

* **Green Bullet**

28th November 2015

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 andyyuille@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/publications/nwel-green-bullet) website.

**CPRE North West have kindly agreed to continue their support to enable the Green Bullet to be produced throughout 2015 – very many thanks!**

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***Campaigns***

**Climate change**

On November 29th, [The People’s Climate March](http://fortheloveof.org.uk/peoples-climate-march/) will take place in London where tens of thousands of people, young and old, from all walks of life, will come together for the love of all we hold dear. It takes place as [world leaders begin to assemble in Paris](http://www.cop21.gouv.fr/en) for a summit to negotiate future global action on climate, and it’s vital that they know the world is watching and urging them reach the strongest deal possible. The march is happening at the same time as hundreds of events worldwide from New York to Mumbai to Rio. There will also be major climate events in [Edinburgh](http://www.stopclimatechaos.org/scottish-climate-march)and [Cardiff](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/wales-climate-action-diwrnod-hinsawdd-cymru-tickets-19119603248)on November 28th, and [Belfast](https://www.facebook.com/events/1067121923313017/)on the 29th. Help make this fantastic day the biggest climate march the UK’s ever seen.

**Bigger, better National Parks!**

The Secretary of State has finally decided to [extend the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks](http://www.friendsofthelakedistrict.org.uk/pages/FAQs/category/hot-topic) so that they will meet at the M6. This follows a public inquiry in 2013 and many years of campaigning. Well done everyone involved!

**Food waste**

The [Food Waste Bill](http://resource.co/article/mp-seeks-introduce-food-waste-bill-10450) introduced to the House of Commons in September has been given a second reading by MPs. The Food Waste (Reduction) Bill, presented by [Kerry McCarthy](http://www.kerrymccarthymp.org/news/westminster_news/news.aspx?p=1091233) MP under the House of Commons 10-minute rule, will be drafted and read to Parliament on 29 January 2016. It highlights the huge problem of food waste and calls for solutions to reduce it so food goes to people first. Join food waste campaigning organisations Feedback and ‘This is Rubbish’, FareShare, WWF-UK, Friends of the Earth and Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming by [showing your support](https://www.facebook.com/WhatAWasteSupportTheFoodWasteBill). Provisions laid out in McCarthy’s bill include the obligation of supermarkets to donate unsold foods to charities, the publishing of food waste arisings in the food manufacture supply chain and the concentration on enforcing the food waste hierarchy through incentives, requiring supermarkets and manufacturers to reduce their food waste by 30 per cent by 2025, and halving per capita food waste at the retail and consumer level by 2030.

**Breaking the Bag Habit**

After campaigning by the [Break the Bag Habit coalition](http://www.breakthebaghabit.org.uk/), the Government has finally acted and imposed a 5p [levy on single-use plastic bags](http://merci.org.uk/drupal/node/33293). Similar levies in Ireland and Wales have slashed the use of these long-life monuments to the throwaway society. So grab a bag for life and shop with a smile!

**Manchester: City of Trees**

Red Rose Forest and The Oglesby Charitable Trust are leading a new movement, to [double the tree cover in Greater Manchester](http://cityoftrees.ontheplatform.org.uk/) and, within a generation, plant a tree for every man woman and child that lives here. They also aim to improve access to existing woodland and ensure that they are well managed and, where possible, local communities can have an active role in caring for them.

**Dark Skies**

A report based on 14 years of data from 62 local authorities that have [reduced street lighting](https://libdembodders.wordpress.com/2015/09/12/do-you-feel-less-safe-with-street-lights-turned-off-during-the-night/) found no association between reduced lighting and traffic accidents at night or overall levels of crime, lending a boost to [dark skies campaigners](http://www.cpre.org.uk/what-we-do/countryside/dark-skies/the-issues?gclid=CKP48_T45MgCFUv3wgodGV8BGw).

