



● GREEN BULLET

30th May 2018

North West Environment Link (NWEL) is a partnership of environmental voluntary sector organisations, representing hundreds of thousands of members in the North West. We are members of VSNW, the regional voluntary sector network for the North West, whose purpose is to support a connected and influential voluntary and community sector (VCS).

This bulletin is intended to keep NWEL members and wider networks up to date on events and issues that will be of interest to environmental voluntary and community sector organisations in the North West. Please send any items for inclusion in the next bulletin to andyuille@gmail.com - and feel free to forward all or parts of these bulletins throughout your own networks to help spread the word!

The Green Bullet is also available to download from the [VSNW](http://www.vsnw.org.uk) website.

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Campaigns

Bees & insecticides

- After increasingly intense international campaigning, the EU has announced a [total outdoor ban on neonicotinoids](#), the world's most commonly-used insecticide, associated with dramatic reductions in bee populations and health. [Michael Gove](#) pledged to back an EU

ban in November, overturning the UK's previous opposition, but it is not clear whether it will remain in place after Brexit.

- The Friends of the Earth [Great British Bee Count](#) runs throughout June. Download the [Apple](#) or [Android](#) app to identify and record bees - on your way to the shops, work or school, in your garden or local park – anywhere! It's a fun and easy way to discover the wonderful world of bees in our gardens, streets and green spaces.

Farming

- Almost 90% of farmers taking part in a Nature Friendly Farming Network survey agree that now is the time for a [radical change in agriculture policy](#) to ensure high environmental standards - nearly half (47%) did not feel confident that the government would deliver the farming policy required to create positive environmental change.
- Wildlife and Countryside Link published eight blogs focusing on different aspects of the Government's consultation on agriculture. Topics included [reducing pesticide use, international trade, climate change, public health as a public good, agroforestry, grasping the opportunity for the uplands](#) and the [interconnection between land and water](#).

Climate change

- The Climate Coalition are encouraging people to host [Speak Up](#) events this summer, and have provided a host of [handy resources](#) to help you do so
- While UK production-based greenhouse gas emissions fell by over a third between 1997 and 2015, our carbon footprint has remained almost exactly the same: i.e. [we are not reducing our emissions at all](#), we are merely moving the around.
- Most governments are [not on course to meet their Paris Agreement commitments](#), according to a damning new report from the Climate Action Tracker which shows a host of countries across the globe are not yet willing or able to phase out coal.
- The EU has put forward a 'climate quota', in which the clean energy transition and other initiatives to decarbonise Europe's economy would represent [25% of EU spending](#) under a seven-year EU budget plan
- Research by Oxfam has found that rich countries' pledges to support poorer countries mitigate and adapt to climate change, made as a key plank of the Paris Agreement, are [falling short by about 50%](#)

Air quality

- The [UK is being taken to the European Court of Justice](#) for repeatedly failing to tackle the illegally high levels of air pollution that are causing a [public health crisis](#). Luckily, post-Brexit we'll be free to pollute as much as we want without this sort of bureaucratic interference.
- Meanwhile, Defra has launched its [latest clean air strategy](#), which has already been [heavily criticized as inadequate](#), including by [Client Earth](#), the environmental lawyers who have defeated the Government in court three times over their failure to tackle the issue..
- BBC research into the World Health Organisation's air quality database has revealed the [most polluted towns and cities in the UK](#).

Great Cumbrian Litter Pick

Friends of the Lake District are running a competition for the district which hosts the most litter picks (Eden, Carlisle, Allerdale, Copeland, Barrow or South Lakeland) as part of the Great Cumbrian Litter Pick on Friday 6th July, with a prize of a Landscape Grant of at least £1000 for the winning area. It could be your school or local community that benefits so [get yourself](#)

[registered](#) and tell others in your district to join in too. There are over 20 registered so far right across Cumbria: see them on the [interactive map](#).

Water

As the Environment Agency warns of [severe water shortages in England by 2050](#), and pressure mounts on consumers to reduce their individual water consumption (we consume significantly more water per person than many other European countries), it is revealed that the water companies [lose around 20% of daily water supplies through leakages](#).

