

* **Green Bullet**

27th January 2016

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 2016 – very many thanks!**

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***Campaigns***

**Climate Change**

Yep, after Paris it’s still top of the list! George Osborne has asked for the public to contribute to the policy-making process for the budget 2016, Friends of the Earth and are asking people to email him to [demand a budget for the climate](https://www.foe.co.uk/act/demand-climate-budget?utm_source=Friends+of+the+Earth+Communications&utm_campaign=2abc8f2593-Climate_Budget_test1_21_2016&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_383af65c6b-2abc8f2593-20757677) this March to show that we’re serious about commitments made in Paris. And building on the success of their [2015 climate campaign](http://www.e-activist.com/ea-action/broadcast.record.message.click.do?ea.url.id=531644&ea.campaigner.email=9fvwWIaMrZEXbizhjQl4ulESkN1MQhKC&ea.campaigner.id=BdU2tw7NTCmZkArzVWMSmA==&ea_broadcast_target_id=0), the Climate Coalition wants to inspire people across the UK to turn hearts green and [#showthelove](http://fortheloveof.org.uk/show-the-love-green-hearts/) for the people, places and life we want to protect for generations to come. Green hearts are the visual symbol of the #showthelove campaign, like the red nose or poppy.  Wearing or sharing one is a great way to get people talking about what we love and don’t want to lose to climate change.  All around the country people will be making green hearts and sharing them in public places and on social media - please join in from 8 February.

# Ask your MP to end food waste for good – TODAY!

From ‘ugly veg’ to unsold milk, the**UK bins 15 million tonnes of edible food** each year. At the same time, thousands across the UK rely on foodbanks and almost a billion people worldwide are going hungry. This isn’t just wasteful – **it’s unforgivable**. While we can do our bit at home (for example, by [dabbling with your dinner](http://www.dabblewithyourdinner.co.uk/) or [Eating Better](http://www.eating-better.org/)), over 50% of waste takes place before food even makes it to our shopping bags. We need suppliers and supermarkets to take action too. [France has recently passed legislation](http://www.eurofoodlaw.com/country-reports/french-food-waste-law-likely-to-be-enacted-early-2016--1.htm) to tackle food waste by supermarkets, and we can do the same. On **January 29th**, MPs will decide whether to vote for a new law on food waste. [**Please email your MP today**](https://www.foe.co.uk/act/ask-your-mp-end-food-waste) **to ask them support the new law! And check out some** [amazing large-scale food waste up-cycling schemes](http://merci.org.uk/drupal/node/34295)**!**

**Orchards**

In a traditional orchard people and nature meet unlike in any other place, but the quality and quantity of this habitat is rapidly declining. The People’s Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) are working to halt the decline and improve the prospects of this habitat into the future with their [Traditional Orchards Project](https://ptes.org/campaigns/traditional-orchard-project/). The campaign aims to improve the condition of traditional orchards around the country by providing guides to wildlife sympathetic orchard management, giving grants to help replant old traditional orchards and raising awareness of the value orchards provide to our wildlife. They also want help identifying threats to orchards, in particular from new development.

**Blue belts**

Twenty-three new areas along the UK coast were announced in January as the latest [Marine Conservation Zones](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/marine-conservation-zone-designations-in-england) to be awarded environmental protection by the government. They add to the original 27 areas designated in 2013, and a final tranche will be consulted on in 2017. But there is much more work to be done. You can help by joining the Wildlife Trusts’ campaign band become a [Friend of Marine Conservation Zones](http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/mcz), or [ask your MP to support the Marine Charter](http://www.wcl.org.uk/marinecharter.asp).

