

## **LINK Board meeting 25 April 2019 held at the Buglife office, Stirling.**

**Present:** Charles Dundas (Chair), Craig Macadam (Vice-Chair), Tim Ambrose (Treasurer), Lucy Graham, Clare Symonds, Paul Walton, Sam Gardner, Deborah Long (CO), Karen Paterson (OM). Daphne Vlastari – part (AM).

**1 Apologies** Beryl Leatherland (Beryl was attending the launch of the Landscape Alliance) and Helen Senn – Helen had planned to join the meeting via Zoom however the equipment was not available on the day so rather than try and join via a phone/laptop with poor sound quality it was agreed Helen would give her apologies and Deborah would provide Helen with an update verbally.

### **2 Minutes, matters arising and reports.**

a) **Minutes** - Charles noted the minutes from the January meeting were very comprehensive and he believed them to be accurate, this was agreed with Clare proposing and Craig seconding. The actions are on the agenda or covered in the Matters Arising paper.

b) **Matters Arising paper** – Content was noted with any specific matters being covered in the agenda.

### **3 Operations**

#### **3.1**

##### **a) More Strategic use of the DPF (paper C)**

Deborah noted the FSG had met on 16/4 to discuss how the DPF was used and granted. The meeting recommended that the historical procedure for making an application to the DPF be reinstated (this had not always been followed of late) – application be made from the Group/subgroup via a member of LINK staff, this is then considered by the FSG subgroup who would then make a recommendation to the Board. The FSG will therefore meet at least 6 monthly (or before each Board Meeting if there are applications for review). It was noted that LINK currently had a very healthy DPF (starting the year with £35,000) however already this would be reduced to around £11,000 if the current proposals were to be agreed. **The Board agreed the process of FSG review be reinstated.**

The FSG also considered the application form currently in use and this was revisited, some additional questions were added, specifically how the proposed action would fit within LINK's Strategic Objectives (the revised form was circulated with papers).

Sam asked if this procedure would answer his original question of whether the increased spend have a greater impact, whether we will see a noticeable change in 3 years compared to now and whether groups could fairly easily pitch their request to fit in with what are quite wide Strategic Objectives? Deborah noted that the groups/sub will need to be clear on where their request fits in with LINK's SOs and with the re instating the review by the FSG it will give the staff and FSG more time to consider each application. She also suggested we review the procedure in January to assess its effectiveness.

**Action:** FSG to review procedure and our ability to measure progress in January and report back to the Board.

Sam asked - Can the Board provide Strategic objectives over the next 1 to 2 years and is the DPF equally available to everyone? Deborah noted that she thinks it is an advantage to be available to all, and this sits with the SOs we have to meet (in particular to the EFF Grant).

Tim noted that by adding the additional question to the application 'how will success be assessed' this will also make groups think more about it. It is envisaged that there is likely to be more competition this year which means some requests may be refused.

Charles noted that it should be a level playing field for all and there is an ultimate obstacle in that Groups/sub will still have to demonstrate to the FSG, who will be looking at application with increased scrutiny, and Board, that each application is appropriate.

Sam noted that there may be a need for clear criteria to be able to make and measure progress towards the SOs.

**Action:** FSG will consider the need for clearer criteria at the review stage.

Deborah noted that we had also reinstated an AAR to enable us to assess the impact of each project which would also allow Alice to report to funders etc. The proposed AAR form was circulated at the meeting.

Charles questioned whether indeed smaller groups were fully aware of LINK's SOs so when they apply?

**Action:** KP to add link to DPF application form to LINK's Corporate plan and SOs.

Paul noted that sometimes relatively small amounts can do more, in RSPB's experience bigger is not always better. Paul also went on to discuss his experience through the Wildlife subgroup's potential application for funding for a State of Nature (specific to Scotland) report which there is currently no resources available to complete the design and printing. Those involved all agreed that it was a very worthwhile report to complete and as this would be a great tool for LINK to gain political leverage it would be best to proceed under LINK and to make a request for DPF funds. While DPF should be kept for items such as the FFSN campaign that wouldn't be easily funded elsewhere, Groups are responsible for finding funding where possible to maximise availability for DPF for 'difficult to fund' items, large or small. This raises the issue that member reps on Groups may not have capacity or specialist knowledge to look for this funding, which may then place the additional burden back on LINK staff. Groups should however be aware that they need to identify possible funding sources for all pieces of work that LINK staff, capacity allowing, may be able to help apply for. This capacity is limited however.

