



# 2022 opportunities:

UN Decade of ecosystem restoration

Biodiversity CoP15: China: October 2021 then Apr / May 2022

Climate CoP26: Glasgow: the aftermath

Climate and nature emergency synergies:

Green recovery:

SNP / Green cooperation agreement:

Public opinion

International focus; business getting on board

Biodiversity: Edinburgh Declaration useful.  
Promised Biodiversity Strategy & target delivery;  
keeping up with EU

Human right to a healthy env

We have the rhetoric: we need to turn it into action:  
nature based solutions and well being

We need to maintain the focus on a green and blue  
recovery – vested interests kick back

We need to ensure Holyrood is working for the  
environment this time round: counter delays &  
prevarication: Vhairi will say more

Blue Planet effect continues: engaging more widely &  
ensuring others use our messages: Miriam will say  
more

# Scottish Parliament priorities – 2021-22



COP26

Just Transition Commission recommendations

NPF4

Environmental principles & keeping pace consultations

COP15 & Biodiversity Strategy 2022

Local Nature Networks

New agricultural policy



National Economic Transformation Strategy

Budget 2022-23

Blue Economy Strategy

£500m Nature Restoration Fund



Good Food Nation Bill

Legislation to ban common single-use plastic items

Ban on sale of peat for horticulture

National Care Service Bill



Covid Recovery

Gender Recognition Act

Brexit in practice

Independence

# LINK campaigns 2021 - 2022

## Circular Scotland



## Save Scottish Seas



## Nature Champions



**Ash**  
Graham Simpson MSP  
with Woodland Trust Scotland



**Aspen**  
Ariane Burgess MSP  
with Trees for Life  
with Woodland Trust Scotland



**Atlantic salmon**  
MSP  
with John Muir Trust  
with National Trust for Scotland  
with Scottish Wildlife Trust

## Fight for Scotland's Nature



## **Note of the LINK Strategic Planning meeting held 6 October 2021, held online.**

**Attending:** Alan Caldwell (Facilitating), Matthew Crichton (FoES), Malachy Clarke (FoES), Vicki Swales (RSPB), Andrew Stark (RSPB), Aedán Smith (RSPB), Alison Connolly (RSPB), Annie Robinson (CIEEM), Isobel Mercer (RSPB), Calum Duncan (MCS), Beryl Leatherland (SWLG), Diarmid Hearn (NTS), Janine Ballantyne (NTS), Sam Collin (SWT), Kathy Wormald (Frogl), Eila MacQueen (ArchScot) Lucy Graham (SWT), Dougie Peedle (SWT), Alistair Whyte (PlantL), Catherine Gunby (Fidra), Lloyd Austin (HF), Alan McDonnell (TFL) Pete Ritchie (Nourish), Denis Mollison (HWDT), Helen Todd (RS), John Thomson (SCNP), Phil Richardson (ArchScot), Mike Daniels (JMT), Eddie Palmer (SBT), David McKay (SAS), Amber Connett (CIEEM), Karen Blackport (Trustee).

**Staff:** Deborah Long (CO), Vhairi Tollan (AM), Tanyara Matore (FOM), Phoebe Cochrane (SEPO), Esther Brooker (MPEO), Fanny Royanez (MPEO), Miriam Ross (CC), Alice Walsh (DO), Rachael Fairbairn (AOA), Juliet Caldwell (NAO),

**Apologies:** Craig Macadam (BugL), Paul Walton (RSPB), Duncan Orr-Ewing (RSPB), SCRA, ARC, SAGS, Pat Monaghan (HF), Coralie Mills (HF), Steve Gardner (SWT), Alastair Seaman (WTS), Arina Russell (WTS), Charles Dundas (Chair), Chris Aldridge (TFL), Joe Nunez-Mino (BCT), Barrie Fisher (KSB).

### **1. Introduction from the facilitator.**

Alan Caldwell outlined how the meeting would run, zoom protocols and break out sessions.