***Information update***

**Energy**

Greg Clark has turned down four more wind schemes, for single turbines in [Cumbria](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/464797/15-09-30_DL_IR_Gleaston_Park_2221985.pdf) and [Northumberland](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/464857/15-09-30_DL_IR_Shoreswood_Farm_2195630.pdf), and for two turbines each in [Yorkshire](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/464353/15-09-29_DL_IR_Wakefield_Road_Kirklees.pdf) and [Staffordshire](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/469562/15-10-22_DL_IR_Stone_Park_Farm_Stafford_2212769.pdf), for failing to comply with new rules requiring turbines to have community backing. But the Government’s anti-onshore wind campaign has suffered a setback, with the House of Lords voting down [its proposals to end onshore wind subsidies a year earlier](http://www.businessgreen.com/bg/news/2431672/government-forced-into-wind-farm-rethink-after-lords-rejects-subsidy-closure). There is a [House of Commons petition](https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/106791) and a Friends of the Earth [email-your-MP](http://www.manchesterfoe.org.uk/help-fergal-saveoursolar/) e-action to speak out against the proposal to slash solar subsidies by 87%, which will hit small-scale and brownfield / rooftop schemes particularly hard. The cuts to renewables subsidies and removal of the exemption for renewable energy from the carbon tax (yes, you read that right) have led to power station giant Drax [pulling out of a carbon capture and storage scheme](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-34356117). The White Rose CCS project would have trapped up to 90% of carbon emissions from a new power station next to the company’s existing Yorkshire power plant and stored the CO2 beneath the North Sea. RSPB research shows that the recent round of new fracking licences puts almost 300 of England’s most [valuable wildlife sites at risk](http://merci.org.uk/drupal/node/33297), so a coalition of environmental groups are running an [e-action](http://www.cpre.org.uk/magazine/opinion/item/4122-make-the-government-keep-its-promises-on-fracking) to ask the Government to stick to its pledge to protect such sites. The Government’s latest public attitudes survey found that just [21% of UK households support fracking](http://www.edie.net/news/6/One-fifth-of-Brits-back-fracking-Government-survey-reveals/28724/) – the lowest percentage recorded by the survey - while 28% opposed it and 49% said they neither supported nor opposed it.

**Devolution**

The Commons Library has produced a [briefing note](http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/offices/commons/commonslibrary/commons-library-news/cities-local-govt-devolution-bill/) on the Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill. 38 cities and counties have put forward [bids for ‘devolved’ powers and funding](http://www.out-law.com/en/articles/2015/september/devolution-proposals-submitted-by-38-cities-towns-and-counties/) to Government under this Bill, including Cumbria and Cheshire & Warrington. Lancashire were in negotiations, and we believe they do still hope to come up with a deal, but didn’t make this deadline. Greater Manchester and the Liverpool City Region have already secured devolution deals, and are seeking further powers. Experts predict that, as in Greater Manchester, these proposals will lead to larger-than-local land use planning. Concerns have been expressed that the approach to devolution has been [secretive, opaque and lacking accountability](http://www.lgcplus.com/opinion/lord-kerslake-devolution-deals-at-risk-without-serious-scrutiny/5090106.article).

**National Infrastructure Commission**

The Government has set up an independent [National Infrastructure Commission](https://portaldirector.wordpress.com/2015/10/08/osborne-unveils-national-infrastructure-commission-initiative/) (NIC) to direct future nationally significant infrastructure development. The commission’s first chairman will be Lord Adonis, formerly a Labour transport minister. The NIC’s immediate priorities include “a plan to transform the connectivity of the Northern cities, including high speed rail (HS3) …and how to ensure investment in energy infrastructure can meet future demand in the most efficient way.” They will publish advice to Government on these issues before next year’s Budget, and will also assess infrastructure requirements for the next 30 years.

**Planning**

The wide-ranging [Housing and Planning Bill](https://portaldirector.wordpress.com/2015/10/15/government-publishes-landmark-housing-and-planning-bill/) was introduced to the Commons without debate this month - see [Andy Boddington’s review of the Bill](http://andybodders.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/CPRE-South-East-eBulletin-October-2015-The-Housing-and-Planning-Bill.pdf) for details. In brief, it sets out proposals for, amongst other things:

