



● GREEN BULLET

26th October 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 - 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

- The IPCC released their latest scientific assessment of what could happen to the world's climate in two scenarios: 1.5°C and 2°C of warming. They conclude that “Limiting global warming to 1.5°C would require [rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes](#) in all aspects of society”, and that this is necessary for “ensuring a more sustainable and equitable society”. We are, according to the authors, “[nowhere near on track](#)” to achieve this. Greenpeace summarise the [thirteen key points](#).

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- Global carbon emissions will rise to a new record level in 2018, making the chances of reaching a target to keep temperature increases to 1.5 or 2°C "[weaker and weaker every year, every month](#)," the head of the International Energy Agency (IEA) has said.
- The Committee on Climate Change, the Government's official advisor, has called the [UK's approach to sea level rise and coastal change](#) "not fit for purpose", as it warns that over a million homes are at risk
- The [Government has written to the Committee on Climate Change](#), asking it for advice on developing a roadmap for emissions reductions. Which is odd, because since it was established, the CCC has been providing Government with advice on what it needed to do to secure the requisite emissions reductions, most of which advice has not noticeably been acted upon – just this month warning ministers that the new [Road to Zero strategy for tackling transport emissions will not be sufficient](#) to meet national and international climate targets.
- As a result of all the above, a new non-violent direct action campaign has sprung up, called [Extinction Rebellion](#), who are advocating mass civil disobedience.

Fracking

As the consultations on the government's proposals to fast-track fracking come to a close, they have announced a second parliamentary debate on fracking to take place next week, on Wednesday 31 October. CPRE are asking people to [email their MPs asking them to attend the debate](#). Over 300,000 people have [signed petitions](#) opposing the measures. [Fracking has started](#) at Preston New Road, but was paused almost immediately as [minor earthquakes](#) (which led to the moratorium seven years ago) were once again detected. The fracking protesters jailed by a judge with family interests in the fossil fuel industry were freed after the court of appeal ruled that the sentences were "[manifestly excessive](#)".

Green GB Week

Yes, all the above happened in and around Green GB Week. Notwithstanding the irony of this, Edie have published a list of [top ten policy asks](#) of government to turn the Green GB rhetoric into reality, and has compiled [a few good news stories](#) from the private sector.

Protected wildlife sites

The Government has [quietly abandoned efforts to meet a longstanding target to improve England's most important wildlife sites](#). The official target is to ensure that 50% of England's sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs), by area, are in "favourable" condition by 2020. But a leaked internal Natural England action plan shows that the agency is actually working towards a target of 38.7%. The new target is just 0.07% higher than the current level. The document also warns that Natural England, the government's nature regulator, is too stretched to prevent "further human-induced extinctions of known threatened species".

Plastics

The UK's [plastic recycling industry is under investigation](#) by the Environment Agency for fraud and corruption, as evidence emerges that plastics are being allowed to leak into land and watercourses rather than being recycled. Independently, a Greenpeace investigation has found plastics exported by the UK to Malaysia (which takes 25% of our plastic waste for recycling) in [illegal landfill dumps](#).

Water

Twenty environmental NGOs, co-ordinated by [Blueprint for Water](#), and nine water companies have come together to create a set of [shared principles](#) setting out how they will work together to help leave the environment in a better state and deliver more effective joint working on environmental and wildlife issues, including more on the ground projects.

Air pollution

The final final final we-really-mean-it-this-time [Clean Air Strategy](#) is due to be published in December, following a series of challenges in the courts which found that previous iterations were so poor as to be unlawful.

Information update

Brexit and beyond

- Greener UK has set out the [headlines necessary for an effective UK Environment Bill](#) to ensure environmental protections are not compromised after Brexit. They are asking people to [email their MPs to ask them to support their Environment Charter](#). They have also produced a [series of briefings](#) providing expert advice on the impacts of Brexit and recommendations on future governance and legislation.
- The Government has published statutory instruments intended to ensure the [smooth operation of planning and environmental assessment](#) regimes after Brexit
- Government continues to [publish technical notices](#) on how individuals and organisations should prepare in the scenario that the UK leaves the EU with no deal. Numerous technical notices apply to civil society organisations as well as their employees and beneficiaries. For example, there are multiple notices on how organisations who apply and receive EU funding should prepare.
- The government is preparing to publish a new bill that will set the [rules for UK fishing after Brexit](#). Currently, a quarter of the UK's fishing quota rights are owned by just five families (all on the Times Rich List), and another quarter by companies linked to a huge criminal overfishing scam. The Government has no plans to use this opportunity to redistribute quotas in a more just or sustainable way. Are we 'taking back control of our waters' so that the mega-rich can continue to profit from decimating the marine environment and our coastal communities?
- Despite Brexit, the UK Government couldn't resist [lobbying to weaken EU proposals on air pollution](#).
- George Monbiot sets out the opportunities for food, farming, communities and the environment arising from [leaving the EU's Common Agricultural Policy](#) – and where the current Agriculture Bill is failing to grasp them.

Energy

- Theresa May has confirmed that the UK will be joining 18 other countries that have [committed to reaching net-zero emissions by 2050 at the earliest](#), while also setting aside £160m to help developing nations transition to cleaner energy systems.
- Domestic housing accounts for about [20% of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions](#), mainly from space heating and hot water, needing a major retrofit to help meet climate goals
- Cuadrilla has started fracking at Preston New Road in Lancashire – see 'Campaigns' for updates.
- Scottish Power are the [first major UK energy company to provide 100% renewable](#) energy.

