



## ● GREEN BULLET

27<sup>th</sup> September 2018

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

This bulletin is intended to keep NWEL members and wider networks up to date on events and issues that will be of interest to environmental voluntary and community sector organisations in the North West. Please send any items for inclusion in the next bulletin to [andyuille@gmail.com](mailto: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

- A new report concludes that even if the 2,175 companies and 8,419 cities, states and regions to have made emission-cutting commitments achieve their pledges in full, the result will [not be sufficient to realise a 2C trajectory](#) in line with the Paris Agreement.
- [UK councils invest more than £9 billion in the fracking industry](#). You can [call on your local council to divest](#) and invest in a more sustainable future and find out how to [campaign for fossil fuel divestment more widely](#).

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- A new report commissioned by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy suggests that tracts of [forest the size of Yorkshire](#) will need to be planted across the British countryside to suck CO2 from the atmosphere, so that the UK can achieve zero net emissions of by 2050.
- Over 62% of Brits say they'd like their own solar panels to help power their homes. But bit by bit the government is removing the incentives that help people to do so - devastating the solar industry and jobs. From March next year, the government plans to scrap the export tariff payment for people who get solar panels on their roofs. This means they will not be paid for the excess energy they produce, while producers of other types of power, like dirty oil and gas will still receive payment. [Greenpeace are running a petition](#) against this rather perverse idea.

### Wildlife

- Chris Packham has launched a [People's Manifesto for Wildlife](#). It presents a series of essays by 18 Ministers highlighting some of the most critical concerns affecting the UK landscape and its species, each accompanied by ten commandments – 'no-brainer' solutions to the problems. It has been written to be accessible to everyone with an interest in the health of our countryside and a respect for the species that live there. It is freely open to future contributions – we urgently need more ideas, discussion and debate to move conservation in the UK forward and cease the war on wildlife. Please distribute and please contribute.
- Almost half of England's SSSIs ([our 'most important wildlife sites' are at risk](#)) due to a failure to monitor their condition at least every six years, as required by national guidelines

### Air pollution

A number of studies have been released about air pollution this month. They point out that air pollution could affect people at every stage of their life. Toxic air was [found to travel](#) through mothers' bodies, from lungs to placentas. [A study has found](#) that children are not only exposed to toxic air to and from school, but within it too. And [another study](#) found a link between air pollution and dementia. People over 50 who were living in an area with more toxic air, were found to be 40% more at risk of getting the illness. NICE has issued [new guidance on air pollution](#) to councils and health bodies, but [the number of dirty diesel vehicles is still rising](#) three years after the Dieselgate scandal began, with more than seven million on UK roads alone. And for icing on the cake, the EU Court of Auditors has declared that [air pollution is now "the biggest environmental risk" to public health in Europe](#), but governments are failing to adequately deal with the crisis. The leaders of 17 UK cities, including Greater Manchester and Liverpool City Region, have [called on the government to take "tough and urgent" measures](#).

### Fearless cities

What could Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region and other North West towns and cities learn from the ['new municipalism'](#) that is sweeping Spain, with localist, participative, ecological and feminist movements taking control of many of its major cities? Can local politics and action form a productive counterpoint to the cynicism and mistrust that characterizes national politics?

### Tree Charter

The Charter for Trees, Woods and People sets out the principles for a society in which people and trees can stand stronger together. The Tree Charter was launched in Lincoln Castle on 6 November 2017; the 800th anniversary of the 1217 Charter of the Forest. The Tree Charter is rooted in more than 60,000 'tree stories' gathered from people of all backgrounds across the

UK. You can get involved by [signing the charter](#), setting up a [charter branch](#) (there are nearly 250 in England and Wales already) and getting involved with [Tree Charter Day](#) which is taking place on 24 November 2018.

