**Meeting Notes- Wildlife Subgroup meeting 21st August 2018, Balallan House**

Present- Allan Bantick, Bruce Wilson, Craig Macadam, Daphne Vlastari, Dilraj S. Watson, Elisabeth Ferrell, Gus Jones, Stuart Brooks, Suzanne Burgess, Via phone- Frances Rayner and Jim Densham

Apologies- Alan McDonnell, Alistair Whyte, Arina Nagy-Vizitiu, Beryl Leatherland, Calum Langdale, Eddie Palmer, Emilie Devenport, Paul Kirkland

1. a. **Approval of previous minutes.**

b. **Updates**

Craig- Gave evidence to PAPLS on Biodiversity and that report has since been circulated. Attended the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy Stakeholder event in June in Battleby. SG response on Coul Links was very non-committal, and Protected Areas/National Ecological Network were not perceived correctly. Good spin from SNH but a poor report on progress.

LINK had a SNH liaison meeting in July, number of topics discussed with Sally Thomas, Francesca and someone from Marine. Quick meeting and outcome is set up follow up meeting

Habitat and Species group met end of July, group seemed positive on NEN.

Elizabeth- Bats met with Fulton Macgregor in a face to face meeting, where the MSP offered to take people around the parliament.

Daphne on behalf of Eddie Palmer- Eddie wrote an article on wildlife crime, using Cumbria as a case study and apply that learning to the recommendations, to what needs to be brought into practice in Cairngorms. PQs were sent across. In the pipeline is to review existing literature on wildlife crime.

1. **Link’s position on the Climate Bill-**

Call out to Frances Rayner (WWF) and Jim Densham (RSPB).

Daphne- We are seeking input from Jim and Frances on how different political parties are responding to the Climate Bill, and what are the current conversations around the submission of the bill.

Frances- Will focus on the public messages around Climate Change (CC) Bill for now due to paucity of time. While SCCS is spearheading the key asks in the CC Bill, there is a gap which LINK wildlife sub group can address. The gap is the impact climate change will have and is having on Scottish biodiversity. This can be supported by a hard-hitting report, by pulling together what is already there, which we can give to media and add to the story. Link is well placed to take the lead on this and WWF will be co-branding this.

Craig- What timescales are we looking at?

Frances- Something before Christmas, simple piece of work pulling in existing work.

Daphne- In case the DPF fund can come into play. Do a literature review for a researcher consultant to pull in the information. Or speak to James Curran to establish the link, proposal to the DPF fund

Charles- Have someone dedicated to put it together, as we can signpost but unable to put the report together. Who puts in the bid for the DPF? Which subgroup?

***Action Point****-* Daphne/Dilraj/Frances to work on the proposal and then put this to the wildlife subgroup.

***Action Point-*** IUCN produced a position paper leading up and Stuart to share the paper.

Jim- Endorse what Frances said, there are three or four key asks SCCS are working on with regards to the climate bill. Asking SG to aim for net zero emissions for 2050, Labour is supporting this, currently getting Tories to change into the play. LINK is in a good position to work on that along with the public.

We also put into the evidence when we had the consultation, focussing on land use and agriculture, while emissions have reduced it has been due to external reasons, and not just because of govt policy to reduce nitrogen emissions. Therefore, there is a need to strengthen legislation around land use. Our stage 1 submission based on the consultation may need to consider the following policy areas-

* Nitrogen Balance Sheet
* Agro forestry
* NEN (Securing our assets, planned approach to securing our assets, through carbon sequestration, and helping to adapt in the future.
* Peatland protection (Muirburn). What is LINKS position on Muirburn- Not to have mandatory licences in securing grass moors. That could go in as an impact

Bruce- Grass Muir licensing issue might be a challenge for NTS, if connecting to the principles but not on the licensing.

Stuart- NTS will not be able to sign up if Muirburn is included.

Jim- There are some key questions we need to agree on-

- Can we look at mitigating current effects now and in the future? - Do we agree on just about impacts or are we looking at mitigation and adaptation?

***Action Point-*** Dilraj to send the CC Bill Stage 1 evidence across incorporating Jim’s recommendations.

1. **Follow on from the NEN/PA workshop-**

Stuart and Isobel went back to the working group from the workshop and will be in discussion tomorrow and has been circulated by Brian Eardly. Latest statistics on site conditions monitoring.

Craig- Queried the ecological reasons on the report, more about the process.

Stuart- Birds are pretty much on top of the list, sea birds are a big part of that and takes you back to CC Bill, climate change and grazing pressure. More native species in the central belt

Allan- Queried on whether SWT are ok with prioritisation within NEN, BW indicated they are.

Allan- Reference to Sandford principle has been misapplied, the same in the case of the Cairngorms this resonates, with the Sandford principle and this can be misused. BW- We need to have people who embody the spirit.