Charles noted that sometimes lots of small things add up to being greater than their parts, impression he has is that it does and it's a positive for LINK that we work across a range of things. LINK is more than just one issue with a broad range of expertise across a range of areas and there is value in our bottom up process but can understand we want for more strategic control.

Tim noted that new DPF form calls from a nominated lead who will take greater responsibility and be more accountable and also seeks more information on who will be involved in the project (including the demand on LINK staff), where will other funding come from and groups/subs should only ask once they have more information and have a clearer plan.

Paul asked if we are explicit that DPF can be used for 'bigger' applications and should we say we will consider up to £xx so members know it's not just for small things. Tim advised that indeed the ERCS bid to the DPF is for £10,000 and (if approved) might be more and we've said we would consider.

**Action:** staff to remind members that DPF is viable, with reinstated procedure and for totals from a few hundred pounds to a few thousands.

Charles agreed with the FSG proposals of reforming the DPF process with a view to reviewing DPF through a strategic lens.

Charles advised that although the FSG would do the filtering anyone who is on the Board is welcome to join the subgroup.

**Action:** Trustees - Please let Tim know if you wish to join the FSG.

### 3.1

#### **b) Operational plan and KPIs (paper D)**

This was a summary which had been requested covering the upcoming review of the corporate strategy and Summary of operational plan update.

**Corporate Strategy** - Deborah noted she had started to investigate the Corporate Strategy review for the next four-years 2020-2023. In her meetings with members one of the key Qs had been to find out their priorities for the next 3 – 5 years, this will also be supported by the review of the Board's effectiveness. The consensus was Graham Reekie whom we'd used in our last review (2016-19) had been very good and should be approached again. The initial quote provided was double what had been allocated in the budget. Deborah has now re visited the original ask and by taking some lines out feels we can almost achieve it within budget. The original ask had included a workshop with the Board in October, but we may have to do this without Graham as it would be tight to include.

Sam asked how much additional budget would be required to include everything – Deborah confirmed + £6,000 (giving a total budget of £12,000).

Deborah advised she would circulate the outline that we initially asked for and then the worked down version to what we can afford including how much Board involvement would be required in the process. **Action:** Deborah to circulate agreed contractor tasks.

**Action:** Board to complete effectiveness survey when it is emailed to them by 31 May.

**Operational plan** – Groups and sub groups are reporting good progress is being made, either good or very good,

**Advocacy** very good, specifically supported by the FFSN campaign.

**Strong voice** – good and improving, again specifically on FFSN

**Operating as an effective....**– good to very good, with the review of the corporate strategy building on key organisational tools already in place may further improve.

Deborah also noted that the dinners need to be built on to further improve horizon scanning and tackle issues identified (see upcoming note 3.2.)

Charles noted the paper (D) was very helpful and great to have a summary.

### 3.1

#### **c) New round of member dialogue incl. strategic questions, networking agenda, congress theme & proposed process and timeline for development of strategy for 2020 forward – oral update [DL]**

**Strategy** - It was noted that LINK has a very short corporate plan and a very large strategic + operational plan, could we pull together to one more comprehensive plan? The May Networking meeting will be used to identify member priorities and Group plans to 2020 and then to 2023. The consultant will run an electronic survey to identified external stakeholders and Board members, with targeted interviews to gain additional detail. The Board will receive a draft strategic plan at the full Board day in October and members will input at the Strategic planning day in December.

The Board agreed a four-year plan 2020-2023 was appropriate.

Sam noted that WWF also have a 10-year Horizon plan as most transformational change takes a lot of work over a number of years, and whilst they have a 3 year rolling plan they also are constantly looking to see how this fits in with their 10 year plan. This might help LINK to write specific outcomes beyond the general advocating for a 'Sustainable Scotland'.

Paul also noted that RSPB operates on a decadal scale which does work, and it might be worth LINK considering.

**Action: Deborah to start the work on 10-year vision at May networking towards which the strategic plan will build.**

**Networking Agenda** – Deborah has sent a draft network agenda to allow members to get the date in their diary and is working on a more detailed agenda for staff, with each member of staff allocated to each group and will forward to Board once finalised.