### **Information update**

#### **Brexit and beyond**

- [The Agriculture Bill](#) has been published and had its first reading in Parliament. This sets out proposed farming policy after Brexit, beyond the Common Agricultural Policy (and [here's a useful summary](#)). Essentially, it says that all farming subsidies will be replaced with payments for public goods - thriving plants and wildlife, clean air, preventing flooding, improved public access to farmland and healthy soil etc. The transition to the new system would start in 2021 and continue for 7 years. It has been [broadly well received](#), meeting at least some of the [demands of a major coalition of environmental NGOs](#), although it has been heavily criticized for its [failure to say anything about our intensive reliance on pesticides](#), one of the most pressing problems in the sector. The main concern is that under continuing austerity, made worse by Brexit, there [will not be sufficient public funding available](#) to achieve its worthy aims
- A [House of Commons Library Briefing paper](#) has been published, discussing current environmental law and policy in the UK and in the devolved nations; preparations for Brexit and potential impacts of Brexit; and actions and proposals being taken at a domestic level for both the UK and each of the nations in the UK
- The Government has published its [latest tranche of reports on preparing for a 'no-deal' Brexit](#). They have reiterated their commitment to maintaining environmental standards, but have still not provided – or even committed to - any of the necessary mechanisms, details or funding that will make that possible.
- However, the [most recent update](#) to Greener UK's Brexit risk tracker emphasises that the [possibility of a 'no-deal' Brexit amplifies the threats](#) to UK environmental standards and protections. They state that "the government's pledge to 'protect and enhance' the environment in the Brexit process is in [significant doubt](#)"
- Friends of the Earth highlight [5 key things the Government would need to do to ensure a green Brexit](#), and is polling on whether people think it's likely they'll be achieved.
- Labour has committed itself to a [net-zero target of greenhouse gas \(GHG\) emissions by 2050](#), and pledges to "kickstart a green jobs revolution" in the UK. They have also released a [new environmental policy](#) in which they claim that the next Labour government would be "by far the greenest ever". Despite the scepticism that this inevitably arouses, Greenpeace has praised the plan, saying that they are taking the issue "as seriously as is needed", unlike other mainstream political parties.
- Meanwhile, Tory MPs continue to lobby to use [Brexit as an opportunity to lower environmental standards](#) and get rid of environmental protection and regulations...
- ...and the biggest lobby group in Europe is preparing to [fight EU efforts to improve action on climate change](#)

#### **Energy**

- Cuadrilla is [due to start fracking its Preston New Road site](#) within weeks, while [four peaceful protestors against the process were sent to jail](#) – despite the process being so risky that it is effectively banned in many countries, including most of the UK. It was reported that they were the first environmental activists to be jailed since the mass trespass on Kinder Scout

established the Ramblers movement 86 years ago. Greenest Government ever. Farewell to the right to peaceful protest.

- [Scotland continues to outperform the rest of the UK](#) on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, but needs fresh measures to meet its own recently introduced targets, according to the Committee on Climate Change
- The [UK's total wind generation capacity has reached 20GW](#) for the first time, following the opening of the world's largest wind farm off the Cumbrian coast earlier this month. [Renewables accounted for a record 29.3% of the UK's electricity in 2017](#). Wind power accounted for half of the renewables mix, with 8.6% of the overall total sourced from onshore wind and 6.2% from offshore, and [2017 seeing a record-breaking amount of installation of onshore wind](#) from previous permissions. However, [the lack of wind this summer pushed carbon emissions up](#) again, and new onshore wind farms remain effectively banned...
- ... and [40% of solar power installers are considering leaving the UK](#) due to the current Government's 'hostile environment' for onshore renewables, amidst calls for government to [urgently stabilize the sector](#)
- A new report from think tank Carbon Tracker departs from conventional wisdom and predicts that [global fossil fuel demand will peak between 2020 and 2027](#) – most likely in 2023 – as the cost of renewable installations and battery storage technology falls.
- Students from Lancaster University have designed a [mini-wind turbine that can be used in cities](#) and can utilize wind energy from any direction, unlike conventional uni-directional turbines.

