning Policy where 20 plus documents, critical for planning applications and development plans, were



consolidated into one document. The first draft was very poor on sustainable development, and PTF pressure led to a much improved document published in February 2010 which has a really useful description of Sustainable Economic Growth. The TF had much appreciated assistance from LINK PO. Another benefit for members has been general intelligence sharing over the year, a key role going forward.

Agriculture: Vicki was representing Katrina here. ATF work remains very relevant for comms, coordination and action on the various fronts, CAP reform and some of the detailed policies that Government is pursuing. The TF is on lots of stakeholder groups, where the beneficial outcomes are hard to quantify. They are heavily weighted to sectoral interests. It is useful and necessary that we are there to promote the environmental interest. Proactively ATF is working on updating the CAP vision document. ATF has worked with the other Links meeting and corresponding with George Lyon MEP, rapporteur to the European Parliament Committee on Agriculture. Also engaged with other task forces and more of that is coming up.

The meeting noted good work by Angus Yarwood in spotting the opportunity and getting LINK 2 places at the meeting Richard Lochhead convened on conflicts between agriculture and forestry which Jonny Hughes and Vicki Swales attended (note on members' website).

Marine: Calum spoke for MTF members, whose big focus on the Marine Scotland Act, passed unanimously at Stage 3, with members happy with the result (see the OP update for Q4). Calum said it was a privilege to be involved with the process and it demonstrates the value of LINK, citing particularly the expert help of Alan Wells and Ylva Haglund, of the LINK Bill Team, Andy's and Lloyd's expertise, and WWF hosting of the email actions in the latter stages. All in all it was an enjoyable process. He recognised that this was the end of the beginning and MTF is in the good position of having funds for two officers until 2013. There will be much for them to do.

Andy noted that all 5 parties publicly thanked LINK for its contribution, that reputationally it has been very good for us, an inspiring example of what we can do together. People should take credit for their part in it. Reflecting on why it was so successful, marine was not a priority up until recently. In this process LINK was on a par with the fishermen, marine renewables sector, and LINK outperformed them, and prevented bad amendments getting into the bill. Dedicated staff made a big difference. Alan Wells became the trusted expert in Parliament. Without staff support, marine is very under resourced in LINK.

2.6 Task forces brief resumes of what's afoot

Please also see updates in the Quarter 4 Operating Plan.

Landscape: John Mayhew reported that they hoped to see the Scottish Landscape Charter published soon, by SNH. It sets out what the European Landscape Convention means for Scotland. LINK supported the UK signing up to the ELC, the setting up of the multi-interest Scottish Landscape Forum, which drafted the Charter. The process stalled while various ministers hesitated about signing it, and decided not to. Participation in LTF helps members promote their projects and campaigns and get support, eg JMT Wild Land designation, APRS and SCNP work on future of national parks in Scotland, and MCoFS hilltracks campaign. Last year's half-hearted NP review was meant to be part of a 2-stage process, now part 2 is abandoned. LINK asked for a place on the NP Strategy group and heard back that nothing is happening yet. JM has represented LTF interests in LINK discussions of marine renewables document, and thinks the final



product will be useful. LTF is on a couple of external forums; Placebook Scotland which will end soon with a published book (who will get the profits?), and Hon Fellow Bob Aitken is on a UHI project on sustainable estates, which 3 to 4 PhD students are working on.

Sustainable Land Use: The stakeholder groups did not follow LINK's recommendations in the 5 key steps document and the feedback is that they were terrible and badly facilitated, except for a fairly good meeting in Edinburgh. TF is compiling case studies on integrated land use management in preparation for a conference in the autumn to raise the profile during the consultation period on the draft strategy. TF is meeting the SG team next week (note of this on members' website). Expectations of the strategy are being downplayed. If it can align other strategies under it that is not such a bad outcome first time round. It was good that we started with a high level of ambition, got our case agreed first and then discussed it with other interests. SNH response has been lacklustre. It is on the agenda for the SEPA meeting on 4 May, they may be more positive. LINK focus has been on trying to influence the process, as the content is too broad, and if the process is right, the chances for content are better.

