



● GREEN BULLET

26th March 2019

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](#) website.

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Campaigns

Climate change

- Cyclone Idai caused [one of the worst weather disasters ever](#) to hit the Southern Hemisphere, affecting hundreds of thousands of not millions of people in Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Carbon Brief have developed a [map of extreme weather events](#) and the extent to which they can or can't be associated with climate change. Meanwhile, the five biggest oil

and gas companies listed on the stock exchange are spending nearly \$200m every year to [delay, control or block climate change policies](#).

- [New research](#) has found that sharp and [potentially devastating temperature rises of 3C to 5C in the Arctic are now inevitable](#) even if the world succeeds in cutting greenhouse gas emissions in line with the Paris agreement. This could trigger a 'tipping point' into a positive feedback spiral, dramatically accelerating warming and impacts beyond IPCC projections.
- [Young people's climate strikes](#) have continued, with more than a million students and pupils taking part in 100 countries worldwide, and Greta Thunberg, the Swedish schoolgirl who started it all, has been [nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize](#). She is [interviewed here in the FT](#) – take five minutes to read it.
- The priority the UK Government, and indeed Parliament, places on climate change can be seen from [the attendance at the first debate on climate change in the House of Commons in over two years](#), triggered by the school strikes

Water

Reassuringly known as the "[jaws of death](#)", the point at which water demand exceeds supply is on target to hit England in 25 years according to the CEO of the Environment Agency, not generally known for their alarmist tendencies. The warning from the Environment Agency comes with analysis that says that in order to avoid this scenario water usage needs to be cut by a third, leaks by 50%, new reservoirs and desalination plants must be built, and wasting water needs to be seen as the moral equivalent of "[blowing smoke in the face of a baby](#)".

Greening Greater Manchester

At the [Greater Manchester Green Summit](#), Andy Burnham set out his [Five-year Environment Plan \(summarised here\)](#) for the city region, including the ambition to be carbon-neutral by 2038, 12 years' ahead of the Government's own target; for all new buildings to be net carbon-zero by 2028 and existing buildings to be retrofitted to the same standard by 2038; to establish the largest [Clean Air Zone](#) outside of London, and [the biggest walking and cycling network in the country](#); detailed proposals to substitute fossil fuels with low-carbon energy alternatives by 2038, with planning policies which create a presumption against fracking; and a [Greater Manchester Big Clean Switch](#) enabling residents and organisations to get discounted offers on green energy. Great to see policies that environmental NGOs have been pushing for years finally being implemented; great also to see GMCA acknowledging that even if they do everything in their plan, which is by some way the most radical in the UK, they will still overshoot their total emissions budget by almost double, so this is just a start. The Greater Manchester [Climate Action Network](#) have proposed a set of short and medium term actions to help close this gap.

Air quality

[A new study](#) has found the number of early deaths in Europe caused by air pollution is double previous estimates, making city smog even more deadly than smoking cigarettes. It comes as Public Health England has [recommended that all councils consider introducing Clean Air Zones](#), including measures such as for cars to be banned around schools, car pool lanes promoted, and congestion charged imposed on cities around the country, and.

Fracking

CPRE are encouraging people to [write to their MPs](#) to encourage them to attend a scheduled debate in Parliament on Thursday 28th March, the third on fast-tracking fracking. The Government may have to reconsider Paragraph 209(a) of the National Planning Policy

Framework – which [supports planning applications for fracking](#) - after a High Court judge ruled that consultation on the policy was unfair and unlawful and the government had failed to take into account up-to-date scientific evidence on the climate change impacts of such development.

Rewilding and restoration

The UN have declared that 2021-2030 will be [the decade of ecosystem restoration](#). It aims to massively scale up the restoration of degraded and destroyed ecosystems as a proven measure to fight the climate crisis and enhance food security, water supply and biodiversity. Meanwhile, Rewilding Britain's Alastair Driver makes the case that [rewilding is vital for farmers as well as wildlife](#) and Dave Goulson summarises how we can [reverse the catastrophic decline of insect populations](#).