# ****Cold Homes Week 2016!****

**Cold Homes Week (1-5 February 2016) is a week of action on fuel poverty and winter deaths. This year Age UK are leading the week with their** [campaign for warm homes](http://energybillrevolution.us5.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=2ac8318bb672a4e0bd11aae16&id=20b54aefb3&e=5a9fc5fbcf) **– join in!** Each winter, one older person dies every seven minutes from the cold weather. Many of these deaths could be prevented if everyone lived in warm home. During Cold Homes Week, Age UK and the [Energy Bill Revolution](http://www.energybillrevolution.org/coldhomesweek/)are calling on the Government to reform its energy efficiency schemes to enable all older people to live in a warm home and to make energy efficiency a national infrastructure priority – a key issue for climate change and energy reduction campaigns.

***Information update***

**Energy**

As you will have gathered from these pages, the Government has been turning down renewables applications left, right and centre, based on their claim that we don’t need them because we are on target to hit our legally-binding 2020 renewables target already (including more rejected solar farms this month - [two](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/494018/16-01-21_DL_IR_Tawdside_Farm_West_Lancashire_3011997.pdf) in [West Lancashire](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/492966/16-01-18_DL_IR_Butchers_Lane_Aughton_3002667.pdf) and one in [South Gloucestershire](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/489669/15-12-21_Green_Farm_DL_IR.pdf) - and more turbines in [Rugby](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/492996/16-01-19_DL_IR_Cestersover_Farm_Rugby_2227479.pdf)). However, a [leaked letter from Amber Rudd](http://www.theecologist.org/News/news_analysis/2986190/leaked_letter_rudd_admits_25_green_energy_undershoot_misled_parliament.html?utm_source=Energydesk+Daily+Email&utm_campaign=88ae359128-Energydesk_Dispatch5_9_2013&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_ad1a620334-88ae359128-141760085) indicates that we’re heading to miss that target by 25%, and she also openly admitted that the targets would be missed anyway if key policies on [transport and heating](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/the-government-doesn-t-have-the-right-policies-on-renewable-energy-energy-secretary-amber-rudd-says-a6728541.html) were not changed. Meanwhile, [drilling boreholes](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/amendment-to-permitted-development-rights-for-petroleum-exploration) to monitor or investigate potential for fracking operations has become permitted development, and [vast swathes of Cheshire and Lancashire](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/485475/14R_Map_v1.pdf) (plus a chunk of Northern Manchester and littles bit of Cumbria and Merseyside) have been licensed for fracking and other onshore gas and oil exploration.

**Planning**

The latest Governmental wheeze is an amendment to the Housing and Planning to allow the [privatization of the planning system](http://www.theplanner.co.uk/news/housing-and-planning-bill-mps-unhappy-with-privatisation-of-planning) by enabling developers to insist that “alternative providers”, not Local Authorities, processed their planning applications. Councils would still make the decisions – but based on the recommendations and interpretations of the evidence made by private companies. The Bill is now with the [House of Lords](http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2015-16/housingandplanning.html) and had its second reading on 26th January.. Following repeated denials by the development industry that landbanking is an issue – as [highlighted by CPRE](http://ihbconline.co.uk/newsachive/?p=10460) last summer - a Guardian report shows that our four biggest housebuilders are [holding on to four times more land](http://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/dec/30/revealed-housebuilders-sitting-on-450000-plots-of-undeveloped-land) than they are actually building on. The Secretary of State has extended the period in which he will more [actively intervene in cases involving Neighbourhood Planning](http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2016-01-11/HCWS457) areas by a further six months. 33 appeals have been recovered under this power since July 2014, with the Secretary of State fairly consistently ruling in favour of neighbourhood plans where they have been adopted and they are in clear conflict with the application. The High Court has held that [gardens outside of built-up areas can be considered as brownfield](https://andrewlainton.wordpress.com/2016/01/25/high-court-rules-that-garden-grabbing-outside-built-up-areas-complies-with-nppf/) land.