* granting automatic planning permission in principle on designated sites (intended initially just for small brownfield sites, but with no restriction on expansion to larger or greenfield sites);
* giving the Secretary of State greater powers over local plan making;
* requiring councils to promote “Starter Homes” (probably at the expense of “affordable” homes that would at least remain “affordable” in perpetuity), while extending the Right to Buy voluntarily to housing associations and forcing councils to sell off their most valuable housing stock – ie 3 separate measures to reduce the supply of affordable housing;
* requiring councils to keep registers of brownfield land, and potentially other types of land;
* simplifying and speeding up neighbourhood planning;
* and enabling [housing](https://www.bdb-law.co.uk/blogs/planning-act-2008/657-hundreds-of-unrelated-houses-to-be-allowed-in-nsip-applications/?utm_source=Bircham%20Dyson%20Bell%20LLP%20&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=6271754_Planning%20-%20657&utm_content=blog&dm_i=1JZ2,3QFBE,EDPX1U,DFU07,1) to be included in applications for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.

The Government also announced that the ability to [convert offices to homes without planning permission](https://portaldirector.wordpress.com/2015/10/15/office-to-residential-pd-to-be-made-permanent/) will be made permanent, and that demolishing office blocks to build houses and converting light industrial units and launderettes to housing will now also be considered permitted development.

***Publications***

# Response for Nature

In 2013, the State of Nature report found that 60 per cent of UK species studied had declined in recent decades, and more than 1 in 10 could disappear from our shores altogether. That left the question: 'what needs to be done to improve the fate of nature in the UK?' Across the four UK countries, 34 different conservation organisations contributed to the [Response for Nature](http://www.rspb.org.uk/forprofessionals/policy/responsefornature/) project to help answer that question, identifying a range of actions necessary to save nature. Reporting this month, the project highlights common themes and specific priorities for each UK country.

**Water and farming for people and nature**

Wildlife and Countryside Link (the national grouping of environmental NGOs) has launched two major publications – [Water Matters](http://blueprintforwater.org.uk/watermatters/) and [Farming Fit for the Future](http://www.wcl.org.uk/farmingfitforthefuture.asp). These publications set out a coherent holistic approach for a future in which the natural environment underpins healthy farmland, rivers, lakes and wetlands in England and they call on the Government, businesses and wider society to do more to achieve this. The Parliamentary launch of the two publications brought together more than one hundred different stakeholders including farmers, water companies, MPs and voluntary organisations. Zac Goldsmith MP and the Secretary of State, the Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP, spoke about [the importance of taking an integrated approach](https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/elizabeth-truss-speech-to-the-wildlife-and-countryside-link) and Link’s Director, Dr Elaine King, highlighted the [need to work together](http://www.wcl.org.uk/docs/elaine_%20king_link_%20speech_%20150915.pdf) to deliver our shared ambitions, in enhancing the natural environment for people, wildlife and the economy.

**Better protection needed for natural beauty?**

A [new report from the National Trust](http://offlinehbpl.hbpl.co.uk/NewsAttachments/RLP/NationalTrustreport.pdf) concludes that the Government should update national planning guidance to include nine tests to ensure that areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONBs) are adequately protected from inappropriate development. They found that in two-thirds of decisions investigated over the past three years, the duty of regard for AONBs set out in the law was not formally noted in planning reports, and AONBs were frequently not identified as being exempt from the presumption in favour of sustainable development under the National Planning Policy Framework.

**Valuing our life support systems**

Natural capital underpins our economy and our health and is of vital importance to human wellbeing. In its (rather belated) ‘[Valuing our Life Support Systems](http://www.naturalcapitalinitiative.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Valuing-our-Life-Support-Systems-summit-report.pdf)’ summit report The [Natural Capital Initiative](http://www.naturalcapitalinitiative.org.uk/) argues that the valuation of natural capital enables the use of rational policy and business tools for decision-making about investments in infrastructure, and is urgently needed if we are to achieve long term sustainability.  All outputs of the summit, including speaker presentations and videos, are now available on the [Natural Capital Initiative website](http://www.naturalcapitalinitiative.org.uk/events/valuing-our-life-support-systems-2014/).

**Green Belt**

New Government [figures](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-green-belt-statistics-for-england-2014-to-2015) have shown that the overall area of green belt land decreased by 2,000 hectares last year, marking ‘‘the largest annual change in the area of green belt reported in the last five years.’’ The decrease was driven by 11 local authorities who adopted local plans which saw parcels of green belt land redesignated. This pattern can be expected to continue over the next few years with Green Belt authorities under significant pressure to release land for building.

