

# The LINK Newsletter

The quarterly update from Scottish Environment LINK  
July 2009



## Scottish Parliament passes Sustainable Floods Act

Andrea Johnstonova, RSPB, Convenor, [LINK Freshwater Taskforce](#)

In May 2009 the Scottish Parliament passed a new piece of legislation – the [Flood Risk Management \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#). The Act establishes a framework for the sustainable management of flood risk and completely changes the way floods are managed. It is no longer only about hard flood defences, but about considering a range of options, including natural approaches, with the aim of finding the most sustainable, long-term solution.

The Act essentially deals with three things: it transposes the requirements of EC Floods Directive; updates the Scottish flood risk management framework and responsibilities, and deals with the issues of reservoirs safety and management. It designates SEPA as the competent authority for flood risk management planning and local authorities and Scottish Water as responsible authorities.

The Act was strengthened significantly through its parliamentary process, and Scottish Environment LINK was recognised as being instrumental to that process. Significant changes to the Bill were achieved at stages 2 and 3. These changes included strengthening general duties on

Scottish Ministers, SEPA and responsible authorities on achieving sustainable flood management, better provisions for the assessment and consideration of natural flood management, and stronger provisions for collaborative working between responsible authorities.

The whole Act is about sustainable management of flood risk and contains many provisions to ensure that sustainable approaches are delivered. These include provisions in the long title of the Act, strong general duty on Scottish Ministers, SEPA and responsible authorities to '*act in the best way calculated to manage flood risk in a sustainable way*', and provisions to ensure that only the most sustainable solutions are identified in flood risk management plans. The Act provides for a new type of assessment of costs and benefits of flood management measures that incorporate social, economic and environmental aspects. This is a significant development and will allow for the assessment of multiple benefits of natural flood management techniques. A big element of flood risk management planning is public

participation and consultation, which will be achieved through national and local advisory groups.

There is a strong theme throughout the Act that natural flood management is an important part of sustainable flood management. This means that restoring floodplains and wetlands, re-naturalising river corridors and breaching sea walls in coastal areas are part of flood management with potentially significant gains for wildlife and the environment. There is a built-in 'priority' for natural management in that in considering measures to manage flood risk, SEPA and local authorities must consider measures that involve natural flood management.

NGO involvement in the implementation of this Act will be of crucial importance if the potential for sustainable flood management, and in particular the role of natural flood management is to be fully recognised. It is now even more important to keep up the pressure on the Scottish Government and SEPA to fulfil these important provisions of the Act.

# Scotland's Climate Change Bill

Sam Gardner WWFS, Convenor, [LINK Climate Taskforce](#).

Wednesday 24 June marked the end of many years work to secure a strong Climate Change Bill and the start of what must be a collective effort to turn the commitments and targets into meaningful action. The [final Bill](#) passed unanimously by the Scottish Parliament represents a hugely significant step forward in the level of ambition the Scottish Government must bring to tackling climate change.

The headlines are perhaps well known but still worth repeating:

- a 42% target by 2020 and at least 80% by 2050;
- annual targets and strong parliamentary scrutiny of their achievement;
- inclusion of emissions from international aviation and shipping;
- a duty across the public sector to ensure it leads us towards a low carbon future;
- strong commitments on energy efficiency and a limit on the use of international carbon offsets.

There are also key commitments on adaptation and an overarching sustainability duty on Scottish Ministers to ensure that climate change solutions to both mitigation and adaptation are found which do not cause environmental harm. This is a Bill to be proud of; it demands commitment from Government, business and members of the public if it is to fulfil its promise.

The Bill is not short on requiring action; its successful delivery will see a transformed Scotland from the one we know today. The scale of the challenge

demands decisive delivery across all sectors, policies must be pursued in parallel rather than consecutively if we are to meet targets. The limited time we have left ourselves to tackle climate change will mean little scope for trial and error.

A plan of action is needed and the Scottish Government have set out their intentions in their [Climate Change Delivery Plan](#).

This document will serve as the forerunner to the statutory description of plans and policies to meet the first set on annual targets required by the Bill. By 2020 this plan says that emissions from heating our buildings and water must be down by at least 51%, 73% from the waste sector, 21% from rural land use and the current increase in transport emissions will have to be reversed to become a 27% reduction. In the transport sector this will mean delivering on at least the Scottish Government's current proposed targets of 100% use of alternative powered vehicles for the public sector fleet and a national target of 30% for other road users by 2020.

Highlights from other sectors include a tree planting rate of 15kha/year, at least 40% of houses with solid walls will have insulation fitted, new housing will be connected to heat networks and all off-grid properties will be using low carbon heat. The way we move about the country, the way we heat our homes and the way we manage our land will all need to change to deliver the emissions reductions needed.

