

The LINK Newsletter

The quarterly update from Scottish Environment LINK
November 2008



LINK

A Greener Scotland — on track?

Fifty LINK members and guests gathered in Birnam on 30 October to explore how far we are on track to a Greener Scotland and to examine how we are measuring progress towards that objective.

LINK's vision, set out in [Scotland 2011: LINK's Challenge to the New Scottish Government](#) (2007), suggests what this Government should do to move Scotland towards environmental sustainability. Participants were keen to explore further how Government's central purpose of creating a more successful

Mark Ballard (Communications Manager, SCVO) noted the similarities between the previous and the current administrations' priorities. Recalling his experience as an MSP on the Finance Committee he questioned whether having priorities actually made any difference: the test was whether

Dr Rebekah Widdowfield (Head of Analytical Services, Environment & Rural Affairs Directorate, Scottish Government) explained how the [National Performance Framework](#) (NPF) and its indicators had been set up and how these management tools are beginning to affect how the government goes about its business. She considered the NPF a useful mechanism for a

country where all of Scotland can flourish through increasing sustainable economic growth is affecting the ambition for a Greener Scotland.

David Lee, a senior editor of The Scotsman gave some context of where 'greener' sits among the other strategic objectives (wealthier and fairer, smarter, safer & stronger and healthier) from his eight years' experience with the newspaper. He considered green issues have moved into the mainstream with an increasingly

government related its spending to its targets. Discussing the range of [indicators](#) Government is using, though some are better than others, he felt there was definite progress in the shift of emphasis now from processes to outcomes. He saw a massive opportunity for the voluntary sector to be ready

cross-cutting approach, increasingly providing a frame of reference for local government and all public bodies, including civic society. Its value is only starting to become apparent and it is still being developed. In practice it has led to better cooperation across the Scottish Government directorates, with a reduction in the 'silo' approach to issues.

sophisticated understanding within the editorial team, partly driven by readers' demand for more and better coverage. Conceding that the economy will always be the overriding concern of the paper, he felt that the financial crisis meant everything was now up for grabs. It is up to NGOs to badger the media to question where we are going as a society, and to hold it to account for better joined-up thinking.

with our own targets, to get our issues on the agenda and into the planning structures. He felt the voluntary sector needed to find better ways to relate to government. He pointed to New Zealand, with its cross-cutting zero waste policy, as a useful example of a comparable small country.

She described the [Scotland Performs website](#), which is kept regularly updated. She noted that a wider evaluation framework is needed to understand why indicators perform as they do and to understand the effect of government activity. She finished with an invitation to the third sector for engagement with the Strategy and Performance Unit.

Discussion explored the meaning of 'sustainable economic growth' with a recognition that whilst economic stability was what people wanted, Gross Domestic Product, though not on its own a useful measure of progress, is still by far the most influential.

Participants felt that though the financial crisis may be both opportunity and

threat for environmental concerns, with climate change and peak oil crises on the horizon, the role of NGOs in speaking up for the public interest on the environment was vital.

LINK is grateful to the speakers for their contributions and to Perth & Kinross Council for a grant towards the cost of hosting the event.



LINK Presidents, a celebration

A reception to celebrate the election of Helen Zealley OBE to the LINK Presidency was held during the Congress. LINK's Chair John Mayhew formally welcomed Helen who has a distinguished career in the public health sector and has long been a champion of the interlink between human health and environment.

The gathering raised a glass in memory of Fred Edwards, who had worked

tirelessly as LINK President to help our sector work well with others, to spread the message that the environment is the context in which human endeavour operates, and that the climate crisis is a result of unsustainable development. Helen read a poem, written by a close friend shortly before Fred's death, in appreciation of his tremendous gift to inspire others to care more,

and so do more, to bring about a better world.