***Resources***

**Climate Justice**

Why are some people more vulnerable to climate change, where are they, and what can be done? Climate change has the potential to increase inequalities and disadvantage in the UK. Local authorities and other organisations working on climate change, or working with vulnerable communities, have a key role to play in responding to this challenge. The [Climate Just](http://www.climatejust.org.uk/?utm_source=E-news+September+2015&utm_campaign=CUK+e-news+Autumn+2015&utm_medium=email) website has been developed to provide evidence to support local action, highlighting which people and places are likely to be most vulnerable, examining fuel poverty and inequities in energy policy and how these can be tackled locally, and providing maps to identify the issues in your local area and find guidance, case studies and resources on actions you could take to help build local resilience.

**National wellbeing and deprivation figures**

The Government has updated the [English Indices of Deprivation](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015) 2010. This provides a measure of relative levels of deprivation in 32,844 neighbourhoods in England. September also saw the release of the latest [ONS personal well being statistics](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/wellbeing/measuring-national-well-being/personal-well-being-in-the-uk--2014-15/index.html) for the UK and includes interactive maps and charts.

**Natural Capital Protocol**
The term ‘natural capital’ is used as a way of starting conversations in government and business that lead to greater recognition to the value of the natural environment in society. A ‘[Natural Capital Protocol](http://www.naturalcapitalcoalition.org/natural-capital-protocol.html)’ is being developed to provide a consistent way for businesses to understand their impacts and dependencies on natural capital. This month, a pilot testing programme began, led by Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL) on behalf of the [Natural Capital Coalition](http://www.naturalcapitalcoalition.org/). The trials come ahead of the [World Forum on Natural Capital](http://naturalcapitalforum.com/) in Edinburgh on 23rd and 24th November 2015.

**Fracking action**

Following the previously- featured [Objectors Guide to Fracking](http://www.leighday.co.uk/LeighDay/media/LeighDay/documents/Guides/Fracking-guide_June-2015.pdf) from law firm Leigh Day, Friends of the Earth have launched a [Stop Fracking Action Pack](http://www.foe.co.uk/page/order-a-stop-fracking-action-pack?ct=t(No_Fracking_action_pack10_9_2015)), with i**nformation** about fracking, the risks and the alternatives; **tips and guides** on everything from spreading the word and putting on public meetings, to joining or setting up groups, influencing local decision makers and using the media and social media; m**aterials and resources** to get you started; s**tories and advice from people who’ve done this before; and tips on how to join forces** with the wider fracking and climate movements**.**

**Be a BEE and Love Your Saltmarsh**

These are two new activities created by BESS (Biodiversity and Ecosystem Service Sustainability) for teachers and others to use with children. The [instruction packs can be downloaded](http://www.nerc-bess.net/index.php/bess-projects-list/outreach-materials/221-learning-materials) and used at outreach events or in the classroom.  The core activities are designed for 7-11 year olds, but adaptations are suggested for younger and older participants.  In Be a BEE participants forage amongst different species of flowers collecting nectar with their honeybee or bumblebee before returning to fill the hive or nest.  They transfer pollen between flowers, and fruit is produced if the pollen matches.   Love Your Saltmarsh initiates discussion about coastal management. When there is no saltmarsh and mudflat in front of a Lego town, participants discover that they spend more of their chocolate coins to build and maintain a higher sea wall.

***Events***

## Climate Resilient Communities conference

The [Climate Resilient Communities Conference](http://climateuk.net/event/climate-resilient-communities-conference-birmingham?utm_source=E-news+September+2015&utm_campaign=CUK+e-news+Autumn+2015&utm_medium=email)aims to showcase best practice from around the country with regards to implementing successful community resilience schemes. Empowering communities and providing mechanisms for them to deal with the consequences of extreme weather is becoming a more and more popular approach, as the resource burden on both the communities and the relevant authorities is reduced considerably. Results are often more effective when the community can have a direct say and influence in the interventions that need to occur in specific locations. 28 January, 2016 - 09:15 to 16:30 at Innovation Birmingham, Faraday Wharf, Holt Street, Birmingham, B7 4BB.