Trees

The good news is that the government have committed to plant 11 million trees before 2022. The bad news is that they are [way behind schedule already](#). Plus, the Committee on Climate Change - that's the government's own climate advisors - say [the target itself should be at least three times higher](#) if we're going to keep up with climate change. 10:10 have started a [petition](#) to ask Government to act on that!

Information update

Brexit and beyond

- 250,000 people have supported The Wildlife Trusts' campaign to persuade Michael Gove to drop plans to [remove protections from Local Wildlife Sites](#) through the amended NPPF. Removing protection from highly valued wildlife sites is all part of the plan for a genuinely green Brexit, no doubt.
- MEPs have revealed a "completely mad" push by the [UK to weaken and undermine EU climate laws](#) before it leaves the bloc. Weakening climate change laws is all part of the plan for a genuinely green Brexit, no doubt.
- The Government have launched a consultation on '[Environmental Principles and Governance after the UK leaves the EU](#)'. In it, they commit to introducing an Environmental Principles and Governance Bill next year, which will establish a new environmental governance body. Environmental NGOs and campaigners have been near [universal in their condemnation](#) of the proposals as weak and ineffective. Making sure that whatever environmental laws remain cannot be effectively enforced is all part of the plan for a genuinely green Brexit, no doubt.
- The Brexit department has the [worst record on transparency](#) in the Government, responding adequately to less than 20% of Freedom of Information requests... while around 80% of our environmental laws will be affected by what the department are doing but refusing to disclose. Refusing to share information with the public is all part of the plan for a genuinely green Brexit, no doubt.

Energy

- A joint Ministerial Statement provides [a series of boosts for the fracking industry](#): Minerals plans should not restrict fracking (although of course Local Plans are able to virtually prohibit renewables!); and in the summer the Government will consult on making shale gas exploration permitted development – i.e. not regulated through planning any more than putting up a garden shed – and on the criteria for including fracking applications the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime, i.e. subject to much reduced public scrutiny and involvement. Friends of the Earth have a [petition](#) opposing the moves. NGOs have described the proposals as [an outright assault on local communities](#) and as trampling

on democracy. All part of the plan for a genuinely green Brexit which lets people take back control, no doubt.

- Meanwhile, Cuadrilla have filed for [an injunction to ban protests](#) outside its site in Preston New Road, so public opinion may soon be silenced both within the planning system and without.
- The UK has [no need to build new large gas-fired power stations](#) to replace the coal plants that the government has pledged to switch off by 2025, according to a new report by WWF and Sandbag. The gap can instead be filled by renewables, battery storage and flexible technologies, allowing the UK to go from “coal to clean” and skip new gas completely.
- Energy efficiency measures installed under government schemes have [dropped by over 50%](#) since the scrapping of the flagship Green New Deal policy in 2015
- Despite a [drop in renewable energy investment of over 50%](#) in 2017, the UK has [climbed three places](#) in a ranking of the world's most attractive renewable energy markets for investors, thanks to a move towards subsidy-free solar PV – and the Government has just announced a [£102 million fund for clean energy R&D](#)
- [Tidal power](#) could deliver £1.4bn to the UK economy by 2030, with wider marine technologies helping to reduce national carbon emissions by up to four million metric tonnes a decade later, according to a new report from the Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult.
- A coalition of green NGOs and industries in the business of recycling, chemicals, forestry and the bio-based economy have written to policymakers, urging them to prevent [incineration of waste from being counted as renewable energy](#).
- Drax has announced that it will open [Europe's first bioenergy carbon capture and storage plant](#) in Yorkshire.
- The Government has again acknowledged that it could [dispose of the UK's radioactive waste](#) by burying it under our most highly-protected landscapes, i.e. the Lake District.

