

E-bulletin July 2014

Welcome to Link's July 2014 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 [Morwenna](#).



Blueprint meeting with Minister Dan Rogerson

A group of Blueprint for Water members met Dan Rogerson on the 16 July to discuss the water abstraction reform. Minister Dan Rogerson seemed interested in understanding better our thoughts on water abstraction and other related issues such as dredging. He said that dredging should only be considered in specific cases and that this is not a "one size fits all" solution. He was keen to engage with us in the future if we produced a new PR. He also encouraged Blueprint members to produce manifestos with water related issues (i.e. request for an abstraction bill) prior to the next general election..

Blueprint meeting with Ofwat

The Blueprint for Water group met Cathryn Ross, Ofwat Chief Executive and Nicci Russell Director of Parliamentary and Public Affairs on the 25 July. Cathryn praised the work done by the Customer Challenge Group (CCG) and largely positive engagement with other groups, including members of the Blueprint for Water. Even though she recognised there is still much work to do to strengthen links amongst the groups and improve process transparency. The Blueprint group raised their concerns about the accuracy of information provided by water companies and requested to have a broader environmental and experienced representation at the Board.

Trade meeting with the Crown Prosecution Service

On 7 August the Trade group will be meeting with Sue Hemmings, Head of the Special Crime and Counter Terrorism Division who has been appointed Senior Wildlife Champion. The group will be discussing training of specialist prosecutors, attendance at specialist training days and how the Trade group can help the CPS.

Marine meeting with Defra and the IWC Commissioner

On 25 July Link's Whales Group met with Defra's Species Protection Team and the UK IWC Commissioner Nigel Gooding to discuss the resolutions which will be put forward at the International Whaling Commission meeting in September.

Marine Charter Parliamentary Briefing

Link has produced a [parliamentary briefing](#) as part of the marine charter campaign. Copies of the briefing have been posted to all Members of Parliament and the House of Lords. The full list of supporting parliamentarians can be viewed on [Link's website](#).



Agriculture Working Group Workshop

The Agriculture Working Group (AWG) met on 31 July to discuss the key components required to achieve a better food and farming system. The meeting was very productive, with attendance from Link members representing nature conservation, access and animal welfare interests. The group will now review the outcomes from the meeting and develop a strategy over the next few months.



Terrestrial Biodiversity Group

The Terrestrial Biodiversity Group held a webinar on 16 July at which items discussed included the Campaign for the Farmed Environment and developments within the TBG.

Biodiversity Indicators

Link is liaising with Defra regarding its plans to update and develop the UK and England Biodiversity Indicators that it publishes each year. In particular, Defra is working on developing a methodology to reach an estimate of public sector expenditure on biodiversity using a set of specific indicators. For further information contact [Kirsten Loveday](#).



The Link INNS Task and Finish Group came to a close at the end of June. The INNS work will continue but primarily outside Link. For more information about current INNS work please contact Kay Haw at the Woodland Trust: KayHaw@woodlandtrust.org.uk



Land Use and Planning Working Group meeting

The group met on 9 July to discuss current issues such as the Infrastructure Bill, fracking and biodiversity offsetting.



Criminal Justice and Courts Bill

The relevant clauses of Part 4 of the Criminal Justice and Courts Bill (Judicial Review) were debated in Committee in the Lords on 30th July. Link's amendment was tabled by Lord Beecham and Lord Kennedy (and supported by others, including Lord Marks of Henley on Thames) but resisted by Lord Faulks QC (Minister of State (Ministry of Justice)). The amendment was consequently withdrawn but the Government agreed to reflect on the points during the Recess and report back. Report stage in the House of Lords is scheduled for 20th October 2014.

Infrastructure Bill

Clause 16 of the Infrastructure Bill has caused some concern amongst Link members because, as drafted, it could result in species control agreements, and orders to combat invasive non-native species, being applied to species that are extinct in the UK, because they are not currently resident.

Furthermore, any native species becoming extinct in the future and species that may naturally colonise our shores under a changing climate would also be classified as non-native. The Bill also defines as non-native certain native species included in Schedule 9 of the 1981.

Following publication of a briefing involving a number of Link members, Baroness Parminter tabled amendments at Committee stage. These were withdrawn after the Minister advised that a consultation would be conducted on a Code of Practice governing how Clause 16 is to be applied. Link members and others are seeking a meeting with the Minister before Report Stage to discuss appropriate amendments to address their concerns. The Infrastructure Bill is yet to pass through the House of Commons so further opportunities will exist to address this issue.

For further information, contact [Sheila Wren](#) and [Richard Benwell](#).



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Joint Links teleconference

Marine officers from the Joint Links attended a teleconference on 22 July to discuss UK-level marine issues such as the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the development of an ecologically coherent network of marine protected areas.

South Marine Plan vision

On 31 July Link submitted a response to the Marine Management Organisation's consultation on the [Draft Vision and Objectives for the South Inshore and Offshore Marine Plan Areas](#).



The 25 year plan

In March 2014 the Natural Capital Committee proposed the idea of a long term plan (25 years) for maintaining and improving our natural capital. Link has organised a meeting for 16 September with Nick Barter, Head of the Natural Capital Committee Secretariat at Defra, to discuss the 25 Year Plan and members' contribution in order to put together a framework for protecting and improving natural capital.



Meeting with Minister Dan Rogerson

A group of Blueprint for Water members met Dan Rogerson on 16 July to discuss water abstraction reform. The Minister expressed an interest in better understanding our position on water abstraction and other related issues, such as dredging. He was keen to engage with the Blueprint

over a new Price Review analysis and encouraged Blueprint members to produce manifestos on water related issues prior to the next general election.

Meeting with Ofwat

The Blueprint for Water met Cathryn Ross, Ofwat Chief Executive, and Nicci Russell, Ofwat Director of Parliamentary and Public Affairs on 25 July. Ms Ross commended the work carried out by the Customer Challenge Group (CCG) and appreciated the positive engagement from other groups, including members of the Blueprint for Water, while recognising that more work is needed to strengthen links amongst the groups and improve transparency. The Blueprint raised its concerns about the accuracy of information provided by water companies and requested a broader environmental and experienced representation on the Board.



Meeting with Defra and the IWC Commissioner

On 25 July Link's Whales Group met with Defra's Species Protection Team and the UK IWC Commissioner Nigel Gooding to discuss the resolutions which will be put forward at the International Whaling Commission meeting in September.

Whales Working Group meeting

Link's Whales Group met on 25 July to prepare for the meeting with Defra and discuss a number of issues including Greenland's catch limits, Icelandic whaling and the International Court of Justice ruling on Japan's scientific whaling programme.



Meeting with the CPS

On 7 August the Trade group will be meeting with Sue Hemmings, Head of the Special Crime and Counter Terrorism Division at the Crown Prosecution Service, who has been appointed Senior Wildlife Champion. The group will be discussing specialist prosecutors and how the group can help the CPS.

