

## **Note of LINK Network Meeting 22 January 2009**

Present: John Mayhew Chair (APRS), Stuart Brooks (SWT, BTF depute), Sam Gardner (WWFS, Climate tfc), Calum Duncan (MCS, MTFc), Helen McDade (JMT, LTFc), Carey Coombs (RSPB, ATFc), Judy Wilkinson (SAGS), Jenny Mollison (SAGS), Steve Gardner (SWT, SEFFc), Deborah Long (PL, BTFc), Jonny Hughes (SWT, LINK trustee), Lloyd Austin (RSPB, LINK trustee), Sarah Dolman (WDCS), Jonathan Wordsworth (AS, LTF depute), John Rosser (NTS), Ian McCall (RAS, LINK trustee), Dan Barlow (WWFS LINK trustee), Helen Zealley (LINK President), Jen Anderson, Alice Walsh, Andy Myles, Susan Guest, Adean Lutton, (LINK Staff).

Apologies: Andrew Fairbairn (WTS, LINK trustee), Eila McQueen (AS, LINK trustee), David Downie (LINK trustee), Richard Hill (PTFc), Duncan Orr-Ewing (DTFc), Bob Dawson (BBCT), Paul Kirkland (BCS), Alistair Beeley (NEMT), Gordon Gray Stephens (SNW), Andrea Johnstonova and Mike Donaghy (FWTFc), Robert Maund (SCNP), Nicki Sinclair (NTS), Roger Powell (SCRA).

Ian explained that Dave Morris would be off work for a few months and that Ian was acting director meanwhile. All wished Dave a speedy recovery.

### **Board Updates**

Corporate strategy: had been approved subject to a few amendments and would be out to members in mid February for sign up over 3 to 4 weeks, for implementation from April 09. Silence in this case would be taken as approval.

LINK's political strategy development: Intention for PO to prepare political strategy report twice yearly (more often if Board requires) for Board and Networking meetings and to circulate widely to all players. Draft to Parly Forum for March meeting and to LINK by 12 March for Board and Networking meetings (AM) The process was being developed to be inclusive without adding additional burdens to reps.

Ministerial liaison: The LINK Ministerial and G6 meetings continue with efforts to coordinate between them and to ensure access to LINK members. Other Ministers are being advised of forward dates to encourage their attendance. Early notice of TFs requirement for participation of other ministers would be useful. Notes of meetings would go on LINK website asap after meetings (JA)

Financials: The budget had been approved with a Discretionary Project Fund of £4.5k available. The budget would be put onto the website (HG).

Operating Plan: It had been updated for the board meeting (see website).

### **TF evaluations**

Woodland and Deer were deferred to June 09 (AY, DOE).

Landscape (Helen McDade). Would revisit Operating Plan as vision now slightly out of date. The TF worked well with the Scottish Landscape Forum which is slowly winding down. Need to look at another way forward for landscape issues. The tf has struggled for capacity and there has been a lack of committed time from TF members – difficult for task forces without major support. It had been a hard year. There was an issue of cross task force working – those at the LTF were clear on what they wanted. Some issues were not just landscape issues, eg national parks, which need input from others. Helen felt the tf worked better with organisations outside of LINK than with LINK members, though that was the TF's fault to some degree. The lack of PO support for some of the time was an issue. For the future - closer working with the Planning tfs particularly, and support when

needed of the PO. John Mayhew supported Helen's assessment, thanked her for convening and Jonathan Wordsworth for deputising. He felt there was quite an overlap between the Planning and Landscape tfs, with RSPB and SWT on PTF and the NPF and SPP as common issues. Lloyd Austin agreed on the difficulties of x-sectoral integration and that the P and L linkages were key. It was unfortunate that SWT and RSPB capacity on planning had been down, and hopefully integration would now improve.

On NPs (workshop the following day) LA noted that they were meant to be beacons of integrated approach and were not eg the LL&TNPA wished to administer agri-environment schemes themselves which was refused by Scotgov.

On marine NPs Calum Duncan reported the MTF position; recognised that NPs could help deliver coastal and marine objectives, and agreed with the cabinet secretary's logic to focus first on the Marine bill, so were not pushing for CMNPs at the moment.

