



DRAFT MINUTES OF SCOTTISH ENVIRONMENT LINK BOARD MEETING HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2012, AT THE LINK OFFICE IN PERTH

Present

Trustees Deborah Long (see para below), Paul Ritchie (Treasurer), Jonny Hughes, Helen Todd, Angus Yarwood, Lloyd Austin, Ian Findlay and Mike Robinson

In attendance Ross Finnie (President elect) – arrived later owing to train delays
Diarmid Hearn (observer), Ron Payne (observer)
Staff - Jen Anderson, Hugh Green, Andy Myles, Alice Walsh

Lloyd Austin opened the meeting in Deborah's absence owing to train delays.

He welcomed Ron Payne who was present to observe proceedings and help MCoS to a better understanding of what LINK Board is about.

Introductions were made round the table in relation to people's 'day jobs' as well as their roles within LINK, on task forces and forums and as trustees.

Ron Payne indicated that MCoS was still considering its membership of LINK hence more engagement by himself than other directors recently. Lloyd welcomed this engagement and hoped the Council would decide in favour of the benefits which engagement in LINK can bring.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Eila Macqueen.

5. FINANCE (ITEM BROUGHT FORWARD)

5.1 Funding update, Discretionary Funding, FSG report & recommendation (Paper 7)

Jen spoke to the paper. The meeting noted the grant offer secured from Scottish Government (like, SNH's, indicative only) and their decision that SNH should in future administer this alongside SNH's own funding to LINK. Alongside EFF's funding confirmed in December, this was positive news about core support and recorded a big thanks to Alice for her work in securing the funding.

In relation to concern that the 'streamlining' of grants proposed by SG, a current trend, could undermine the differentiation between the purposes of both streams, the meeting agreed to seek a formal letter of confirmation from SG that the existing objectives of their support for LINK (ie., as an intermediary, facilitating the collective voice of the eNGO sector as a critical friend of government) would continue to be considered legitimate activities for that part of the funding over time. Clarification would also be sought that this part of the funding would not be impacted by the terms of SNH's own grant-in-aid letter from Government. **Action: Alice**

The allocation of 2011/12 discretionary funding in early 2012 to the economics forum, the NPs task force, and LINK's Rio+20 contributory work, was formally noted; this had been agreed by email correspondence over the winter.

The Board approved the FSG's recommendation that the £100 subscription rate (for organisations in Band 6 with limited resources) should in future be the absolute minimum payable, given the cost of delivering membership services. This would be clarified on the schedule for 2012/13 and beyond. **Action: Jen and Hugh**

5.2 Budget 2011/12 Outturn to end December 2011 (Paper 8)

The Board noted with regret that Scottish Native Woods had gone into administration; Gordon Grey Stephens had indicated some hope of a strand of the trading work continuing under other auspices in the longer term.

Hugh reported on the budget outturn. Three-quarters through the year cash-flow was very good, with 89% of income in, 67% expenditure out and over £300k in the bank, a significant part of that



being the upfront award by the outgoing Tubney Trust during 2011 for marine project spend during 2012/13. For the forecast to end of March income was solid other than SNW's subscription (not shown in the paper which had preceded the news from SNW), staff had again reviewed and revised the budget with net savings and LINK would finish the year in good health with a surplus of around £26k in unrestricted and £46k in restricted funds. Alice reported one further change to the figures: Craignish Trust's £5k was now deferred till April at our request.

The meeting assessed risks associated with funding: minimal claw-back was a possibility with SNH funds because of grant conditions on levels of support per heading; Tubney's stipulation was that funds be used as originally intended which did not present any problem; Hugh wondered if EFF might expect a return of any surplus on the marine project and in relation to this, Jen reported discussions already afoot among the four Links about a bid to renew the EFF marine funding; the feeling of the meeting was that the marine project situation would become clearer during 2012/13.