Litter & recycling

- Keep Britain Tidy are coordinating the Great British Spring Clean, a campaign across the country to help improve the environment on our doorsteps, from March 22 to April 23. They're aiming to inspire 500,000 people to join forces - in partnership with community organisations, businesses and the government - to collect and safely dispose of litter from our streets, parks and beaches, recycling as much as possible. You can [join, host, or pledge support to a local clean-up](#) via their website. Friends of the Lake District are organizing a Great Cumbrian Litter Pick on 27-28 April – similarly you can [sign up, host your own local pick, and access resources](#) via their website.
- CPRE are encouraging people to [take their e-action](#) to respond to the Government's consultation on a deposit return scheme to counter industry lobbying to water it down, in order to ensure that it genuinely maximises re-use and recycling and minimizes waste and litter, by following a set of 'Golden Rules'.
- New research quantifies the extent of our plastic pollution problem – [key facts and figures](#) are pulled out here.

Information update

Brexit and beyond

- Having analysed the possible outcomes of a 'no deal' Brexit, environmental coalition Greener UK has concluded that leaving without a deal would have [terrible consequences](#) for the environment and our countryside. Concerns about a no deal exit were also raised with the Environment Secretary in a letter from the [House of Lords EU Energy and Environment Sub-committee](#).
- Anything else I write today will be out-of-date by tomorrow, so, pass. However, you can read [an interview with Prof. Charlotte Burns](#) (the Co-Chair of [Brexit & Environment](#), the authoritative source for independent research on how Brexit is affecting the environment - a network of academic experts analysing the implications of Brexit for UK and EU environmental policy and governance) and Marc Hudson (from the peer-reviewed journal [Environmental Politics](#)).

Energy

- Cumbria County Council has just [approved the UK's first deep coal mine](#) for around thirty years. Becky Willis explores [how this can possibly have happened](#).
- The Government has signed an [off-shore wind sector deal](#), aiming (amongst other things) to increase the sector's share of total electricity production to 30% and triple the number of jobs in the sector by 2030

- Following the Communities secretary's [refusal of plans for a shale gas fracking site at Roseacre Wood](#) near Preston, Cuadrilla have announced that they [will not appeal](#) against the decision. However, they have [remobilized equipment](#) at their first Lancashire site, Preston New Road, after long delays due to causing earth tremors beyond regulatory limits
- [Renewables](#) generated 65% of Germany's electricity over a whole week in March, with wind turbines responsible for just under 50%.

Planning

- The Chancellor's [Spring Statement](#) included measures to introduce a new "[Future Homes Standard](#)" by 2025, which would aim to future-proof new build homes with low carbon heating and "world-leading levels of energy efficiency" (Code for Sustainable Homes rebooted but without the breadth or depth?); and to deliver on proposals to require [biodiversity net gain in new development](#) (again, without any of the crucial details about implementation or funding). (Wider environmental issues in the Statement covered under 'Resources')
- The national online [Planning Practice Guidance](#) has been updated in a number of places, including to allow Local Authorities to require better energy performance standards in new housing developments, but no higher than the equivalent of (ex) Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4; updating advice on assessing housing and economic needs; allowing CIL contributions to be pooled across councils boundaries; and directing councils to consider why any previous permissions for major development on a site had not been implemented.
- The RTPI and Liverpool City Region Combined Authority are working together to develop a [climate resilience policy](#) for the region's emerging Spatial Development Strategy, which the Authority hopes to have adopted within two years. The initiative, the first of its kind in England, will see the institute and the combined authority work with Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral councils, as well as experts from the universities of Liverpool and Manchester, to identify specific issues and needs across the region, based around the concept of climate justice.
- In Greater Manchester, the Government has [withdrawn its £68 million housing deal](#) to help deliver brownfield sites and affordable housing, as the new draft Spatial Framework, revised after extensive community consultation, no longer promises the number of houses the Government wanted. And [Trafford](#) is pushing back against the housing numbers allocated for it in the Framework, potentially putting the whole strategy at risk.
- Despite [near universal condemnation from the planning sector](#), the Government have set out plans to [extend permitted development rights](#) on the high street.
- [Middlewich](#) has become just the third area to reject a neighbourhood plan at referendum, following [Thornton-on-Hull](#) (where large numbers of residents only found out that there was a plan when they heard about the referendum) and [Swanwick](#) (where the authoring Parish Council campaigned against their own plan in the referendum because the Examiner had recommended such sweeping changes to it).
- More than [400,000 homes have been granted permission but are still waiting to be built](#), a rise of 16% in the past year.

