

# The LINK Newsletter

The quarterly update from Scottish Environment LINK  
Spring 2008



## Climate consultation responses

More than 21,000 supporters of [Stop Climate Chaos Scotland](#) responded to the Scottish Government's Climate Change Bill Consultation, calling for tough measures and strong political leadership.

All responses sent via the coalition made three key demands: a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of at least 80% by 2050; a statutory annual reduction target of at least 3% and the inclusion of emissions from aviation and shipping.

15,000 emailed their responses through the websites of SCCS member organisations such as FoES, RSPB Scotland, Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund, Tearfund, UNISON, World Development Movement, Woodland Trust and WWF Scotland. A further 6,000 engaged through postcard campaigns and letter writing. Around 9,000 responses were sent from within Scotland, and 12,000 were international.

Mike Robinson, chair of SCCS commented that the unprecedented level of engagement demonstrates beyond any doubt that climate change is an issue Scots care passionately about. The large number of responses from outside Scotland shows that the international community are looking for Scotland to take a lead. SCCS supporters welcomed the Government's commitment to an 80% reduction in Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, but they know that in order to meet the long-term target it is essential that we also see statutory annual reductions of at least 3%. If that annual target is not enshrined in law, it will be a disappointing departure from the SNP manifesto commitment.

He concluded: "There has also been a clear signal from members of the public that they would like to see emissions from aviation and shipping included in the targets. To exclude the fastest growing source of emissions makes no

sense, and completely undermines the stated purpose of the Bill. I am very hopeful that in the face of such enormous pressure, the Scottish Government will be prepared to re-think their stance on this issue."

LINK's brief [response to the consultation](#) supported SCCS key demands and elaborated on some of the environmental issues the Bill should address. A key point is a sustainable approach to tackling climate change. The Bill should contain a duty on all public bodies to deliver climate change reductions in a sustainable manner in line with the Scottish target. Reducing emissions needs to be set within a legislative framework which encourages a sustainable approach with demand reduction and efficiency at the top of the decision making hierarchy. This means delivering energy conservation along with renewables without environmental harm, and reducing waste and encouraging recycling. It means greater support for walking, cycling and public transport rather than expanding airports and roads. It also means finding ways to manage our land to provide multiple public benefits, including attractive landscapes and natural habitats, improved local economies and quality of life.

A sustainable approach will also avoid environmental conflict when considering the most appropriate ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or adapting to climate change. We and future generations depend on a healthy environment and there is no point seeking opportunistic ways of addressing climate change which threaten biodiversity, landscapes or our cultural heritage. Our natural environment if managed sustainably can help in reducing emissions and providing the means to deal with a changing climate. The ministerial foreword to the consultation document recognises the need for sustainability to be at the heart of all policies, including climate change but this is not reflected in the legislative proposals. LINK considers it is vital that such a strong legislative framework document should include a clear

steer that climate change should be tackled in a sustainable manner.

The other main issue is that species and habitats important to Scotland are vulnerable to climate change because many are in a damaged condition and exist in a fragmented landscape, threatening their continued survival and depriving them of the ability to shift to more suitable climates. The Bill should contain a duty on Ministers to report on the impacts of climate change and to prepare an adaptation strategy with reports to Parliament on progress against the adaptation strategy's objectives. See the full response on the LINK website.

### **LINK climate actions**

Following the Members' Congress last November LINK commissioned guidance for its members on best practice across their operations. LINK has updated all its climate related positions following a meeting of task forces in the winter; once the membership has signed off the document, it will be edited for wider communication. We are grateful to the Craignish Trust for supporting both of these strands of work.

Since December's *Making it Easy* workshop, co-hosted with the Scottish Government, where over 40 participants from business, NGOs and agencies enthusiastically supported moves towards a more structured, coordinated approach to effectively communicate climate related messages to the public, LINK commissioned Michael Scott to audit the contribution member bodies' current and planned activities can make towards the climate challenge. LINK is in dialogue with government and other sectors about an appropriate enabling framework required to make the necessary changes in all our lifestyles. Lloyd Austin and Mike Robinson, LINK trustees, have been proposed as our nominees to the Climate Challenge Fund grants panel.

### **Future of food**

LINK welcomed the discussion paper *Choosing the right ingredients: the future of food in Scotland* hoping that this timely discussion will be followed up by development of a sustainable food policy for Scotland encompassing all aspects of food production, processing, manufacturing and consumption. [LINK's response](#), coordinated by the Agriculture task force, focussed on the environmental aspects of such a policy. Pressures on land, nationally and globally, demonstrate the need to take biodiversity, landscape and the wider environment into account at an early stage.