The Board noted several important presentational points for annual reporting and reporting to members, given the difficult circumstances and uncertain future context for financial planning. It was agreed to split EFF's core support of £25k across the four months from December to March, and the first eight months of 2012/13 and to annotate the accounts accordingly. WRT subscriptions, trustees advised that members be reminded that over a three to five year period LINK's funding trajectory is going down, and that the proposed 5% inflationary rise follows three years during which subscriptions were effectively frozen at 2008 rates. **Action: Jen and Hugh**

The meeting thanked Hugh for his good work in keeping information up to date and reporting succinctly and clearly.

5.3 Draft Budget 2012/13 (Paper 9)

Hugh explained that the draft budget had been prepared in December ahead of news from RAFTS and SNW. He tabled a revised version which showed the impact of these losses. He and Jen had reviewed the current year's likely outturn as a basis for the prudent forward budget, with many headings at 'run rate' plus anticipated inflation, and salary costs based on outcomes of the December 2011 review. The meeting noted that the bottom line was impacted by Tubney Trust's advance payment in 2011 of marine project grant restricted for spend in 2012/13 and some months into the 2013/14 financial year.

WRT the terms of EFF's interest in our project work, and the likely end of year surplus on the current year's budget, the meeting agreed to raise the discretionary project fund for 2012/13 from £5k. It was decided that the figure of £10k should be allocated as staff felt most appropriate to the headings of DPF, member workshops, events in parliament; it was later agreed that the DPF allocations should include the first year's trial Civilscape membership (see under 4.3 below).

Action: Hugh and Jen

2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING (6 OCTOBER)

2.1 Minutes & Matters Arising

The minutes of the 6 October 2011 meeting (copies tabled) were approved.

Trustees who had not yet submitted signed declarations would be reminded. **Action: Jen**

Jen reported that in fact LINK had not written a letter of farewell to Campbell Gemmell on his departure from SEPA for Australia.

The meeting noted that Angus had joined the FSG which also comprised Paul, and Mike on occasion, with relevant staff) and that this subgroup would draw in other trustees and/or members (especially for the 'smaller body perspective') as needed.

2.2 Meeting with Ross

Deborah reported on the recent meeting between herself, Ross, Jen and Andy to identify where Ross could best engage and support network effort. The meeting welcomed their plans, noting that the circulated paper should read 'Scotland House' (in Brussels) rather than 'Scotland Office',

and that Andy would aim to meet civil servants here in Scotland, investigate how we might get material through contact with them, in time to report to the April meeting.

Ross suggested LINK also raise the 'Europe information channel' issue with the Minister and seek to secure his support for ongoing cooperation; from his experience this was a much under-used resource, remarkably in touch with what is being developed in the Commission, which is both of a reportable nature, and not representing a particular government line.

Jonny Hughes reported on the support available from Scotland Europa which SWT had joined when LINK decided it would not be feasible to be proactive members of Scotland Europa, in addition to IUCN and EEB; Jonny explained that SE support included attending and feeding back to clients on meetings of interest, lobbying for clients to have entry to groups, providing digests of information, and more; Jonny advised this be borne in mind as LINK explored European options.

Working in/through Europe was agreed as a substantive item for the April agenda, starting with reports on the outcomes of these approaches. **Action; April agenda**

The meeting congratulated Ross on his appointment to the Water Industry Commission from summer 2012. Lloyd said that RSPB and LINK would value continued, constructive discussion with the industry, via Lisa Webb (on RSPB land use team & Convenor of LINK Freshwater TF).

2.3 Succession planning

Helen Todd reported that her approach to a contact involved in corporate sponsorship had not come to fruition as the person had other competing commitments. Eila would be asked to update the Board by email. **Action: Eila Macqueen**

2.4 LINK SGM 2012

October's Board had approved the proposal for an SGM in March to set subscriptions for 2012/13, as a one-off means of shifting the annual approval of subscriptions out and ahead of the financial year to which they relate. That meeting had agreed to add confirmation of Ross's appointment (which LINK's Memo & Articles currently restrict to AGMs) to the SGM agenda.

The lawyer had since advised changing the M&A to reduce restrictions on when the President could be appointed; the Funding Subgroup had proposed changing the M&A to reduce the period during which a body can remain a member from 2 years to 12 months where the subscription goes unpaid. The Board now gave approval for resolutions along these lines.