**Congress theme** – Possible theme could focus on the challenges and barriers in Rhetoric to Reality (from discussions @ Networking dinners). The same format as 2018 was proposed and agreed – training during the day, followed by buffet dinner, 3 / 4 speakers and then Q & A. **Action:** staff to book venue and start planning training and Congress.

### **3.2 – Development of thought space (paper E)**

Deborah noted there had been 3 dinners. The first dinner identified three areas to explore:

- 1.the absence of a thought-space-cum-thinktank on environment within the panoply of Scottish institutions;
2. The gap between implementation and delivery on the one hand and rhetoric and ambition on the other in Scotland; and
3. How networking can support Scotland to be relevant internationally.

Dinner 1: The first topic was explored re thought-space / think-tank

Next steps are being taken forward by James, Sam and Deborah, who are looking in to designing, funding and running an invitation only event amongst key leaders in Scotland to build a partnership reaching far beyond LINK's usual stakeholders. These are influential thinkers who we would like to come together. Group size would ideally be 10 – 15. Getting the right people would be critical, and some might be a bit of a gamble as it would be people we haven't previously spoken with, we need to look beyond our usual suspects and to be challenged.

**Action:** The Board was invited to add names to the invitation list, available on huddle.

Sam noted that this was going to be quite an ask as we would be asking people to invest their own time as possibly the event would run over 2 days (lunch time to lunch time with an overnight) to allow attendees to immerse themselves in the conversation on the environment and the level of action needed to bring positive change. It would be key to keep them 'in the space' for the full time. Work will need to go in to fundraising, developing the attendee list and securing a high-level facilitator. Sam already had a meeting scheduled with [Norman Drummond](#) as a potential, the room agreed he could be ideal. Support would be needed across LINK to help identify the sorts of people who should attend and who might be best placed to ask those identified on our behalf.

The Board agreed that we need to have people who are influencers and to show we are reaching outwith our network and not just the usual stakeholders. It was noted this must be seen as a 'safe space' so views could be challenged, and where people could move forward, assess their relationship with Scotland's environment in their own world and what Scotland could look like in the future. But noting this cannot be done without funds!

The Board understood that the event would not be without risk, we would be projecting our priorities in to a new space and would want to influence the people we want to then take action and influence the next stage.

Clare noted the WWF [Natural change project](#) as something similar done in the past.

Charles noted he was enthusiastic about the prospect as an event.

**Action:** Board agreed to support Deborah and Sam to take the matter forward.

Dinner 2 - topic rhetoric and ambition

Deborah asked for the Board's thoughts on the proposed establishment of a shadow independent environmental audit committee with LINK Hon fellows and retired experts whose role would be to identify the gap between rhetoric and reality and call the government out. It would not issue legal challenges. Legal challenges may become part of the Environment Rights Centre work, if funded. Daphne noted one clear gap is the Client earth gap in Scotland and bringing cases. The question was asked 'do we have environmental lawyers and we do use them?' should we involve them more in our legal subgroup work? How do we get the legal systems to achieve current environmental aims of policy? Could our legal sub group perform part of this action? How does it fit with ECR? See discussion below on ERC.

Paul noted that there is a role for legal challenges in Scotland: we press for legislation, get it in and this it doesn't do what it is supposed to so there is definitely a missed opportunity as no one then takes legal action. He gave the example of General Licences in England and suggested that we needed an equivalent in Scotland. However, to highlight the reality gap, we would need to secure top-level people: a committee would be a good idea. Can we pull together some people known to LINK who can pass judgement?

This would be an add on to our advocacy, but just as another tool as only a shadow committee. Unless it is really hard hitting, we would need a really influential Chair with weight to make an impact, someone the Scot Gov would respect, it would take quite a bit of work to convene, take forward and fund... Action: Deborah to explore its likelihood of success as well as idneftying a possible, effective Chair.

Alternatively, should we persuade another body to do this, e.g. the Royal Society on a case by case basis?

Craig noted whilst he likes as an idea, specifically to engage the Hon Fellows and thought Leaders if there is no direct challenge at the end how effective will it be? He asked Daphne if she felt this would be a potential advocacy tool? Daphne thought possibly but would need to think carefully of their title, it would be useful to do more work on R & R and wondered if we could use fellows in specific areas of work. E.g. a report card on how legislation is implemented.

