

E-bulletin: October 2012

Welcome to Link's October e-bulletin. Please see below for our top stories and updates from our working groups. If you would like to subscribe to our e-bulletin or submit news items, please contact [Louise](#).



News from trustees on Link's Director

For almost a year now, Elaine King has covered Jodie Bettis' role as Link Director while Jodie starts a family. Jodie has decided not to return to Link and she'll be seeking part-time work in the new year. We are pleased to say that Elaine has accepted Link trustees' offer to continue as Director full time and permanently. We'll be marking Jodie's extensive contribution to Link in a suitable way including at our forthcoming AGM on 5 December. It's great to retain Elaine to provide continuity and to advance Link's updated operational strategy. So huge thanks to Jodie and a renewed welcome to Elaine.

Triennial Review

On 25 October Link members attended a workshop with the Defra Triennial Review Team to discuss the scope, focus and Terms of Reference for the Review of the Environment Agency and Natural England. Link's Director is liaising with Defra and working with Link members and other stakeholders to ensure the effective communication of information and the development of a consensus position on the future of the Agencies.

Invasive non-native species

Link has launched a new Task and Finish Group on invasive non-native species. The group will identify the current issues associated with invasive non-native species within Great Britain, such as the legal sale of known invasive non-native species and the threats they present to our native species, as well as how these issues can be addressed. We welcome Heidi Richardson as a new Link volunteer who will be working specifically on this Task and Finish Group. The group held its first meeting on 31 October to discuss the Terms of Reference and workplan for the group.

CAP briefings

This month the Joint Links published a series of [briefings on CAP reform for MEPs](#). The briefings identify ways in which MEPs can influence the current CAP negotiations to ensure that the next CAP delivers the wide range of public goods that society expects from our countryside. The briefings cover: Rural Development Programmes; Ecological Focus Areas; Cross Compliance; and High Nature Value Farming.

Sustainable Development Indicators

Link has [responded](#) to the Defra consultation on Sustainable Development Indicators. The response, coordinated by Link's Land Use Planning Working Group, looks at both proposed headline and supplementary indicators, including those on: natural resource use; wildlife and biodiversity; land use and development; status of species and habitats; water availability; and river water quality. The response also provides recommendations for additions to the proposed indicator set, including a headline indicator on High Nature Value Farming and supplementary indicator on water efficiency.

Habitats Directive Article 6(4) consultation

Link has [responded](#) to the Defra consultation on guidance on the application of article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive. Article 6(4) allows plans or projects which may have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site to go ahead on grounds of "imperative reasons of overriding public interest" (IROPI) when there are no alternative solutions and compensatory measures have been secured. The response expresses concern that the draft guidance on Article 6(4) does not align with existing EU case-law and guidance and suggests amendments to the guidance on IROPI and compensatory measures.

Step up to being a Link Trustee

Link is about to enter a new phase as we update our operational strategy and seek new trustees. In addition, Paul de Zylva's time as Chair ends at our 5 December AGM. If you are interested in serving the whole of Link's membership as a trustee and/or as Paul's successor, and would like more information, please contact [Paul](#).

Link AGM – date for your diary

Link's Annual General Meeting will take place on 5 December at the Campaign to Protect Rural England's offices in London. The day will begin with a gathering of the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Link's working groups and task forces, followed by the official business of the AGM. There will also be a post-AGM debate, the theme for which will be confirmed shortly.

Joint Links Conference 2012

As reported last month, the biennial Joint Links Conference took place on 25 – 26 September in Belfast, hosted by Northern Ireland Environment Link. The proceedings of the Conference are now available, if you would like a copy of these please contact [Louise](#).



Meeting with Defra's RDPE Director

On 24 October Link's Agriculture Working Group met with Sarah Hendry, Defra's Director of Rural Development, Sustainable Communities and Crops, who is responsible for the design and development of the next Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE). The meeting was very

constructive and focused on the arrangements for the transition between the current and new RDPE. Link will continue to engage with Sarah Hendry and her team throughout the transition period.

National Action Plan for pesticides

Link has [responded](#) to the Defra consultation on the draft UK National Action Plan (NAP) for the Sustainable Use of Pesticides. The response expresses concern that the draft UK NAP fails to propose new measures to address the negative impacts of pesticides and relies heavily on voluntary initiatives with an absence of clear targets and monitoring. The response also outlines key priorities we would like to see addressed in the NAP, such as targeted protection for specific areas vulnerable to the impacts of pesticides.



Meeting with Natural England

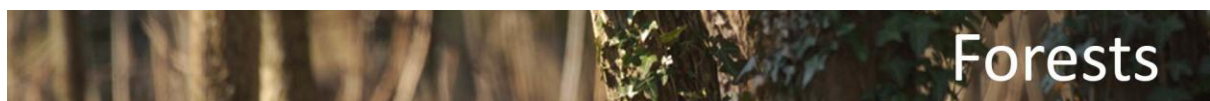
The Biodiversity Working Group held a meeting with Ben McCarthy, Adrian Jowitt and Andy Brown from Natural England on 31 October to discuss lead partners and [Biodiversity 2020](#) (B2020) delivery for 2013, discussed in the context of [Link's critique of B2020](#).

Meeting with Defra

Members of the Biodiversity Working Group will also be meeting with Defra on 8 November, to discuss the effective delivery of *Biodiversity 2020*. The group will be meeting with Robin Mortimer, Director for Sustainable Land Management and Livestock Farming, and Chris de Grouchy, Deputy Director for EU and UK Biodiversity Policy Delivery.