**Urban Tree Health**

The Forestry Commission and Community Forest Trusts are holding an Urban Tree Health event on Wednesday 18th November at Manchester Museum, 9.30am - 4pm. Topics will include the current main tree health threats in the urban areas of North West England; future threats and lessons from other areas in the UK and in Europe; management of ancient and heritage trees in urban areas; approaches to management of tree pests and diseases; planning for future resilience; how to protect our trees  – biosecurity; and tree safety management. There are speakers coming from across the UK and from Denmark. Further agenda and speaker details will be available soon. Please book your FREE place via email by following this link.

**Linking environment and health**

25th November 2015, the Advanced Technology Centre, Bradford. The Ecosystems Knowledge Network is organising a series of workshops to help initiate long-term partnerships between local organisations in the health sector and initiatives that are promoting access to the natural outdoors. Following on from a successful workshop in Cambridge in July, the second event will be in Bradford and will focus on the challenge of [childhood obesity in West Yorkshire](http://ecosystemsknowledge.net/node/2416). To request a place email info@ecosystemsknowledge.net.

**Communicate 2015: Challenging Partnerships**
[Communicate](http://www.bnhc.org.uk/communicate/) is the UK’s leading conference for environmental communicators, focusing on how to get ideas and actions related to the natural environment across to those who need to know. This year’s event, 'Challenging Partnerships', is focused on collaborative and innovative ways of working to address the big threats to the environment. The event will discuss ways of forming partnerships and going beyond the boundaries of individual sectors or ideologies to create a compelling story for change. It will be held on 10th and 11th November, at the At-Bristol Science Centre, Bristol.

**Locality Convention**

**Some of the UK’s most senior funding experts will be sharing their funding and finance tips at this year's** [Locality Convention](http://locality.org.uk/events/locality-convention-2015/)**: 10 & 11 November - St George's Hall, Liverpool. Speakers from** The Big Lottery Fund, Power to Change, The Access Foundation, and The Community Shares Unit will be talking about **lessons learned from the front line of community sector funding and finance** - plus sharing their wisdom, insights and tips.

***Consultations***

**Air quality**

Following the Supreme Court finding that the [Government’s plans to reduce illegal levels of air pollution](http://www.clientearth.org/news/latest-news/uk-supreme-court-orders-government-to-take-immediate-action-on-air-pollution-2844) across most of the country were ineffective, and requiring them to deliver new ones by the end of the year, they are now [consulting on a new set of plans](https://consult.defra.gov.uk/airquality/draft-aq-plans). NB consultation closes November 6th!

**Environmental law cases**

The Government is consulting on varying the way that [caps on costs for environmental court cases](https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/costs-protection-in-environmental-claims) (judicial reviews) are applied, in a way that seems likely to [cause uncertainty and expose potential claimants to significantly higher costs](http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/sep/28/green-legal-challenges-heathrow-hs2-cost-caps), thereby deterring claims and denying access to environmental justice. Consultation ends 10th December. The UK is already the biggest source of complaints to the EU Aarhus Convention’s Compliance Committee, which monitors access to environmental justice.

***Funding***

**First Steps Enterprise Fund**

Launched on 19 Oct, the Social Investment Business’ [First Steps Enterprise Fund](http://www.sibgroup.org.uk/firststeps/) is a £300,000 pilot fund offering loan-grant packages to charities and social enterprises working in communities in England.  Small community-led organisations can apply for up to £30,000 to help them grow their services and become more sustainable. The investments are the first steps towards accessing the wider social investment market and more financing options. The deadline for applications for the next investment panel is 11 December 2015.

**Forestry finance**

Forestry Commission England are providing free support to forestry businesses in relation to the new grants in the new Rural Development Programme that launched in 2015. They canhelp with business planning, financial forecasting, legal agreements, and identify the right technical solutions and the best grant fit. So if you work with woods in the North West and haveidea to expand your business but struggle to pull the necessary paperwork together, contactPenny Oliver, 0300 067 4186, penny.oliver@forestry.gsi.gov.uk. There are also a [series of local events](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/BEEH-A2MJC7) to provide a detailed overview of the grants available and practical advice on how to apply.

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