## Planning

- The [2016-based household projections](#), which form the starting point for assessing housing need and therefore housing numbers, show a 25 per cent fall in the growth rate of households over the next 25 years. This translates into a drop of between 44,000 and 63,000 in the annual housing requirement for England. The North West shows the second-lowest regional rate of growth, at 11% from 2016-2041. Litchfield's provides a [detailed breakdown](#). Only 33,000 houses per year are projected to be required for [the entire North of England](#). Some authorities have seen their entire housing need wiped out, with Barrow-in-Furness and Copeland projected to see decreases in households. Some councils like [The Wirral](#) immediately announced that they would use the changes to avoid the Green Belt release that they were being pressured into by Government, and others (such as [Great Yarmouth](#) and [Richmondshire](#) (both links paywall protected, sorry!)) plan to slash housing numbers. In the light of all this, the Government has said that it will imminently consult on changes to the standard method for calculating housing need which they have spent several years developing and which has literally just been launched.
- The online [Planning Practice Guidance has been updated](#) to reflect the changes in the new NPPF
- Friends of the Earth have launched a [legal challenge against the NPPF](#), on the grounds of "the complete failure by the government to environmentally assess the major impacts of this new planning framework, which we think is unlawful and shows contempt for people and our planet."
- [Landowners in England profited more from planning permissions than the global profits of Amazon, McDonald's and Coca-Cola combined](#) – more than £13 billion in 2016/17, according to the Centre for Progressive Policy and the National Housing Federation (NHF). MPs are pushing for [changes to the way land value uplift is captured](#) to benefit communities rather than the mega-rich.

- The [revised Greater Manchester Spatial Framework](#) should be published for consultation at the end of October, after taking account of the new household projections. The '[dream timetable](#)' would have the final version of the GMSF published for comment in July 2019, before being submitted around the end of 2019 or early 2020. The public examination would take place in the Spring and Summer of 2020, followed by adoption the following Winter.
- One effect of the new NPPF was to put [developing small sites](#) into the spotlight: this blog explores what that might mean in practice.
- The Government has launched [two new funds to get housebuilding going](#) – one that may be used for decontaminating brownfield land, amongst other things, and one to speed up infrastructure provision for small sites.
- At the Labour party conference, shadow planning minister Roberta Blackman-Woods launched a "[root and branch rethink](#)" of the planning system. It will be undertaken by a planning commission, and aims to give local communities more of a voice in local planning decisions. The commission said it will issue a call for evidence on 25 October. They should probably start by reading the Raynsford Review which is in the process of doing exactly the same thing. I shall be launching a commission on wheel reinvention in the coming months.
- The Government has pledged [£2 billion in funding for housing associations](#) in an bid to give them the 'long-term certainty' they need to have a 'central' role in helping to address the housing crisis - a welcome boost for affordable housing, although [reactions](#) suggest that this is just the start of what is needed in terms of changes to funding and attitudes

## **Transport**

- The Government has pledged [£100 million to low-emission vehicle development](#) at the world's first zero-emission vehicle summit. The [Aldersgate Group](#) has released a briefing paper arguing that the need to decarbonise the UK's notoriously carbon-heavy transport sector is now "urgent", and that the opportunities for doing so are "ample". Greenpeace offer this list of [five things you need to know about electric cars](#), while Sustrans questions [whether electric cars really are sustainable transport](#)
- Manchester suffers the [worst traffic congestion](#) of any English location outside London, according to the National Infrastructure Commission, with Liverpool close behind in second.
- The hybrid bill that would grant planning consent to the northern section of the High Speed Two (HS2) rail link has been delayed by a year, the Department for Transport (DfT) has confirmed. It will not now be tabled until 2020. The DfT said the hybrid bill was being paused because the government wanted to fully consider the impact on HS2 of the separate Northern Powerhouse Rail project.

## **Publications**

### **Building on brownfield**

Local authority resources for monitoring the remediation of brownfield land must be improved to reverse a trend that is [putting 'communities and the environment at risk'](#), according to a new report by the Environmental Industries Commission, which examines the consequences of the loss of expertise and funding for remediation activities - the detoxification of previously-used land. More effective regulation of brownfield development is needed and the sector requires better financial backing, and the report details several [recommendations](#) for tackling the problem.