**Flooding**

A googlemap shows the location of [flood defence schemes not going ahead](https://www.google.com/fusiontables/data?docid=1mectARI2agl0mSjCVBWiFJy7AAQV0nDAMFUHtJP-#map:id=3) due to lack of funding, but the Government has [defended their decisions](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-35190896) on investment and its [full response](http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7424) provides details of its announcements. The newly-formed Cumbria Floods Partnership has announced dates for a [series of community flood discussions](http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7424). One non-traditional approach - [slowing the flow](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/slowingtheflow) – appears to have saved Pickering from flooding this time around – although approaches like this need careful tailoring to individual circumstances. Commentators such as [George Monbiot](http://www.monbiot.com/2015/12/29/going-downhill-fast/) have linked the floods to climate change (it was the [warmest and wettest December](http://merci.org.uk/drupal/node/34307) on record) and inappropriate land use and water management.

***Publications***

**Natural Partners?**

Green Alliance have launched a report called [Natural Partners](http://www.green-alliance.org.uk/resources/Natural_partners.pdf), in which they seek to align Natural Capital and Nature Conservation approaches. Some [commentators](https://anewnatureblog.wordpress.com/2016/01/27/natural-capital-day/) take issue with this approach though, arguing that framing nature conservation in economic terms will ultimately undermine their overarching objectives by appealing to selfish values and presenting nature as a mere substitutable commodity. [The Common Cause for Nature Practitioner’s Guide](http://valuesandframes.org/downloads/) from 2013 is well worth re-visiting to get to grips with this crucial argument.

**Transport**

The Public Accounts Committee have published a report on the sell-off of HS1, in the process strongly criticising the [burying of evidence](http://stophs2.org/news/15016-stop-hs2-response-public-accounts-committee-report-2) that would have undermined the case for progressing HS2. Separately, claims have been made that the total cost of HS2 is set to rise to [£70 billion](http://www.railnews.co.uk/news/2015/11/16-construction-costs-of-hs2-are.html). There have been calls, albeit from the fringe, to [divert funding from HS2 into flood defences](https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/117184). Meanwhile, the Campaign for Better Transport’s [Buses in Crisis report](http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/sites/default/files/research-files/buses-in-crisis-2015.pdf) finds that bus services in England have been cut by £21million or 8.3% this year, and by £73million, 25% since 2010. In England, 372 bus services have been cut, altered or withdrawn in this year alone.

**Fit for the Future? LEPs and climate change**

The [Fit for the Future report](http://www.sustainabilitywestmidlands.org.uk/resources/fit-for-the-future-local-enterprise-partnerships-climate-ready-and-low-carbon-economy-good-practice/) by Sustainability West Midlands is aimed at those working with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) at the local and national level to integrate climate adaptation, mitigation and the low carbon economy into their economic strategies and the billions of pounds worth of investments over the next five years. The research represents the first national review of all 39 LEPs’ commitments to tackling climate change and embracing the low carbon economy, based on information from their latest key strategies. It contains good practice case studies, benchmarking tables, maps and recommendations to those working with LEPs. While none of them are exactly towering giants of sustainability, Lancashire LEP is convincing the worst of the 39, scoring lowest on all but one of their performance indicators.

**Devolution**

Locality and NAVCA have published a paper entitled [Devolution for People and Communities](http://locality.org.uk/blog/realising-revolution-making-devolution-work-people-communities/) outlining a set of principles which should underpin devolution in the light of Government rhetoric and policy around devolving power and empowering communities.

***Events***

**Community Energy 2016 – What next?**

Feb 6 2016 9:30am to 4:00pm. This event, organised by Cumbria Action for Sustainability, will explore the latest [challenges and opportunities for community energy](http://www.cafs.org.uk/events/community-energy-2016-what-now/) in Cumbria and beyond. Following a number of policy changes in energy this is an ideal opportunity to inform and encourage communities, local authorities and community energy practitioners to continue taking action on energy.

**England’s Communities Forests – Annual Conference**

England's Community Forests are hosting a [national Conference](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/englands-community-forests-annual-conference-2016-tickets-19799090613) to discuss the progress community forestry is making, identify issues and develop opportunities, at the Birmingham Midland Institute on 23rd March 2016. The Conference is chaired by Sir Harry Studholme, Forestry Commission Chairman, and will host the launch of the Urban Forest Vision and a group of great speakers, with lots of time for discussion and questions too. Contact The Mersey Forest on 01925 816217, or mail@merseyforest.org.uk for further information.