### **2. Chief Officer's welcome**

Deborah welcomed everyone. We had considered a face to face for this meeting, but due to uncertainty and convenience for many members being able to contribute without having to travel, we decided to keep it online, as the format worked very well last year. The meeting would have an initial session on the contexts we are operating within, before the breakout sessions where each Group is asked to identify what we need to be doing next year.

### **3. Setting the scene – where are we at the end of 2021 and where are we heading in 2022? – plenary**

**The year ahead: opportunities and challenges; LINK's strategic priorities; CoP outcomes & opportunities; UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration: Deborah Long**

*See the slides at the end of the document for all three presentations.*

We are still operating within in a topsy-turvy world. Looking at new and more local opportunities for recreation and enjoyment. This presents our sector with opportunities and challenges. The world is awake to current crises, though still doesn't know what to do about them. We want 2022 to be the year of real action. Our groups have changed a bit over the last year - Legal Governance is back in Governance; Aquaculture is incorporated into Marine; and Green Recovery is carrying on longer than initially anticipated. The groups are the engine room. We are getting some kickback from vested interests.

**Scottish Parliament in 2022: opportunities and challenges; Holyrood balance of power, Westminster and EU: Vhairi Tollan.**

There are new committees, new ministerial portfolios, over a third of MSPs are new, and a new Presiding Officer; Chamber will behave quite differently from before, and day to day dynamics will be different.

The Cooperation agreement means the Greens will support SNP except on a small number of agreed points. With the shared policy agreement and the Programme for Govt we know what the intentions are. A high profile moment is COP 26, we expect announcements ahead of it. Also COP 15 - a key task for us is to raise it up the Parliamentary agenda over the coming months. Work on the budget begins in autumn, it is unclear what influence the Parliamentary scrutiny will have, given cooperation. We have to raise our budget issues over the next few months. The draft is due 9 Dec for agreement in Jan/Feb. We have raised concerns of the lack of environmental expertise in the Transforming the Economy group. NPF4 is due to come out timing unclear – housing, energy, nature networks. Parliamentary scrutiny and consultation running simultaneously. Good Food Nation Bill, Budget Bill. ban on sale of peat and single use plastic via secondary legislation – all due to be done by June 2022.

From the Continuity Act, there is more to come on guidance, agencies and use of keeping pace powers, hoping to see more on them soon.

Autumn 2022 new SBS, hope we can influence MSPs thinking.  
Ongoing work on rural development funding. We have representation on this.

Parliamentary time and media focus will be on the national care bill, and other issues on the agenda drugs deaths crisis, gender recognition, covid and Brexit. Indy and political developments.

Parliamentary dynamics: there is a governing majority with Greens supporting SNP on all but a small number of issues excluded from the cooperation agreement. The opposition will not have the same influence in working together and passing amendments if it doesn't fit an SNP or Green priority. We need to demonstrate public support, and get in early to Government contacts before legislation is drafted. The Greens will be involved in the draft of all legislation, so we need to be upfront with some of our asks, keep in mind for Group workplans this year and for 2023 on the Natural Environment Bill in 2023 and the CE bill when it comes.

### 2021 LINK campaigns and options for 2022: Miriam Ross.

The public campaigns running as LINK in 2021 are:

**Circular Scotland** – calling for a strong circular economy bill. A bill is promised later in this parliamentary session, so this campaign will continue in 2022.

**Save Scottish Seas** – we're currently planning a new phase to launch early next year, calling on the Scottish government to protect 30% of Scotland's seas by 2030.

**Nature Champions** – initiative with MSPs will also continue into next year and beyond.

**Fight for Scotland's Nature** – with our asks on environmental principles and new watchdog largely met, we shifted the focus this year to our third ask, for legally binding nature recovery targets. We now have a commitment from the Scottish government to introduce targets in a Natural Environment Bill, due in 2023 or 2024.

What our options are for 2022 – we have to be selective as we don't have the resources to do everything. We are in the process of working out what to do next with FFSN. Now that the SGovt has said it will do what we're asking for, do we keep the Fight for Scotland's Nature campaign going, and if so, what will it say? Or do we do something different with the resources we've so far been using for this

campaign? Whichever path we go down, LINK will continue to do inside track advocacy on targets – so the question is about the public facing campaign.