Craig- We should have sent that paper which was forwarded to the PAWG out for a sign up.

Daphne- Are we happy with the revised paper?

Stuart- The PAWG submission was built upon the paper that was circulated in the NEN/PA workshop and the feedback received. The paper that has been submitted will be reviewed further by the working group.

Elisabeth- What is the purpose of this?

Craig- We are putting this together to demonstrate on what NEN is. Bruce has produced something on peatlands, Emilie is working on salmon and sea trout, and sea grass as a habitat.

***Action Point-*** Stuart to update in the next meeting, the outcome of the SNH protected areas working group.

***Action Point-*** Craig to confirm in the next meeting way forward with the NEN and provide update on the testing of the NEN proforma.

1. **Species Champions-**
2. **General Issues**

Craig- There are four MSPs that Graeme Dey had put forward to become Species Champions: (Alex Neil, Annabelle Ewing, Gordon MacDonald, Linda Fabiani) would any organisations be willing to offer a species to these MSPs? Buglife engaging with 4 MSPs. Daphne- We have had a couple of MSPs contact Calum about their involvement. And will be able to offer information.

***Action Point-*** Members let Callum know if they are willing to offer a species.

1. **Species Champion Event**

Craig- Suggestion that Charles Dundas speak on behalf of LINK, at the parliamentary event. The members present agreed with this.

At the meeting following points were raised regarding the Species Champion Event--

* To review the idea that we produce a cardboard cut-out, which says “I’m standing up for Scotland’s wildlife” with the species champion logo on it. MSPs would hold this up for photo opportunities. ***Action Point-*** LINK members present at the subgroup meeting ok with cardboard cut-out idea.
* Should LINK provide something for all MSPs, examples of which would be (a photo of their species/pin badge etc). There was discussion around costs, and the necessity of giving out incentives/gifts. It was generally agreed that pin badges would be appropriate. ***Action point-*** Pin badges to be given to the MSPs at Parliamentary Event.
1. **Funding for species champion role** Craig- We looked at funding over summer, looking at broadening that role, spoken to Scottish Youth Parliament, have put in a DPF extend the funding for next 12 months, board has approved, and we now have funding for next 12 months, and SC on leave and once back from his leave, will review how will continue with his other commitments. ***Action* *Point*-** Species Champion to get more involved with Scottish youth parliament and look at sustained funding.

**AOB**

1. **Update on the Environment Strategy Consultation**

Daphne- Sent an email to all group convenors/concerns, input from Marine/economics/governance/ current discussion sets about ambitions and outcomes, not in line with the NPF, they are for the whole government, which is a slight contradiction to the NPF. Indication that clear actions, clear implementation, review cycles, needs to work in line with EU environmental principles, which gives us an in, into the wider ask of Environmental Act.

Bruce- NC input to this. Ian Jardine meeting, looked at it as a rough set of ideas, the strapline is not really a vision. Happy not to include business and growth type of words in that. James Curran and BW had a discussion on having a cleaner strapline, focus on healthy Scotland.

Daphne- Asked to put forward people from LINK, they are the reference group: John Mayhew, Anne McCaul, Lloyd Austin, Callum Duncan. Daphne has seen the notes from that meeting, and another meeting is scheduled for the 25th of September, to discuss the Environment Strategy. The third meeting is about biodiversity, with SNH, they are looking someone from LINK to discuss biodiversity post 2020, no date for it yet.

Bruce- The 6-pillar thing does not have an underpinning of a healthy eco-system

Daphne- Concerns that this wasn’t thorough, we do want an environmental strategy, we agree on the one planet, and agree on the sustainable development goals and we want that to be built into the strategy, it is not just about ambition. When you look at the evidence in Scotland, we need to be doing more.

Stuart- NTS will be pushing the landscape aspect of this. Our point will be that it is a good idea to have reference framework, something like the NPF, if these knowledge accounts sit behind these key pillars.

Bruce- Few of these are drawn from different sources, and few are not.

Craig- SNH have a meeting on the 12th of Sept, some of the things we will have on the agenda will be environment act, environment strategy and LINK have been asked if they would like to input into dairy farming, crop production, and look at wildlife implications and freshwater implications. We will also focus on catchment management and peatlands, will meet with Stuart at some point, regarding this. Andy is reaching out to LINK to talk to us about feedback.

***Action Point***- Craig to ask around for people’s availability.

* Allan mentioned about LINK advertisement for CEO on Twitter

Craig- Jen’s position now open to recruitment

* Bruce- We need to reinvigorate forestry strategy, Daphne mentioned that we are meant to have a dedicated meeting with Fergus.

***Action Point-***

* Bruce to meet Charles Dundas regarding Forestry Strategy
* Daphne setting up meetings with SPAD and Minister