Scottish Marine Bill Campaign

LINK's marine campaign moved into a new phase once the consultation on the Scottish marine bill came out in June. The campaign included stalls at thirty events, festivals and fairs, many organised by member bodies. Campaign leaflets were distributed, enabling supporters to sign a pledge for a marine bill with the environment at its heart, and there was a matching e-action. Three seminars on the consultation were held for MSPs and stakeholders at the

Parliament in September which provoked some useful discussions.

4,731 signatures were collected in support of the campaign. Most of these were presented to Cabinet Secretary Richard Lochhead on 2 October. Marine task force members attended the autumn party conferences, continuing the advocacy for a strong Scottish Marine Bill with the environment at its heart.

For news, briefings and updates, and responses to

both the UK and Scottish marine bill consultations please go to

www.savescottishseas.org



LINK Climate Statement

In preparation for Scotland's Climate Bill LINK produced [Time to act on climate change; a clarion call from Scotland's environment movement](#), a statement of policy recommendations. Condensing the consensus developed amongst member bodies, it aims to be a clear, comprehensive, accessible resource for all interests.

LINK calls for the transition to a low carbon economy to be seen as an

opportunity to achieve a sustainable economy which delivers a high quality of life. The policy changes advocated promote sustainable ways of delivering climate change action, which safeguard the environment as well as delivering other benefits. As the SNH commissioned report *Valuing our Environment* shows, sustainable use of the environment underpins the economy by £17.2 billion a year, which is more than a

tenth of the country's economic output. Currently there are too many examples, eg on transport, where investment in new infrastructure undermines efforts to reduce emissions. There is no point saving the planet if we destroy the natural environment's ability to be our life support system in the process. LINK is grateful to the Craignish Trust for a grant to produce this publication.

Agriculture Task Force

The task force responded to the consultation on the CAP Health Check in September and set out LINK's vision in the document [Beyond the CAP, Towards a Sustainable Land Use Policy that works for Scotland](#). LINK argues that Scotland should be calling for radical reform beyond the limited 'Health Check' of the CAP. Scotland is fortunate to have enough natural heritage and natural resources left to allow us to become

environmental leaders, and is well placed to benefit if funds were divided on the basis of the environmental goods that a country's land management delivered; the biodiversity, landscape, access, and all the ecosystem services that sustainably managed soils, air and water provide.

Retargeting funds towards public goods would give land managers more choice about their farming methods and could extensify farming in some areas, while

continuing highly productive farming for market rewards in others. The public would gain from more funding to Scotland and a reduction in costs of clearing up environmental problems from better directed subsidies.

LINK's priorities were discussed at the November meeting with the Environment Minister. There was some consensus with Government's findings, which will be pursued further in the relevant stakeholder forums.

Freshwater Task Force

The tf welcomed the open and transparent approach of the Scottish Government in its drafting of the Flood Risk Management Bill. LINK has been engaged as an active member of the Flooding Bill Advisory group. LINK believes the Bill is a major opportunity for more sustainable approaches to flood risk - a big issue in Scotland and likely to increase due to climate change. LINK believes the Bill could be strengthened in a number of key areas, as set out in the new publication *Flood Risk Management*

(Scotland) Bill: A Vital Step for Scotland.

Three key principles need to be at the heart of the Bill. It should set out clear intentions to deliver sustainable flood risk management so there must be provision for this. It should get the best out of nature by promoting natural flood risk management supported by the production of 'opportunities maps' at both national and local scale. Not least it must ensure delivery on the ground by setting out clear duties for Local Authorities and other responsible authorities. Some

of these points were explored with the Environment Minister in November (see below).

In addition to its response to the consultation the tf has produced several [briefings](#) on the Bill, [written evidence](#) to the Rural Affairs and Environment Committee for stage 1 of the Bill, a submission to the Finance Committee, and commissioned a report, [The Way Forward for Natural Flood Management in Scotland](#) which looks at what can be learned from past studies and experience. These are all available on the [flooding pages](#) of the website.

