



MINUTES of LINK Annual General Meeting held at Friends Meeting House in Edinburgh on 12 December 2018

PRESENT

MEMBERS:

Charles Dundas, Chair & Woodland Trust Scotland
Craig Macadam, Vice Chair, Buglife
Tim Ambrose, Treasurer & Cairngorms Campaign
Beryl Leatherland, Trustee & Scottish Wild Land Group
Lucy Graham, Trustee & Scottish Wildlife Trust
Clare Symonds, Trustee & Planning Democracy
Paul Walton, Trustee & RSPB Scotland
Sam Gardner, Trustee & WWF Scotland
Bruce Wilson, Scottish Wildlife Trust
Aedán Smith, RSPB Scotland
Gus Jones, Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group
Tessa Jones, Cairngorms Campaign
Helen Todd, Ramblers Scotland
John Mayhew, Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland, Scottish Campaigns for National Park and Scottish Countryside Rangers Association
Gavin Thomson, Friends of the Earth Scotland
Calum Duncan, Marine Conservation Society
Eddie Palmer, Scottish Badgers
Diarmid Hearn, National Trust for Scotland
Maggie Keegan, British Ecological Society
Roger Downie, Froglife

STAFF: Jen Anderson, Daphne Vlastari, Alice Walsh, Karen Paterson, Phoebe Cochrane,

IN ATTENDANCE: Deborah Long, Chief Officer Designate, Miriam Ross, (new LINK Campaign Coordinator, starting Jan 2019)

WELCOME

Charles Dundas opened the meeting at 16:30, thanking all for coming and confirmed the meeting was quorate.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Sarah Dolman, Whale and Dolphin Conservation; Paul Kirkland, Butterfly Conservation; Pete Ritchie, Nourish; James Curran, Honorary Fellow; Angus Miller, Scottish Geodiversity Forum; Helen Senn, RZSS; Liz Ferrell, Bat Conservation Trust, Alison Lomax, Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust; Jim Foster, Amphibian and Reptile Conservation; Anna Brand, RSPB; Alistair Whyte, Plantlife; John Thomson, SCNP; Noel Fojut; Dilraj Watson, LINK.

Joyce McMillan, President

2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING ON 7 DECEMBER 2017.

The draft minutes were approved as an accurate record and were proposed by Helen Todd, seconded by Clare Symonds.

3. MATTERS ARISING

1. Gender Balance among Office Bearers

A question about gender balance among office bearers was raised at the AGM in 2017. This was considered by the Board in early 2018 in relation to office bearers, trustees generally and also Honorary Fellows. The Trustees did not consider this to be a problem. Office bearers (now 3 male: 0 female) had been at a ratio of 2 female:1 male for several years previously; the network at meetings seemed well balanced in gender terms, and the staff team tends to be female. Trustees felt the gender issue to be avoided is where people are unable to progress because of barriers and took the view that this is not a LINK problem; they also felt that the problem where it does arise will not necessarily be addressed by taking on more of a particular gender in one place, but via having and applying equal opportunities policy generally. The Board also considered gender among LINK's group of Fellows, noting that LINK was for several years constrained in its approaches to people about fellowship, by the condition that those eligible for fellowship must be leaving the network having contributed significantly. This rule changed two years ago allowing LINK to approach external players who have contributed significantly on sustainability issues. The Board will bear gender in mind when inviting external players in future, though for the same reason as above, should not think in terms of quotas. It was agreed at the meeting that this issue had been satisfactorily reviewed and no further action was required.

2. Proposal for young person to be co-opted

A proposal to the AGM in 2017 that LINK co-opt a young person to the Board during the Year of Youth was reviewed by trustees at the January 2018 Board meeting. Trustees concluded that the Board could be a lonely place and is not the best forum on which to co-opt a young person. It was agreed that LINK's Species Champions initiative is a more appropriate forum, partly for the access the young person would have to relevant issues, also for relevance to LINK's own plans for the Species Champions scheme to reach out to the youth sector and also for opportunity for LINK to get the most from the relationship. The Board has asked the Wildlife Subgroup to pursue this actively.

Maggie Keegan from BES and Bruce Wilson from SWT still felt that if an appropriate young person who had the skills and specific interests was known we should still bear this in mind. Paul Walton, RSPB questioned whether rather than joining as a Board Member perhaps the route of Honorary Fellow might be used, it was agreed that this would also be a possibility (on the same assumption as before that the young person had the skills and specific interests needed to fulfill the role). It was agreed this was something both Members and Trustees should give due consideration too and if and when someone becomes known to them they can alert LINK to the opportunity.

3. LINK subscription policy

This will be covered in point 7.

4. ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR TO 31 MARCH 2018

Tim introduced the accounts noting LINK's finances were in pretty good shape, the prior year had recorded a deficit of £35,000 (to 31/3/17) however this year (to March 18) had produced a surplus of

£38,000, specifically noting that with the receipt of the 3-year grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation LINK has a healthy income and balance sheet.

Tim Ambrose recommended these to the meeting. He recorded thanks to Karen Paterson, LINK Finance Manager, for keeping such accurate records that the financial examination had gone seamlessly, and thanked Jen Anderson and Alice Walsh for their work in drafting and proof-reading the report.

