



● GREEN BULLET

30th June 2017

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.

CPRE has agreed to continue funding the Green Bullet throughout 2017 – many thanks!

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Campaigns

Climate change

- Donald Trump has formally announced that he will [withdraw the USA from the Paris Agreement](#), leaving a big hole in the hitherto universal support for the ground-breaking accord, out of which other commitments may start leaking. However, [initial reactions](#) have been in favour of pursuing the agreement regardless.
- A report by the [High Level Commission on Carbon Prices](#), a group of leading economists including Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz and former World Bank chief economist [Nicholas Stern](#), warned on Monday that the world risks catastrophic global warming in just 13 years

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unless countries ramp up taxes on carbon emissions to as much as \$100 (£77) per metric tonne. Even the EU Emissions Trading Scheme, the biggest and most advanced in the world, [currently charges just £5.20 and is criticized for providing an excess of credits](#) and allowing carbon prices to fall to levels that make it cheaper for companies to pollute than to change their behavior.

- The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) has warned of [delayed progress to reduce emissions](#) by 80% by 2050 in line with the Climate Change Act, with reductions largely confined to the power sector, and emissions rising in the transport and building sectors. Meanwhile, attempts to improve the state of the natural environment continue to worsen or have stalled in many areas
- The construction sector needs a dramatic shift towards a zero-carbon built environment to meet the objectives of the Paris Agreement, according to [new research from the World Green Building Council](#). They claim that by 2050 every building (new *and* existing) will need to be 'net-zero' carbon by 2050 – compared to only 500 net-zero commercial buildings and 2000 net-zero homes currently existing around the world.
- [Campaigners have been granted permission to appeal](#) a Planning Court ruling allowing fracking at the Preston New Road site in Lancashire. Protestors, including local and county councillors, have [blockaded the entrance to the site](#) as part of a month of action.
- Energy industry professionals have warned that the UK's ambitious target of [slashing carbon emissions](#) by more than half within 13 years is at risk because of government dithering on energy policy.

Water

Wildlife and Countryside Link has launched "[Blueprint for PR19](#)", a campaign led by their [Blueprint for Water Group](#). Over the next 18 months, water companies in England and Wales will be drawing up their business plans for 2020 to 2025, as part of the 'Price Review 2019' (PR19). WCL believes that nature should be at the heart of water companies' business plans and has developed a set of key priorities that they want to see reflected in these plans, to benefit both customers and the natural environment.

Air quality

- Environmental lawyers Client Earth are [taking the government to the high court for a third time](#) in a bid to remove "major flaws" from minister's plans to tackle the UK's illegal levels of air pollution. Client Earth has inflicted [two humiliating defeats](#) on the government over previous plans, which were ruled not to meet legal requirements. Lawyers from Client Earth had requested improvements to the [latest plan from Defra](#) but were refused, prompting the new court action. The public consultation on the new plans (which, as previously reported, were widely condemned) ended in June.
- To 'celebrate' [National Clean Air Day](#) on June 15th, Edie has compiled a set of shocking [statistics about air pollution](#) in the UK, while [new research](#) suggests that the public would be willing to pay £1 billion themselves to clean up our air quality.
- Friends of the Earth have released initial findings from their ground-breaking citizen science experiment, which suggest toxic air pollution is a problem in far more places than the government admits. '[Unmasked: the true story of the air you're breathing](#)' summarises the pollution monitoring carried out by thousands of Friends of the Earth supporters up and down the country, and they have started a new '[clean air everywhere](#)' petition.

Bees

Conservative politicians are trying to block EU proposals for a full [ban on neonicotinoids](#).

