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Dirleton, East Lothian
Please join us on our Members’ Day visit on 21 September
2019 has been packed full of deposit return activity for our Have You Got The Bottle? campaign, so here’s an update on what we’ve been up to since the last newsletter!

What’s next for deposit return in Scotland?

We’re still waiting to hear what decisions have been made about how and when to introduce Scotland’s deposit return system. We’re aware that even after a design decision has been announced, there will still be around 18 months to wait before people can actually start returning their empties. So, to keep the positive pressure up, we’ve been busy filming a series of interviews across the range of our partner organisations. We began launching these films in March, and you can watch them on our campaign website at www.haveyougotthebottle.org.uk

Please let your friends and family know, as we want the Scottish Government to see how far our message has spread.

Visit from international experts

In January we hosted deposit return experts from Estonia, Lithuania and the Netherlands in London and Edinburgh. In London our guests attended meetings with various journalists and the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs, while in Edinburgh they presented at a meeting in Holyrood. The meeting was hosted by Angus MacDonald MSP, with the aim of sharing perspectives on the benefits of an ambitious, inclusive deposit return system. Our guests made a strong case for that kind of inclusive system to a cross-party group of MSPs, plus retailers and other business owners.

Bring Back Your Empties animation launched

Also in January we launched the sequel to our gull film, which you can watch on our campaign website www.haveyougotthebottle.org.uk. It features a choir of Scottish animals pleading with Roseanna Cunningham to introduce a deposit return system that includes all kinds of bottles and cans. It’s fun but a little dark, and aims to support her previous commitments to an ambitious system as the Scottish Government moves closer to announcing the final details.

A world class system means minimising waste and litter and maximising the number of empties returned, and that means that everything (not just plastic) should be included. We’re optimistic that this is what the Scottish Government will do, but we want to reassure them of the wide support from the public.
Public Consultation results published

In February we hosted a stall at Scotland’s first International Marine Conference, where the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform announced the findings of the deposit return consultation.

She said “Scotland wants to see a well-run and appropriately targeted deposit return scheme. It is extremely welcome that the consultation signalled support for a model which is ambitious in scope and with a minimum deposit in excess of 15p. An implementation advisory group will play a critical role as we translate our proposals into an efficient, operational solution.”

The consultation received 3,232 submissions through various routes. Two-thirds of the responses (66%) were submitted online (we think about half of the online responses drew on our guide for the public); around a third (32%) were submitted as postcard campaign responses (all via our campaign!); and the remainder (2%) were submitted by email.

We were delighted to be explicitly mentioned for our contribution to the consultation, and are extremely grateful to all of our members who helped by submitting their own responses.

We were also pleased to see support for an accessible and convenient system, which is ambitious about which materials are included. However, we still have concerns around timing. Each extra day we wait before deposits are brought in, the research shows more than 100,000 extra cans and bottles will be littered across Scotland. Have a look at our online counter to see how many plastic, metal and glass drinks containers have been littered since the consultation results were published - it’s scary!

English, Welsh and Northern Irish deposit return consultation launched

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs consultation was launched on Monday, 18th February, covering England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and it closes on Monday, 13th May. We’re pleased to see that the consultation gives an ‘all-in’ option, as our friends south of the border also want to see a deposit system that accepts and collects every single can and bottle. We’re now working with colleagues to draft a guide for people who wish to respond to this consultation, and we’ll share it with you as soon as it’s ready.

Our friends at the Campaign to Protect Rural England have already spoken personally to Michael Gove, Secretary of State for the Environment, to let him know the importance of committing to an ambitious deposit return system.

Jenni Hume, HYGTB Campaign Manager
35 environmental charities in Scotland, including APRS, have come together through Scottish Environment LINK to Fight for Scotland’s Nature and gather support for a new Scottish Environment Act.

EU protections have played an important role in protecting and enhancing Scotland’s natural environment, but the prospect of Brexit threatens to unravel this – at a time when 1 in 11 species in Scotland is at risk of extinction. Miriam Ross, LINK’s Campaign Co-Ordinator, gave a fascinating talk to our recent APRS Council meeting in March. Under the proposed new Act, the campaign calls for the Scottish Government to embed EU principles in Scots Law, create an independent watchdog to oversee environmental legislation and set legally binding environmental targets. The Scottish Government has recently launched a ‘Consultation on Environmental Principles and Governance in Scotland’ (deadline of 11 May 2019). We would very much encourage APRS members and friends to respond to this consultation. The Fight for Scotland’s Nature campaign has launched an e-action which allows individuals to quickly and easily respond to this consultation by emailing suggested text to the Scottish Government (respondees can alter this text if they wish). This can be found at the following link: https://www.fightforscotlandsnature.scot/e-action/

The consultation itself can be found by going to https://consult.gov.scot and searching for ‘environmental principles’.