The meeting noted that Jen would take plans forward with legal advice over wording of resolutions and voting arrangements. Voting would be carried out electronically as LINK's Memo & Articles currently allowed, in March.

Action: Jen

2.5 Strategic liaison

The paper circulated reported on liaison with SNH, SEPA, CNPA and the Minister and proposed that LINK re-establish liaison at a strategic level with FC Scotland and the Board agreed a number of points in relation to ongoing dialogue as follows:

LINK agenda and delegates for spring meeting with senior staff of SNH - agenda items agreed were : Biodiversity strategy; SNH's strategic review in relation to the interpretation of 'wealth' and what this means for the Agency's operations, commitments and workload; Active travel/Scottish Budget/SNH access remit; SNH's thinking on input to the current and the next SRDP; SNH remit and role on landscape in relation to renewable energy; Clarification of continuing valuing of LINK's independent voice notwithstanding transfer of LINK funding; LINK's response to SNH's invitation for views on roles which the Agency could drop in an era of increasing austerity. On the last point, the Board agreed to seek information about SNH's forward budget and frame suggestions around that so as to put SNH's invitation in its proper context, drawing on the Agency's core remit as set out in the founding legislation. Mike, Ian, Helen and Lloyd indicated interest in attending the meeting. **Action: Alice contact A Bachell, keep S Pepper informed**



SNH board appointments – Several positions on the SNH Board, including Chair, would be advertised shortly, for summer appointment. The meeting agreed that LINK should encourage people to apply and open the advert up on the LINK website. **Action: Kate MacColl**

Environment summit – Adding to the circulated report Deborah indicated that LINK was making this last attempt to find a date to suit all parties, and that if the summit went ahead, a pre-meeting for LINK players would be called. It was agreed that our 'Environment in a Time of Cuts' paper formed the basis for our contribution to the discussion. Once external players were confirmed, Deborah and Jen would look again at an appropriate LINK turnout. **Action: Deborah, Jen**

SEPA – The Board supported Deborah's proposal that LINK maintain the interface with SEPA Chair and CEO and asked staff to seek a date. WWFS (via Dan Barlow) would be encouraged to continue to play a part in ongoing dialogue. Lloyd and Jonny indicated would continue to be involved; Stan Blackley had indicated that he would attend as agendas required. **Action: Alice**

CNPA – Jen reported that the November meeting between LINK NPTF and CNPA staff and 2 board members had been constructive even around the issues of real concern, and that CNPA had encouraged the NGOs to continue to engage actively with the Park. Mike reported RSGS' plans for a feature on Parks in Scotland and would contact NPTF Convenor Bill McDermott.

FC Scotland – There had been no strategic liaison with FCS for a long time and the Board agreed that given the current structural changes at senior level it was good timing to meet with David Henderson Howat (FCS) and with Bob Macintosh in his new role as head of SG's Environment & Forestry Directorate. Angus proposed timing be arranged to coincide with prep of a LINK paper on the future of forestry and the forest estate, which Woodland Forum members planned, given changes to statutory arrangements in Wales and impacts on FC at the GB level. It was agreed to explore with David Henderson Howat an April opportunity to meet. **Action: Deborah**

DG Environment & Forestry – A meeting would be sought in the spring with Bob Macintosh in his new role, to welcome him and talk about intentions for this wider portfolio. LINK Board considered some of the issues and the potential conflict of interest in this new role. **Action: Jen**

Ministerial meeting – The meeting agreed to add active travel/NPF/physical activity indicator to the agenda, in view of the less-than-reassuring response from John Swinney to LINK's December letter outlining network concerns about the budget in relation to active travel. **Action: Jen/ Andy**

2.6 Strategic review progress update including review of LINK connections (Paper 2)

A collation of generic feedback had been circulated and indicated generally positive feedback at this stage; staff were encouraging other members to respond and hoping for at least 75% feedback. The final report would be circulated to Board and members.

Volunteers for a subgroup to comment on a brief for the external part of the survey – i.e. of perceptions of external audiences' about LINK's impact – were Lloyd, Ian and Deborah. This work would proceed as soon as possible with results also going to Board and members.