Links Devolution seminar

The Links in the UK countries held a two-day seminar in Birmingham in October on the practicalities of working well together post devolution. This

followed a valuable seminar held two years ago. Relationships between the Link secretariats and task forces continue to be strong, with ongoing work on marine,

agriculture, biodiversity and freshwater. Thanks to WWF UK for funding towards the costs of maintaining good liaison.

Ministerial meeting

LINK's regular liaison meeting with the Environment Minister and civil servants was held on 11 November. On climate, LINK welcomed the inclusion of aviation and shipping in the Bill. Members have concerns about the Climate Challenge Fund criteria which exclude 'communities of interest', although the role of environmental NGOs is seen as important in preparing the

groundwork for geographical communities. Government undertook to review how this role was recognised.

LINK's wish to see a duty for implementation in the Flooding Bill was discussed in the light of the catchment-based approach required across local government boundaries and the many competing claims on local government resources. LINK considers there is a real

danger that funding pressures, already limiting essential environmental work, will get worse, so other funding streams should be explored. The Minister acknowledged that funding is potentially an issue, though felt that flooding will remain a priority for local government, and there is provision for Government oversight if required.

Liaison

John Mayhew led a LINK delegation to meet Cllr. Alison Hay and CoSLA colleagues in October, where funding for environmental measures within Single Outcome Agreements was discussed. CoSLA advised NGOs to show where their interests will help

local authorities attain national indicators. CoSLA's support for the Stop Climate Chaos asks of the Bill was noted, though any new duties coming from the Bill would require funding.

Discussion also covered waste, where CoSLA is

pressing Scottish and UK governments to do more on reduction. CoSLA felt more work was needed to encourage sustainable procurement as there was a conflict with the system for e-procurement, which is about saving money.

Corporate Strategy

Preparation for LINK's 2009-12 strategy started in July with consultant Bruce Britton seeking views from members

and key stakeholders. Findings indicate a 'steady as she goes' approach, with no major step changes, and a

high level of satisfaction from respondents.

Planning, communications and staff

The annual work planning meeting was held on 31 October, the second day of Congress, to discuss where joint effort and resources will be needed next year. This will contribute to LINK's 2009-10 Operating Plan.

Members contributed to a review of internal communications, resulting in improvements to some

services and a planned overhaul of the website. Subscribers can now sign up for LINK's weekly parliamentary monitoring service for an additional subscription. Please see the website for details.

Jane Herbstritt and Eilidh Macpherson, who was in post for Jane's maternity leave, have both moved on

from LINK. Our thanks to both for their excellent work and all best wishes for the future. A new officer will be appointed shortly.

Francoise van Buuren, LINK trustee, has moved abroad, and was thanked by the Board at its October meeting for her contribution over the past two years.

Scottish Environment Week This is in the Parliament's diary for the week beginning 23 February. Programme details will be posted on the [website](#) during January.

News and Views from Members

The following are articles from LINK member bodies and guest contributors

Natural Change

Jules Weston, Natural Change Project Manager, WWF Scotland



"People do not resist change; they resist having change imposed on them."

Fritjof Capra

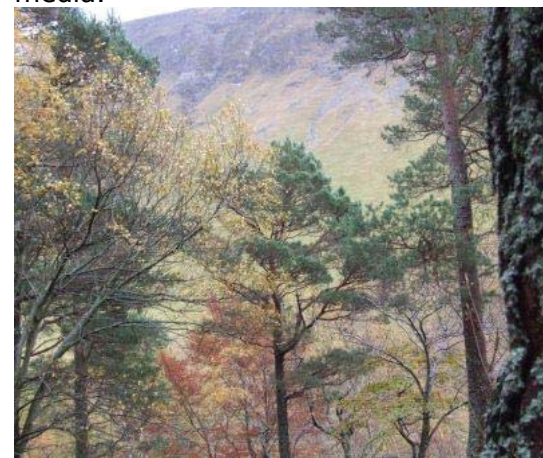
WWF

So how, instead, can we motivate and inspire change towards more fulfilled, sustainable lives and ultimately create social change? Research suggests that change can best be influenced in the long term through psychological approaches that work with people's deeper personal values and identity. This is the starting point for the [Natural Change Project](#) which explores how experiences of the natural world can inspire

people to live more sustainably.