Transport

- A new report by the New Economics Foundation, commissioned by Friends of the Earth, has concluded that rather than reduce the regional divide, [HS2 could increase inequalities within and between regions](#), primarily benefitting the already-wealthy. It sets out a programme of rail improvements using the current HS2 budget (although HS2 looks likely to

bust that budget as well) that and that the Government could improve rail journeys in all regions and nations.

- A report from [Campaign for Better Transport](#) explains how a national programme to reopen train lines should initially prioritise 33 new rail lines with 72 new stations. That would bring over 500,000 people to within walking distance of a train station and could generate an additional 20 million rail passenger journeys a year, and create or safeguard up to 6,500 jobs in construction and engineering and 1,650 new railway jobs. Meanwhile Keith Williams, the chair of the government's independent review into the rail system has concluded that "[Franchising cannot continue the way it is today](#). It is no longer delivering clear benefits for either taxpayers and farepayers"
- [Nearly half of all bus routes in England are under threat](#) as their subsidies from councils are squeezed. The Local Government Association is warning that the underfunding of subsidised bus routes, coupled with councils facing an overall funding gap of £3.1 billion in 2019-20, means that local authorities will struggle to maintain current subsidies for bus routes which will continue to fall unless they are given the funding to protect them. The funding gap for free bus passes for older and disabled people has also grown to over £650 million.
- The Government has announced a [£23 million boost to walking and cycling](#) funding nationally. Put in context, this is [the same cost as 788 metres of the Heysham-M6 Link Road](#). New analysis suggests that [twenty times more British children could be cycling to school](#) with better transport planning.
- The Department for Transport (DfT) has set out how it wants technology to make transport greener and more efficient in [Future of Mobility: Urban Strategy](#), aiming to reduce travel congestion and transport emissions in urban areas, while Labour has pledged to put transport at the centre of a new '[green industrial revolution](#)'
- Highways England will lead a £300,000 study to consider major improvements to [road links between the M65 in East Lancashire and parts of Yorkshire](#), set to start in April.

Publications

Global Environment Outlook

UN Environment launched its [sixth Global Environment Outlook](#) (GEO-6) this month, which paints a bleak picture of a deteriorating environment with a rapidly closing window for action. The 700-page document, the most comprehensive report on the global environment since 2012, finds that since the first edition in 1997 there have been many examples of environmental improvement, especially where problems have been well identified, manageable, and where regulatory and technological solutions have been readily available. Nevertheless, the overall condition of the global environment has deteriorated and urgent action, involving ambitious and effective policies, is necessary to arrest and reverse this situation. The rather more digestible [four-page summary of key messages](#) will give you the big picture.

Biodiversity

You might remember that in 2016, we were warned that the UK is "[among the most nature depleted countries in the world](#)". Now it seems that we're [going to miss almost all of the 2020 nature targets](#) that we signed up to a decade ago, including those on agricultural pollution, threatened species and unsustainable fisheries. The Joint Nature Conservation Committee's [6th National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity](#) sets out the detail. However, a separate study suggests that [most of Britain native carnivorous mammals are in better shape](#)

[than they were in the 1960s](#), due to measures such as restrictions on hunting, pollution control and habitat protection.

