

## Inside the Issue

**1** Letter from the Chair

**2** **Working Groups**  
Farming & Rural  
Development WG  
Land Use Planning  
WG

**3** **Working Groups**  
Land Use Planning  
WG (cont)  
- PPG  
- Minerals  
Wildlife & Trade

**4** **Working Groups &  
Task Forces**  
Wildlife & Trade WG  
(cont)  
Whale Group  
Marine Nature Cons.  
Task Force  
Bycatch

**5** **Task Forces**  
Bycatch (cont'd)  
Water Task Force  
DEFRA - Haskin's  
Review of Rural  
Delivery  
Arrangements

**6** **Sister Links**

**7** **Organisational  
Development  
Contacts**

In the text Link documents  
are in italics and underlined.

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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



## Quarterly Report October-December 2002

### Letter from the Chair

It was good to see so many of you in December at the Link Annual General Meeting, and for drinks afterwards. I enjoyed meeting so many people from a wide range of Link members.

At the meeting we thanked both David Bowles from the RSPCA and Patrick Begg from the National Trust for their service on the Management Committee and we welcomed John Everitt from the Wildlife Trusts who was elected onto the Committee for the first time. The Committee is critical to the strategic management of Link and Link's long-term success is due to the inputs from the members. If anyone is considering volunteering for the Committee next year, please talk to me, or Gwyn Williams the Vice Chair, or anyone on the Committee, or Pippa Langford our Director. As I said at the AGM this will be my last year as Chair.

Looking to policy work carried out during the last quarter of 2002 we made some significant progress. The Wildlife and Trade group were particularly successful in gaining greater protection from International Trade for several marine species.

Link members are working on two bills during the current session of Parliament. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill is speeding through the Commons and Link members have been working hard but with little visible success immediately apparent. There is still a lot more to do when the Bill reaches the Lords and in pressing home some of the changes in subsequent policy guidance and regulations. The Link Water Task Force is awaiting the Water Bill and has already been actively lobbying Peers and MPs and put together a comprehensive briefing pack with support from 11 of the Link members.

DEFRA announced two reviews in November, one of the progress of the Rural White Paper and the second of Rural Delivery Arrangements by Lord Haskins. We have set up meetings with Richard Wakeford of the Countryside Agency and Lord Haskins and his team to look at the latter review. Please contact Pippa Langford if you would like to feed in thoughts.

Our Office and Information Co-ordinator, Jen Bolton is has gone on maternity leave and we have appointed Anna Rackett to cover for her. Anna has previously worked in offices in Poland and London.

I hope that 2003 proves to be a good year for Link, wildlife and the countryside

Best Wishes

Tony Burton

# Working Groups

## Farming and Rural Development WG

The last quarter of 2002 was one of mixed progress. Link's inputs into DEFRA's review of agri-environment schemes received a favourable response, but overall there were worrying signs from Brussels of a lack of progress on the Mid Term Review (MTR) of the CAP.

Link members worked very hard on the Steering group for the review of the Agri-Environment Schemes Review. There were three meetings of the steering group with significant work on the proposals between the meetings by many Link members. The group submitted many proposals for inclusion within the scheme, many of which are reflected in the pre-pilot scheme.

The government published its "Sustainable Farming and Food Strategy" on the 12<sup>th</sup> December. It was generally acknowledged to have followed up the recommendations from the Curry Commission. Progress is to be monitored by the "strategy implementation group" chaired by Sir Donald Curry and which includes Graham Wynne from the RSPB.

The ERDP consultation group met on the 10<sup>th</sup> December. Link members held a pre meeting to discuss priorities and the papers of the meeting. There were concerns that if more funds were sought for additional schemes within the plan, then there would not be sufficient to fund the Agri environment schemes in full. Members have made many comments about the ELS (or broad and shallow scheme as it used to be known), encouraging DEFRA to include historic environment features amongst many other suggestions.

The second consultation on the Review of Agri Environment Schemes Framework document was published on the 16<sup>th</sup> December, Link members agreed to co-ordinate their responses in the New Year. The consultation reviews many of the issues Link has already raised with Defra and reflects many of our concerns.