Although these numbers might appear challenging and the in-

vestment they require seem daunting in the current economic climate we should not ignore the significant opportunities the Climate Change Bill presents for Scotland. We have now positioned ourselves at the forefront of a new low carbon economy. This means improving our leaky housing stock to reduce the heat losses and help pull people out of fuel poverty. It means growth in our renewables sector and in the development of new carbon storage technology and the significant employment opportunities these bring to Scotland. It means leading the way with low carbon vehicles and huge growth in active travel with all the health, community and economic benefits this delivers. We must not hesitate in our actions if we are to realise these opportunities and fulfil the now statutory requirement for Scotland to reduce its emissions by at least 80%.

## Diary - 5 December

Glasgow for a [march](#) to show world leaders gathering in Copenhagen that we want them to follow Scotland's lead to Stop Climate Chaos. See the [SCCS website](#) for updates and please help spread the word among supporters, friends and colleagues.



Virtual (and real) people represented at the SCCS rally at the Scottish Parliament, April 2009.

## LINK Marine Bill [Campaign](#)

LINK warmly [welcomed](#) the introduction of the [Marine \(Scotland\) Bill](#) to the Scottish Parliament on 30 April, calling on all MSPs to ensure it becomes a truly groundbreaking piece of legislation, delivering effective protection for Scotland's seas, shores and wildlife. MSPs across all parties attended fringe meetings or displays on the theme *Healthy Seas: Priceless* which LINK organised for the Spring party conferences, with some excellent discussions of concerns and benefits.



Lloyd Austin (RSPB), Richard Dixon (WWFS) and Alasdair Morgan MSP speaking at the SNP party conference marine fringe event, April 2009.

Following scrutiny of the Bill by Marine Taskforce (MTF) members, LINK commissioned legal analysis to inform its [written evidence](#) to the Rural Affairs and Environment Committee submitted on 5 June. The MTF considers there is much in the Bill that is encouraging, however certain provisions need to be strengthened; there is concern that there are no provisions to *improve* or *recover* the ecological status of Scottish waters outside Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and there need to be duties to further the achievement of sustainable development; deliver an ecosystem approach; prepare and adopt both national and regional marine plans; include marine ecosystem objectives in all plans; and designate MPAs to contribute to an ecologically coherent network of well-managed MPAs.

Lloyd Austin (RSPB) provided [LINK's oral evidence](#) on 10

June, and submitted [supplementary written evidence](#) that emphasised the need for sites to be designated on scientific criteria alone.

Lloyd and Calum Duncan (MCS) gave [oral evidence](#) to the Calman Commissioners on the case for legislatively devolving nature conservation from 12 to 200 nautical miles. [The findings of the Commission](#) agreed (rec 5.17), and LINK has followed up with a [letter to Jim Murphy](#), Secretary of State for Scotland and chair of the Calman Commission urging immediate action.

LINK and [Take One Action](#) jointly organised three screenings of [The End of the Line](#), a film based on the book by Charles Clover. Screenings were followed by discussions, one including the author, and were excellent opportunities to engage an informed audience.

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## More network News

[Agriculture](#) The taskforce (TF) promoted LINK's vision for sustainable agriculture through its response in June to the CAP Health Check Consultation. This followed an earlier response to questions on article 68, potentially a source of funding to agricultural systems valuable for biodiversity in addition to

funds through the Scottish Rural Development Programme. The TF continued to contribute views on the SRDP review; the unacceptability of reducing Rural Priority funds to top up the broad and shallow Land Managers' Options scheme is now more generally accepted by Government and other stakeholders. The TF meeting in

July was the last attended by Mandy Gloyer, who has moved on from RSPB to Scottish Power Renewables. We are indebted to Mandy for her major contributions to agriculture and land use policy development on LINK's behalf over the past five years.

**Planning** The Planning TF responded to the Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) consultative draft, which proposed consolidation of the current suite of around twenty individual planning documents covering various subject areas into a single, much shorter, document.

In common with many other stakeholders LINK has had serious concerns about the draft SPP which members raised at associated Scottish Government events during the consultation period which

ended in June. In LINK's view the document has been reduced at the expense of vital background information which could well lead to less effective, less consistent development and application of policy, and perversely to more delays and challenges. The exercise has resulted in a draft planning policy document so different to current documents that any sense of joint ownership and responsibility for the current policy from those who have worked to help develop it over previous years is likely to be lost.

**Meetings** A meeting for members interested in the health and environment agenda was held in May following exploratory meetings led by Helen Zealley (LINK President) with SNH and other agencies with overlapping interests. Members agreed to map what is already happening within the LINK network to take to a further meeting of all interests in the autumn.