Andy had been visiting as many TFs as possible since his appointment. He noted that with 3 major bills, calls on LINK to give evidence, briefings needed, that this is a time when integration is needed and is difficult, as many TFs are strained on capacity. For coordination purposes all those being asked to give Parliamentary evidence on issues of network-wide concern were asked to advise Andy and Susan (Members, Staff, Board). Sam noted that while coordination is possible, integration is another issue to strive for. We discussed the issue of LINK constantly focussing on what is current, that our follow-through on issues we advocated strongly in advance of legislation (eg Parks, SEA) is not up to the challenge of ensuring adequate implementation. Addressing this will mean shifting resources from other 'priorities'. SEA is an area LINK should monitor at least in terms of what is not being, though should be, SEA'd. NPs is another.

LINK & BEFS NPS Workshop planned 23 Jan to inform responses to (inadequate) SG consultation. On 5 Feb a meeting was arranged with LLTNPA on park plan and more – all were welcome.

### Marine

Calum reported that there has been lots happening, aided by Alan and Ylva (MRO & MCO) and the active members of the TF. There was good engagement with SGov through the stakeholder groups, that extra capacity generated more activity. On NIMAs the TF had been successful in building enough support to get NIMAs into the consultation; an analysis shows support for a biodiversity duty and other environmental goods though the devil would be in the detail. There were difference is support for MPAs with some not supporting. The bill was getting into the crucial phase. Current funding for the marine posts would end in June, there was a bid with the trusts in conjunction with the other Links to extend funding for a further 3 years. The marine campaign had a constituency of support for LINK asks. The cabinet secretary understood the LINK asks. The TF thought the handover meeting with him in October could have been structured better. The TF had a useful meeting with the Environment Minister – now happy that the UK and Scottish ministers were in agreement on planning though this was not yet reflected in the legislation.

There was good support from RSPB, WWFS and others in getting the campaign postcards out.

The TF was working with fishing interests. There were non LINK members wishing to support the campaign, the TF was looking at how to include these.

Looking ahead: SEW event, party conferences, liaison with ScotGov, civil servants, SNH. Jonny asked how the Marine Strategic Framework Directive was being integrated with the ecosystem objectives (a discussion to be continued in another forum). Andy noted that the MSFD was a good reason for funders to wish to maintain capacity.

### **Operating plan 09-10.**

Europe

- We want and need to stay tuned
- Reps, TFCs : Please use the monitoring Susan circulates, take up EEB and other opportunities – important to send them our outputs and we can feed into their work plans; note the Scottish Parliament's External Relations Ctte is active and interested in feedback. Respond to Jonny on any draft briefings and responses which Jonny circulates. EU case studies would be useful too and benchmarking where Scotland is. Jonny to please flag things up that need inputs.
- IUCN UK new three year plan offers more including on landscape – potential for big impact via our small subscription. Stuart Brooks willing to continue as LINK rep. One big project IUCN to sponsor is on carbon and peatlands; J Hughes will lead on this for 3 years; other partners envisaged.

#### Opportunities ahead

- New US President with interest in green jobs and environmental schemes; expect bigger spend there and use this as lever for increased investment here.
- Getting past the credit crunch may well offer scope for environment and eNGOs.
- Post 2010 biodiversity targets (eNGOs being asked now)
- Potential for New Deal look alikes and linking them to environmental needs

#### Threats and challenges

- Maintaining high profile for environment against context of economic downturn (framing our case carefully)
- Single Outcome Agreements impacts for legislative and policy commitments
- Implementation of EU policy and resisting the 'goldplating' kneejerks
- Less criticism may be expected from organisations more dependant on public funds.
- Shrinking £s on the ground: our policy work has to support the case
- Continuing to say what sustainable economic growth really is/should be
- Linking to international initiatives and dimensions
- Global food crisis pressuring debate on food security, polarising views between intensification for self-sufficiency UK, and the argument round complementary agency (?) services; RDP under pressure to fund producers not environment; more pressure for plantation forestry.

#### Elections / Calling Government to account / Governance

- Though we've influenced place of environment on the agenda, must press for good transposition too. Needs resources.
- SNH, SEPA accounting to Parliament? Attend Agency Board meetings? Upcoming meeting with SEPA should discuss working with stakeholders
- Manifesto work to target Europe 09, UK 09 (or later), Scottish elections 2011; proposed political strategy report (above) will order these and suggest priorities. In relation to SOAs, there is a manifesto ask for local authorities also.
- Be more cross-cutting in our advocacy and assessment: Governance TF? Could TFs do this when planning work by identifying: cross-cutting/integration of policy, follow-through needed on legislation and other political commitments, effectiveness of Agencies (TFs)
- Calman & National Conversation: take part in these debates (we have in the past, our views are being sought)
- SOAs part of governance issue; the end to ring-fencing may not be long-lived, but in the meantime we need to add our perspective to work by SCVO and others of monitoring delivery of SG objectives.