In December DEFRA also launched a consultation on an animal health and welfare strategy. The Link members concerned with animal welfare greeted this with dismay. The document is dominated by concerns for animal health, in relation to food safety, and includes little on animal welfare. The Link Farming group will not be developing a joint response to this consultation, however the members that are concerned agreed to circulate their responses.

Some Link members have submitted responses to the consultation on the "little red tractor" scheme. The original scheme had no environmental benefits, yet was promoted as being good for the British countryside. Link members expressed concern that even with revisions the scheme would not be sufficiently demanding to secure any environmental benefits.

Martin Harper of Plantlife resigned from the Chair of the group at the end of 2002, as he is now the Chair of the new Biodiversity group. If anyone who is active in farming would like to chair the group, please could you contact the Link Secretariat.

Finally the Link Farming group is losing Georgina Dobson from CPRE as she is leaving CPRE to go to New Zealand, we wish Georgina luck and would like to thank her for all the work she has done with the group. We hope to see her again in the future.

### Activities

The Farming and Rural Development group met on 24<sup>th</sup> September, no meetings were held in October - December

### External meetings

ERDP consultation Group meeting 10<sup>th</sup> December 2002

Lord Whitty Sustainable Food and Farming Contact Group meeting, 24<sup>th</sup> October

DEFRA Agri Environment Schemes review meetings 17<sup>th</sup> September, 10<sup>th</sup> October, 8<sup>th</sup> November

### **Activity Forecast**

Response to consultation on the future of Agri-Environment Schemes. Deadline 28<sup>th</sup> February 2003

DEFRA Agri Environment Schemes review meeting Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2003

Finalise Workplan for 2003

## Land Use Planning WG

The government's intention to change the planning system was clearly indicated in the Queen's Speech. This was confirmed when the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill was published. Due to the very short timescale for the Bill within the Commons Link members exchanged briefings but did not issue a common Link briefing on the Bill. Members agreed to work more closely when the Bill progresses to the Lords, where it is expected that there will be more time for debates on issues of interest to Link members.

Link members collaborated on a statement on PPG7. The PPG will become a PPS when it is revised. Link members thought that it was important to state our case early, before the launch of the public consultation on the PPG, and to make our case widely known.

Link members considered the issues surrounding the government's consultation on expansion of airports. It was concluded that there are already many other players who are tackling this issue with considerable resources, however the members wished to issue a joint statement to indicate the strength of the opposition to proposals. A Link statement was drafted and circulated for comment and has been in the New Year.

The Link members were alerted to adjustments in the work of the Countryside Agency regarding planning through a letter to Ruth Chambers CNP. Link contacted Tony Hams of the Board to request a meeting to discuss this in more detail. This will be followed up in the New Year.

# Working Groups

## Meetings

Link LUP meeting 9<sup>th</sup> October, 8 attended from 6 organisations

Link LUP meeting 12<sup>th</sup> November, 7 attended, 6 organisations

Link LUP meeting 16<sup>th</sup> December, 7 attended, 6 organisations

### Activity Forecast

Link Land Use planning group meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> October

Finalise Link statement on PPG7

Finalise Link statement on aviation

Link meeting with Lord Rooker

Confirm workplan for 2003

Link briefings on Bill prepared for stages within the House of Lords

## PPG9

Towards the end of the year the group learned that ODPM, DEFRA and EN will all be involved in some way in the drafting of the new PPS9. The group is developing a detailed paper from its initial list of key points, which we hope will serve as a constructive contribution to the drafting process. We expect the PPG9 revision will consist of a Planning Policy Statement (PPS) accompanied by a Legal Circular as well as Good Practice Guidance. A constructive meeting was held with Jonathan Price of EN in December, and meetings will be sought with the departments early in the new year.

### Meetings

9/10 - PPG9 group meeting

12/11 - PPG9 group meeting

5/12 - PPG9 group meeting

16/12 - meeting with Jonathan Price EN

### Activity Forecast

Agreement of scoping paper

5/3 Meeting with Martin Capstick, DEFRA

Meeting with ODPM

## Minerals

In October members of the Minerals group met with the minerals group of the POS, to discuss issues including the Aggregates Levy and Sustainability Fund (introduced in April), and recently revised Aggregates Supply Guidelines.