A LINK workshop on 2 July agreed the basis of a response to the consultation on the Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill, involving mainly input from LINK's [Deer](#) and [Biodiversity](#) TFs among other areas.

The steering group taking forward LINK work on monitoring the environmental impact of Single Outcome

**Officer Bearers** John Mayhew completed his term of three years as Chair of LINK at the LINK AGM on 25 June. LINK President Helen Zealley spoke for all in her praise of his diplomatic, practical leadership, and presented him with a gift on behalf of members. John has also stood down as a trustee after many years' service.



Ian McCall (pictured right) was unanimously elected Chair. Ian has recently moved on from Ramblers Association Scotland following deep cuts to its Scottish operations. He has long experience of LINK as convener of the Freshwater working group in the 1990's; convener of LINK Access Network during the passage of Scottish Access legislation, and is a long-serving LINK trustee. He has represented Ramblers on several other LINK taskforces and working groups, and represented LINK on a range of stakeholder forums.

LINK is particularly disappointed that the draft appears to significantly downplay the role planning can play in sustainable development and fails to take the opportunity to place planning in a central role to tackle climate change. LINK also considered that the questions asked in the consultation were frustratingly narrow and included further comments as necessary in [its response](#).

Agreements met in July. LINK will identify key environmental issues applicable to promote and explore with other stakeholders.

The network meetings held in April and June were lively with good discussions on strategy, integration and evaluation of previous effort.



Vicky Junik, policy officer with the National Trust for Scotland, was elected a LINK trustee. All other serving trustees and office bearers stood and were elected for another year. Our thanks to them all for their time and energy spent for the benefit of the network.

**Staffing and Funding** LINK's Marine Taskforce is grateful to Ylva Haglund, Marine Campaigns Officer, for her excellent campaigning work over two years that helped make a strong case for the Bill to MSPs and members of the public alike, using often innovative interpretation materials and displays. We all wish Ylva well in her new post as Senior Campaigns Officer for Waste Aware Scotland.

Alan Wells, Marine Research and Policy Officer, can continue

in the post until March 2010, thanks to interim funding confirmed in June from the Tubney Charitable Trust and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland Links' work on marine issues. A further joint bid from the Links will be submitted to the Trusts to extend this valuable work until at least 2012.

LINK was pleased to receive a £44,000 grant from the Scottish Government for this year and next to support LINK's role

as an intermediary for the environmental voluntary sector.

Membership subscriptions, a key part of LINK's sustainable funding plan, which with members' endorsement has been on a planned upward curve over the past five years to form a greater portion of essential spending, were kept at 2008-09 rates to help members during the recession. Budget reductions on core expenditure were made to compensate.

**Carbon Accounting** We are pleased to report that £4,500 invested in gas heating and roof insulation in 2006 and 2007 on the Perth office - an old building rented on a 9 year lease - has already paid a full return on investment, saving

over 6 tonnes of carbon emissions and almost £2,000 in fuel bills a year. Hugh Green, LINK's Finance and Administration Officer devised a relatively simple [spreadsheet](#) to help LINK track its own carbon emissions, using the carbon

emissions reduction guidance commissioned for member bodies in 2008. Please see [LINK's carbon accounts for 2008-09](#), including the spreadsheet which anyone is welcome to use or adapt to their circumstances.

**LINK Members' Congress** The theme for the Members' Congress on 19 and 20 November in Dunblane is *Environment and Economics*. There will be a

combination of presentations and debate on Green New Deal (Andrew Simms NEF) and *Prosperity without Growth?* (Jan Bebbington SDC) with focused

group discussions to help member bodies survive, work better collaboratively and even flourish during this recession.

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## LINK Further Information

For information about reports and initiatives referred to in this newsletter please visit the [LINK home page](#) Task Force outputs are listed under 'Work Areas'.

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# News and Views from Members

The following are articles from LINK member bodies and guest contributors



## BOWL'ed over by success

*Justine Whittern, Woodland Trust Scotland*

An interim report from the Woodland Trust Scotland's *Branching Out – West Lothian* (BOWL) project lays out the successes already achieved after two years of the three-year woodland project, which covers sixteen publicly-accessible woods in the region.

Every task the Trust set itself has been either completed or is well underway. Thousands of children, teachers and adults have been involved, 6,750 new trees planted, new wildlife management plans implemented, new pathways built and others improved, and the Trust has picked up recognition from two organisations; Scotland's Finest Woodlands and the Sky Environment awards. There has been good support and encouragement from almost everyone who has heard of, or come into contact with this project.