**Action:** Deborah and Daphne to map gaps and identify what LINK role might be (if any) beyond ERC.

### **Dinner 3 - International networking**

LINK is a member of EEB and IUCN and the members have access to a wide range of networks at UK, European and global levels. Deborah noted she had recently caught up with Stuart Brooks and he also felt it would be useful for LINK and its members to build closer ties with IUCN. They are holding their World Congress in 2020 in Marseilles where there is potential to have an event / presence at Marseilles, the UK Peatland Restoration resolution may be an opportunity although possibly not a cross LINK issue. The Call for Proposals opens 2 May and will be open until 17 July 2019. All proposals must be submitted before 17 July, more [info here](#).

Paul noted this would be a good opportunity, especially as the location was (relatively) close (compared to other years) and we should maybe think of a range of activities/events. Paul and Craig are already involved through the Species Survival Commission.

Paul noted he felt a presence at the meeting would be really helpful.

Daphne noted it would be really useful to have Roseanna there which would present the Scottish Govt with an opportunity to demonstrate Scotland's work/ambitions, lots of connectivity with SNH and work on statement on connectivity and NEN for example and ties in with talks with Francesca on how Scotland works at international levels.

Sam noted this would be good exposure on World Wide actions.

**Action:** Deborah and Daphne to identify what a LINK sponsored proposal would look like.

### **3.3 - PSR and Environment Act Campaign**

Daphne asked if anyone had any specific questions on the prepared PSR – there were none.

Daphne advised that we were working in difficult times, it was hard to get assurances on environment protections, but we were making progress. The statement made by Mike Russell on the continuity bill was helpful - [New legislation will be brought forward to enable devolved laws to keep pace with the EU if Brexit occurs, Constitutional Relations Secretary Michael Russell has said](#).

Relations with Cab Sec improving with good contacts with civil servants, and an SNP fringe event on environmental rights and strategic direction for Scotland's environment with Roseanna taking place 27/4.

Good progress is being made on the 2020 biodiversity strategy and Advocacy team are looking to see how we get better links with other orgs such as EEB, IUCN. The team have also been working on post 2020 to develop both LINK's views and others such as SNH to develop a transparent and inclusive process for developing Scotland's future policy on biodiversity. It is an opportunity to showcase that Scotland wants to be a leader.

If we can enhance links with IUCN this would also be useful for improving relations with SNH and getting Roseanna more engaged.

Climate and nature based solutions – Nature on red alert report has been a great boost to having discussions.

Marine – work is ongoing but there have been lots of postponements.

Rural affairs – short bill expected in Autumn with an ambition to include future of farming system.

Working is ongoing on building more champions of nature in the cabinet and work in to how we enable these high-level connections (including linking to human rights)? Focus will need to be on targeting specific people as the work for government is being developed.

RECC can be a struggle but there have been lots of successes with ECCLR picking up our asks. Conservatives are more on side now and Greens have come out in favour of our FFSN campaign and the call for an environment bill.

Continuing success on Species Champion initiative, 100 days worked well over last summer and planning on doing more this summer which also support the FFSN campaign activities.

Plan for European elections is to work on a 2-page manifesto – what we want, ambitions in our approaches.

#### Update on the FFSN campaign:

The campaign is currently focussing on the consultation, which currently has over 6000 sign ups via LINK, 2000 via WWF. 38 degrees have also now shared the campaign and already (at the time of the meeting) they had generated a further 7,000 which exceeded our target of 12,000. There have been lots of articles, including in the Ecologist, Bright Blue, Common space as well as interviews with the BBC. Blogs from members have been very useful particularly as they cover a range of different areas, Daphne and Miriam have been working with other members/stakeholders to support them to write their own responses including 3 schools, SCVO, the Law Society and KSB. The campaign is planning to have an event with Roseanna to handover the post cards etc. which they hope she will be open to.