Opportunities to gauge the attitudes of industry and to influence the types of projects considered may arise through the WRAP Aggregates Forum. Members attended the first forum meeting in November, which looked at barriers to the use of recycled aggregates.

MPG1 (General Considerations and the Development Plan System) and MPG6 (Guidelines for Aggregates Provision in England) are both due to be revised - further information is awaited.

### Activities

22<sup>nd</sup> October - meeting with POS Minerals Topic Group

6<sup>th</sup> November - WRAP Aggregates Forum

### Papers

Response to the Government's consultation on the revision of national and regional guidelines for aggregates provision in England 2001-2016

### Activity Forecast

29/1- Minerals group meeting

Meeting with HMCE regarding the effects of the Aggregates Levy

28/3 - meeting with DEFRA regarding projects supported by the Sustainability Fund

## Wildlife & Trade

The main focus of the group's work in the fourth quarter (as indeed for the rest of 2002) was the 12<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties to CITES, which took place in Santiago, Chile in November. Michael Meacher was swayed by the group's sustained request that an NGO representative should be included on the UK delegation to the CoP, and the group asked Arthur Lindley of the RSPCA to take on this role.

Many other group members also travelled to the CoP and continued working to secure several positive outcomes. The UK government's proposal to list the basking shark on Appendix II was passed (albeit narrowly), along with a joint proposal from the Philippines and India for Appendix II listing of the whale shark. Japanese whaling proposals (for downlisting of Minke and Brydes Whale populations) were defeated decisively, and a zero catch quota was imposed for the Black Sea bottlenose dolphin (a tremendous result, following the rejection of Georgia's initial proposal that the population be uplisted to Appendix I). A Nicaraguan and Guatemalan proposal to list bigleaf mahogany on Appendix II was also approved. Proposals by three out of five southern African countries to allow limited trade in ivory stocks and other elephant products did succeed, but only with the addition of significant control measures. A worrying Norwegian proposal on Sustainable Use of species listed under CITES failed, as did the UK's attempt to help the Cayman Turtle Farm become registered as a captive breeding operation. Cuba's proposal to downlist its hawksbill turtle population had been withdrawn in advance of the CoP. Disappointingly, Australia's proposal to list Patagonian and Antarctic toothfish on Appendix II was withdrawn following the adoption of a Chilean resolution on cooperation between CITES and CCAMLR.

### Meetings/events

16th October - Meeting with Elliot Morley and UK CITES team

November - CITES CoP12, Santiago, Chile

# Working Groups and Task Forces

## Activity Forecast

15<sup>th</sup> January 2003 - CITES debrief with DEFRA and UK team

26<sup>th</sup> January 2003 - Wildlife and Trade group meeting

3<sup>rd</sup> March 2003 - Ivory issues meeting with DEFRA

Response to COTES review consultation (deadline 4/4)

22<sup>nd</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> April 2003 - CITES Standing Committee meeting

CITES Animals Committee meeting (date unknown)

## Whale Group

Following the rejection of US and Russian requests for indigenous subsistence whaling quotas at Shimonoseki, the US called a special meeting which was held in Cambridge in October. This had the disastrous outcome through a series of highly questionable votes of Iceland's readmission to the IWC with a stated reservation to the moratorium on commercial whaling. America's request for a bowhead whale quota was passed by consensus at the meeting (although Japan did not join it), with some alarming amendments to the text. Japan's request for coastal quotas was rejected through a vote. It was felt that the outcomes of the special meeting, and the intersessional meeting on the RMP held directly after it, could have implications for whale proposals at CITES CoP12, which, again, many group members attended. However, as stated above Japan's whaling proposals were rejected and protection was secured for the Black Sea bottlenose dolphin.

Sharing of intelligence on Norwegian whaling and the recently resumed international trade in whale products continued, and towards the end of the year, the group teamed up with Scottish

Environment LINK's Marine Task Force on two letters to Jack Straw and Elliot Morley.

The first requested that the UK stand by its moratorium on Norway carrying out its Minke whale survey in UK waters, while the second expressed concern regarding recent cetacean strandings associated with military activity. The groups also responded to a rather unsatisfactory reply from the UK's Commissioner to the IWC on the first of these issues.