LINK considers that the Scottish Government should review cross-compliance requirements to provide clear and enforceable baseline requirements attached to the payment of £450m annual public funding. A national conversation about the objectives of public subsidies to agricultural producers should be a central part of developing a national food policy. Government could work with the food sector to develop meaningful production standards alongside welfare standards, for example on biodiversity impacts and climate emissions. Transparent and accountable environmental criteria within quality assurance schemes for farmed produce would be beneficial, and the same standards applied to imported commodities as to Scottish produce. Moving investment from intensive meat and dairy to seasonal fruit and vegetable production and processing would help the national diet and greenhouse gas emissions.

LINK would like to see SEPA and SNH as well as Scottish government departments involved in developing a policy, and LINK too is keen to be involved.

# News and Views from Members

The next four pages contain articles from LINK member bodies and guest contributors

## **Sustainable Development Education – So what is it exactly?**

*Morag Watson – Chair, [SDE Network](#)*

You can be certain that in any debate about sustainable development sooner or later someone will say “we need to get this into schools so the children are learning it!” The strange thing is that it’s already there. SDE is part of the requirements for teacher training, it is in the new curriculum and it is part of the school inspection process.

The SDE movement doesn’t stop with schools either. Over the last twelve months the Scottish Further Education Unit (the umbrella body for Scottish colleges) launch a [project to embed SDE in the college curriculum](#) and Universities Scotland announced that they will be undertaking an audit of SDE in the curricula of Scotland’s universities. In the education sector SDE is, without a doubt, inching, and in some places striding, its way up the agenda, mostly due to the efforts of the SDE Network and the [IDEAS Forum](#).

However there is one rather large fly in the ointment. Although more and more people may be talking about SDE, what they understand SDE to mean is a far knottier issue. It is due to the widely varying interpretations of SDE that for the last six months the SDE Network has been trying to pull together a consensus definition of what SDE is. So after six months of hard work, here is what the SDE Network and the IDEAS Forum members understand SDE to be.

“Sustainable Development Education is the process of acquiring the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to build local and global societies that are just, equitable and living within the environmental limits of our planet, both now and in the future.”

The full definition, including details of exactly what knowledge, skills and attitudes we are talking about can be found on the SDE Network website under [‘What is SDE?’](#). So where would we be if SDE was fully embedded in the education system?

Currently the education system is based on the following attitudes...

- a strong, growing economy is the most important thing as it is the way our standard of living is maintained
- society must be shaped to meet the needs of the economy
- by acquiring the skills the economy requires, I will be able to have a good standard of living
- my perception of how many resources I can use to maintain my standard of living is governed by how much I earn

But it would become one that is based on the attitudes of...

- the Earth’s living systems are the most important thing as it is the way our wellbeing is maintained
- society must be shaped to keep the Earth’s living systems strong and vibrant
- by acquiring the skills to meet my needs
- without exceeding the limits of the Earth or society, I can ensure my and others wellbeing
- my perception of how many resources I can use to maintain my wellbeing is governed by my understanding of environmental limits and the equitable sharing of the Earth’s resources

So far in the education sector, as in much of the rest of the sustainable development movement, we have come a long way in building up peoples’ knowledge of sustainable development, we’ve also made inroads on the skills front, but attitudes? We still have a lot of work to do.

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## **Bumblebees – forgotten heroines?**

*Bob Dawson, [Bumblebee Conservation Trust](#)*

Bumblebees are vital pollinators of crops and wild flowers, but worryingly they are in decline. Queen bumblebees emerge in spring to found new nests, sending successive batches of daughters out to forage for nectar (fuel for the colony) and pollen (protein-rich food for

developing larvae). Males are produced in summer, but do little work in the nest, instead spending their time drinking nectar and occasionally looking for a mate. Bumblebees are familiar, benign and approachable insects, and although they hardly ever sting, should be treated with respect.

There are twelve species of social bumblebee in Scotland. Six are relatively common, and two of these have extended their range northwards. Of the others, three are UK BAP Priority species, the great yellow bumblebee *Bombus*



*distinguendus* (pictured, photo Dave Goulson) having been joined recently by the red-shanked carder bee *B. ruderarius* (restricted to Coll and Tiree) and the moss carder bee *B. muscorum*.