Information update

General election

- Well. That was a surprise. Nearly a month on, the consequences of the general election are still only slowly beginning to unravel.
- There are some [new Ministers](#), although not as many as had apparently been planned. The biggest changes of relevance to this list are [Michael Gove](#) as the new Environment Secretary, [Claire Perry](#) as new Minister of State for Climate Change, and [Alok Sharma](#) as Housing and Planning Minister.
- Of most interest in the [Queen's Speech](#) will probably be the Repeal, Fisheries, Agriculture and Nuclear Safeguards Bills (all under the umbrella of 'Delivering Brexit') and the HS2 Bill. However, how far this two-year programme gets rather depends on how long the minority Government can hold on, supported by the seemingly unreliable, '[climate pariahs](#)' in the DUP. In amongst the [online commentary](#) (we can only [point to](#) a small [selection](#) of a [few](#) articles), pledges from the new Government who seem determined to carry on as if nothing had happened, and criticism from across the spectrum, the only thing that seems certain for the moment is [uncertainty](#). But with the absence of the environment from the election campaigns and the finely-balanced power dynamics, don't expect to see a Clean Growth Plan, Clean Air Act, Clean Power Plan or a 25 year plan for the environment or for farming any time soon.
- While the Government has signaled its intention to remain at the forefront of global climate leadership, the Climate Change Committee has made clear that this position is becoming increasingly tenuous, with its repeated delays to crucial legislation being "[no longer justified or wise](#)"
- Edie has pulled together the expert views of various sustainability professionals and green organisations, and analysed the responses to their pre-election green policy survey, to put together a list of 14 key green policy areas that they think the UK Government must now prioritise, published in two parts, [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#).

Energy

- Two out of three Lancashire residents oppose the Conservative proposal to allow non-fracking drilling without planning permission, and oppose fracking within five miles of their homes, suggests a [YouGov survey](#) commissioned by Friends of the Earth.
- At least 75 per cent of the UK's electricity should come from renewable sources by 2030, says the author of a new report by Friends of the Earth. [Switching On: How Renewables Will Power the UK](#), states that with the cost of renewable energy falling and advances in grid management and storage technology, the UK can "reliably be supplied with the clean, affordable energy it needs".
- Renewables have provided [more than half the UK's electricity](#) for the first time (albeit for a very short time!)
- A [coalition of thirteen energy industry firms](#), including Siemens, Shell and Total, have launched a new joint initiative called [Make Power Clean](#) to limit the amount of state aid subsidies that are sent to highly-polluting fossil fuel plants across the European Union (EU).
- A highly critical report from the National Audit Office has condemned the new Hinkley Point C nuclear plant as '[risky and expensive](#)'.
- A [new coal mine](#) has been proposed for West Cumbria, and a number of groups have sprung up to [oppose](#) it.

Planning

- The Secretary of State has strongly re-emphasised that [unmet housing need alone is unlikely to justify building on the Green Belt](#), in a recovered appeal in Castle Point. He overruled his inspector's recommendation and rejected the housing application, despite the council only being able to show 0.4 – 1.1 years' worth of housing supply. He stressed that the [Written Ministerial Statement \(December 2015\)](#) that unmet housing need is unlikely to outweigh harm to the Green Belt to such an extent as to establish the very special circumstances required to justify inappropriate development means that this balance is now a matter of national policy, not merely guidance (which had been the Inspector's interpretation). Green Belt protection has been clarified, and effectively strengthened, by this intervention
- A [root-and-branch review of the English planning system](#) aims to see how it can be made 'fairer, better resourced and capable of tackling the major challenges which confront the nation'. The review, led by TCPA President and former Labour housing and planning minister Nick Raynsford, has been motivated by "widespread concerns" that the planning process is unable to deliver places that successfully balance the needs of economy, environment and community well-being. Evidence will be collected over an 18-month period (beginning in late June 2017) and formally presented at all major party conferences in autumn 2018.
- [Research from CPRE](#) shows that some, but not all, councils are applying planning guidance that is intended to protect valued countryside from inappropriately high housing targets.
- New-build home starts in England rose by three per cent in the last quarter to 43,170 in the latest quarter to 31 March, compared with the previous three months. The [DCLG housing statistical release](#) also notes this is a 21 per cent increase on the same quarter in 2016. The number of completions for the three months to 31 March 2017 is estimated to be 39,520 – nine per cent higher than the previous quarter and 21 per cent higher than the same period in 2016. In the year to March 2017, there were 162,880 new-build dwelling starts, an increase of 15 per cent when compared with the year to March 2016. Completions in this period totaled 147,960, up six per cent on the previous year. However, research from consultancy Savills suggests that [the increase in housebuilding is not happening where it is most needed](#).
- New research from CPRE shows a [growing crisis of rural affordable housing provision](#). Using Government data, the research indicates that the proportion of affordable homes being provided by non-metropolitan local authorities has halved in five years.
- The National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) issued a '[post-election statement](#)' setting out twelve projects and programmes that it says 'require urgent action', including Heathrow, HS2 and HS3, but also flexible power systems, renewable energy and decarbonisation of energy.