We need to have further discussions with members before making a decision. We've been considering the possibility of using the Fight for Scotland's Nature framing to campaign for funding for nature restoration, supporting the work the Green Recovery Group is doing on this issue. But we've got some doubts as to the effectiveness of a campaign focussing on funding.

Alternatively, with the Scottish government working on what's going to replace the Common Agricultural Policy, a number of members have asked if LINK can run a campaign on agriculture and land management, to galvanise public support for the changes required to make farming work for nature and the climate. So that could be a potential new campaign.

We will be organising a workshop in the coming weeks to give members the opportunity to feed their views into this decision, and you can get in touch to discuss it in the meantime if you wish.

### **Q&A - Discussion**

The Political Strategy Report in preparation for the Board would incorporate the information from the AM's presentation with known timelines. It will be available to members for reference at the end of October

On the strategy for economic transformation LINK noted Government had not spoken to environmentalists or other groups beyond business. SWT had responded to the NSET consultation, RSPB had been sent the link to it. LINK had also done some cross-sectoral work with WEALL. **Action: If anyone else was contacted for views please let Matthew know**

Vicki made a pitch for a network campaign on farming and land management for consideration in the breakouts. Next year will be an incredibly important leading up to the Agriculture Bill in 2023. We are not winning the arguments on agricultural funding, and there are a lot of counter voices. There is £650m of public money for the sector, which controls 75% of Scotland's land, and major impacts on climate and biodiversity. If we don't get it right we are scuppered for years. John Thomson supported Vicki on this, we are in danger of losing out quite severely. We can use the lever of staying level with the CAP, it's not ideal, but we don't want to head down a different road. Pete said not to forget the Good Food Nation Bill is coming. if we get it right it could pre-figure the Agriculture Bill, frame future public support if we can collectively make the case that good food equals sustainable food. The EU is producing a sustainable food bill.

Mike agreed with Vicki's points and noted that forthcoming legislation on crofting reform also relates and is quite encouraging from our point of view.

NPF4 – We are expecting to see the draft document (circulating within Govt) sometime this autumn/winter timescales as yet unclear, and with Parliamentary scrutiny as well as a public consultation running alongside, we have some questions of how these will take account of each other. The Planning Group has a checklist of asks, including landscape land use issues.

Just Transition - is it just oil & gas or is it broader around reform of land use in the uplands? It is mainly about the energy sector transition to net zero. The energy recs of the JT have been agreed and will be

implemented. The Scottish view of JT is about transforming the entire economy, not just the fossil fuel sector so does include land use. There is a shift in the current PfG, responding to the JT commission, to restrict it to specially affected sectors, including energy and not necessarily including agriculture. The commission will be charged with monitoring.

Activities related to the COP 26? Juliet has been coordinating on behalf of LINK, based on promoting member activities. A summary went around from a small roundtable, to keep everyone informed. Scottish Government is expected to make several announcements to coincide, though there are few details of what.

**4. Planning ahead to achieve our priorities** – Breakout session for groups: Marine; Economics; Food and Farming; Governance; Green Recovery & SEFF; Land use; Planning; Wildlife; Woodlands / Deer.

**Reports back** - three priorities for action and namecheck groups to liaise with.

**Marine:** Sam Collin.

6 areas of work within the Oceans Recovery Programme, of which the 3 priorities are:

1. **completion of MPA network**, consultations to come next year for implementation on the remaining MPAs without management measures, public support campaign. Also engaging more about the 10% highly protected implementation – discussions ahead on how to implement those and the powers needed.

2. **Aquaculture**, now within the main Marine Group rather than being a separate group. Scottish Govt published their response to the Salmon Interactions report the previous day. There is a lot in it, consultations and regulations, and links to the Wild Salmon Conservation strategy which is ongoing. This brings in a lot of restoration and environmental management work beyond marine, riparian, energy and predator management, there is potential for other groups to engage. Expected by end year.