Planning

- The Government intends to issue the revised NPPF by the end of July, despite receiving more than 27,000 responses to the consultation, many of them highly critical, including responses from [CPRE](#), [Wildlife and Countryside Link](#) and the [Local Government Association](#).
- [James Brokenshire](#) (MP for Old Bexley and Sidcup) has been appointed the new Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government following Sajid Javid's move to the Home Office after the Government lost its fourth Cabinet Minister in six months. His [first recovered decision](#) was to reject permission for a 1,000 home 'garden village', despite a housing land supply of less than 3 years, due to harm to the Green Belt.
- The European Court of Justice has ruled that [major infrastructure projects affecting European protected sites](#) must initially be assessed without taking into account any environmental mitigation that the developer may (or may not) deliver. This overturns a previous decision by the British courts which allowed a much less robust approach to environmental assessment. The judgement is [already having effects](#).
- England's population growth is expected to grow at a slower rate over the next 10 years compared to previous projections, according to [new government data](#) that informs councils' housing need figures.
- The [interim report of the Raynsford Review](#) has been released, finding that deregulation has led to poor-quality outcomes and that the system as a whole is “less effective than at any time in the post-war era”. It calls for a powerful, people-centred planning system, with a

clearer purpose focused on sustainable development, and a fairer way to share land values. They are seeking feedback on the report's 9 propositions by July 16th.

- And not to be outdone by Raynsford, Create Streets are also looking for views on the future of planning, and how to make it work better for all of us. Their new project, '[Planning 3.0](#)', asks 'how can we improve the planning system to deliver more homes with popular consent?' and 'what should planning look like in 2030?'
- The RTPI has said that [better coordination across the North of England is vital](#), ensuring that Local Plans join up and are linked in with the plans of regional bodies like Transport for the North. It has launched an invitation to tender to develop a framework for aligning these plans. Nobody mention Regional Spatial Strategies, or re-invented wheels, people will get upset.
- Lord Jim O'Neill, vice-chairman of the Northern Powerhouse Partnership, has called on Government to conclude a [devolution deal for Cheshire and Warrington](#) as a priority this year
- The [Greater Manchester Strategic Framework](#) consultation has been delayed by a week. The next version of the plan is now expected out in July. All the land considered suitable and available for development is available to the public through their easy-to-use [mapping system](#); if you think they've missed anything, you can [let them know](#).
- At least [350,000 new homes](#) were given planning permission in 2017, according to research by HBF and Glenigan, but the proportion of affordable homes in new developments in the countryside has [fallen by almost 40%](#) since 2010 - while a report published by the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) has found that [63 per cent of UK councils rate their affordable housing need as severe](#).
- New research by the RTPI shows that only half of new homes in 12 of England's fastest growing cities are [located near train stations](#)
- 59% of North West councillors sitting on planning committees are [opposed to Green Belt reviews](#) – although two thirds believe the housing crisis is getting worse.
- The Government has paid over £250 million through the [starter home fund](#) - but not a single property has been built
- A new £23 million fund offering [support to groups preparing neighbourhood plans](#) has opened for bids of up to £9,000, with an additional £8,000 support available for those plans which allocate sites for housing; include site-specific design codes; are designated business neighbourhood plans; involve a cluster of three or more parishes writing a single plan; or cover a neighbourhood area with a population of over 25,000 people
- To absolutely nobody's surprise, new research shows that office-to-residential permitted development is producing [poor quality housing](#).

Publications

Biodiversity crisis

The latest five-yearly report on the [state of the world's birds](#) from Birdlife International – the most comprehensive data on the world's most studied species - reveals a biodiversity largely crisis driven by the expansion and intensification of agriculture. One in eight bird species are threatened with global extinction, and once widespread creatures such as the puffin, snowy owl and turtle dove are plummeting towards oblivion, according to the definitive study of global bird populations. At least 40% of bird species worldwide are in decline – although targeted conservation action has helped saved 25 species from extinction.

Biodiversity solutions?

In their new report '[Towards a Wilder Britain](#)', The Wildlife Trusts have outlined how a 'Nature Recovery Network' could help bring wildlife back across our towns and countryside. The Network would be part of new environmental policy designed to achieve Government targets for helping species and habitats to recover and increase. Maps, created locally and linked to these targets, would identify existing important places for wildlife as well as key areas where habitats should be restored. There is widespread agreement that we need to do more to reverse the decline of wildlife and this report sets out some ideas for how we could take the first step on that journey.