#### Task Force updates

Climate TF - Working with SCCS on Bill and topline asks and mobilising memberships also to apply pressure to PM. Working up areas such as energy, heat. Coordinating as needed with other TFs. Making Copenhagen a relevant Scottish target.

Agri TF – To talk with Climate TF. SRDP review. LFAs debate (loss of livestock in hills / future support). Engaging with Soils Framework being introduced. Food policy discussion. CAP review: TF plan seminar with others on what we want in future.

Bio TF – Launched *Delivering the Goods* in December; following up with Minister April. Work with AgriTF on the SRDP (writing Cab Sec, follow-up). Engaging in SOAs analysis and could work with others on this. Interest in proposed Nat Her legislation.

SEFF – Responding Big Lott Fund consultation to make accessible to eNGOs. Talking to HLF re new projects. Sub-SEFF meeting involving 26 folk will look at accessing SRDP.

LTF – Looking for more cross-cutting work about landscape scale in relation to land use. Also at ways of promoting these messages to SG.

MTF – Marine Strategic Framework Directive, Scottish Marine Bill, inputting to UK Marine Bill. Greatly helped by project staff and funds. Taking asks to spring party conferences.

WTF – Not planning forward strategy until March. Could be serious issues relating to forest estate coming up in Climate Bill.

PTF - NPF2 has been the focus with further work ahead in terms of monitoring implementation. Also engaging in the discussions around the single SPP. Invite reps and TFs to identify core text in existing SPPs to protect in the proposed single SPP.  
Reps, TFCs

Nat Her legislation – Lloyd leading for RSPB and willing to coordinate any LINK activity/input. Outline of likely content given. Our Deer TF had met with SG officials recently to input ideas. Govt agenda behind including a review of designations not yet clear and could require eNGO action later.  
TFs and Reps will be invited to input and/or sign up to small grouping. JA

Climate communications work – The small group proposed at August LINK Gathering had met November 08 to identify headings to recommend to members, which: will resonate with public; could be used to suit different styles of member bodies; have significant carbon impact; offer scope for creative messaging; are achievable. Next stage is discussion with Comms staff within the network on how to work these up, before circulating more developed ideas to members. The ambition of the Gathering was to move beyond Govt's messages to get at real scale of action needed, at same time as being sensitive to the problem of message-fatigue. The headings identified were:

- Eating less meat/dairy/hierarchy of food choices
- Driving at 50mph
- Holiday at home
- Transport to work/public transport options for short journeys
- Water & Energy use / Reduce / Re-use / Hierarchy of actions

Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs) – Address this by developing remit for a contract for analysis of issues of concern to LINK members and TFs. Reps and TFs to be invited to input asap. Funding for the contract to be sought from LINK discretionary project. JA

Priorities for parliamentary work to June 09

- Flooding, Climate and Marine legislation
- Eu and UK elections preparation potentially both for this spring
- Regular monitoring work
- Scottish Environment Week 09 and initial preparation for SEW 10
- Andy is keen to continue to attend other TF meetings and will always try to help with any queries

Other points noted in discussion here were: NPF2; Energy Inquiry; Pathways into Sport.

#### Scottish Environment Week

- HM hoped to see this project assessed before entered in the Operating Plan for 09/10.
- JA confirmed each SEW is evaluated in March with lessons taken on board by successive steering groups. Overall, there is wide support across the membership for the event. In terms of its value compared with say a number of parliamentary events through the year, members see SEW as an opportunity not to be missed to profile the value and role of the environment with a wide range of MSPs as well as other decision-makers and sectors; whilst celebratory in style it undoubtedly provides good opportunities for lobbying and networking with MSPs, Ministers and environment spokespeople. And SEW does not preclude the opportunity to run other events through the year.
- JM seconded the value of the Week for networking, personal contacts and building relationships for future achievements.
- Possibility of taking any core exhibition to CoSLA during the year mooted.

#### DIARIES - Networking & Core LINK Meetings

Reps & TFs Networking, **Friday 24 April 2009** (afternoon, Perth)

Reps & TFs Networking, **Thursday 25 June 2009** (afternoon, Perth)

AGM, **Thursday 25 June 2009** (early evening, Perth)

Congress & Forward planning, **October/November** (dates to be confirmed)

Festive Reception, **16 December** (eve, Edin)

JA/AW/LINK/28.1.09