UK Climate Change

Carbon Brief's analysis shows [the UK's CO2 emissions fell for the sixth consecutive year in 2018](#), the longest series of continuous reductions on record. The estimated 1.5% reduction was once again driven by falling coal use, which was down 16% compared to a year earlier, whereas oil and gas use were largely unchanged. However, there are signs the recent run of reductions could be coming to an end, with 2018 seeing the smallest fall in the six-year series. Home CO2 emissions increased by 1% in 2017, the most recent year with sectoral data available. Meanwhile, the Committee on Climate Change recently rated progress in each of [18 policy areas, giving the government a failing grade in 15](#) of them. Its letter to energy and clean growth minister Claire Perry said government policies had ['failed to produce expected reductions in emissions.'](#)

Waste not, want not

A new report from the Global FoodBanking Network (GFN) [Waste Not, Want Not](#), has found that food banks around the world have helped mitigate more than 10.5 million tonnes of carbon emissions by preventing almost 2.7 million metric tonnes of edible food being wasted. They found that food banks operating across 57 countries have served 62.5 million people with meals that would otherwise have gone to waste. It concludes that foodbanks are a "pivotal, stop-gap solution" – but serves to highlight the (shared) root causes of food poverty and food waste are failing to be tackled even in the most "advanced" economies and societies. However, other new research shows that in the UK, the [majority of food waste](#) happens in the home...

State of Brownfield 2019

A new analysis of councils' Brownfield Land Registers by the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), demonstrates the huge potential that building on derelict and vacant land has for the regeneration of towns and cities, as well as the provision of new homes. The [State of Brownfield 2019](#) analysis highlights that there is space on suitable 'brownfield land' – land that has previously been built on, and now sits derelict or vacant – to accommodate more than one million new homes, two-thirds of which are 'shovel ready' and could make an immediate contribution to meeting housing need, as they have been confirmed as being deliverable within five years.

Green space and mental health

A new large-scale study looking at the correlation between [mental health and childhood exposure to green space](#) in over a million people shows that the risk of developing a mental disorder decreases incrementally the longer you have been surrounded by green space from birth and up to the age of 10. However, the [latest MENE report](#) (the national survey on people and the natural environment) makes some [worrying findings](#) about children's engagement with nature. Other studies continue to make the connection between [wellbeing and nature and the countryside](#)

National Nature Reserves

Natural England has released a set of [natural capital accounts for its National Nature Reserves](#) (NNRs). The report indicates that the economic, environmental and societal benefits of NNRs for public society total £36 million. NNRs are recognised as important English sites for wildlife and geology, where conserving biodiversity and geodiversity is run alongside providing an

outdoor space for education, learning and research.

A Just Transition

According to the Institute for Public Policy Research's new report, [A Just Transition](#), as many as 46,000 jobs could be created in the north of England in a decarbonised power sector alone by 2030 – but they are keen to stress there is significant risk with around 28,000 job losses in the coal, oil and gas industries expected during the same period.

These figures are also without considering the other potential job losses in high-carbon, energy-intensive industries, and the wider economic and social implications that the loss of industry can bring about. They highlight the history of poorly managed industry transitions in the north, while making the case for a new approach that puts economic and social justice at the heart of energy and skills policy in the North.

Events

Natural England's Eco-metric Tool webinar

Tuesday 30th April 2019, 1 to 2 pm. The eco-metric is an emerging approach for measuring gains and losses in natural capital services for people and places resulting from habitat change. Alison Smith (University of Oxford) alongside Alison Chapman and Clare Warburton (Natural England) will provide an [update on Natural England's eco-metric tool](#) covering: An introduction to the eco-metric, the results of the pilot tests, how the tool may be useful to you and next steps for the project.

Earth Hour

30 March, 8.30-9.30. For this year's [Earth Hour](#), WWF is encouraging people not just to switch off their lights and other power, but to reflect and talk about our connection to and need for Earth and nature. Nature not only provides us with all the things we need to live - from the air we breathe to the water we drink, and from the shelter we need to the economy we rely on - but also makes our lives better. However, its growing loss puts this all under threat. This Earth Hour, join millions around the world to turn off the lights and speak up about why nature matters. They can help with [ideas for events, tips for social media and actions](#) you can take for Earth Hour for different kinds of businesses and groups.