Through time spent in the outdoors, as well as indoor workshops, mentoring and self-guided study, a group of influential individuals from diverse sectors are exploring wide ranging themes of place, identity, change, nature, empowerment and sustainability. They talk personally and eloquently about their experiences and concerns through their own [blogs](#) at www.naturalchange.org.uk as

well as to their individual organisations and specialist media.



© Jules Weston

Louise Macdonald, Chief Executive of Young Scot and Chair of RSA in Scotland:

The conversations at the second weekend have been amazing - expansive and challenging, with huge questions that I tend to find myself shying away from day to day, mainly because they seem so overwhelming and make my head hurt.

We talked today about this catastrophic vision for the future that exists, if we carry on the way we are now, and how to imagine and make real a more utopian vision. What was interesting was the rejection by some of us of viewing this as a linear thing, and I found myself thinking

that they could morph into the same thing - that the reaction to climate and credit crunch chaos, could end up corrupting the amazing beauty and life that we have into something managed and manufactured - a dystopia surely, even a beautiful one?

Gavin McLellan, Head of Christian Aid Scotland:

Why are we always rushing? Why is it so hard to find the compromise between time and convenience? What is driving us to make these choices? How do we break out of the rat race and assert the need to slow down?...

I was dismayed by the pace and wastefulness of our consumption culture, now I am more disgusted. So what am I going to do about it? What do I do next? What do I not do next? Apart from the obvious - not flying (have cut

this down already folks) What's the next most obvious thing? Then what are the subtle changes, cultural ones, and life structural ones, ones that will shift the herd culture?

Gurjit Singh, President National Union of Students, Scotland:

Over the last few days I have heard and learnt so many things that I would never have picked up on had I not been on the Natural change

project. I personally feel different, but I don't know why or how? What I do know is that it feels like a greater sense of connection and

empowerment to do something about how I am feeling and how we are feeling as a group.

Roseleen Shanley, Principal Teacher, Bankhead Academy:

We have looked at our own interactions with nature and related these to our own lives in a bid to understand our deepest personal emotions and thoughts for nature. By drawing from this spiritual

base, people's affinity and passion for change is driven more directly than by more conventional ways such as "telling people how best to approach change." The relationships within the

Natural Change group are very strong and the passion for change overwhelming...I think there is a place for Eco Psychology within the school curriculum...

Emma Little, Learning and Development Officer NHS Health Scotland:

We're all being encouraged to be more and more effective and efficient, cramming in

more and more to our own ever depleting linear scale. But what if we concentrated

on just BEING more? Or valuing quality over quantity?

Who else is taking part in the Natural Change Project?

Sarah Munro, Artistic Manager of Tramway Theatre

Emily Peel Yates, Senior Landscape Architect, Halcrow

Margaret Kerr, Psychotherapist

Amie Fulton, Project Cook and Local Footprints Officer

Sam Harrison, Participant Researcher and Director of Open Ground

Dave Key, Project Consultant and Founder of Footprint Consulting

An Action Research report will be published in May 2009. For more information and to read the full range of blogs go to www.naturalchange.org.uk

Are our protected areas safe?

Lloyd Austin, Head of Conservation Policy, RSPB Scotland



First things first – we’re not anti-development, we’re not anti-golf, and we’re not anti-Trump.

We believe in sustainable development to make Scotland both wealthier and greener, which is why we’re surprised and disappointed with the Government’s decision to allow this development to go ahead on an unparalleled, supposedly protected Site of Special Scientific Interest, or SSSI.

The Government promised a “greener Scotland” as one of the five main planks in its vision for the country.

However, given that the Government “called in” the application for their own decision following the original rejection of the plans, we’re not too surprised at the outcome.

So where does this leave the Government’s vision of a “greener Scotland”?