Back in 2006, the West Lothian-based project stated its aims were to improve woods for wildlife and people. It would encourage people to visit local woods more regularly by training teachers and other community group leaders, by organising its own events and linking in to existing ones, and

by improving and extending pathways and gateways. New maps, guides and waymarked trails would be produced to enhance the experience of visitors.

Within BOWL, an officer appointed to look after the Woodland Learning Project has linked into existing local networks to design, develop and deliver the project by encouraging creative use of woodland, even going so far as training teachers to use woodland as a creative space for lessons. This has taken place in close co-ordination with the work of the Woodland Officer, thereby ensuring that conservation management tasks and work to paths and gateways has not interfered with activities taking place, and the finished works serve to properly enhance the experience of visitors.

Two of the most popular events have been the teacher training sessions and the week-long woodland discovery events for primary schools. These have supported local primary school teachers in using local woodland as an 'outdoor classroom' and challenged their perceptions of how the outdoors can

be used for teaching across the whole curriculum. For secondary school pupils, additional funding was sought to establish the Young Roots video project. Pupils worked with a professional film-maker to make a 10-minute film about their attitudes to woodland that would encourage others to visit. Again, this scheme was successful in producing advances in the learning ability of pupils, some of whom experienced a boost to their self-esteem that enabled them to enjoy applying their skills to a constructive piece of work for the first time.

With some aspects of the project exceeding targets, and all others reaching target, the project's organisers have been able to offer more training for local teachers and community group leaders than initially expected. A pack of teaching support materials developed throughout the project will soon be available to [download](#)

As we enter the final year, we can already say the project has been a success and lessons learned in West Lothian can be applied to other regions in Scotland and throughout the UK.

## Walk Homecoming 2009!

*Alison Turnbull, Promoting Walking Coordinator, Ramblers Association Scotland*

The 2009 Year of Homecoming is a tremendous opportunity to celebrate Scotland's diverse and wide ranging contributions to the world. Ramblers Scotland is helping Scots living at home, as well as those returning from abroad, to join the celebrations by encouraging them to explore their local communities and those of their ancestors on foot, throughout 2009 and beyond!

Ramblers Scotland launched the 'Walk Homecoming' campaign in March 2009 at Perth Concert Hall (pictured), to encourage local people and those returning from abroad to walk their roots. Walk Homecoming is the first step in a six year programme to ensure that Scotland is fit and active, with lots of new walking routes, by 2014, the year of the Glasgow Commonwealth Games. Ramblers Scotland intend to develop other exciting initiatives to promote walking as part of a physical activity legacy of Glasgow 2014 in the years ahead.



For 2009, 'Walk Homecoming' is initiating the development of Bronze, Silver and Gold 'medal' walking routes in and around Scottish communities with grading levels based on timing - Bronze routes will take 15 minutes, Silver routes 30 minutes and Gold routes 60 minutes. The routes will be flat, easy and circular and based around local 'walking hubs', ranging from post offices, community centres and shops to workplaces and schools, to hotels, youth hostels and tourist information centres.

The onus for developing the routes has come from local communities. A mailing to community planning partnerships, schools, workplaces, hotels, youth hostels, supermarkets, tourist bodies and Ramblers walking groups took place at the beginning of December, offering community groups, employers, walking groups and tourist businesses the opportunity to get involved

in the project. Interested parties were asked to propose any number of 'walking hubs' and to identify three routes (graded at bronze, silver and gold level) starting and finishing from each 'hub.'

Following the identification of more than 100 walking 'hubs', Ramblers Scotland, in conjunction with Local Authorities, are in the process of producing maps of routes to be displayed within community 'walking hubs.' Maps also show information about other physical activity opportunities close to the 'hubs.' Information about organisations involved in the project and their associated walking hubs will be accessible online at the Ramblers Scotland website.

If you are interested in finding out more about the project, or other Ramblers Scotland initiatives to promote walking in Scotland as part of a physical activity legacy from the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, please contact [Alison Turnbull](#), Promoting Walking Coordinator at Ramblers Scotland, tel: 01577 867746. It is hoped to advertise and appoint a project officer in August to take forward the Walk Homecoming 2009 work over the next 12 months.



## Scottish Government 'walking the talk'

Jenny Mollison, Scottish Allotments & Gardens Society

Guest speakers at SAGS annual conference in June included Roseanna Cunningham, Minister for the Environment, Dr Charles Winstanley, Chair Lothian Health Board, Maf Smith from the Sustainable Development Commission, and speakers from Transition Towns and local authorities. There were fascinating tales from new allotment groups round the country. We were pleased with a record turnout at this event.