Resources

Spring Statement

The Chancellor's [Spring Statement](#) was almost certainly [the greenest for years](#), although still far below the level of action needed. Still, it contained measures and/or commitments on [biodiversity in new development](#) and a comprehensive [review of the relationship between biodiversity and economic growth](#), [energy efficiency for new homes](#) and small businesses, [marine conservation](#), greening the gas grid and [carbon offsetting](#).

Towards fossil-free energy

A new study charts [practical ways to bring energy carbon emissions down to zero by 2050](#). It sets out six possible scenarios, demonstrating that there are a variety of options to get to the necessary end-point, but central to each are cutting energy use in buildings, ramping up renewable electricity and developing large-scale storage with hydrogen.

Guide to Historic Environment Records (HERs) in England

Historic England has published a [Guide to Historic Environment Records \(HERs\) in England](#). This guidance sets out the specification for Historic Environment Records and replaces [Benchmarks for Good Practice](#). It defines the scope of the content and coverage of a HER, its temporal and geographical limits, and how the public can access records.

Consultations

No new consultations, but worth remembering that there's still time to respond on:

- how Government will [evaluate sites for burying nuclear waste](#) in England - until 29 March.
- The HS2 [Supplementary Environmental Statement 2 and Additional Provision 2 Environmental Statement](#) – until 29 March
- developing a [marine plan for the North West](#) – until 29 March
- [proposals for the long-term future of UK aviation](#) – until 11 April
- a [deposit return system](#) in England, alongside three other consultations on waste and resource reforms (accessible from the bottom of the website) covering packaging producer responsibility; consistency in household and business recycling collections; and a tax on plastic packaging containing less than 30% recycled content – until 13 May
- [how to better use and implement light rail and other rapid transit solutions](#) in cities and towns – until 19 May

Funding

Lancashire Environmental Fund - Green Grants

Lancashire Environmental Fund are offering grants of up to £1,000 to not-for-profit organisations, charities, trusts, community groups, parish or community councils or voluntary organisations, for small stand-alone projects in Lancashire, with a 6-8 week turn around on applications. The projects must benefit the wider community so need to have public access and be within 10 miles of a landfill site. LEF cannot fund projects in the unitary authorities of Blackpool or Blackburn with Darwen. Projects might include; energy or water efficiency measures at community facilities, wildflower and bulb planting, tree planting, community orchards, community gardens (but not allotments), pond creation and planting, improvements to access to public parks and gardens, benches and seating, health walk way marking etc. For more information about the Green Grants and to discuss eligibility before applying please email general@lancsenvfund.org.uk or call on 01772 317247. Guidelines and application forms for the Green Grants and information on the Fund's other major funding schemes can be found on the Fund's website at www.lancsenvfund.org.uk/apply.

Bright ideas

Locality has announced a new £3.2m [Community Business Bright Ideas Fund](#) to offer tailored support and grants of up to £15,000 to 150 groups to develop their projects. Over three years, the fund will give community groups the early stage finance they need to carry out consultations with local people to develop a community business idea the community wants and needs, and will also give them support and tools to start setting up their community businesses. Applications are due by April 9th, with further rounds in August – September 2019, February 2020 – April 2020, August – September 2020, and February 2021 – March 2021.

Heritage Impact Fund

The National Lottery Heritage Fund has joined Historic England and others to launch [The Heritage Impact Fund](#), a £7 million investment fund providing loan finance to enable charities outside the heritage sector to acquire, reuse or redevelop buildings of historic or architectural importance.

Community-led homes

Community-led Homes is a new partnership run by four leading community-led organisations: Confederation of Co-operative Housing, Locality, National Community Land Trust Network, and UK Cohousing. They provide [training, funding and practical support](#) to local groups, councils and developers, so communities can create the homes they want and need. They have announced [three new community-led housing funds](#). Designed for groups at all stages, you could apply for funds from £4,000 to £100,000 for your project.

To subscribe or contribute

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