What is the point of having a network of protected areas if they’re not actually protected? Will this set a dangerous precedent where, if the scale of your development

We’ve praised much of what they’ve done for the environment, including an ambitious climate change Bill, and sustainable flooding and marine Bills. But it’s hard to see just how this decision can be made in a “greener Scotland”

The sad thing is that John Swinney didn’t have a simple ‘yes or no’ decision to make – we offered up a ‘yes but’ alternative. We commissioned a respected Scottish golf course designer to come up with a different design for a top level golf course on the site which

is grand enough, all of Scotland is up for grabs?

The Government now has a job to win back its environmental credentials. It will need to confirm that this is a truly unique case, and not a precedent that says money talks. It will need to make clear that it does indeed value our special wild places for what they are. Studies have estimated the economic value of Scotland’s environment in the tens of billions of pounds – this is an asset that needs protecting, not undermining.

avoided the most sensitive land, including the SSSI.

Unfortunately, Trump International Golf Links Scotland (TIGLS) refused to compromise throughout, or even consider our ‘yes but’ option – and now the Scottish Government seems to have followed suit. Our alternative could have brought all the economic benefits without such massive environmental damage, and we can’t understand why John Swinney hasn’t considered it. By ignoring it, it appears that the government has succumbed to knee-jerk political and business lobbying.

The diggers will soon move in and stabilise the dynamic sand dunes at Menie, and one of the best examples of such a landscape in Western Europe will be lost. The Inquiry report made clear that the loss of dynamism cannot be mitigated, and so we can cross Foveran Links SSSI off the list of ‘protected’ sites in Scotland. The question for now is whether our other protected areas are safe in this Government’s hands?

Stop Climate Chaos update

Ruth Dawkins, SCCS Coordinator



Between the Scottish Parliament Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee's

Energy Inquiry, the Take One Action Film Festival, the Machinima Project, Party Conferences, the Scottish Government Adaptation Consultation, and the ongoing progress of the Scottish Climate Change Bill, things have been busy for the Stop Climate Chaos Scotland

More recently, the coalition welcomed the announcement on the Climate Change Bill by Cabinet Minister John Swinney. Following immense pressure from the coalition and its members, the Scottish Government is now committed to annual emissions reduction targets in the Bill, as well as the inclusion of emissions from aviation and shipping. However, the devil will be in the detail, so there are no plans to scale down campaign activity.

SCCS is planning a series of short, informative breakfast meetings in

(SCCS) coalition recently.

SCCS also held a Climate and Energy 'Question Time' at the start of October – the first in a series of events that will take place across the UK throughout autumn and winter 2008. Around 200 students and members of the public packed into Edinburgh University's new Informatics Forum to quiz Members of the Scottish and Westminster Parliaments, along with NGO and Energy Industry representatives, about their

Parliament, for MSPs and Researchers, on a number of issues relevant to the Scottish Climate Change Bill. Coalition members are currently working on securing speakers for these, and it is likely that the breakfast meetings will also be tied in with evening meetings of the Cross Party Group on Climate Change.

Work is underway on organising a number of public meetings on the Scottish Climate Change Bill. These will take place throughout late 2008 and early 2009 in key constituencies across the country. Coalition

views on Energy and Climate Change. Sarah Boyack MSP and Mark Lazarowicz MP represented the Labour Party, with Rob Gibson MSP in attendance for the SNP, and Patrick Harvie MSP for the Greens. Dan Barlow from WWF Scotland and Chas Booth from the Association for Conservation of Energy completed the panel, with Rob Edwards, Environment Editor of the Sunday Herald, chairing the event.

representatives will have a platform to put forward their perspective on the Bill before opening up the floor to a public question time. Local MSPs will be invited along.