## Meetings

7<sup>th</sup> October 2002 - Whaling forum

14<sup>th</sup> October 2002 - IWC Special meeting and RMP intersessional meeting, Cambridge

24<sup>th</sup> October - Whale group meeting

## Letters

To European CITES Scientific and Management Authorities, urging support for the listing of the Black Sea bottlenose dolphin

Two letters from WCL and SEL to Richard Cowan on denying whaling nation (Norwegian) scientists access to UK waters for cetaceans surveys

From WCL and SEL on Naval sonar and cetaceans.

## Activity forecast

28<sup>th</sup> January 2003 - Whale group meeting

6<sup>th</sup> May 2003 - Whaling forum

9-11<sup>th</sup> April 2003 - ASCOBANS Advisory Committee, Bonn

May?? - IWC in Berlin

## Marine Nature Conservation Task Force

In November DEFRA indicated that a new legislative sub-group of the RMNC would be formed early in the new year, which would examine the need for legislation for the marine environment with the aim of reporting in 2004/5. It was therefore decided that the marine task force should work through and alongside this sub-group and campaign over the next

two years to secure government commitment to legislation for the marine environment.

Group members continued to work with the existing RMNC groups. The paper prepared by the criteria group was accepted by the RMNC working group in November, and will now be used in the Regional Seas Pilot.

The official public consultation on the Marine Stewardship Report was launched at a conference in November entitled: Marine Stewardship and Integrated Coastal Zone Management. The group produced discussion papers on Marine Spatial Planning and ICZM which were supplied to conference delegates. It is planned that these papers will be more widely disseminated with requests for feedback. Members of the ICZM sub-group met with DEFRA's Sam Rowbury in December to discuss progress on implementation of the EU Recommendation on ICZM.

The group was briefed by John Roberts and Chris Tompkins of DEFRA on outcomes for oceans of the recent World Summit on Sustainable Development and the EU Marine Strategy.

## Bycatch Task Force

The bycatch sub-group continued to put pressure on the UK government and the EC for a regulation to limit bycatch, including a management framework as recommended in ICES (ACE) and STECF (SGFEN) reports. The sub-group's Chair, Ali Ross, attended a Commission meeting on this issue in December. Unfortunately, the Commission was not prepared to fast-track measures to limit bycatch in this winter's pelagic trawl fishery, which made reports received towards the end of the year that large numbers of common dolphins had been observed south of Cornwall rather depressing.

In December, a regulation to ban the finning of sharks on board vessels was considered by EC Environment and Fisheries Committees. Link's Bycatch and Wildlife and Trade groups wrote to committee Chairs and members asking them to push for a complete ban on



# Task Forces

finning, and proposed amendments to the current committee reports on the regulation.

## Meetings

23th October 2002 - Bycatch Task Force

29th October 2002 - Marine Task Force (inc. briefing from John Roberts and Chris Tompkins on WSSD and European Marine Strategy)

29th October 2002 - All Party Parliamentary Group on Wildlife and Conservation - Inaugural meeting. Speaker: Elliot Morley on marine conservation

12th November 2002 - UKOOA dialogue meeting

14th November 2002 - Conference on Marine Stewardship and ICZM

25th November 2002 - Marine Task Force

11th December 2002 - EC meeting, Brussels on possible measures concerning incidental catches of cetaceans in fisheries in Community waters attended by Ali Ross

16th December 2002 - ICZM sub-group meeting with Sam Rowbury, DEFRA

16th December 2002 - Marine campaign sub-group

## Papers/letters

Joint Links - Marine Spatial Planning

Joint Links - Implementation of the EC Recommendation on ICZM

Bycatch Task Force - letter to EC urging attention to key points in the ACE and SGFEN reports on cetacean bycatch in development of a new EU regulation

## Activity Forecast

17th January 2003 - Marine Task Force

22-23th January 2003 - Coastal Futures Conference

13th February 2003 - Marine campaign planning meeting

28th February 2003 - deadline for submission of MSR consultation responses

28th February 2003 - RMNC legislative sub-group first meeting

## Water Task Force

In the last quarter of 2002 the Water Task force were mainly busy with the response to the joint DEFRA/WAG 2<sup>nd</sup> consultation on the implementation of the Water Framework Directive. The group again had concerns that water quality standards were not being set at the right level, and that the criteria being used to define good quality were not sufficient and would not lead to improvements.