Thereafter the campaign will follow up with some hard advocacy including workshops, developing a preferred framework for governance and undertaking some further research. Some civil servants foresee we can get a good commitment in the programme for Government. The campaign will work to keep MSPs up to date, potentially one event soon with a few more planned from September. Hoping for a focussed roundtable with the ECCLR committee, using Species Champions over the summer to ask for support and secure possible pledges to act. A subgroup has been preparing a Survey on attitudes to environment which is now ready, work underway with a photographer, planned work with local groups on developing their advocacy, KSB have indicated they may be able to involve their Eco Schools programme on a more robust environment.

Charles noted the Board could lend its support to enthuse the network to do more.

Paul noted the massive amount of stuff that the Advocacy team are working on and they are very appreciative of that work that Daphne does to bring it all together.

Paul asked if when we met Francesca had there been mention of the Extinction Rebellion and how much impact she felt they had had? – Deborah advised, yes it had come up and Francesca noted it showed how much the public cared about the environment.

Daphne advised that ER had shared our E-Action. She noted however that LINK does not have the grass roots support that perhaps some of our members might have, e.g. Planning Democracy, so

how we do spend our summer if we want to create the effect that we do have such support and how we showcase it? A march on Parliament perhaps? Visiting community groups around Scotland to enthuse and inform them? Possibly lobby event in January?

Sam reflected that the campaign was a huge body of work and it was great to see reflections of LINK in terms of public mobilisation. But ultimately politics will be informed by the public and we need to find ways to bring the public to life.

Daphne felt it would be dependent on the members who can bring large number of people to a mass event. The LINK role is more to offer solutions to the challenge to the Scot Gov to enable them to move forward. This is critical because absence of this ability could mean NO action. It was noted that this is not an area where we want to be cutting our cloth, we need to identify what we need and then make the ask.

Daphne reminded the Board of our audience: LINK's strength lies in the relationship with parliament. It is our members who are much better at getting the public on the street.

Sam noted that LINK members possibly don't have it either, and even if they did it would need co-ordination from the centre, which could be problematic. Could we use Extinction Rebellion to work to our advantage? Not exclusively climate challenge but would maintain the momentum to apply pressure.

Deborah noted some of the tools we can use may be the shared narrative with SNH, leadership from output of the dinners. **Action:** Deborah to map the use of key tools, including above, to identify how LINK can mobilise and build on the space opened up by Extinction Rebellion and others.

Sam asked if following Mike Russell's statement were there any more movement from Cab Sec? Daphne noted the SPAD yesterday didn't expect anything new to be said at the SNP conference, but can try and encourage them to be more encouraging on, for example 'right to clean and health environment' to put ambition in the program for government.

Sam asked if we were getting the member support we needed for the campaign?

Daphne noted that whilst some were good it could be better from smaller members and Miriam and Karen were in the process of contacting.

Clare noted that targeting smaller members and trying to add to their capacity would be useful, timescales for doing work can be very extended, planning bill for example 4 years +, and when PD was trying to organise an event themselves whilst they had received lots of interest via email they really struggled to get people out to parliament. It's helpful to link member's own agendas to the campaign. Daphne noted that we had been testing that with blogs.

Craig noted that in the dialogue with members that took place around 18 months ago, Trustees were nominated specific members, would it be worthwhile for these contacts to be re-established by their nominated trustee to help push the campaign? Charles agreed this was a good idea.

**Action: Daphne and Craig to help co-ordinate trustee support to members.**

### **3.4 - LINK Communications update**

Karen noted that on developing the new website for the FFSN campaign staff had been reflecting on the existing ScotLINK website which now looked very old and is difficult to navigate. It had been built around members, who are a key internal audience, but it was not serving the external audiences well. It had been agreed that a refresh be looked in to which would refresh the website, better use



of imagery, easier to use and be more public facing. Deborah noted LINK currently have 4 separate sites – Scotlink, FFSN, Savescottishseas and Sea Scotland (although this last site is really only used to promote and provide information on the annual Sea Scotland conference run by the Marine group). Styling across the sites was inconsistent and a more consistent, obvious, stronger LINK identity should be introduced. Karen noted to date we have approached 2 website designers, DoGood who did the work on the Have you got the bottle? campaign and Infinite Eye who designed the FoES website plus Phil Taylor.

We have also asked Heedi Design (who have recently completed the design work on a number of LINK projects – FFSN website design, Nature on Red Alert report etc.) to look at a LINK logo refresh. A proposed line is now included in the revised forecast for 2019/20 to cover costs.