The Board agreed to stick to original plans for a Board awayday to review feedback and determine how to refresh LINK strategy as a result, and asked staff to circulate May dates and venues in central belt for consideration. The meeting also noted that Simon Pepper would be a good facilitator, if needed, for this discussion. **Action: Jen**

Deborah reported on progress she and Mike had made with the mapping of LINK's contacts with the wider community (chart devised by Andy and circulated to members in summer 2011, with limited feedback). She tabled a paper illustrating their assessment which the meeting then discussed, agreeing further updates (attached at Appendix 1) the direction of which would form part of the forward strategy. **Action: Jen**

3. Standing item: Reports back

3.1 EEB AGM Andy reported on the EEB AGM in Brussels. He had queried extent of reliance on external funds as opposed to membership in relation to independence of voice and the meeting had discussed future work programme. This has also been an opportunity to meet with Elizabeth Heister of ClientEarth, the EEB's board's new UK member, with whom Jen had been in touch earlier to outline LINK's concerns and aspirations w.r.t. communications amongst the UK



members of EEB. The meeting had reiterated the opportunities for EEB members to engage in EEB working groups, with expenses paid.

3.2 Rio+20 and Scottish contribution Jonny Hughes reported on Rio+20 work within Scotland. He was part of a small steering group including SNIFFER, SBIC and others; they had run an event in December to identify views on top achievements and challenges since Rio (1992) and these were distilled in a report to be published soon; the steering group were editing and linking to the 'beyond GDP' agenda, sustainable development and improved governance. Scottish Government were thinking about attending Rio + 20; Jonny would organise for Simon Milne to forward the finished report to the Minister with an encouragement. **Action: Jonny**

3.3 International connections & representations

Jonny had just attended an interesting London discussion organised through WWF/EEB with the DG Environment Infringements Team. EC had indicated concern at the UK red tape review of the Habitats Regulations. The LINK Board noted in relation to this, that the Minister had indicated no appetite for a similar review in Scotland, and most Environment Committee members had now signed a motion against any Scottish review.

Jonny reported that Stuart Brooks was now Chair of the IUCN's UK Committee. As LINK Congress 2011 had agreed, IUCN, and IUCN UK, were routes to influence which could be more proactively used.

Jonny thanked LINK for its nomination of him as IUCN regional councillor, for which elections were still to be held.

Deborah thanked Andy and Jonny for their very useful reports.

4. Operations

4.1 Report on Operating Plan 2011/12 Quarter 3 & KPIs (Paper 3)

The meeting noted good progress across planned activity in the quarter to end December, well reflected in the report. Jen would review the risk register and report in April. **Action: Jen**

4.2 Congress After Action Review & early thoughts towards 2012 theme (Paper 4)

The meeting agreed that Congress and Strategic Planning had been very good days, with good prep, attendance, chairing, and clarity around priorities.

Staff invited views on strong candidate themes for the 2012 Congress, perhaps linked to LINK's 25th anniversary in the autumn and suitable for sponsorship. The meeting favoured a focus on the contribution of the corporate and NGO sectors to sustainable development, perhaps with analysis of transport initiatives and active travel as one example, via the Business 2020 Group, SCCS and the 2020 targets, looking at the potential of this group to deliver for sustainable transport and active travel, the role of civic Scotland. The possibilities of linking this to: consideration of the post Rio+20 period; SWOT analysis around how constitutional options could deliver; and to place-making – were all noted. It was agreed to canvass members for further suggestions, and seek volunteers for a steering group. **Action: Alice**

4.3 LTF proposal for LINK to join Civilscape (Paper 5)

The meeting considered the LTF proposal that LINK join Civilscape to pursue and promote a Scottish focus on landscape and the EU Landscape Convention. Trustees were conscious that LINK has had similar discussions of other options (eg Scotland Europa) and had decided against these on the basis that proactive membership demands capacity with LINK and its members tend to find difficult to allocate. There was support in principle for the objective of wanting to engage with the Convention and to support the TF in doing that. The meeting decided to propose that the LINK Landscape TF take out membership for a year, paid through the discretionary project fund,



and trial whether the task force members can provide the proactive engagement needed to draw the benefits from the membership. Providing deliverables were met in the trial year, the view of the Board was that LINK should then include Civilscape membership in future core budgets.