For those not on email please write to:

The Scottish Government, St Andrew’s House, Regent Rd, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG to request a copy and response form.

Social Media:
Keep up to date with our latest news at:

www.facebook.com/APRScotland

Follow us on Twitter @APRScotland
National Parks Campaign

Last November, responding to a Parliamentary Question from the MSP for Galloway, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon stated: “I understand and appreciate the arguments for a Galloway National Park. We want to give full consideration to the proposal, and I am happy to ask the relevant minister to engage with the member and others who have an interest on how we can take the matter forward properly”. In January the Galloway National Park Association then met Environment Minister Mairi Gougeon MSP, who expressed interest in the proposal and offered to visit Galloway to discuss it further. The Daily Record and Galloway Gazette both reported on the meeting.

Scottish Borders Council recently raised the idea of a Borders NP in the Main Issues Report for its new Local Development Plan; clearly it sees the potential benefits for Borders landscapes and people and so is taking the issue seriously. The Council “considers there is merit in posing a question on the proposition for a National Park, its possible boundaries and operational model through the Main Issues Report. This ... would enable the Council to better gauge the level of public support for the proposals, the attitude of key stakeholders, ... proposed benefits and ... what would be involved in the establishment of a park”. The Campaign for a Scottish Borders National Park has issued its first newsletter, which you can read on its website at http://www.borders-national-park.scot.

The Marine Conservation Society (MCS) has given its formal backing to our campaign for more National Parks in Scotland. Calum Duncan, MCS Head of Conservation Scotland, said: “A Coastal and Marine National Park provides an excellent opportunity to deliver integrated, sustainable management across land and sea, with oversight from a single authority, benefiting the environment and coastal communities”.

In January 2019 ITV Border News broadcast features on the plans for both a Galloway National Park and a Borders National Park, including impressive drone footage showing the beauty of the Galloway and Borders landscapes. You can watch the Galloway item on www.youtube.com – search for “Galloway National Park Plans” and the Borders one on www.facebook.com – search for “Should the Borders be National Park” then scroll down to “Videos”. In association with the Borders piece ITV also posted an online poll, which generated 83% support for the proposal.

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Scottish Borders National Park

NEWSLETTER | ISSUE 1

The Campaign for a Scottish Borders National Park (SBNP) is encouraging Scottish Borders Council (SBC) to include our proposal in the Main Issues Report for the Local Development Plan. Meanwhile, Borders politicians in the Campaign’s view continue to ignore reports on the issue. It can now be argued that a National Park for the Borders is needed to enhance the SBNP’s campaign to secure full support from the Scottish Government for the Borders National Park – as already shown by Galloway’s MSPs and local council for a National Park. Indeed, at an MIR session, this Kelso Conservative MP was saying he is investigating the feasibility of creating a National Park. Our newsletter highlights how positive but separate Borders proposals from New Borders and Borders without Borders are not picking up the latest efforts, and the enthusiasm shown by Galloway’s MIRs and local council for another idea.

Why are our local politicians allowing Borders & Galloway to go it alone and the Scottish National Park in this region to further management, wider support, economic impact fully materialise (with financial benefits) by any of VAT receipts to the Scottish Government, and resultant 5% MIR Report – the other routes. Only Borders National Park can deliver the Borders as ‘a National Park’ as requested by the First Minister?

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Scottish Borders Council (SBC) will be a key planning document Scottish Borders Council (SBC) will be a key planning document. Council includes Scottish Borders National Park in key planning document Scottish Borders National Park in key planning document. Council includes Scottish Borders National Park in key planning document Scottish Borders National Park in key planning document.

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The way it works is that easyfundraising turns your everyday online shopping into free donations for APRS. All you have to do is to shop as normal, then shop as normal. Every time you shop, we receive a small donation to say ‘thank you’ and it’s completely free! Lots of these small donations soon add up – we’ve raised nearly £1,000 so far with only 20 supporters, so if all APRS members registered we could raise much more. So please sign up and help us at: https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/aprs
Scotland’s Scenic Heritage - 40th Anniversary Celebration

In 1978 the former Countryside Commission for Scotland (CCS) published the landmark report *Scotland’s Scenic Heritage*, which led to the designation of Scotland’s 40 National Scenic Areas (NSAs) two years later. NSAs are areas “of outstanding scenic value in a national context”, in other words the finest examples of the landscapes for which Scotland is renowned.