DEFRA published its Water Strategy, "Directing the flow" in November, this was not for consultation. Several Link members expressed concern that the rhetoric within the strategy was not supported by the approach within the 2<sup>nd</sup> consultation document.

The Queens' speech announced a Water Bill in this session of parliament.

The 2004 Periodic Review: Research into Customers' Views was finally published. Link members welcome the results which clearly showed public support for paying additional amounts through their water bills to secure environmental improvements for rivers and coastal waters. This detailed research undermined the arguments of many consumer lobbyists who insist that the public are only

concerned about paying less for services. Copies of the research findings are available, in hard copy only, from the Link office.

Diffuse pollution issues continue to be a concern of both the water group and the farming group, members requested that Link should work with SUSTAIN on diffuse pollution.

## Activities

Link meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> October, 8 attendees, 7 organisations

Link meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> December, 5 attendees, 5 organisations

## Outputs

Link briefings on the Water Bill

## Activity Forecast

Link response to the DEFRA/WAG 2<sup>nd</sup> consultation on the implementation of the Water Framework Directive

Link meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> February

Water Bill published

Possible meeting with Elliot Morley

## DEFRA - Haskin's Review of Rural Delivery Arrangements

A review of DEFRA's rural delivery arrangements was announced in late November, further details followed in December, with publication of the scoping document on 20<sup>th</sup> December. The review will mainly examine work within the Land Use and Rural Affairs Directorate of DEFRA and the work of the Countryside Agency. The review team will be submitting their first report to Ministers in April 2003 with the final report due to be published in the summer of 2003. Link members who are interested in contributing to a Link response should contact Pippa Langford.

# Sister Links

## Northern Ireland Link (NIEL)

The Rural Community Capacity Building Project has been actively engaged in raising environmental awareness in the rural communities of Northern Ireland. The results of the survey (collated by RCCBP) have shown that conservation and waste management come as top environmental priorities of rural community.

In September and November 2002, NIEL has welcomed the final selection of rural community groups (17 groups have been accepted) which are going to work on chosen environmental projects that include: developing an area of common ground into a community resource; restoration of a historic walled garden into a community organic enterprise; planting a local woodland; setting up recycling facilities; providing rural lighting using wind power.

The launch of the Environmental Report Card - an NGO Assessment of Northern Ireland's Environment, which NIEL has been working on for the past few months, has been postponed until May.

Following approved funding from Arts Council for Northern Ireland NIEL has appointed Caroline Huey in a role of an Artistic Facilitator - Rural Arts Project. Congratulations Caroline and we wish you all the best in a new role!

NIEL has been finalising a document updating its Environmental Strategy to be entitled 'Worth the Paper?' which presents 25 recommendations for action and a 'state of the NI environment' report highlighting 25 specific topics. The Document will be produced in March, and officially launched later this spring.

NIEL has also been working on the Environmental Education Forum, finalising a series of five posters promoting Education for Sustainable Development, to be accompanied by a website and conducting Environment Days for trainee teachers at local Teaching Training Institutions. They also produced and distributed a Fact Sheet on Climate Change, and planning ones on Historic Buildings and Sustainable Development for early 2003.

## Wales Environment Link (WEL)

Strategic Development Plan for WEL is under way and WEL will conclude this plan in the coming weeks.

WEL is planning to produce a manifesto for May's Assembly Elections, and produce an agreed Environmental Work Programme for the NEXT Assembly Government which they aim to submit to the new government in June.

WEL has just completed a Wales Link Bulletin for Assembly Members, MP's, senior civil servants and Quango's outlining the main purpose and current priorities of some of our members. This has been a major achievement as the document consisted of 50 pages and has taken a lot of effort to produce.

On top of this Agriculture the main policy area of activity, especially now CAP MTR details are starting to appear from Europe.

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill now going through Westminster is also exercising people's minds, as it is an England and Wales Bill with a separate "welsh bit".