Publications

Floodplains

A new study, [The Changing Face of Floodplains](#), suggests that 90% of England's floodplains have been changed so much that they are "no longer working", and that flooding will worsen unless we act to reverse this damage.

Mental health and dementia - green care

[This report](#) was commissioned on behalf of the National Outdoors for All Working Group, and prepared by the Centre for Sustainable Healthcare. It focuses on the need and opportunity to scale up and mainstream the delivery of nature-based interventions for mental health and dementia care, such as care farming, social and therapeutic horticulture, Green Gyms, Walking for Health, and other green care type activities.

Planning for green infrastructure

The Universities of Northumbria and Birmingham have published a report on [how English planning policy supports green infrastructure provision](#). The report identifies best planning principles for green infrastructure and applies them in seven local authority case studies.

Food sector emissions

A [new report from WWF](#) has suggested that farmers, retailers and the UK Government should promote the consumption of fruit and vegetables to deliver a 30% emissions reduction and place the UK on the pathway to limit global warming to well below 2°C.

Events

Speak Up! Week of Action

[Speak UP! Week of Action](#), July 1-9, is organised by the [Climate Coalition](#), the UK's largest group of people and organisations (including many NWEL members) committed to action on climate change. MPs are often keener to hear from constituents straight after an election, so the Week of Action is a perfect time to persuade your newly elected MP to champion positive solutions to climate change. From nature walks to tea parties to community energy visits, there are no limits to how you can get conversations about climate change started. Join or plan an event near you, or just write to your MP. Speak Up! Also coincides with [Community Energy Fortnight](#) (24th June – 9th July).

Valuing Nature Conference

The [Valuing Nature Annual Conference 2017](#) will be held on 18 & 19 October 2017, John McIntyre Centre, Edinburgh EH16 5AY. This free conference will provide a national forum for sharing knowledge and research about valuing nature. The overarching themes of the conference are: Health and Wellbeing in the Natural Environment; Exploring and Understanding Tipping Points; and the broader Valuing Nature agenda. It will bring together researchers and people who make decisions that affect nature in business, policy-making and in practice, and will include presentations, interactive sessions, posters and networking opportunities. The full agenda will be available at <http://valuing-nature.net/>, and information about the first Valuing Nature conference which was held in Manchester in October 2016 is available [here](#).

Natural capital and ecosystem services webinar

Applying the natural capital and ecosystem service concepts – a test case from Scotland. Thursday 28th September 2017, 1 - 2 pm. The Cairngorms National Park in Scotland was recently the location of a test case for an EU-funded research project on the application of [the natural capital and ecosystem service concepts](#). This [webinar](#) presents the perspective of the Cairngorms National Park Authority and the Crown Estate on the work conducted. It will also summarise the results from an evaluation by nearly 250 stakeholders of the work conducted across the 27 case studies around the world, highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of the natural capital and ecosystem service concepts from different perspectives.