The coalition is also planning a major public lobbying event in Spring 2009, to coincide with the end of Stage 1 for the Climate Change Bill in the Scottish Parliament. For more details on this or any other coalition activity, please contact the [co-ordinator](mailto:coordinator@foe-scotland.org.uk) tel: 0131 311 6500. You can also visit the [website](http://www.foe-scotland.org.uk)

Building a Low Carbon Economy Lecture 9th February



Friends of the Earth Scotland is jointly

hosting a lecture with the University of Edinburgh and British Council Scotland on *Building a Low Carbon Economy - A UK and International Perspective*. The lecture will feature Lord Adair Turner, Chair of the Committee

on Climate Change and also current Chair of the Financial Services Authority.

The British Council is inviting an international speaker to speak after Lord Turner and provide an international view. A networking reception will follow the lecture.

The lecture is on 9

February will start at 6 pm at the Playfair Library, University of Edinburgh. The event is free but ticketed. Please register your interest in attending by <mailto:lecture@foe-scotland.org.uk> and we will send you information and tickets closer to the time.

New Environmental Literary Prize - Woodland Emphasis

This new award, set up by Cowalfest and sponsored by Forestry Commission Scotland, was launched by Environment Minister Michael Russell on 29 May 2008.

“The Robin Jenkins Literary Award will be for £5,000. The Award is for a work of either fiction or non-fiction and should not exceed 100,000 words in length.

“It is a condition of the Award that entries must have the environment, trees and forestry in Scotland as a key theme or setting. Your work does not need to be entirely set in Scotland. It can be a biography, environmental or wildlife study, historical account or a work of fiction, as long as it can be clearly referenced to the key theme.

Whilst entries of new writing are expected in the main, works published within the last two years are eligible if they meet the criteria. Entries will be accepted from anyone resident in Scotland, born in Scotland, those with Scottish ancestry, or anyone with an interest in Scotland and Scottish culture.”

Full details are available at the [Robin Jenkins award website](#)

Allotments and Climate Change

Jenny Mollison & Judy Wilkinson, [Scottish Allotments and Garden Society](#)



In October, Richard Lochhead announced that he was “asking a number of public bodies to consider how the land they manage for the Scottish Government could be made available to local authorities to increase the number of allotments in Scotland.” Whilst the national recognition of long waiting lists for allotments and the need to find suitable sites is extremely welcome, it is just a first step. The location of sites is important: they should be as near as possible to the communities they are intended to serve.

The Climate Challenge Fund accepts that growing local food can reduce carbon emissions and that fundable projects “could include

bringing new plots into production, increasing productivity on existing land or generating increased levels of local food growing/consuming in new groups of people.” The Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society is asking policy makers to promote responsible gardening as one of the biggest contributions which ordinary people can make to adaptation and mitigation of climate change. We want local authorities to make long term strategic provision for accessible gardening.

Education about appropriate planting, soil management and horticultural techniques will become even more important as species decline and migrate. Allotment Associations offer opportunities

to engage ploholders and their wider communities in a better understanding of ecology. Recently, we have written briefing papers and articles connecting allotment gardening and the climate change debate. In partnership we have produced booklets on biodiversity in allotments, gardens and orchards. Sites now include boundary hedges and small ponds; ploholders are growing flowers, soft fruit and herbs in addition to traditional vegetables.

The Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society is a small voluntary organisation and we value the continuing help and support of our LINK partners in realizing the full potential of allotments as vehicles for behaviour change.

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'.

HQ Address:	2 Grosvenor House, Shore Road Perth PH2 8BD	Parliamentary Office	3rd Floor, Gladstone's Land 483 Lawnmarket Edinburgh EH1 2NT
Phone:	01738 630804	Email:	parliamentary@scotlink.org
Fax:	01738 643290	Phone:	0131 225 4345
Email:	enquiries@scotlink.org		

Marine campaign [email](#), [website](#)

Scottish Environment LINK (LINK) is sponsored by grants from SNH, the Esm e Fairbairn Foundation, the Scottish Executive Sustainable Action Fund, and supported by subscriptions from its member bodies, supporters and subscribers, and charitable donations. LINK is a Scottish Company Limited by guarantee and without a share capital under Company No. SC 250899. LINK is a Scottish Charity SCN 000296.