## Scottish Environment Link (SEL)

On 25-26 October, representatives from 19 of Link's member organisations have attended Member Bodies Congress in Pitlochry. The aim of the congress was to serve as a meeting platform for people working in different parts of the sector and to enable them to use Holyrood elections to promote environmental issues.

In October, SEL has organised a seminar for member bodies to write a joint response to the Scottish Parliament's Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee's Inquiry into Tourism. Members of Link saw it as a crucial point to promote public policy in relation to tourism, that enhances and strengthens relationship between tourism and environment and recognises reliance of tourism on the environment as its key resource.

Another success of SEL was its contribution towards amendments of the Water Environmental Bill, which were approved on 11 December 2002. In summary, the bill encompasses the issues of: flooding, sub-basin plans, integration, wetlands, sustainable development and fish farming. Two years of hard work of SEL paid off!

# Organisational Development

## The Annual General Meeting

The Link AGM was held on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> December 3-5pm. The AGM was well attended this year, with members coming from across the country. The formal meeting was followed by drinks, food and a trip on the London Eye for some. There was the opportunity for members to meet informally and discuss a wide range of issues.

Two members of the Management Committee completed their term of office, David Bowles from the RSPCA and Patrick Begg of the National Trust. Both have had long associations with Link, however there is a maximum three year term of office for anyone serving as an ordinary member of the Committee so both had to step down this year. If anyone would like to serve on the Management Committee please ask Pippa Langford for more details, or ask a current member if you would like the members' view. John Everitt from the Wildlife Trusts was elected to the Committee the first time this year.

## **Planning for 2003**

The draft work plan for 2003 was approved at the Annual General Meeting. The Biodiversity group received a warm welcome from members and will start with an inaugural meeting sometime in the New Year. Link will also be working closely with Buglife and other interested members on a Brownfield sites conference.

Link is also establishing an email group for those who are interested in Badger issues - please contact Pippa if you would like to be included in this.

## Other Link News

Our Office and Information Co-ordinator, Jen Bolton went on maternity leave at the beginning of 2003. We have kept up the international flavour of the office by recruiting Anna Rackett as Jen's maternity cover. Anna has lived in England for over 8 years, but originally comes from Kielce in Poland (a city in south Poland).

The Joint Links meeting in Edinburgh in November was particularly useful in providing an opportunity to compare the work of the 4 Links. We discussed how to ensure that Links work well and we exchanged information about how to ensure that Links communicate efficiently with members.

## Working Groups

### Farming and Rural Development

Chair: Martin Harper  
(martin.harper@plantlife.org.uk)

Sec: Pippa Langford  
(pippa@wcl.org.uk)

**Woodland:** Nick Collinson  
(NickCollinson@woodland-trust.org.uk)

Sec: Pippa Langford  
(pippa@wcl.org.uk)

### Land Use Planning

Chair: Mark Southgate  
(mark.southgate@rspb.org.uk)

Sec: Pippa Langford  
(pippa@wcl.org.uk)

**Minerals:** Emily Richmond  
(emilyr@london.ramblers.org.uk)

**PPG 9:** Tony Gent  
(enquiries@herpconstrust.org.uk)

Sec: Annie Smith  
(annie@wcl.org.uk)

### Wildlife and Trade

Chair: Rob Atkinson  
(ratkins@rspca.co.uk)

**Whales:** Mark Simmonds  
(mark@wdcs.org.uk)

Sec: Annie Smith  
(annie@wcl.org.uk)

## Task Forces

### Marine Nature Conservation

Chair: Sam Fanshawe  
(sam@mcsuk.org)

**Bycatch:** Ali Ross  
(xbs54@dial.pipex.com)

Sec: Annie Smith  
(annie@wcl.org.uk)

### Water Policy and Legislation

Chair: Rob Cunningham  
(robert@waterteam.cix.co.uk)

Sec: Pippa Langford  
(pippa@wcl.org.uk)

### Biodiversity

Chair: Martin Harper  
(martin.harper@plantlife.org.uk)

Sec: Annie Smith  
(annie@wcl.org.uk)

## One-off Initiatives

### **Access to the Countryside**

### **Future of Commonland in England and Wales**

### **Brownfield Sites**

(pippa@wcl.org.uk)

Sec: Pippa Langford