3. **Fisheries Management**. We have begun in discussions around joint fisheries management, are expecting some consultation on FM and remote monitoring and inshore cap on fishing effort.

On the chat Sam/Aedan/Calum: Offshore wind will be within the Marine planning strand, Group will be engaging in consultations on the recently proposed areas of search for offshore wind sites linked to decarbonising the O&G industry. Charlie & Catherine at RSPB can help.

**Economics.** Phoebe Cochrane

1. The **Circular Economy** project, again campaigning for the Bill to come forward as soon as possible, soon after the next 12 months, building on research we are about to commission to recommend top policies for footprint reduction, we will advocate using the Circular Scotland coalition.

2. The work on the new **10 year economic strategy** -Transforming our Economy. We are pushing for better consultation and more inclusive representation on the Council. 10 key points in our statement, so will be building on that in the run up to the publication of the strategy. What it contains will dictate what happens afterwards. There will be crossover with the Green Recovery Group.

3. **Just Transition plans**, that they include Circular Economy and deliver for nature.

**Woodlands** Mike Daniels

1. The **UK review of Forest Standards**, coming.

2. Advocate our recommendations for the **next Forest grant scheme**, coming up

3 increase **proportion of native woodland** in the woodland expansion targets.  
Overlap with Wildlife, Deer and Landscape Groups.

**Deer** Mike Daniels

1. Implementing the **recommendations of the independent working group**. There has been no action yet 6 months on, so hoping to get some progress. Holding Govts and NatureScot's feet to the fire.  
Overlap with Wildlife, Woodlands and Landscape Groups.

**Food and Farming.** Pete Ritchie

1. To get the narrative about **the transition to agro-ecology** into the public domain, get people talking about it. Idea of a wider LINK campaign on how to spend the £650m less uselessly than currently, the agriculture narrative to inform that campaign.
2. Producing a report, **what has farming got to do with biodiversity**, and why is agro-ecology the answer to that question. The nature-agri issue still tends to exist in silos with Govt, and certainly within public perception.
3. Then Kunming and next COP and what other groups are doing regarding **the Edinburgh process** and if work on that will raise it across government depts that are typically silo'ed.

Making sure the links between food, agriculture and nature are clear in advocacy around the Good Food Nation bill

**Governance:** Vhairi Tollan

1. **Networking and building relationships across the new Parliament.** Reaching out to new MSPs on our priorities, particularly on the Natural Environment Bill and our set of asks, setting up lots of opportunities to meet with MSPs, Ministers and new SPADs, receptions and discussion events.
2. Providing **support on legislation to other groups**, helping with the GFN bill with amendments etc.
3. Feeding early to the development of the **Natural Environment Bill**.

**Green Recovery.** Dougie Peddie

1. Work on **green skills and ecosystem restoration** complementing and not duplicating the work of the Economics Group.
2. Continue to apply our **5 tests** to Government plans as they come out, timing uncertain.
3. Combination of **funding and the current list of green projects**, advocacy around replacing EU funding and new funding arrangements like the Nature Restoration Fund, making sure we have a 'ready to run with' list.

Overlaps with Economic, SEFF, Wildlife and Marine Groups.

**Land Use** John Thomson.

1. The **Land Use Strategy** - we were disappointed by the 3rd iteration, which was not sufficiently directive and didn't adequately address the nature and climate crises. We were told the action plan would be the place for that, so we will try and influence it. Overlaps with Food & Farming, Woodlands and Deer. Rolling it out through Regional Land Use Partnerships 5 pilots being set up. The question for us is to influence their briefs, and to be involved at local level, a challenge for groups not well staffed.
2. **Land reform**, emphasis on large land holdings, and where tensions can exist within LINK bodies, depending on the extent of their landholdings. Our key point is that LR is about safeguarding the public interest in private land, to ensure it is firmly on the agenda of the Scottish Land Commission.
3. Landscape; there is a commitment **to new National Parks**, and want to influence Govts thinking, the role, powers and functions. There is a connection to 30x30 target within LINK, where dialogue needs to continue. (Chat note from Isobel – Govt likely to set out plans within the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy).