Roseanna Cunningham (pictured with SAGS committee members Judy Wilkinson (right) and Barbara De La Rue)

acknowledged the benefits of growing your own food and the rising interest in allotments. Our priority is land for allotments and a number of public bodies, such as the NHS, Forestry Commission Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage have already been asked to identify land that can be made available to local authorities for community gardening and allotments. Then she said *"For Scottish Government – we want to walk the talk and demonstrate to others how easy it is to grow your own food – which is why my officials are in discussions with colleagues in Victoria Quay to investigate how we can change the current land use of some of the building's surrounding grounds for allotments."* SAGS are excited about this - it would be a wonderful exemplar.

More councils are writing allotment strategies which are

the first step along the road to finding land to meet the demand. NHS Lothian is looking at its surplus land but with the prospect of hospitals being re-developed, provision of allotments on NHS land are unlikely to benefit from long leases.

The Minister tied collaboration with CoSLA into the 'grow your own' strand in the Food and Drink Policy stating that *"From a strategic perspective this means revisiting the CoSLA guidance – widening its scope to highlight to communities, public bodies and local authorities the different approaches that can be taken to establish and support grow your own."*

SAGS intend to keep the pressure up in all these areas – watch this space.





## New Bigger Adopt-a-Monument Scheme

*Phil Richardson, Project Development Officer, Archaeology Scotland*

Since 2006 Archaeology Scotland has been running the Adopt-a-Monument (AaM) Scheme which aimed to make Scotland's past accessible and enjoyable for everyone. The aim was to help communities to care for the heritage that belongs to us all.

Many archaeological sites and monuments across Scotland are in need of care and maintenance but few have owners with the resources to make this happen. Equally, there are people who wish to step in to do something to help protect these monuments for the future and to increase our understanding of them. Adopt-a-Monument provided the means by which monuments and communities were brought together. Due to the success of the original AaM Scheme Archaeology Scotland is now in the planning stages of a new bigger AaM Scheme which aims to build on our experience and

plans to spend the next five years supporting a larger, more varied, number of community projects.



*Adopt-a-Monument group at Sandwick, Unst, Shetland*

The new scheme will support communities, as it did between 2006 and 2009, to deliver projects which conserve, enhance, interpret and make accessible local sites and monuments with an emphasis upon participant-led stewardship of the historic environment. The field for support will expand to support as wide a range of community projects as possible, covering anything which bears testament to Scotland's rich history, and

to accommodate the high level of demand for graveyard recording, conservation, and management projects. The scheme will develop a communications strategy that reaches out to as large an audience as possible, including disadvantaged groups and schools. Whether a community group wishes to improve access, condition, or the interpretation of a site, or simply to raise awareness of its importance, the new AaM Scheme will provide the professional advice and hands on assistance needed to make it happen.

Over the next few months I will be further developing the project plan and consulting widely in order to deliver an exciting new scheme that meets the needs of the communities it aims to support. Find out more at [the website](#), by calling 0845 872 3333 or by [emailing](#) me.

[Paths for All](#) is the national charity promoting walking for health and the development of multi-use paths in Scotland. Our vision is '*Paths for people ... a happier, healthier, greener, more active Scotland*'. Our strategic priorities are to reduce the proportion of the population who are inactive, through the delivery of a national walking programme; and to increase the number, quality, accessibility and multi-use of paths.

There is a growing body of evidence which shows that improvements in our physical environment encourage people to be more active and therefore to be healthier. This is important news for organisations interested in the environment and paths, such as Paths for All and LINK member bodies!

The recent review of Scotland's Physical Activity Strategy '[Let's make Scotland More Active](#)' recognised that 'the creation and provision of environments that encourage and support physical activity offers the greatest potential to get the nation active'.

Many major organisations are now engaged on this, for example:

Scottish Physical Activity Research Collaboration ([SPARCo](#)) report cites 'facilities for walking and cycling have repeatedly been shown to be important for an active lifestyle, and the easier they are to get to the better the impact on health' (2008).

[National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence \(NICE\)](#) guidance '[Physical Activity and](#)

[the Environment](#)' (2008) offers the first national, evidence-based recommendations on how to improve the physical environment to encourage physical activity. It has a lot to say about improved facilities for walking and cycling.

[Policy and Action for Cancer Prevention](#) by The World Cancer Research Fund and American Institute for Cancer Research (2008) recommends widespread dedicated walking and cycling facilities throughout built and external environments.

In conclusion, there is an increasing recognition of the importance of investing in quality environments, including paths, and promoting their use, as a means of contributing to the health and well-being of the people of Scotland.

Please see also the [Physical Activity and Health Alliance](#) website further background.

