

E-bulletin July 2015

Welcome to Link's July 2015 e-bulletin. See below for this month's top stories and updates from each of our working groups. If you would like to subscribe to our e-bulletin or submit news items, please contact [Emma](#).



Communications

Link issued two press releases in July: one announcing Hazel Norman's appointment as Chair of Link's Board of Directors; and one, with our sister Links, highlighting the heartening fact that over half a million people responded to the European Habitats and Birds Directives' consultation. The Habitats and Birds response was picked up by Radio 4 Today with Chair of the Habitats and Birds Working Group Kate Jennings featuring in a live interview with John Humphrys. Hazel's appointment was retweeted by a number of people including Sunday Times columnist Charles Clover (@CRHClover).

Following a survey of members' views of our website, we produced a brief outlining what we want based on this feedback. We are currently in the process of meeting digital agencies to discuss their proposals in response to this brief. The next step will be to commission an agency to work on developing the new Link website. The members' survey showed us that the new site needs to look up-to-date, be visually appealing, contain readily-accessible information, and have a strong campaigning voice. Content for the new website will be written in-house.

Link Staff Updates

Link is delighted to announce Hazel Norman's appointment as Chair of Link's Board of Trustees. We would also like to welcome Marcus Gilleard, Steve Trotter and Chris Butler-Stroud as new Link trustees.

Next month Link will be saying farewell to Maria Ellis, Link's Information and Office Coordinator. Maria will be starting a countryside management traineeship with natural England and we wish her all the best in her new position. Emma-Jo will be joining the Link team as IOC and can be contacted [here](#).

Joint Vision for Water Management and Agriculture

On 15 September Link will be holding a parliamentary reception to present Link's vision for agriculture and water and launch an integrated approach to protect the English environment. This joint approach is crucial at a time when urgent action is required to reverse the decline of our natural environment. The event will be hosted by Dr Sarah Wollaston MP and Zac Goldsmith MP with a keynote speech delivered by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Rt Hon Liz Truss MP.

In preparation for the publication of our farming vision, Link's Agriculture Group have been engaging various stakeholders including a meeting held with farmers on 13 July.

Public consultation

The European Commission's public consultation closed on 24 July. A total of 520,325 citizens across Europe responded to the consultation via the Nature Alert webtool. On 23 July the Joint Links published a [press release](#) in the run up to the closure of the consultation.



Joint Vision for Water Management and Agriculture

On 15 September Link will be holding a parliamentary reception to present Link's vision for agriculture and water and launch an integrated approach to farming and fresh water management. This joint approach is crucial at a time when urgent action is required to reverse the decline of our natural environment. The Secretary of State for the Environment, Rt Hon Liz Truss MP will deliver a keynote speech and the event will be hosted by Dr Sarah Wollaston MP and Zac Goldsmith MP.

In preparation for the publication of our farming vision, Link's Agriculture and Water Groups have been liaising closely and have been engaging various stakeholders including a meeting held with farmers on 13 July.



Submission of further evidence to the European Commission's fitness check of the Habitats and Birds Directives

Link's REFIT group has elected to submit further [evidence](#) to the fitness check of the Habitats and Birds Directives. This further submission brings together issues addressed in Link's previous response but in a more succinct and coherent way.

Public consultation

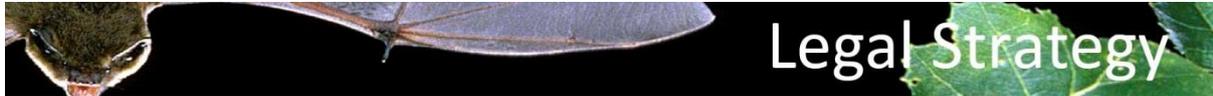
The European Commission's public consultation closed on 26 July. A total of 520,325 citizens across Europe responded to the consultation via the Nature Alert webtool. On 24 July the Joint Links published a [press release](#) in the run up to the closure of the consultation.



INNS Working Meeting with B&Q

On 23 July, Link's Invasive Non Native Species Group (INNS) met representatives from B&Q to discuss and advise on B&Q's invasive non-native plants buying standards.

The INNS Group is also currently working on a briefing paper for MPs and on gathering evidence and writing recommendations for further species to be included on Schedule 9 through the current review consultation.



Legal Strategy

Legal Strategy Group Meeting

The Legal Strategy Group met on the 30 July. Items discussed included: Conservation Covenants, Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), a draft Wildlife Bill, Nature and Wellbeing Act, Access to Justice and engaging with other Link groups, including a joint event with the Animal Welfare Strategy Group. The meeting was attended by Edward Mummery-Lockhart, the Smarter Environmental Regulations Review (SERR) leader in Defra who talked to the group about Defra's work on the Smarter Environmental Regulations Review. The Legal Strategy Group organised this talk for all Link members to enable information, skills and opportunities to be shared between all Link's policy groups.

The Group will meet again on the 12 October when the group will be joined by Alistair McGlone, member of the Aarhus Compliance Committee, to talk about the Aarhus and Protocol on pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTR) Compliance Committees and how NGOs can use them. This talk will be open to all Link members.



Land Use Planning

Land Use Planning Group Meeting

The Land Use Planning Group met on 1 July. The group discussed Brownfield Guidance; the Group's planning aspirations and a response to the Government's 25 year plan for nature.



Water

Blueprint for Water meeting with Rory Stewart MP

On July 10, Blueprint for Water representatives met Rory Stewart who has recently been appointed as Minister with responsibility for biodiversity. The meeting served as an introduction to Link and allowed the group a chance to explain some of the key areas of concern for water. This included discussions of better protection for our environment and over-abstraction. Rory was eager to continue engaging with the Blueprint for the Water group in the future.

Summer activities for Blueprint for Water

The Blueprint for Water group has produced a [plan of action](#) to promote the Save Our Waters campaign that will run throughout the summer until October 2015. The plan encourages Link members to engage with local groups to promote initiatives to write to and meet local MPs to highlight concerns about the state of our waters ahead of the final River Basin Management Plans report, which will be published at the end of the year.

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Whales Group Meeting

The Whales Group met on 7 July. The group reviewed and discussed the outcome of the recent meeting of the International Whaling Commission's (IWC) Scientific Committee.

The UK Delegation played an important role in ensuring the implementation of decisions and resolutions adopted at the 2014 Biennial Meeting of the IWC. UK Delegation scientists, including two members of Link's Whales Group, made significant contributions to the increasing work of the Scientific Committee to address environmental threats to cetaceans including climate change, entanglement, ship strikes and marine litter. Work was also undertaken to progress integration of the study of welfare implications to cetaceans from these threats.

Of particular concern was the Japanese Government's scientific permit whaling in the North Pacific and the plan NEWREP-A to resume whaling in the Southern Ocean. Matters relating to commercial whaling by Iceland and Norway also continue to be of concern.

The Whales Group received updates from other Link Groups relevant to its work including welfare and UK and European responses to the Marine Strategy Framework consultation and the REFIT process.



Meeting with the Community Liaison Group

On 8 July Link's Wildlife Trade group met with the Defra Community Liaison Group to discuss the progress of any recent CITES activities. It was reported that Rory Stewart has recently been appointed as the Minister responsible for Biodiversity. In addition, the Commission is planning to publish a 'road map' as part of the EU International Wildlife Trade Action Plan. The public will have a chance to comment on the road map by the end of July. The UK government is committed to continuing its support for the international progress stemming from the London and Kasane summits on International Wildlife Trade and will try to provide assistance to the next follow up meeting in Vietnam in early 2017.



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