Paul asked why we felt a change was required? Deborah confirmed it was more of an update, to make the LINK brand more consistent and our identity stronger.

Karen noted the review was being taken forward by a small subgroup of the LINK team including Deborah, Esther and herself with Daphne's input when time allowed and once some firmer plans/outlines were available this would be shared with the wider LINK staff team. It was agreed that we should continue to pursue and obtain final sign off from the Board before committing to any changes.

**Action:** bring back to board with refreshed brand

#### **4 - Governance**

4.1 Deborah noted she had been reviewing the Energy Consensus statement and has made a few tweaks, combining wind energy with land very tricky, the statement does now include a piece on landscape and Deborah will continue to work on.

4.2 Policy review – Karen had reviewed all LINK policies, some minor updates were required, including some enhancements for GDPR compliance, Equality and Diversity and the changes to DPF, subs etc. There was a master policy spreadsheet with included policy revision dates, issue levels etc.

**Action: Karen to load the master policy spreadsheet on Huddle and if any Trustees would like a copy of a specific policy to contact Karen.**

4.3 Update on President search and recruitment - Deborah, Charles and Beryl had met to discuss and a spreadsheet with some initial thoughts had been started, this was more of a potential list of people who might be able to suggest names. It was noted the Anne Glover is of interest, but she is extremely busy.

Paul wondered if Pat Monaghan may have some ideas and he agreed to ask.

**Action: Paul to contact Pat before June and report back to subgroup** and if anyone else has any suggestions, comments etc. please let the subgroup know.

The timeline for the group was to convene again in June for exploratory discussions with more detailed discussions in August and confirm back to the Board by September.

Deborah confirmed that the sub group had adopted a gap analysis approach to help find a new President. This approach was also identifying potential Hon Fellows. The sub group's gap analysis has identified Business, Land management / ownership and Media as sectors where LINK has poor connections and low levels of expertise.

#### 4.4 Trustee appraisals report back

Charles noted he had spoken to most but he there still was a couple to do, the overarching feeling was one of general contentment. No warning lights on issues current or upcoming. Consistent issues raised on strategic alignment. Inductions work well and support from staff excellent. Board expertise at high level and varied to cover LINK needs. No current co-optees but no gaps highlighted that need a co-option to cover, noting that the last 2 co-optees – Mike and Ian are now LINK Hon Fellows and we are still able to call upon them if needs be. The next round of follow ups would next be due by 2022.

Huddle working well despite some initial issues, email alert process working well. Staff presence at LINK group meetings works well but recognise that pulling in staff for key parts of meeting could be explored more.

What can LINK achieve –

Over next few years: focus on key strategies aiming to have more impact while bearing in mind resource implications for members. Make more use of Hon fellows and value existing staff. Noting the negative can be too much going on means it's not always possible for the Board to stay on top of all LINK activities, but everyone does the best where they can.

Strategic Planning – Widen member staff involvement in LINK would be valuable: need to find a way to engage with them more so all feel a part of LINK.

Summing up that there we no surprises and overall happiness pleasure and pride in LINK. Charles will complete exercise and add in feedback from Jen's exit interview. Charles will pull together as paper for August board.

**Action: Charles to prepare paper for August Board to agree actions going forward.**

It was also noted that this paper would also be useful tool for the Consultant working on the Strategic review.

Sam did raise the question with all the campaign work should we be looking to Co-Opt someone with expertise in this field? Deborah suggested Julie Stoneman, WWF, as a possibility.

## 5. Financials

5.1 Budget outturn to 31.03.2019 – Tim noted LINK's year end was 31.3 and Karen was now in contact with Geoghegans to start work on their independent financial examination. Jen is working on the first 9 months for the annual report, and Deborah will complete the last 3. The surplus had been higher than expected, and particularly high due to EFF grant, the FSG had agreed to keep the balance of the DPF (from 18/19) to be used to fund balance of Species Champion post to 31/3/2020 (rather than carry forward).

**Action: Daphne to discuss contract extension with Calum.**

There were no questions in relation to the outturn to 31/3/19.