The Long View

[The Long View exhibition](#) will be in the beautiful galleries in the heart of [Grizedale Forest](#), from June 21st – August 31st. The exhibition will celebrate the beauty and value of trees and the experience of walking through the Lake District and pausing to spend time with seven specific trees - beacons in a wider landscape, and representatives of trees further afield. Through them, the exhibition explores the way trees are valued across the country, what trees do for us, and the special relationship that people have with trees. The exhibition uses photographic images, poetry, prose, word art and 3D work to introduce each of the seven trees as well as the environments around them. The Long View project is also the theme of the [Friends of the Lake District Kirby Lecture](#) in October.

Resources

Debating Nature's Value

What are the implications of 'natural capital' thinking? The University of East Anglia and Anglia Ruskin University are collaborating to stimulate debate about the term 'natural capital'. The [Debating Nature's Value website](#) contains links to pages that help understand how the term has come to the fore, and inform its application. They will be exploring whether the concept of 'natural capital' is valid, useful, and/or harmful, and how it can or should be operationalised. Join the network!

Valuing changes in ecosystem service provision

The [Environmental Value Look-Up \(EVL\) Tool](#) is a searchable database which contains indicative monetary values for a range of changes in the state of the environment. The unit values in the tool are based on a review of over 350 UK valuation studies that have been conducted since 2000.

Green Infrastructure Resource Library

The [Green Infrastructure Resource Library](#) (GIRL) is a new, unique database of documents, case-studies, videos, tools and other information about Green Infrastructure and its benefits, provided free by the Green Infrastructure Partnership.

Outdoors for All

The National [Outdoors for All](#) Working Group is a national (England-wide) network bringing together the environmental and voluntary organisations delivering or co-ordinating the delivery of services to people living in deprived areas, the elderly, those with physical or mental health disabilities and people from black and minority ethnic communities to ensure opportunity for all to the natural environment. They also aim to share information and best practice between organisations who are working to help people access the natural environment, for example through [key evidence and briefings](#) on outdoors for all..

Bioenergy – the graphic novel

An [online and downloadable comic](#) intended as an educational resource for schools, universities and the general public has been published, illustrating what bioenergy is, why we might use it, what the problems are with it and how they might be solved.

Heritage Action Zones

Councils, local organisations and groups in England can now apply for [Heritage Action Zone status](#) to make areas more attractive to residents, businesses, tourists and investors. The scheme aims to encourage economic growth and improve quality of life in communities. Historic England says it will ‘help to breathe new life into old places that are rich in heritage and full of promise’.

ECOSTAR

[ECOSTAR](#) is a new “research-enterprise impact hub and accelerator” that promotes entrepreneurship and innovation for nature-based businesses, assisting the start-up and development of new business initiatives with a positive impact on environment and society.

Consultations

Planning system – the Raynsford Review

A [root-and-branch review of the English planning system](#) aims to see how it can be made ‘fairer, better resourced and capable of tackling the major challenges which confront the nation’. The review, led by TCPA President and former Labour housing and planning minister Nick Raynsford, has been motivated by “widespread concerns” that the planning process is unable to deliver places that successfully balance the needs of economy, environment and community well-being. Evidence will be collected over an 18-month period (beginning in late June 2017) and formally presented at all major party conferences in autumn 2018.

Vacancies

Planning Officer

[CPRE Lancashire](#) is seeking a [part time Planning Officer](#), initially for six months, to support the Branch Planning Manager in responding to local plan consultations, commenting on relevant planning applications and giving advice to CPRE members and the general public when making enquiries.

Treasurer

VSNW is currently searching for candidates to fulfill the role of [Treasurer](#) to oversee the financial affairs of the organisation and ensure they are legal, constitutional and within accepted accounting practice. Deadline: 18th August.

SEES Jobs

[SEES Jobs](#) is an online community where Sustainability, Environment and Earth Science practitioners can network, learn and advocate new ways of working. And where like-minded businesses can find the right talent fast.

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