The report and accounts were proposed by Beryl Leatherland and seconded by Craig Macadam and this was unanimously approved by the meeting.

5. ELECTION OF TRUSTEES & OFFICE BEARERS; APPOINTMENT OF PRESIDENT & HONORARY FELLOWS

Trustees:

Charles noted that one third of the Trustees each year must retire by rotation and this year these were Charles Dundas, Lucy Graham and Beryl Leatherland, all three are eligible for reelection. A call had been made to members in the summer seeking any nominations for new Trustees however none were received. Charles therefore asked the room if they wished all three to be reelected en bloc, this was proposed by Eddie Palmer and seconded by Paul Walton and this was unanimously approved by the meeting.

Charles also reminded the room that there are also two spaces available on the Board for co-opted members (currently none) if there was an area where there was a gap, or someone had specialist knowledge that may be useful. There were no current proposals for co-option.

Office bearers:

The current office Bearers, Charles Dundas – Chair, Craig Macadam – Vice-Chair and Tim Ambrose-Treasurer were all eligible and willing to be reelected for a further term, this was proposed by Sam Gardner and seconded by Eddie Palmer and this was unanimously approved by the meeting.

President:

Charles reported that Joyce McMillan had been approached earlier in the year to continue to Autumn 2019 and she had agreed in principle, the Board recommended that LINK re-appoint Joyce as President, this was proposed by Calum Duncan and seconded by Helen Todd and this was unanimously approved by the meeting.

Honorary Fellows:

Charles noted there were 4 recommendations for Honorary Fellows this year, although he further advised they should have in fact been 5 as the Board should have also thought to propose Jen Anderson, but this would be noted for carry forward to next year. The four proposals were

1 Lloyd Austin, Lloyd has a very longstanding connection with LINK of over 25 years' active engagement. He served on LINK's board, and as Chair for a term and has recently retired from RSPB.

2 Campbell Gemmell, Campbell has 33 years post-doctoral experience, mostly in the environment sector, as a public body leader (CEO of SEPA 2003-12) and environmental regulator, public policy influencer, advisor and implementer, educator and consultant.

3 Pat Monaghan, Pat is currently the Regius Professor of Zoology at the University of Glasgow. She did her PhD at Durham University, and most of her career has been spent at Glasgow. Pat is a well-respected, internationally recognised scientist. She runs a well-funded research programme concerned with how environmental changes influence animal life histories.

4 Coralie Mills, Coralie is a dendrochronologist and environmental archaeologist. Her career has been shaped by her degree in Environmental Plant Geography, Master's in environmental Archaeology and PhD in Dendrochronology. It is hoped Coralie would be able to represent the historic environment sector.

The nominations we proposed en bloc by Paul Walton and seconded by Calum Duncan and this was unanimously approved by the meeting.

6. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL EXAMINERS

Tim Ambrose recommended the reappointment of Geoghegans CA of Edinburgh, reporting they did a good job and their fees were reasonable. This was proposed by Beryl Leatherland and seconded by Craig Macadam and this was unanimously approved by the meeting.

7. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR THE YEAR 2018/19

Tim reminded everyone that LINK have been reviewing our subscription system and contact had been made with members in the summer. The current system is broadly a slab system so the sub a member pays is a range and if you tip over the range often the sub can go up by as much as 40%. The Funding Subgroup had looked at a number of other options all of which aimed to be revenue neutral and these were circulated to members. Charles noted he felt the review had been well communicated to members over the summer with opportunities for feedback and comments. The Board took stock of all the feedback with the majority of members supporting their recommendations to change to a smoothed system, with a 20% over-ride and an additional band at the lowest income.

Membership Band	Member income threshold	Proposed subscriptions for 2019/20, by Band	2018/19 subscription by Band
1	£3 million and above	£9,450	£9,664
2	£1 million - £2,999,999	£4,950 plus £2.25 per £1,000 of Total Income over £1 million	£6,450
3	£500,000 - £999,999	£3,450 plus £3.00 per £1,000 of Total Income over £500,000	£4,294
4	£250,000 - £499,999	£2,200 plus £5.00 per £1,000 of Total Income over £250,000	£2,846
5	£100,000 - £249,999	£1,150 plus £7.00 per £1,000 of Total Income over £100,000	£1,765

6	£1,600 to £99,999	£150 plus £10 per £1,000 of Total Income.	£ 987 or 1.084% of income, whichever is less. Minimum £125
7	Up to £1,600	10% of Total Income	£125

As with all systems there are always winners and losers, losers would generally be those currently at the top of the present slab range, winners those near the bottom (but any increases would be somewhat protected by the 20% cap).

Clare Symonds, Planning Democracy asked if there was still protection for the very smallest organisations and Tim confirmed that yes, indeed the new band 7 was specifically in place for these.

Beryl Leatherland, SWLG proposed the new subscription model be adopted and this was seconded by Bruce Wilson, SWT and this was unanimously approved by the meeting.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was raised.

Charles closed the meeting at around 16:50 thanking the room for attending and giving special thanks to Jen for her last AGM as LINK Chief Officer.