## Planning

1. **NPF4** – there is so much in it. It needs more coordination between all groups and members, The Planning Group has a checklist of issues we want to see in it, and we need to identify leads across LINK to respond efficiently.
2. **Nature networks**, regional vs national. Overlaps with the Wildlife & Land Use group.
3. **Permitted Development**, many consultations were delayed, keep a watching brief and influence where needed.

## Wildlife.

1. Continued work on the **Scottish Biodiversity Strategy**. Engaging with SGovt and NatureScot on it, making sure eNGOS are involved both in forming it and positioning ourselves as delivery bodies.
  2. **Targets**; contributing to Nature targets in the forthcoming bill and making sure they are meaningful and measurable.
  3. **Nature Networks**; continuing to promote the briefing and the film. Working across several groups on NPF4, and RLUPs, If there is an opportunity to build a case study where it has worked well with eNGOs engaging with the process, eg one of the NPs, that would be useful.
- Cross-over with Planning, Land Use and also with Wildlife Crime and Freshwater.

## Member updates.

Trees for Life: 1. Affric Highlands, an ambitious 2k (square) landscape collaboration project, based on restoration at scale, about relationships, for a **nature based economy** in that area, have 3 years funding for development and for the beginning of the delivery phase. 2. Work has started on Dundreggan **rewilding centre**, hope to complete by end summer 2022. 3. Working on an approach based on **natural regeneration as a key means of woodland expansion**, it will change how TfL operates and hopefully influence others too.

John Muir Trust. 1. Working up a **carbon emissions land tax** around CoP 26, it has traction from the Scottish Climate Assembly, the idea that land currently emitting carbon can be taxed based on its emissions, to upscale it starting with big landowners, and the funds go towards ecological restoration. 2. **Just transition in land use**, ie moving from grouse moor management to wildlife reserves, including deer management, and how this all links to policy work. 3. **Deer management** through the Deer Group looking at developing models of community hunting, Assynt larder, not just about the rich. 4. The **threat to wild land being demoted**, and driving more energy developments onto peaty soils is a concern, JMT is doing some work around existing energy consents, and looking at community wind projects and how that would meet targets without the need for large scale windfarms.

Scottish Wildlife Trust. Sam covered Marine. 1. focussing on **fisheries management and aquaculture** management, as 2 key sectors they are engaging with, developing positions around marine nature based solutions, developing policy around that. Sam sits on the Scottish Marine Environmental Enhancement Fund, fundraiser launch due shortly for launch for applications in Spring next year, the idea is that this fund is supported by voluntary contributions from marine sectors to support restoration. 3. **Oceans of value** in Orkney over last 2 years, a stakeholder evaluation and Natural Capital assessment in the final stages, hope to have something to share soon.

Dougie: work going forward, put in submission on **National Strategy for Economic Transformation**, want it to take on board the advice from Govt's own advisers and Dasgupta, that it does not get lost in

translation to next iteration. Also focussing on some of the positive announcements from Govt on **Biodiversity, on targets, local nature networks, the promise of the SBS** coming next year, and focussing on the urgency, and need for action now. Also continuing to coordinate **Conservation Finance Pioneers Group**, to build on the work of the £bn for nature, new ways of funding biodiversity coming forward. Developing the partnerships on the **Riverwoods** project. Looking to see how the new SNP/Greens cooperation agreement works and how to maximise influence. **A campaign raising awareness on Nature Based Solutions** (not just sitka and peat) around COP26 and to try to make it part of the COP legacy.

Plantlife. Launched **strategy and vision to 2030**, several highlights for Scotland, includes the **Grasslands Plus campaign**, with target of restoring 100k of grassland across the UK, how much should be in Scotland. 2. Continuing support to the **Alliance for Scotland's Rainforest** on the west coast, highlighting and focussing on lichens and bryophytes; 3. **Horticultural peat**, have funding to work across UK countries to bring extraction to an end. 4. Involved in **Species on the Edge**, delivering large scale species recovery, led by NS with eNGO partners, hopefully in delivery phase next year with impact across coasts and islands.

