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*"Bringing together organisations in the UK to protect and enhance wildlife and landscape, and to further the quiet enjoyment and appreciation of the countryside."*



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Wildlife and Countryside Link is a registered charity (1107460) and a company limited by guarantee (3889519) registered in England and Wales

*Letter from the Chair...*

Dear Members,

The first quarter of 2007 has seen the long awaited publication of the Marine Bill White Paper, and Link continues to urge the Government to publish a full Marine Bill early in the next Parliamentary session. The recent grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Tubney Charitable Trust to appoint a full time Marine Policy and Campaigns Co-ordinator to support Link's Marine Bill campaign will increase capacity within the Secretariat and ensure that we are getting our message out clearly over the next few years as this process continues.

During the quarter the Biodiversity Working Group joined forces with Wales Environment Link to publish the first annual assessment of progress towards the Government's target of halting biodiversity loss by 2010, based on the indicators set out in the Joint Links 2010 leaflet. The long awaited outcome of the saga of the Rural Development Programme for England 2007 - 2013 was also announced in March and Link is continuing to monitor developments in this area, particularly around concerns regarding the potential impact on Higher Level Scheme agreements.

Finally, in 2006, we asked you for your comments on this quarterly report. In response to the feedback received we plan to change how we communicate with the membership over the coming months and as a result this will be the last Quarterly Report produced.

We are currently looking at the best way in which to communicate with our members, and so if you have any suggestions you'd like to make please let Link know!

Best wishes,



Dr. Hilary Allison

# Working Groups



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## Biodiversity

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An away day for the Executive and Staff helped NIEL on its way for strategic planning for the next seven years, and affirmed the need to be active politically. Task Forces on Marine, Archaeology, Climate Change and Waste have been the most active in the past three months. NIEL still awaits news on the Review of Environmental Governance; the report is now due in May.



### Wales Environment Link (WEL)

WEL members had their last six-monthly meeting with the Minister for the Environment, Planning and Countryside ahead of May's Assembly Elections. The agenda included measuring CO<sub>2</sub> impacts of Welsh strategies, zero carbon homes, links between the Wales Environment Strategy and the Wales Spatial Plan, coastal access and landscape characterisation work. In March, three members represented WEL at an oral evidence session with the Environment, Planning and Countryside Committee on implementation of the Environment Strategy. A supporting paper was submitted, which illustrated how well implementation of the action plan has been advancing to date, from the perspective of the environmental voluntary sector.

A number of WEL consultation responses have been drawn up recently, including responses to the UK's Draft Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2007; the Strategic Action Plan for the Voluntary Sector Scheme and the Local Service Boards/Local Service Agreements consultation. WEL's Planning Working Group also responded to the Planning for Climate Change consultation. WEL's Election Campaign working group provided the four main political parties in Wales with feedback on their pre-manifesto publications. The group is now awaiting the publication of the final manifestos to see how much influence WEL's campaign work has had.

## News from the Secretariat



### Management Committee Meeting

The first Management Committee meeting of 2007 was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> March at Link's offices. Issues discussed at the meeting included Link's quarterly accounts and projected year-end figures, the recommendations of the Forward Planning process of last year, partnership working with like-minded coalitions, and the 2007 workplans of each Working Group and Task Force.

The next Management Committee meeting is scheduled for 27<sup>th</sup> June 2007 at Link's offices.



### Other Link news

Following the successful application for funds for a full time Marine Policy and Campaigns Co-ordinator (for 2-3 years) to facilitate Link's Marine Task Force and ensure our campaign for comprehensive legislation is successful, there are some expected staff changes as from May this year. Annie Smith - currently Policy and Campaigns Co-ordinator - will take up the new position of Marine Policy and Campaigns Co-ordinator, and will be working full time on Link's marine campaign. Jodie Bettis, - currently Link's Information and Office Co-ordinator - will be promoted to Policy and Campaigns Co-ordinator. As a result, we are currently recruiting for an Information and Office Co-ordinator (see our website for details - closing date 19<sup>th</sup> April).

As reported last month, we are currently reviewing some of our methods of communicating with our membership. The Link quarterly report has been produced by the Secretariat for many years and has taken on many formats and incarnations. We are always looking to improve our services and are asking quarterly report recipients to give us their feedback over the next couple of editions. If you have any comments on the quarterly report or would like to join the mailing list, please contact the Information and Office Co-ordinator in the Link office.

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An away day for the Executive and Staff helped NIEL on its way for strategic planning for the next seven years, and affirmed the need to be active politically. Task Forces on Marine, Archaeology, Climate Change and Waste have been the most active in the past three months. NIEL still awaits news on the Review of Environmental Governance; the report is now due in May.



### Wales Environment Link (WEL)

WEL members had their last six-monthly meeting with the Minister for the Environment, Planning and Countryside ahead of May's Assembly Elections. The agenda included measuring CO<sub>2</sub> impacts of Welsh strategies, zero carbon homes, links between the Wales Environment Strategy and the Wales Spatial Plan, coastal access and landscape characterisation work. In March, three members represented WEL at an oral evidence session with the Environment, Planning and Countryside Committee on implementation of the Environment Strategy. A supporting paper was submitted, which illustrated how well implementation of the action plan has been advancing to date, from the perspective of the environmental voluntary sector.

A number of WEL consultation responses have been drawn up recently, including responses to the UK's Draft Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2007; the Strategic Action Plan for the Voluntary Sector Scheme and the Local Service Boards/Local Service Agreements consultation. WEL's Planning Working Group also responded to the Planning for Climate Change consultation. WEL's Election Campaign working group provided the four main political parties in Wales with feedback on their pre-manifesto publications. The group is now awaiting the publication of the final manifestos to see how much influence WEL's campaign work has had.

## News from the Secretariat



### Management Committee Meeting

The first Management Committee meeting of 2007 was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> March at Link's offices. Issues discussed at the meeting included Link's quarterly accounts and projected year-end figures, the recommendations of the Forward Planning process of last year, partnership working with like-minded coalitions, and the 2007 workplans of each Working Group and Task Force.

The next Management Committee meeting is scheduled for 27<sup>th</sup> June 2007 at Link's offices.



### Other Link news

Following the successful application for funds for a full time Marine Policy and Campaigns Co-ordinator (for 2-3 years) to facilitate Link's Marine Task Force and ensure our campaign for comprehensive legislation is successful, there are some expected staff changes as from May this year. Annie Smith - currently Policy and Campaigns Co-ordinator - will take up the new position of Marine Policy and Campaigns Co-ordinator, and will be working full time on Link's marine campaign. Jodie Bettis, - currently Link's Information and Office Co-ordinator - will be promoted to Policy and Campaigns Co-ordinator. As a result, we are currently recruiting for an Information and Office Co-ordinator (see our website for details - closing date 19<sup>th</sup> April).

As reported last month, we are currently reviewing some of our methods of communicating with our membership. The Link quarterly report has been produced by the Secretariat for many years and has taken on many formats and incarnations. We are always looking to improve our services and are asking quarterly report recipients to give us their feedback. If you have any comments, please contact the Information and Office Co-ordinator in the Link office.

## Wildlife and Countryside Link