The remaining species have all suffered declines, with Scotland being the stronghold for all three: the blaeberry, broken-belted and

heath bumblebees.

The [Bumblebee Conservation Trust](#) was created in 2006 in response to concerns regarding the declines of many bumblebee species. In Scotland, the great yellow bumblebee was formerly widespread but is now restricted to machair and flower-rich habitats in north and west Scotland. A viable bumblebee population may require 10km<sup>2</sup> of flower rich habitat, so a landscape approach is needed to support rare bumblebees. It is the invaluable contribution that individual crofters, farmers and land managers can make which will be crucial, as nature reserves in isolation are not the solution.

What we have achieved so far:

- we inspired widespread media coverage of bumblebee declines that has generated interest and awareness
- we have recruited 2000 members that share our concerns and support our work
- we continue to promote bumblebee-friendly gardening
- 20 acres have been leased from the RSPB Vane Farm Reserve and sown with

wild flower seeds. The choice of plants ensures continuity of pollen and nectar throughout the bumblebee season

- education packs have been prepared by the Trust and offered to all primary schools in Scotland. These have been very successful and a fabulous way for children to learn more about the environment
- we have launched the hugely popular [BeeWatch](#) project that encourages everyone to send in their bumblebee sightings and provides help with identification

For more information, contact [Bob Dawson](#), Scottish Conservation Officer, Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Tel 01786 467818.

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### Protection Through Promotion

Neil Ramsay, [Scotways](#)

Last year the Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society were successful in securing funds, from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Scottish Natural Heritage, for the Heritage Paths Project and in December Neil Ramsay was employed as its project officer. The project will identify as many old paths around Scotland as possible, research and then promote them through publication in a book and a website, developing and disseminating a schools programme, signposting appropriate paths and organising events and activities about the paths.

A heritage path is defined as having been used in the past for some specific purpose rather than an artificial 'heritage trail' that passes older sites. Examples of heritage paths are coffin roads, smuggler's paths, military roads and pilgrimage routes among many other types. We have also learned of a number of unique paths such as the Yankee Road, built by the US Navy to transport oil or Calum's Road, which was built by one man in the 1960s to attract visitors to Raasay.

Through this project we hope that people will access the outdoors and have a richer experience and will be inspired to value their historic environment more. If people are better informed of their historic environment then perhaps increasingly rare coffin rests will no longer be robbed, dirt bikes will stop tearing up Roman roads and developers will make

concessions to these historic and often beautifully engineered roads.



Dere Street, part of Roman road near Crailinghall, Borders.  
Photo Richard Warren.

It is hoped that a significant number of people will engage with this project and contribute to it and so if anyone knows of a heritage path and would like it promoted then please contact [Neil Ramsay](#) or tel: 0131 558 7123 or by post at 24 Annandale Street, Edinburgh, EH7 4AN. Equally if anyone would like more details or has any questions then he would be happy to answer them.

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### Scotland's Cool Seas

Anne Saunders, [Marine Conservation Society](#)

Anne Saunders has recently taken up the new post of MCS Scottish Projects Officer, with a focus on public involvement with the marine environment. Scotland has a fantastic marine environment, with its great scenery and beaches, and thousands of people enjoying trips to the coast every year. MCS aims to raise the profile of our rich marine natural heritage, the threats it faces and how people can get involved in MCS conservation projects.

### Scotland's Cool Seas

On 18 April MCS launched a new outreach project, Cool Seas Scotland, to raise awareness of our amazing sea life among communities and families throughout Scotland, even if they don't live by the sea. Anne will be available to do events, talks and workshops, and a list of all events can be found on the Scotland pages of [www.mcsuk.org](http://www.mcsuk.org). Two new leaflets and a children's activity book have been produced, as

well as banner displays and the [Cool Seas website](#). A Scottish Seashore Guide is also being developed.

The following initiatives are all part of Cool Seas Scotland, and all have a focus on public involvement and enjoyment.

### Gentle Giants

[Basking sharks](#) (*Cetorhinus maximus*) migrate into UK waters during summer months to feed on the abundant plankton found here. They can be seen anywhere around the UK, but mainly in the west due to the larger volumes of plankton present. They are generally only seen in surface waters whilst they feed, and are harmless to humans.