Froglife. Focussing on **Cop 26**, have a public facing campaign and stand at it, to make most of this. 2. **Come Forth for wildlife** project is in its 2<sup>nd</sup> year in the Forth valley, habitat restoration and wide public engagement aspects. 3. **Glasgow Green Nature** for young people, have funding to roll it out across Scotland. Have funding for **Priority Ponds**, undertaking restoration on a selection of these. A project in Ayrshire, part of a wider habitat restoration project mainly in coalfield areas. Next month have a webinar on the role of creative art in conservation, with interesting speakers from the arts sector.

Marine Conservation Society. **Cop 26 and blue carbon** has been a huge priority this year and ongoing, linking climate and ocean emergencies and importance of the ocean in climate mitigation, and why its hampered by unsustainable use, in particular fishing, will have a presence. Co-produced a report with RSPB and WWF **Shifting Gears on climate smart fishing**, part of the advocacy. Also done a report with Rewilding Britain on blue carbon, and one on MPAs looking at the amount of carbon locked in offshore MPAs. All the ongoing citizen science work around the beach cleans ongoing, working with the HYGTB coalition on Deposit Return Scheme, concern at delays, and roll out UK wide. Working through **Saving Scottish Seas** is a key means to achieve MCS's goals.

National Trust for Scotland. The **NTS strategy for next 10 years** in development for starting in 2022, much continues and looking to do more on health and wellbeing and the natural heritage benefits. CoP 26, contributing content to the **IUCN's Peat Pavilion**. Looking to do joint statements with National Trust and An Taisce on climate change. Involvement in the **Scottish Landscape Alliance** to raise Landscape up the agenda. Coming up there will be more on **built heritage on energy efficiency**, adapting the existing building stock. **Marine inshore protections** a lot of work to be done, and for NTS the proposal for a very large fishfarm site by Canna, will likely be objecting publicly to it and looking to groups here to support.

RSPB has a new **UK wide strategy to 2030**. Top line is to achieve **net zero by 2045 and be nature positive by 2030**. This will involve a few strategic shifts, working at a greater scale, more and deeper work on partnerships, working with a wider range of people, developing work force capabilities, income diversification. Currently working out priorities for Scotland within the strategy over the next 12 months, for the rest of this Parliament and over the next 10 years. There is likely to be focus on **finance for nature, agriculture reform, marine, NPF4, and wider land use, in particular forestry**.

Fidra Working on **demonstration projects, plastic pollution** and **chemical pollution**. Working on plastic pellet loss with colleagues across EU to get regulations in place with the chemical industries to prevent loss, and how to reclassify them as a hazardous material for transportation and shipping. And highlighting through data gathering through the great nurdle hunt. And a small project on plastic pitches. Chemical work, inputting into UK wide chemical strategy with a big impact on Scotland, due out next year, working with Defra on that and also working on UK Reach. Projects on chemical pollution we looking at trying to get legislative bans on certain chemicals from food packaging, and in paper, also chemical flame retardants. The best fishes project. Have done recent reports on chemical use, and certification schemes, on fishboxes. During the coming year likely to have a big workshop with retailers, pushing for the sustainability dashboard to be hosted by SEPA.

Ramblers. Advocacy is based on **visitor management and recreation** trying to capitalise on huge influx of people into the countryside since Covid, numbers have not dropped, visits to the outdoors are way up from 2019, govt is working on a strategy led by Kate Forbes. There is a concern that the funding that has come in is seen by Govt as one off response to Covid, rather than in response to 10 years of under investment, so work ahead. **Scottish paths map** is now launched, 67,000 kms, based on other peoples' data, getting it checked now, funded for one more year. There were a lot of landowner concerns to be sorted over time. On **case work**, currently head to head with Network Rail on the closure of the Dalwinnie level crossing, making it more dangerous; 9000 signed the petition. RS has had good advice from ERCS, political and public pressure is the way to go.