### **Northern Forest**

The Woodland Trust has launched a [manifesto for the new Northern Forest](#) in collaboration with the Mersey Forest and others. The report promotes the wide range of benefits the forest provides, sets out the challenges for delivering it, and concludes with a map that appears to set out broadly where they intend to plant those 50 million trees.

### **Land values**

The ‘dysfunctional’ land market is the root cause of an unproductive and unstable UK economy, according to think tank Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR). In [The Invisible Land: The hidden force driving the UK’s unequal economy and broken housing market](#), IPPR highlight that the value of land held by households has “soared” over the past two decades and is now worth “more than double” the value of the house on top of it. The “dysfunctional land market and soaring land values” have driven growing wealth inequality; created the conditions for a broken housing market and are the “root cause” of an unproductive and unstable economy, it concludes.

### **Natural capital**

Four new reports on Natural Capital are intended to help take an evidence-based approach to valuing the UK’s natural assets. The new reports, published by the Valuing Nature Programme, summarise the science available to inform a Natural Capital approach in four key areas: The Natural Capital [valuation of floodplains](#) in relation to preventing floods, storing carbon, and supporting biodiversity; The Natural Capital [valuation of soil](#) in relation to producing food, storing carbon and regulating water supply; Natural Capital [trade-offs from the afforestation of peatlands](#) in relation to the effect on storing carbon, controlling water supply, supporting biodiversity, providing recreational spaces and preserving a record of the past; and [How businesses are using Natural Capital assessments in practice](#). A fifth report on the [Natural Capital of temporary rivers](#) has already been published, highlighting their varied benefits including biodiversity plus drought and flood control. The reports also identify evidence gaps and make recommendations for further collaborative action by government, business and academia.

### **Events**

#### **Green GB Week**

The [first Green GB Week](#) will take place 15 – 19 October 2018. It is, apparently, “your chance to learn about how clean growth is helping to provide new job opportunities, grow our economy for the benefit of us all and help tackle climate change. And to get involved in building a cleaner, green future”. So, perhaps more an opportunity for Government to tell you how great they are than for you to tell them how terrible their environmental record is, or to do something about it. Nevertheless, there is a toolkit, a pledge wall, and a series of events to get involved with.

#### **Is capitalism unsustainable?**

Join the debate among four prominent commentators on the strategies needed to [maximise economic and social justice while keeping ecologically safe](#): Kevin Anderson (leading climate scientist from the University of Manchester), Molly Scott Cato (“green economist” and MEP), Giorgos Kallis (ecological economist and political ecologist and one of the most prominent advocates of degrowth), and Robert Pollin (from the USA - an advocate of “green growth”). Organised by the Political Economy Centre, Manchester University. Sunday 4 November 2018, 6pm. Free but booking essential.

### **VSNW AGM & Conference 2018**

The name and theme for this event is '[A New Direction for Uncertain Times](#)'. Delegates on November 14<sup>th</sup> will have the opportunity to: hear key thinkers and practitioners; engage in discussions focused on the key policy issues and programmes; think about what we need to do and how we can get there; and shape how VSNW supports the sector over the next three years.

### **Fracking & divestment in Greater Manchester**

Tuesday 16 October, 7pm, Friends Meetings House, Mount Street. Public meeting on [climate change, divestment and the fight against fracking](#), organised by Fossil Free Greater Manchester, Frack Free Greater Manchester and Manchester Campaign against Climate Change. Join the discussion about how best to join up these campaigns overlapping campaigns.

### **Natural Environment Valuation Online webinar**

Wednesday 31st October 2018, 1:00 to 2:00pm. The new [Natural Environment Valuation Online \(NEVO\) tool](#) is a map-based decision support tool to inform decisions that affect the natural environment of England and Wales. It makes use of state-of-the-art environmental and economic models developed by the University of Exeter in a user-friendly interface. The tool assesses the value of ecosystem services relating to agriculture, recreation, forestry, carbon emissions, biodiversity and water quantity/quality. Users will be able to change model parameters so as to inform particular decisions.