**Earth First! Winter Moot**

Friday 19 – Sunday 21 February 2016, Centre for Science and Art, 13 Lansdown, Stroud, Gloucestershire GL5 1BB. Stroud station is a 5 minute walk away. Cost is £25/30. The [Earth First! Winter Moot](https://earthfirst.org.uk/actionreports/content/ef-winter-moot-19-21-february-2016-stroud) is a gathering for people involved or wanting to know more about ecological campaigning and direct action in the UK. Those taking their first steps into ecological campaigning are warmly welcomed. There will be debates, discussions on campaign planning, updates, support and solidarity, tactics, strategies, community building, sustainable activism and networking including groups campaigning against fracking, incineration, new roads & GM (genetic engineering).

**Low Carbon Neighbourhood Planning – Alston**

Feb 11th, 6:00pm to 9:00pm. This [free event](http://www.cafs.org.uk/events/low-carbon-neighbourhood-planning-alston/) is hosted by Alston Parish Council and is open to all parish/town councils, neighbourhood planning groups and interested individuals. Neighbourhood planning is an opportunity to identify local climate change and sustainability problems and develop locally-appropriate strategies to tackle them. The Centre for Sustainable Energy has produced a [Low Carbon Neighbourhood Planning Guidebook](https://www.cse.org.uk/news/view/2012) exploring what communities can do to mitigate and adapt to climate change and tackle fuel poverty. This event will explore what neighbourhood plans in other areas have done to tackle these issues, and whether these approaches could be adapted for your community and its issues. For more information contact: Emma Greenshaw at CAfS  or Hellen Aitken at ACT.

**Morecambe Bay Partnership annual conference**

March 9th, The Platform, Morecambe. Join the [Morecambe Bay Partnership](http://www.morecambebay.org.uk/events/morecambe-bay-partnership-conference-2016) to share and celebrate some of their stories and successes over the last year, and tell you more about what you can expect from them over the next year, and how you can get involved. Featuring an array of expert speakers to talk about important subjects and projects that are being delivered around the Bay.

***Resources***

**Conservation evidence**

[Conservation Evidence is a free, authoritative web-based information resource](http://www.conservationevidence.com/) designed to support decisions about how to maintain and restore global biodiversity. It provides evidence from the scientific literature about the effects of conservation interventions such as methods of habitat or species management.  It extracts evidence continually from important conservation journals and systematic reviews published by the [Collaboration for Environmental Evidence](http://www.environmentalevidence.org/) and searches through more specialist journals and unpublished literature to focus on particular species groups or habitats.

**BIMBYs?**

Communities fighting inappropriate development are sick of being derided as NIMBYs. And a [new report by the Prince’s Foundation](http://www.housing-communities.org/) concludes that what they oppose is "rapid, exclusive and overbearing urban development", while they would support street-based housing, walkability, green spaces and a sense of local identity. As a result, the Foundation, along with partners including CPRE and the National Trust, have developed a [simple and practical online tool](https://www.bimby.org.uk/) which will empower communities to work with local authorities and developers to create a regional BIMBY (Beauty In My Back Yard) Housing Manual. It is specifically designed to give both certainty to house builders, who can be sure of their housing's popularity, whilst also granting security to the community and local authority that new building projects will tie in with local preferences and needs.

**Linking Environment and the Economy Toolkit (LEED toolkit)**
The [LEED toolkit](http://ecosystemsknowledge.net/apply/local-economy/LEED) is designed to help Local Enterprise Partnerships and their partners in England understand the connection between local economy and natural assets. It is a practical resource that will be useful to organisations throughout the UK who want to understand and communicate the connection between sustainable economic growth and the natural environment.