Scottish Wild Land Group New project with a liaison group working on a **wild land areas project** with other groups including JMT and Cairngorms Campaign, and some funding from the Scottish Mountaineering Trust looking at changes in wildland areas over time. Also continuing work on **hilltracks**, monitoring and evidence gathering within the small LINK campaign group.

Friends of the Earth Scotland. **Cop 26** and preparation for it. Planning events, working with SCCS on it, the online SCCS calendar. Campaigns: **New circular economy and plastics** campaigner Kim Pratt, working on the bill and other CE issues, and the incinerator review – there may be a moratorium, and also the Deposit Return System, whose implementation looks like being delayed. **Just Transition**, a growing area working with Sgovt and others, proactively working on ending oil and gas, a review is promised in the Cooperation agreement, have discussed possibly convening a group in LINK, ?Marine Group may be interested. Will also be working on NPF4 when it comes out.

Nourish doing a lot of work on the food and climate action around **CoP 26**, trying to mobilise sub national cities and states including Sgovt to link the climate emergency with the food system. Working with the Scottish Food Coalition on the **Good Food Nation Bill**, expected shortly getting the 5 asks into that bill in terms of duties on national and local govt to implement the right to food, a statutory food commission, and other specific targets and asks on food. Working on ending the need for food banks, there is a new Sgovt plan to come. Looking to mobilise collective action on it. Issue about the affordability of a healthy diet in Scotland, and how many households are excluded from that, so co-creating 'good enough' menus with families and looking at affordability. Work with the F&F group on **agriculture policy** and the new implementation board, and doing some work on **sustainable food policies in local areas**, organising about 20 local consultations, and the project Local food for Everyone.

Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust has been more **affected by pandemic** than most as it's so people focussed, volunteers on surveys, outreach to schools, and very grateful for LINK support during the pandemic, and grateful for any future opportunities that arise through LINK. Still not back to business as usual. Most notably been unable to bring volunteers on the Silurian, impedes data gathering without the

visual sightings, and the boat depends on the income generated by the volunteers. They are keeping going, have some new ideas and activities. This is the second year of impact, so hoping that the regulations will ease up to get back on an even keel in 2022.

Scottish Badgers As with HWDT has also been affected by last 2 years. The lottery funded project Earn your Stripes moved online within a fortnight and so reached other people it wouldn't have, young school leavers, unemployed and disabled. **Let's Notice Nature** reached 3000 people so doing well. Same strategy going forward, tackling persecution of badgers, the ultimate lesson is that it has got worse during covid. A particular area of difficulty is **tree felling**, SB has support from Scottish Forestry on some problem areas. Relations with PoliceScotland have improved, would applaud them now, and SB has new groups operating in the Borders and Lothian, areas of traditional difficulty. An application is in to replicate the 2006-09 **badger survey** in Scotland, supported by NS, NFUs and SLE.

Scottish Council for National Parks and APRS. Apart from the ongoing general **advisory and influencing** role which APRS does, worth highlighting dealing with requests from public on **planning**. On projects, share the concern on the delay to the DRS implementation. Calls into question the move from advocacy into education, though will continue with it. Have a **green belt project**, very relevant to NPF4, and a focus as relevant to a lot of other work. The **National Parks** work, a breakthrough thanks to the Greens and the agreement with the SNP has brought a shift in focus, and have some funding to help APRS influence Govt and support local groups. Also hoping to take forward interests from other parts of the country where there is a good case for an NP but not a groundswell of public support yet. Working with the existing NPs on delivering for nature protection and how they can build up their visitor management efforts as exemplars to other areas.

Cairngorms Campaign. Concerned that NPF4 may not mention **wild land as a valuable concept**. Feel its getting more important in Scotland, while sympathetic to the need for wind power, it should not be sacrificed for industrial wind farms. Next issue of the SWLG news will focus on the value and importance of wild land.