Biodiversity crimes

The first ever [annual wildlife crime report for England and Wales](#) was launched this month, compiled by 18 NGOs. Wildlife and conservation experts are committing to publishing a report each year on the number of crimes against wild animals and birds they record, in the absence of government and police data. They aim to shine a light on the hidden deaths, suffering, and conservation impacts of wildlife crime in England and Wales.

Naturally Healthy

This report provides a description of the three year Dartmoor [Naturally Healthy project](#) which aimed to explore opportunities and challenges in developing a 'green care' model to support improvement in health and wellbeing. The report aims to draw learning-outcomes from the project to help other organizations developing their own nature-based health schemes

Greening the Grey

This NERC-funded project led by the universities of Glasgow and Oxford has published [a guidance report](#) on the opportunities, economic costs and wider benefits of incorporating 'green' elements into 'grey' infrastructure projects. The report compares green-grey options with business-as-usual solutions in coastal, urban and historic settings.

Rural Housing for an Ageing Population

This report makes a number of 'rural proofing' recommendations to increase the quality, supply and range of [more appropriate age-friendly housing](#), which could preserve independence for older people and save NHS and social care funds – including for Local Plans to allocate housing specifically for older people. It also calls for wider community-led support solutions that could help people remain in their own village and stay connected in isolated rural communities.

Events

Urban landscapes

A long way away, but looks really interesting! The first ever [Festival of Urban Landscapes for Nature and People](#) will be celebrating ways to design city landscapes and buildings for nature and people – from plant selection, architecture and site design to the detail of green roofs and walls and good landscape management. 21st – 22nd July, Hordon-on-the-Hill, Essex.

Green Learning Environments

The Mersey Forest Partnership is holding a conference on [Green Learning Environments for children with special educational needs](#), 18th October, at Bluebell Park School, Knowsley, 9:30-4:00. Over the past two years, the Mersey Forest Team has been working with two schools in the North West to develop outdoor learning practice for children with special educational needs

and explore new tools for teaching, as part of a project funded by Erasmus+ and also involving schools in Slovenia and Belgium. The conference is an opportunity to hear about and discuss the approaches they have explored and the tools that have been developed. You will also hear from a range of practitioners and teachers working with children with special educational needs in the outdoors, and there will also be lots of opportunities for discussion and sharing of ideas.

Valuing Nature Conference

Save the date! As part of the Valuing Nature Programme's aim to build interdisciplinary research capability with strong engagement of end users, this year's Valuing Nature Annual Conference will be held at the Museum of Cardiff on the 13 - 14 November 2018. A varied programme will bring together researchers, practitioners, business and policy makers in a forum of key note presentations, discussion and activity workshops. More details to follow and will be available on the Valuing Nature website.

Green spaces, healthy places

12th July 2018, London. This [TCPA & Green Infrastructure Partnership conference](#) will identify opportunities for re-shaping green spaces and emphasizing their multiple health and wellbeing benefits, asking questions such as: how can we plan, design and manage green spaces to maximise their value to people's health and wellbeing? How can we improve the health and wellbeing value of existing green spaces? What do we know – and what do we still need to research? High-profile speakers will explore topics such as maximizing the value of green space, attracting funding, and what we can do right now to create and enhance green infrastructure.

Morecambe Bay

Explore the unique [habitats and heritage of Morecambe Bay](#) through the Morecambe Bay Partnership's series of summer events.

Resources

Natural capital planning tool

A free tool has just been launched to try to help planners and developers to implement the Government's commitment to 'net environmental gain' and bring about tangible benefits to society. The [Natural Capital Planning Tool](#) is a site assessment tool developed specifically to be used by non-specialists in the planning context. It allows the indicative but systematic assessment of the likely impact of proposed plans and developments on Natural Capital and the ecosystem services it provides to people such as recreational opportunities, air quality regulation and climate regulation

Natural Capital Assessment Gateway

The Ecosystems Knowledge Network are launching the [Natural Capital Assessment Gateway](#) on their website. Funded through the BESS Programme, this resource profiles over 70 assessments of natural capital, ecosystem services and green infrastructure across the UK. The interactive, searchable, map-based facility allows you to explore projects at the local, regional and national scale.