Critique of Biodiversity 2020

The Biodiversity Working Group will be updating its critique of *Biodiversity 2020*, which was initially published in December 2011. The updated critique will take into account policy development since the end of 2011, and identify key priorities for action by Defra and Natural England, as well as wider stakeholders in national biodiversity work.



Forestry Panel Report

Link has [responded](#) to the Independent Panel on Forestry's final report. The response urges the Government to implement the report's recommendations in full and advises that the report should form the basis of a new England Forestry Strategy. The response goes on to provide suggestions for delivery for specific Panel recommendations. We are now seeking a meeting with the Minister of State for Agriculture and Food, David Heath MP, to discuss Link's proposals in more detail.

National Forestry Stakeholder Forum

On 31 October Link's Director attended the National Forestry Stakeholder Forum. The aim of the forum was to enable the Government to explain how it is approaching the task of responding to the Independent Panel on Forestry's report, and to give stakeholders an opportunity to comment on and feed into this work. The meeting was also used to inform stakeholders about the wider landscape of change that could affect forestry over the next few years. Speakers included Defra's RDPE Director,

Sarah Hendry and the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Owen Paterson MP.

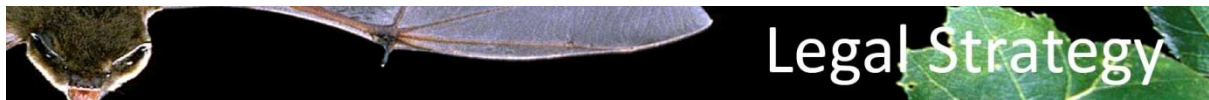


Sustainable Development indicators

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Working Group meeting

The Land Use Planning Working Group will be meeting in early November to discuss: work planning for next year; the Growth and Infrastructure Bill; and the Department of Communities and Local Government's review of planning practice guidance. Lord Taylor of Goss Moor, chair of the guidance review group, will be making an initial announcement in time for the Autumn Statement.



Law Commission review

Link is currently preparing a response to the Law Commission's [consultation paper on Wildlife Law](#). On 16 October, the group met with Keith Vincent from the Law Commission to discuss and clarify points in the consultation paper. Link will be responding by the consultation deadline of 30 November. For further information on the Law Commission review, click [here](#) or contact [Julie](#).



Marine Spatial Planning

Link has written to Jonathan Mullard, Lead Adviser for Marine Planning at Defra, and Steve Brooker, Head of Marine Planning at the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) to strongly urge against any weakening of the environmental aspects of the East of England Inshore and Offshore marine plan areas.

Natural England Review of Conservation Advice

Link attended a teleconference on 18 October to advise Natural England on developing and presenting Conservation Advice for European Marine Sites (EMS).



EFRA Committee inquiry into the Draft Water Bill

The Blueprint for Water coalition will be giving oral evidence to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee on 20 November, in relation to the Draft Water Bill.

Meeting with Defra

On 31 October the Blueprint coalition met with Defra to discuss the Water Bill and the *Blueprint for Water Scorecard 2012*.

Blueprint for Water scorecard parliamentary launch

The Blueprint coalition will be launching its *2012 Blueprint for Water scorecard* on 6 November, at a breakfast reception in parliament. The launch will be hosted by Anne McIntosh MP, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Water, and the keynote speech will be delivered by Richard Benyon MP, Minister for Water. The scorecard will assess progress against the 10 steps to sustainable water, as set out in the [2010 Blueprint for Water](#), and will also be an opportunity to build on progress and to push the urgent water agenda forward.

PR14 meeting

Link will be meeting with representatives from the Environment Agency, Natural England and Defra on 8 November to discuss the 2014 review of water pricing (PR14).

Smart Metering consultation

In October the Blueprint coalition [submitted a response](#) to the consultation by the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) on the Smart Metering Implementation Programme. Link's response urges DECC to ensure that the Wide Area Network / Home Area Network is designed to accept certain radio frequencies in order to take advantage of synergies between smart energy meters and smart water meters.



Whales Working Group Meeting

On 15 October representatives from WDC, Greenpeace, IFAW, WSPA and WWF attended a meeting of Link's Whales Working Group. The main items for discussion included the recent WhaleFest and the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (ASCOBANS) Meeting of Parties in Brighton. Other items discussed included the issue of South Korean Whaling and the Law Commission review.

ASCOBANS Meeting of Parties

Link attended the 7th ASCOBANS Meeting of Parties in Brighton. Key outcomes include the adoption of a new Conservation Plan for the Harbour Porpoise Population in the Western Baltic, the Belt Sea and the Kattegat. In addition, there was agreement on priorities for research and conservation actions in the western part of the ASCOBANS Area, which comprises the Irish Sea and the European North Atlantic.



Report on wildlife crime

On 18 October the Environmental Audit Committee published its [report on wildlife crime](#). The report calls for consolidation of wildlife legislation, greater support for the police and long-term funding for the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU). Link will be writing to Defra and the Home Office on the report's findings in the coming weeks.

Joint NGO Liaison Group meeting

On 1 November Link will be attending a meeting of the Joint NGO Liaison Group (JLG) on the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). The meeting will concentrate on preparations for the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES which will take place in Thailand in March 2013.

Elections for Police and Crime Commissioners

On 15 November elections for police and crime commissioners will be taking place across England. Link will be writing to each candidate to outline why we believe they should set wildlife crime as a priority.



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