Little is understood about the distribution, population size, and biology of this species. What is known raises concerns, and the species is listed as endangered in the north-east Atlantic. The more knowledge we gain, the more that can be done to protect this species. Therefore, sightings from members of the public are vital.

MCS promotes public involvement and collects sightings, resulting in the UK's largest database on basking shark ecology. Information gathered has led to successful MCS campaigns to provide basking sharks with full protection under UK law.

### Ocean Wanderers and Mysterious Creatures

As well as sharks being found in UK waters, it is perhaps even more surprising to know that there are also turtles! Five out of seven of the world's marine turtles have been recorded in UK waters. Of these, the most commonly found is the leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*).

The leatherback is the largest of the marine turtles and is named after the black, leathery skin covering its shell. Leatherbacks migrate to the UK during summer, to feed on the abundant jellyfish found here. Like basking sharks, these turtles can be seen anywhere round the UK coast, but are usually found in the west.

Leatherbacks are critically endangered. Nesting females are often killed for their meat and eggs. At sea, leatherbacks are vulnerable to entanglement in fishing gear. Trade in all species of marine turtles and their parts is

currently banned under CITES, but some illegal trade continues to endanger these species.

As well as sightings of turtles, MCS is asking the public for sightings of turtles' prey: jellyfish. Increased knowledge of the abundance and distribution of jellyfish will provide valuable information on the distribution and movements of turtles, and will contribute to their conservation in the UK and globally. [Report your sightings](#) of turtles, and jellyfish strandings on beaches or swarms at sea. It is also useful to know when no jellyfish have been seen during trips at sea or to the beach.

### Beach Potential

Beach litter is a big problem in the UK, and Scotland has its fair share. One shocking example was over 8,000 cotton bud sticks recorded on just one Clyde beach during the MCS Beachwatch 2007 survey. The [Beachwatch 2007 Report](#) has just been launched.

By taking part in the MCS [beach litter project](#), [Adopt-a-Beach](#), or the annual [Beachwatch survey](#), local communities can help turn the tide on litter. The project involves cleaning your local beach and recording the litter found. MCS then uses this information to lobby government and industry, to stop the litter before it reaches our seas and beaches.

By increasing the number of beaches involved in Adopt-a-Beach and Beachwatch, it is hoped that the wider public will be inspired to take their litter home rather than leaving it on the beach after a day out and stop flushing their sanitary waste down the toilet.



Launch of Cool Seas Scotland, Largs, April 08. Photo MCS.

### Get Involved!

Through the Cool Seas Scotland project, MCS aims to raise awareness of marine issues, and increase public involvement in tackling the problems the marine environment faces. Taking part in the project should also be about enjoyment and it will show you there is more to a day at the seaside than just building sandcastles!

For further information on the Cool Seas Scotland project or about volunteering for MCS, or if you would like MCS to attend an event you are holding, please contact [Anne](#) in the MCS Scottish Office, tel: 0131 226 2391.

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### Scottish Allotments Conference

The Annual Scottish Allotments Conference, organised by the Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society, will be held in the Victoria Halls, Dunblane (next to the railway station) on Saturday 21 June 2008 from 10 am to 4 pm. It is free of charge with a donation for lunch.

The theme of this year's conference is **21st Century Allotments - Vision and Action**. The morning session will be chaired by Aileen Campbell MSP with a report from Dr Richard Wiltshire, co-author of 'Growing in the Community' the Local Government Association (England & Wales) guide to managing allotments, an input on insurance and health and safety issues followed by a panel question session on 'Local authorities and plot-holders, responsibilities and needs'.

The afternoon session will be chaired by Robin Harper MSP with reports from allotment holders across Scotland followed by workshops led by those with first-hand experience on practical facilities, surrounds and standards; inclusion; retaining and supporting new plot-holders; and organic methods of pest and weed control. Further details are on the [SAGS website](#).

## LINK news

**Liaison meetings** John Mayhew, LINK Chair, led two LINK delegations to meet the Environment Minister for regular quarterly liaison on 27 February and 7 May. February's agenda focussed on climate change issues, involving Stewart Stevenson, Minister for Transport, Infrastructure & Climate Change and Jim Mather, Minister for Energy, Enterprise & Tourism, with Environment Minister Michael Russell. LINK outlined support of the SCCS key demands emphasising our particular focus on sustainability safeguards to ensure environmental assets are not damaged. LINK asked about progress in developing an energy strategy for Scotland and opportunity for engagement in that process.