Captialising nature?

There are a lot of initiatives at the moment building on the idea of natural capital. This [short speech](#) reminds us why this approach may end up undermining the very protection of nature that it is supposed to deliver, and what alternative approaches might look like.

Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces 2018

[Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces: Measuring their economic and wellbeing value to individuals](#) is research conducted in line with HM Treasury best practice in valuing non-market goods. It provides a robust economic valuation of parks and green spaces in the UK. It is the first study to apply welfare weighting methodology, and suggests that parks provide over £34 billion of health and well-being benefits.

Planning for climate change

[Planning for Climate Change](#), a new guide drawn up by the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) and the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA), says viability evidence for local plans should take account of the economic and social benefits of renewable energy and climate change mitigation measures. It says that the current approach of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on the need to establish the viability of local plan requirements placed on development "can have very negative impacts on measures to deal with climate change, because of the narrow way in which viability is defined in the NPPF".

A walk in the woods

The Mersey Forest Partnership has published a [new improved online guide](#) to walking, cycling, horse riding, events and more across their woodlands, while the Woodland Trust's [find a woodland tool](#) can take to your nearest place to [enjoy forest bathing](#) across the country.

Urban tranquillity

An [online mapping survey](#) has been launched by university researchers working to mitigate the negative impact environmental noise has on city dwellers' health and wellbeing by identifying and preserving places with positive soundscapes.

Consultations

Post-Brexit environmental watchdog

The Government have launched a consultation on '[Environmental Principles and Governance after the UK leaves the EU](#)'. In it, they commit to introducing an Environmental Principles and Governance Bill next year, which will establish a new environmental governance body. Environmental NGOs and campaigners have been near [universal in their condemnation](#) of the proposals as weak and ineffective. Robust responses to this consultation will be essential to ensure that the environmental effects of Brexit resemble the Government's rhetoric more than their track record. Deadline: August 2nd.

Raynsford Review

The [interim report of the Raynsford Review](#) has been released, finding that deregulation has led to poor-quality outcomes and that the system as a whole is "less effective than at any time in the post-war era". It calls for a powerful, people-centred planning system, with a clearer purpose focused on sustainable development, and a fairer way to share land values. They are seeking feedback on the report's 9 propositions by July 16th.

Protected landscapes review

The Government has announced that it will conduct a [review of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty](#), chaired by Julian Glover and assisted by a yet-to-be-announced team covering various levels of expertise. They have pledged not to reduce either the geographical extent or level of protection of current designated landscapes. However, the review's [terms of reference](#) are extremely broad. Organisations and individuals will have the opportunity to contribute to the review, and more details will be announced shortly. Recent CPRE [research](#) has found that the pressure for major housing development in AONBs has doubled, with the amount of land approved for housing increasing five-fold, making this review particularly timely.

Voluntary Sector North West

[VSNW](#) have increased their staff team and have a new [Chair](#). They want to hear about what you think they could best be doing to support the voluntary and community sector in the North West. A renewed focus on environmental issues perhaps, or on the links between health and social justice outcomes and environmental quality and non-car travel? Delivering climate jobs through social enterprise? Ensuring that devolution deals include strong environmental and sustainability representation? Please let them know by [completing a short survey!](#)

Funding

Community grants in Cumbria

Friends of the Lake District give grants to fund small scale projects that conserve and enhance the landscape in Cumbria. Community groups can apply for their '[Discover Cumbria](#)' grants, to help fund events, and their [Landscape Grants](#), for improvements to the environment.

Trustees

Trustees wanted

VSNW are looking for new trustees – one from each of the subregions / city-regions of the North West and a new Treasurer. If either of these opportunities interests you, please contact CEO Warren Escadale at warren.escadale@vsnw.org.uk or 07753 147664

To subscribe or contribute

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To contribute to the NWEL Bulletin, please
contact:
Andy Yuille
andyuille@gmail.com
01524 389 915

To contribute to the policy work of VSNW,
please contact:
Warren Escadale
warren.escadale@vsnw.org.uk
0161 276 9307