### **Using natural capital approaches to improve integrated decision-making.**

Wednesday 3rd October 2018, 1 to 2pm. This webinar is an opportunity to discuss [how natural capital approaches are being used to engage new partners](#) in decisions about areas of land and water. We will consider barriers to engaging organisations and interest groups who may not understand their dependence on a healthy natural environment. It forms part of the Partnerships for People, Place & Environment webinar series (Defra Local Delivery Project).

### **High Water Common Ground**

Thursday 11th October, free online screening. [High Water Common Ground](#) is a unique documentary film exploring those communities most affected by flooding and innovative methods of flood risk management. It draws upon real examples from around England. This event will begin with a discussion with Andy Clark (filmmaker and ecologist) and panellists from Slow The Flow Calderdale, Environment Agency, University of Dundee and University of Leeds.

### **Resources**

#### **Land Explorer**

[Land Explorer](#) is a new and developing tool for land managers, community groups and the general public to access information on the land around them. It allows you to view soil types, flood risk, greenbelt & brownfield land, and draw, measure, calculate and label areas. These maps can then be shared with your team, community or stakeholders.

#### **UK in 100 seconds**

[The UK in 100 seconds](#) is a short film, in which each second of the film equates to 1% of what the country looks like from the air. Most people don't realise that less than 7% of the UK is built upon and over 40% of our land is used for feeding and rearing livestock. With over half of UK

wild species in decline and 1 in 10 at risk of extinction, the film asks what would happen if we reimagined how we use the UK? Could we make more space for nature?

### **Pollution & vegetation map**

A new study looks at the [role of vegetation in removing air pollutants](#), and the benefits they provide to human health through reductions in exposure. The Office for National Statistics has published an online interactive map, allowing users to find out how much pollution is removed by vegetation in their area, and how this is valued in avoided health damage costs. An estimated 1.4 billion kg of air pollutants were removed by woodlands, plants, grassland and other UK vegetation in 2015, according to the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology.

### **Natural Flood Management**

An [infographic](#) to help catchment partners communicate to communities about the multiple benefits of Natural Flood Management (NFM) has been created in Cumbria by Newground, supported by Natural Course. The [Natural Course website](#) is a useful resource for references on NFM.

### **Consultations**

#### **Fracking**

- There is still time to respond to the consultations on changing the planning rules for fracking: on [making non-fracking shale gas schemes permitted development](#) (avoiding the need for planning permission from a local council) and on [classifying major shale gas production schemes as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects](#) (giving decision-making to a government minister, rather than the local authority).
- The Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee issuing a report on 2 July that [concluded that these changes should absolutely should not happen](#): 'Fracking planning applications should not be brought under the NSIP regime' (para 83, p 28); 'Shale gas development of any type should not be classed as a permitted development.' (para 91, p 30), because they would be 'hugely harmful to local democracy'.
- The All-Party Parliamentary Group on shale gas will be scrutinising the proposed changes to planning rules for fracking in their meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> October. They are [calling for witnesses to appear at the meeting](#).

### **Survey on local partnerships to deliver 25 Year Environment Plan**

Defra is seeking information on local partnership and the delivery of economic, social and environmental benefits. The survey is aimed at people involved in organisations or partnerships in England working below the national level to achieve economic, health or environmental outcomes. It will help understand how local partnerships are currently working together, and the factors that affect their success. The results will be used by Defra to find ways to further increase the value of local partnerships' contribution to delivering the 25 Year Environment Plan. The survey takes about fifteen minutes to complete. Survey closes 5th October 2018

### **Funding**

#### **Aviva Community Fund**

The [Aviva Community Fund](#), launched this month, offers the chance to get funding for causes important to your community. The timescale for applying is quite tight as online entries close



midday on 9 October. Voting for projects then runs from 23 October to 20 November and projects with the most votes will become finalists.

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