May's meeting with Michael Russell discussed funding issues on the implications of Single Outcome Agreements with local authorities, the planning review of SNH, and more. Concerns included funding for sustainable flood management measures; for maintaining ranger services; for management of National Scenic Areas; for care of upland paths outwith designated areas, and the more general reduction of statutory support and grant funding for biodiversity conservation and enhancement in recent years, particularly with the 2010 targets to be met. On the latter, the Minister emphasised local decision making powers though suggested we draw individual cases for concern to his attention.

Deer management was also discussed, including maintaining the momentum of the work of the Deer Commission Scotland during its merger with SNH, and the need for new deer legislation for 2010.

The agenda covered marine issues including the links between the UK and Scottish legislation. The Minister offered a further meeting to discuss the issues around extension of the 200nm limit, which LINK supports on conservation grounds, in more detail.

Several LINK task force convenors and trustees met CoSLA staff in March where contributions from LINK members and task forces were invited for CoSLA's various Executive and Task groups. Flooding, landscape and planning were identified as common issues, and further ideas are welcomed.

**Party Conferences** Parliamentary officer Eilidh Macpherson, marine campaign officer Ylva Haglund, and LINK members manned the LINK stand at the Labour, LibDems and SNP spring conferences, and will be attending the Conservative conference later in May. The stand featured displays on marine and landscape issues, as well as the usual briefings and information materials from LINK task forces. Fringe events on marine were organised for the SNP and LibDem conferences which usefully raised awareness of LINK's key demands from the legislation.

The parliamentary office is organising a one-day training session for member bodies, involving parliamentary researchers, on 28 July in Edinburgh. Details will be circulated to member bodies shortly or contact [Eilidh](#) for further information.

**AGM** LINK's 21st AGM will be held on 26 June in Perth from 5 to 7 pm, and will include a presentation on diversity training from Taja Sidhu of the Black Environment Network. Perth Rangers have offered to host an afternoon's walk for members who are not otherwise involved in the Board and Task Force Convenors meetings on the same day. Please contact [Alice Walsh](#) at LINK's Perth office for further details.

**Marine** The draft UK Marine Bill was published in April. Drawing on further funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and the Tubney Trust LINK has commissioned an environmental lawyer to analyse it from a Scottish perspective. A key aim of the task force is for the UK Bill and the Scottish Bill to be well integrated to deliver maximum gains for healthy seas.

The consultation on the Scottish Marine Bill is expected in July, ending in October. Members are developing a campaign leaflet to include a pledge in support of the LINK asks for the Scottish Marine Bill. It will be distributed via member bodies and partner outlets and during events held over the summer. A matching e-action will be available from the website [savescottishseas.org](http://savescottishseas.org). Please contact [Ylva](#) if you can help get the leaflet out to supporters through events, talks, mailouts, or links from your website.

**Freshwater** LINK welcomed government's commitment to sustainable flood management with the introduction of a Flooding Bill (June) as an opportunity to make progress towards a more sustainable modern approach to flood management, benefitting people and the economy, biodiversity and the wider environment. LINK considers the Bill should address the following key areas:

- review, streamline and amend the existing legislation that contradicts the aims of sustainable flood management
- establish strong decision making structures to address flooding, nationally and regionally, that run in parallel with structures established by the Water Framework Directive
- clarify and strengthen the responsibilities for flood management and ensure better co-ordination between 'responsible' authorities
- transpose the requirements of the EU Directive on the Management of Flood Risk with active public involvement;
- ensure fairness and transparency in decision-making
- introduce duty on responsible authorities to integrate decision making processes and funding streams that have relevance to flooding

The TF also responded to SEPA's consultation on the draft Significant Water Management Issues reports for the Scotland river basin district; an important opportunity to provide information that will help shape the draft River Basin Management Plans. The TF welcomed progress and made a number of additional comments relating to:

- what is 'significant' and the relationship between SWMIs and the first RBMP
- issues relating to climate change
- agricultural and forestry land drainage impacts on ecological status
- the effectiveness of some existing measures
- further measures to deal with diffuse pollution from agriculture, morphological impacts and the use of new technologies
- restoration of the water environment

**Funding** LINK is delighted that the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation confirmed its support of LINK's core work until 2011. The grant of £25,000 annually helps underpin the sustainability of our core operations, also funded by subscriptions, grants from SNH and the Scottish Government.

### Further Information

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

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