APRS felt that the 40th anniversary of this significant publication was well worthy of celebration. We therefore held an evening reception in November 2018, at which our President Colin Prior and Vice-Chairman John Thomson gave illustrated presentations about the beauty and history of our NSAs.

We were particularly pleased to be joined by Jeff Lonsdale, David Rice and Thomas Huxley, three former members of CCS staff who were closely associated with the production of the original report 40 years ago.

Our Chairman Charles Millar chaired a discussion between our invited guests and Members of our advisory Council, which generated many positive ideas for future collaboration to protect and enhance our NSAs.

**National Scenic Areas of Scotland**
APRS Green Belts Alliance

The Planning Bill currently making slow progress through the Scottish Parliament (see report in last November’s Rural Scotland) remains the focus of our efforts to promote stronger protection for Scotland’s 11 Green Belts. During the complex negotiations at Stage 2 (consideration by specialist committee) the APRS-inspired amendment, which would have required local authorities to prepare registers of brownfield land, was withdrawn. However, a separate amendment was passed, which would require planning applications for Green Belt land to state why the development could not be achieved on brownfield land, which brownfield land was considered and why it was not suitable. This goes forward to Stage 3 (consideration by the whole Parliament) which currently seems likely to take place in May.

In October we were fortunate to receive a modest donation towards our Green Belts work from one of our regular funders, the Susan H Guy’s Charitable Trust. This has allowed us to employ experienced environmental policy consultant Nikki Sinclair for one or two days a week, to start making progress towards our Green Belts objectives. Nikki’s work is initially focused on the Planning Bill, mapping the current extent of Scotland’s Green Belts, researching related health and housing policies and fundraising for further expansion of the project. In January the main evening STV News bulletin broadcast a three-minute item on the threats to the North Lanarkshire Green Belt, including an extract from an interview with APRS

New Scotland’s Landscape Alliance launched

APRS members know well that Scotland is blessed with a rich diversity of world-class natural and cultural landscapes. These are arguably our greatest assets and provide the foundation for our sense of identity linked to our heritage. Our landscapes provide the physical context for our lives, where we live, work and play. Access to high quality landscapes influences our health, wellbeing and livelihoods. However, there is deep inequality in access to those landscapes and a lack of public awareness and political interest in the role that landscapes play in our lives.

Recent discussions between several bodies including APRS have led to the conclusion that we need a new alliance between all bodies involved in landscape to raise awareness of its importance and to maximise its benefits. The Scottish Government is developing a new Environment Strategy, and the associated discussion paper makes frequent reference to the value and role of Scotland’s landscapes, so there is a real opportunity right now to raise the profile of our landscapes and the benefits they bring.

APRS has joined the Executive Committee of Scotland’s Landscape Alliance, which will be launched on 25 April. Led by the Landscape Institute Scotland and the National Trust for Scotland, the Committee has commissioned initial survey and research work, the results of which will be announced at the launch. The Alliance will operate through a number of working groups, which will focus on the links between landscape and other critical public policy issues such as community engagement, health and economics. These groups will make recommendations for actions to promote better care of our landscapes and to promote the benefits they bring to Scotland. Please contact the APRS office if you would like to be kept informed about the work of the Alliance.

John Mayhew
Director

Environmental Policy Consultant Nikki Sinclair

Director John Mayhew on the benefits of Green Belts and the levels of public support for their protection. A fuller version of the interview was published on their website – if you’d like to read it simply search for "STV Greenbelt".
**Dates For Your Diary**

**APRS AGM – 30 May 2019**

All APRS members, family and friends are warmly invited to attend our AGM on Thursday 30 May at Swanston Golf Club, situated at the foot of the Pentland Hills Regional Park on the outskirts of south Edinburgh.

This year’s event will focus on an illustrated presentation by the Director of the remarkably busy year which 2018 was for us, with opportunities for members to discuss our current projects and future plans.

Please see separate AGM notification for full details and booking information.

**APRS Members’ Day - 21 September 2019**

Please book now for our annual Members’ Day which will take place on Saturday 21 September in East Lothian. The theme this year is pressures on rural villages with Dirleton as an example. The Dirleton Village Association (DVA) has kindly agreed to host the event at the Dirleton Kirk Hall (10.30am start with coffee served from 10am onwards). There will be a presentation in the morning from two members of DVA which will examine the pressures and opportunities facing rural village life in the 21st century. This will be followed by lunch and a guided tour of the village, including current development sites, in the afternoon. The day is expected to finish at 4pm. There will be a charge of £10 towards a sandwich lunch.

Members are asked to contact Nina at info@aprs.scot or 0131 225 7012 to register their interest in attending.