Action: Hugh to contact the LTF

4.4 Draft Operating Plan 2012/13 (Paper 6)

Jen had circulated the paper the previous day and tabled copies for the meeting. This reflected the plans as collated for strategic planning in November, revised to reflect discussion and prioritisation there. The meeting noted the changes and agreed that the paper was more relevant to the afternoon discussions with the network at which plans could be confirmed.

6. AOB

6.1 Organisational Supporters Alice reported that KSB had not signed up for a second year and that she had approached the Carnegie Trust to invite them to consider. If trustees identified other relevant organisations they were encouraged to keep staff posted. **Action: trustees**

6.2 EET Committee Inquiry into renewables targets Ron asked if people were aware of this inquiry and Jen confirmed that it was to be raised with the network that afternoon. Lloyd reported that RSPB would anyway be making a submission.

7. MEETINGS AHEAD

26 April	Board & Networking
26 June	Board & Networking
18 October	Board & Networking
22 November	Congress
23 November	AGM & Strategic planning
5 December	Festive Reception

Draft/JA/7.2.12

/ See Appendix 1 over – Paper identifying state of LINK's connection to the wider Scottish policy community



Appendix 1 Paper developed at LINK Jan 2012 Board identifying our strengths and needs in relation to the wider Scottish policy community and where we need to establish better relationships

Group	Purpose of contact	Current mechanism	Gaps/Action to take
National politicians	Greening policy	Good ongoing action. Light: SEW. Direct: meetings, conferences, briefings & advocacy.	Continue
Trade unions	Support for policies	Limited, occ. at Congress eg, opportunities via SCCS	Need wider links perhaps?
Professions	Advice. They carry weight with Government. Support for policies.	Very limited contacts in legal & planning, reasonable contact with NFUS, Fishermen's groups. Should build relations with farmers and land managers.	Prioritise RTPi now. Consider others incl. Gamekeepers' Association. Also how to communicate messages more with them?
Academics:	Data & evidence; Can be influential; are encouraged to do 'knowledge-exchange'. LINK could influence their messages.	Good ad hoc contact with individual academics & think tanks through members / LINK now and over the years	Build more strategic relationships with key centres Prioritise - James Hutton Institute & Royal Society of Edinburgh.
Funding bodies	Influencing priorities & direction.	SEFF & ETF	Regular, formalised contact with funding councils?
Faith groups	Support for policies.	Some contact with CoS, ACTS, eco-congregations over years re legislation, hustings, events.	Continue
National bureaucracy	Influencing policies.	Extensive contacts inside govt & agencies, including Ministers	Continue
Finance & business	Developing policy work; recruiting support, counteracting antithesis between environment & business. Government listens to these bodies.	Few direct links with LINK. Members have links eg with SCDI, the 2020 Group.	Establish contact with CBIS through President. Consider SBIC? Look for common ground on issues such as NPF3 and seek support where possible.
Wider civic society	Influencing their policies. Looking for support for our positions.	Have links with SCVO, Poverty Alliance, Churches, ACTS over years. Limited. Good contact & influence through SCCS, SCVO.	Continue to look for opportunities to work with others on Governance Matters and other broad positions.
Lairdly sector/ 'the 1%'	Funding sources. Significant landowners. Ensure mutual awareness.	Nothing formal and little contact	Consider seeking annual meeting with Scottish Land & Estates.
Local government	Influencing action' on the ground' through national level contacts.	Links with ASSC, Councils, CoSLA over the years. LGTF is our current mechanism.	Currently target CoSLA, Improvement Service, Community Planning Partnerships, SG's local govt division, national political parties in relation to local government elections. And accessible activists.
Media	Building wider support for environment.	Link contacts variable: contact through members; also via LINK own presswork and events invitations.	Continue to seek to engage media interest in and awareness of our positioning.