SOAs: Helen reported on the meeting the previous day. Meetings were held with Audit Scotland, SSN, SNH and others to push the report, and yes, the environment has been shoved off councils' priorities. The government report on SOAs downplayed this, and lacks analysis. There is a huge amount to do and the TF lacks resources. SOAs are here to stay, all parties back them. TF is aiming to get Government to monitor them adequately.

SEFF: Steve Gardner reported that SEFF has been in discussions with the BIG lottery fund which wants to engage better with the sector (Steven tabled a paper on discussions so far). The lottery wants to work with LINK and members to help achieve the mainstreaming of environmental good practice in their programmes, and are recognising the limitations of geographical communities and the benefits of NGOs in helping communities. Members commended SEFF for getting better recognition of environment, and encouraged this to continue. It was agreed that we should input to their guidance and standards, though to what extent members wished to act as consultants was to be determined. Steven would set up a meeting with staff and some expertise within the membership. **Action: Steven and staff**

Wildlife & Natural Environment: The stakeholder Forum to look at the analysis of consultation responses has moved 3 times from February to May and is expected to go to Parliament after completion of the Crofting Bill, which is taking more time than expected. Members discussed the delays and what it might mean for the quality of this bill, and various tactics should the time constraints prove unworkable for a good bill. Currently the scope is viewed narrowly, not as broad as members wished for in the LINK consultation response.

Biodiversity: Lloyd reported briefly on the BTF, where members, especially Deborah were doing sterling work in the various groups set up under the SBS.

3. Current contexts and priorities

3.1 Political Strategy Report

Andy reported on the Board discussion earlier, regarding our key asks in the event of negotiations in hung parliament. These are delivery of Calman taxation measures, fiscal measures to move to a green economy, and modal shift from internal flights to rail. Andy would liaise with colleagues in sister Links to discuss joint asks and promote these when opportunity allows.



The meat of this PSR was better engagement with local councils. Board discussions on how we do this would be progressed by a sub-group with additional SOATF input. Helen reported that the SOATF will carry on and needed examples of good practice. Calum noted from discussions last year on the Marine Act that the reality is that members do need to engage at council level and reported how MCS supported effort by COAST to get maerl onto a LBAP had resulted in refusal of a fishfarm application. An 180 degree look at what councils are delivering and what ScotGov is responsible for is needed, though it's a lot of work. Aedán summarised that we need to keep our eye on SOAs, and review our thinking on it, auditing where we are at. We need to check if our 10 asks are in the 32 SOAs above or below the line, whether there are KPIs. Can they be chased up, shared and split between organisations? Susan noted that councils have a duty to report environmental information though this was not always the case (eg air quality). There is a group taking these issues forward who will report back to the network. **Action: staff and sub-group.**

3.3 Towards the 2011 elections

Andy reported that the rolling manifesto is progressing, with just 3 gap areas and 30 areas covered. This will be fine tuned and go back to TFs for approval.

Action: Andy

3.5 Congress theme for November 2010

Trustees had proposed Environment and the law as this years theme, taking a wide view of it, from implementation of legislation since Devolution, environmental crime, access to justice, regulation of pollution, and an international biodiversity perspective from Rio until the present, with an assessment of whether legislation has helped to conserve biodiversity or not, and the question of legal rights beyond humanity. Deborah, Jonny and Lloyd volunteered to take part in the steering group. It was likely that members/task forces would be approached for involvement in various aspects.

Action: Alice

4. AOB

4.1 DPF availability and bids / bidding

There was £15k available this year and task forces were encouraged to send in bids at an early stage. The form is on the website. **Action: task forces**

2.3 Outstanding actions from Jan Networking

These were to be dealt with later in the meeting, but were not covered. Staff would catch up on these for the next meeting. One item was preparation of a draft LINK definition of living within environmental limits. The action was with Tony King of SWT. Calum reported that such a definition would prove useful; in 5 years ScotGov's definitions have backslid on marine policy statements.

5. Next LINK Members' meetings

- 22 June, Networking (p.m., Perth)
- 22 June, AGM (eve, Perth)
- 13 July Advocacy training (day, Edinburgh tbc)
- 17 August, Media training (day, Edinburgh tbc)

Alice Walsh
23/4/10