CIEEM In the midst of 2-day conference **Greening the Grey**, a lot to follow up on as a priority. Policy work: very much **NPF4** and the **agriculture consultation** coming up. Continued work on **equalities and inclusion** in the ecology and environmental management sector, have a new report coming out on finding solutions to barriers to inclusion, lots to do there. Work on **farm environmental advisors project**, bat mitigation guidelines, and many guidance notes being produced on various species and habitats.

**Closing remarks** – Deborah Long.

Making the most of the spotlight on the environment this year; underlining the **urgency for action** now: start of decade of Ecosystem Restoration decade and making the most of CoPs bounce. There are 6 key themes emerging from today's discussion:

### **Restoration and protection: Nature at scale**

- Nature Recovery Plan and Ocean recovery plan, MPAs, marine planning, aquaculture management and fundraising; deer, agriculture, INNS.
- Network completion at sea (MPA implementation) and on land
- Nature targets: 30x30 & focus on 10% highly protected

- New NP: influencing govt thinking on what, where and how they operate.
- SBS: sector involvement in development and delivery
- Nature networks: working with RLUPs. Plus Member projects eg Affric, Riverwoods, grassland restoration, Scotland's rainforest
- Just Transition Plans: delivering for nature & circular economy
- Biodiversity CoP: Edinburgh Declaration & raising awareness of nature CoP and impact / opps for food and farming
- Good Food Nation bill: food and agriculture links and reaching across silos
- Species recovery: eg Species on the edge
- Guidance on land management – farms and species

**Use of land and sea:** Agriculture and aquaculture; forestry

- Narrative of transition to agroecology into public realm: link across silos to biodiversity
- Fisheries management: future of:
- Deer: implementing independent group recommendations
- Land Use Strategy: including action plan so it delivers on nature and climate plus RLUP briefs they are given plus be included
- Land reform: guarding public interest in land use. Wild land: its role, and use
- Native woodland planting in targets: member project eg T4L
- NPF4: cross LINK: looking for support on coordination on key issues
- Woodland: UK FS review
- Paths – Ramblers historic path project

**Funding:** funding what matters

- Doing better with agric support
- Circular economy: Bill based on policies for footprint reduction
- 10 year economic strategy: getting env expertise into policy making. GR group – provide wider context on green recovery
- Funding for nature and providing sector with voice on direction of travel; demonstrating leverage potential of public funding with philanthropic and green financing eg Billion £ challenge;
- Land Tax – JMT initiative
- Forest Grant scheme review

**Logistics:** how we work / working better

- Building relationships: with eg New MSPs; Circ economy coalition; Food organisations; Just Transition Commission; Weall
- Support on legislation development / needs in other LINK groups
- Good legislation prep on Nat Env Bill
- Coordination across LINK groups on key issues – Economic Transformation Strategy, NPF4; 30x30; nature networks local and national;
- Using 5 tests to demonstrate potential impact of legislation / policies
- Cross UK members and sister LINKs

- Member strategies to 2030 (RSPB and Plan eg)
- Managing the long tail of Covid: Helping each other through LINK: opportunities; getting voices heard; coordinating powerful asks; sharing info and resources

**Public awareness:** building the voice

- current – and new campaigns: support for farming / land use campaign
- Consumers and consumer action: eg peat ban; Deposit return schemes; single use plastics
- Access to nature / wild land / railways
- Nature engagement through species; nature and heritage benefits to wellbeing
- Working with other sectors – eg art – getting others to take our messages out
- EDI – across membership and support to improve on our baseline in member survey
- Visitor management and outdoor visits in future – maintaining current levels of support

**Well being:** accessibility and justice

- Affordability of healthy food
- Just transition: fairer futures
- Healthy env and right to one: pollution; access

**Next steps:** We will have a look at the draft plans and will ask Groups to go through them at the next meeting: enabling others not here to contribute.

Deborah will come along to those meetings and help identify overlaps with other groups.

Feedback survey <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/358CR7J>