**Making towns and cities pollinator friendly**

Insect pollinators are essential for food production and wild flower reproduction and they are under increasing pressure.  A majority of humans live in urban areas, but we tend to think only of the pressures on pollinators in the countryside.  It’s important that we also manage our towns and cities as pollinator friendly environments. The [Living With Environmental Change Network’s Policy and Practice Note no 20](http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/partnerships/lwec/products/ppn/ppn20/) explains how this might be achieved.

**Historic England – Tall Buildings**

This [Historic England Advice Note](http://offlinehbpl.hbpl.co.uk/NewsAttachments/RLP/tallbuildings.pdf) updates previous guidance by English Heritage and CABE, produced in 2007. It seeks to guide people involved in planning for and designing tall buildings so that they may be delivered in a sustainable and successful way through the development plan and development management process. The advice is for all relevant developers, designers, local authorities and other interested parties.

**Make your office more sustainable**

NCVO have produced an easy step-by-step [guide to making your office more sustainable](https://knowhownonprofit.org/how-to/how-to-make-your-office-more-sustainable). Now that you’ve broken all your other New Year’s Resolutions, make this the one that you actually do! More tips available from the [Sustainable Business Toolkit](http://www.sustainablebusinesstoolkit.com/going-green-tips-for-the-office/).

***Consultations***

**National planning policy**

The consultation on major [changes to the National Planning Policy Framework](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-planning-policy-consultation-on-proposed-changes) has been extended to 22nd February. Proposals include [allowing “Starter Homes” to be built in the Green Belt](https://andrewlainton.wordpress.com/2015/12/08/telegraph-thousands-of-starter-homes-on-the-green-belt/), broadening the definition of affordable housing to include Starter Homes (that are not affordable in perpetuity, so reducing the supply of affordable homes); increasing the density of development around commuter hubs; supporting new settlements; increasing development on brownfield land (including in the Green Belt) and small sites; measures to penalise councils if developers don’t build in their areas ([likely to result in significant new greenfield land releases](http://www.cpre.org.uk/media-centre/sound-bites/item/4185-concerning-government-consultation-on-nppf-fails-to-address-existing-problems)); and requiring the release of land allocated for employment for housing.

**New Homes Bonus**

The Government is consulting on [withholding the New Homes Bonus](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/new-homes-bonus-sharpening-the-incentive-technical-consultation) from councils without an up-to-date local plan, and reducing it if permission is granted on appeal, rather than by the council itself. Or alternatively, blackmailing councils by withholding resources if they don’t nod through any proposals regardless of suitability or sustainability. Respond by 10th March!

**National Infrastructure Commission**

The Government is consulting on the governance, objectives, and general modus operandi of the new [National Infrastructure Commission](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/489950/National_infrastructure_commission_jan_16_print_final.pdf). Not to be confused with the NIC’s own recent call for evidence, this is about the way the body will actually operate. For example – question 1 – should it be answerable directly to the Treasury? If you think that infrastructure planning should consider social wellbeing and environmental impacts, consider responding! Deadline March 17th.

***Funding***

**Environmental Funders Network**

The [Environmental Funders Network](http://www.greenfunders.org/whos-involved/) is a network of trusts, foundations and individuals making grants on environmental and conservation issues. The network works on relationship building, intelligence sharing and research – and they also have a [list of their members](http://www.greenfunders.org/whos-involved/) – so you can see if any of them are suitable for you to apply to!

**Crowdfunding**

Crowdfunding. Everyone’s doing it, apparently. But what is it exactly, and how can it work for you? Based on the experience of people who’ve done it, Crowdfunder.co.uk have put together a set of [95 tips](http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/95-crowdfunding-tips/95-tips-for-crowdfunders-your-guide-to-running-a-successful-project) with advice and guidance on crowdfunding for anyone looking to raise funds from the crowd.

**Social Investment? Big Potential!**

[Big Potential](http://www.bigpotential.org.uk/) provides information and grants to organisations looking to explore their readiness for social investment.  The website provides many useful resources for organisations looking to explore social investment, including a Guide to Social Investment and a diagnostic tool which are available to all, not just those looking to apply to Big Potential for funding.

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*To subscribe or contribute*

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