5.2 Draft Budget for 2019/20 – Karen noted there were a couple of additional lines in the budget this year, notably the LINK Website refresh/rebrand and money for the Strategic review. Current projections were for a deficit of c£20,000 for the year 19/20 but it was agreed the money had been allocated to worthwhile expenditure. Tim noted that there was a slight degree of uncertainty in the figure quoted for member subs as this is the first year of the new system (calculations undertaken at

the time of the review indicated a fairly revenue neutral result, but we won't know until all the calculations have been made towards end of June). In regard to the 5-year forecast there is still ongoing uncertainty of level of funding that will be forthcoming from the Government but assumptions are this will remain flat. The Board (Sam, Charles and Craig specifically) agreed the budgets and were comforted by the 5-year projections. Charles noted the financial papers were very well laid out and were easily understood and gave thanks to all those involved in preparing and he was comforted that the deficit was a signifier of the activity and action being taken.

5.3 DPF Bids – recommendations for approval from FSG - Tim noted the main application was from Legal Governance towards the set of the ERC for £10,000: The FSG felt this was a wholly worthwhile cause and recommended it to the Board.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> bid was for £600 for research in the Governance Subgroup.

**Both bids were approved.**

It was further noted that the ERCS was potentially very significant and worthwhile and it would be beneficial to have Mary Church to come to the next Board for presentation on ECR. Sam noted that he was concerned however that the 3-year budget was quite low, noting legal advice in particular would be very costly. Deborah advised LINK's funding was very much seed funding with bids also currently in to William Grant, Peoples Postcode Trust and Joseph Rowntree.

**Action: Karen to Invite Mary Church to Board meeting 15<sup>th</sup> August.**

**6. Any Other Business**

Thanks to all who have completed their Trustee annual declarations, Karen will chase up the few still needed.

**7. Meetings**

Daphne confirmed that SEPA have agreed to give £5,000 towards the reception on 5<sup>th</sup> June.

Noted the meeting with SNH – Sally and Francesca was very positive, and they have agreed to have regular informative meetings to update progress etc.

Deborah will write up next steps from the meeting and include a date for a possible further meeting in July. The updated narrative was sent around on 25/4 which needs to be ready 3/5 for meeting with (some) SNH Board members, Paul, Charles, Craig and Deborah.

Deborah noted she also had the opportunity for an informal meeting with Francesca who noted the government focus on Place Making – a possible area for LINK involvement and Francesca has given Deborah contacts to further explore Place Making, she noted it had been an 'easy' meeting and fundamentally we're on same page.

Deborah had met with Drew Bennelick (& 2 others) from HLF on 24/4, SEFF had provided some specific issues to raise and had a positive chat. HLF have agreed to help with the launch of the SEFF film, helping with the guest list, specifically identifying philanthropic givers. HLF are holding a celebration in October to mark 25 years which will include Great Outdoors and Nature and will be looking for input. NLHF are developing a 'Nature Forum' at UK level to fill the identified gap on leadership on nature and environment. This sounds like a parallel process to the one LINK has instigated through the networking dinners. There may be some learnings from both processes. Deborah will keep in touch with Drew on this.

Stuart Housden and the NLHF staff team had all asked for a pipeline of funding bids in Scotland so we are not competing. Deborah has asked SEFF to explore.

22 May – The 4th Annual Biodiversity Strategy Stakeholders' event: Biodiversity 2020...@ SNH Battleby - Paul is speaking.

30 May: RSE lecture from Francesca - International Leadership for the Environment, putting nature at heart of decision making, short talk and then panel (which includes Mike Robinson).

Biodiversity indicator: new proposed indicator of amalgamated species indicator expected to launch in Sept (work contracted out to RSPB)

Craig advised he had met with Scott Mathieson of SEPA 24/4: previously had an informal aquatic policy forum (with SNH, SEPA and LINK) now looking to see if this is right time to reform ready for WFD final decade plus post EU legislation. This would be a 'behind the scenes' forum not owned by anyone.

**Action Deborah to explore at meeting with SEPA**

#### **LINK Meetings –**

Spring Network – Thursday 9 May, Edinburgh

Scottish Environment Reception - 5 June, Holyrood

Next Board Meeting – Thursday 15th August, venue TBC

Congress – 17 September, Horsecross, Perth

Strategic Planning, AGM & Festive Reception – Thursday 12 December, Edinburgh