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- The Government has launched a £320m scheme to help [accelerate the adoption of low-carbon heat technologies](#) across the UK's public, private and domestic sectors, on the same week that further tweaks to the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) were criticised.
- A new study finds that “[Decentralized Microgridding](#)” can provide 90% of a neighbourhood's energy needs
- Clean energy technologies such as battery storage and solar generation could deliver more than half of the required emissions cuts set out in the UK's Clean Growth Strategy by 2030, according to [a new report](#) from Centrica Business Solutions...
- ...While a report from Aurora Energy Research finds that more than [£6bn will need to be invested in the UK's energy storage market](#) by 2030 if the nation is to decarbonise at the rate necessary to meet legally-binding carbon targets. 13GW of additional storage and flexible generation assets is needed by 2030 to balance the grid as more renewable projects come online.
- If Bitcoin were to cease trading tomorrow, 0.5% of the world's electricity demand would simply disappear – which would cover [one year's worth of the carbon emission cuts](#) required to limit temperature rises this century to 2C

Planning

- Continuing uncertainty over the introduction and status of the new standard methodology for calculating housing need has led one council to say it will have to “[rip up](#)” its plan that had been many years in the making and start again. The [Greater Manchester Spatial Framework is further delayed](#) for the same reason. The Government has said that it hopes to consult on changes to the brand-new methodology before Christmas. It has also warned councils that now appear to have much lower housing requirements [not to reduce their housing numbers](#), because the new-new methodology, taking account of the much-lower [2016-based household projections](#) will be intended to bump them up again.
- The Court of Appeal has ruled that ministers must abide by a published government policy and [give reasons for call-in decisions](#) on planning applications. This includes planning applications that were not called in – Ministers have recently been failing to do this.
- CPRE analysis of new figures from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), shows that [more land was released from the Green Belt last year than ever before](#)
- The Greater Manchester Combined Authority has commissioned consultants to draw up a study into [improving biodiversity through development](#). It will focus on Biodiversity Net Gain (development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before), better risk management from quantifying losses and gains in biodiversity, and demonstrating contributions to local communities through biodiversity, including health and well-being benefits.
- Councils are gearing up to make a [significant return to housebuilding](#) for the first time in decades, after Teresa May announced the removal of the borrowing ceiling for building. [60 councils](#) have signed an open letter pledging to borrow to invest in new housing after the cap is removed, while the Government's previous offer to increase councils' collective debt ceiling by £1 billion was swamped with bids, with just 12 councils taking the entire amount.
- Northern Powerhouse cities have seen a [building boom](#), which some commentators attribute to increasing confidence in the concept
- Only [two per cent of councils](#) report that developments in their area meet their local plan affordable housing targets all of the time, and the poorest areas are not getting any affordable housing delivered through the planning system according to a new report by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA).

- [House prices in England](#) have gone up by 173% since 1997. Young adults' real incomes have gone up by 19% over the same period.
- The Local Government Association's planning chief has said that the new Housing Delivery Test is encouraging poor design. He said that "We are being beaten up under the new housing delivery test ... and that means planning permissions going through that, many years ago, would quite frankly not have gone through...The ability to turn things down and have design discussions and to refuse on design grounds is very limited today." ([paywall protected](#))

Transport

- The Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee has accused the Government's 2040 [targets for zero emission cars of being "vague and unambitious"](#), and calls for the Government to bring forward the target for new sales of cars and vans to be "zero emission" by 2032.
- The Committee on Climate Change has written to the Government stating that the new [Road to Zero strategy for tackling transport emissions will not be sufficient](#) to meet national and international climate targets.
- The number of [vehicles on Britain's roads has leapt by almost 2.5m](#) in the last five years, with the increase partly attributed to more delivery vans being deployed to meet the demands of online shopping. The LGA has called for more spending on local roads – but surely that's not a sustainable solution?
- Andy Burnham has said that he doesn't have the powers to 'get to grips' with [transport problems in Greater Manchester](#), with congestion the [worst outside of London](#), the [most delayed trains](#) and [future levels of air pollution](#) likely to be worse than previously predicted. He has launched a campaign called '[Take control of our Transport](#)', and is asking the people of Greater Manchester to get behind him so he can pressure the Government to grant the City Region additional powers and funding
- Transport for the North are reportedly [optimistic](#) about the prospects for actually getting the funding to deliver the [Northern Powerhouse Rail project](#) – although "no details are available". A business case is due to be submitted to Government in December

Publications

Where next for neighbourhood plans

A new publication from the National Association of Local Councils raises concerns that emerging and adopted [neighbourhood plans are increasingly being overturned](#) at appeal, most frequently due to the lack of a five (or three) year housing land supply. They question whether local communities can be expected to commit such significant time and effort to producing plans that can be dismissed due to the actions of developers and local authorities, and how this fits with the principles of localism. They also highlight that having to conform to Local Plans that can be found out-of-date, changes to the NPPF and the introduction of a range of new strategic planning concepts are likely to make the situation worse.

Transport for new homes

A new research report, [Transport for new homes](#), has found that despite national and local policies, new housing estates are being built in ways that enforce car dependency, restrict possibilities for active travel such as walking and cycling, and miss opportunities to deliver decent public transport. The Transport for New Homes Association will now be hosting a [series](#)

[of events](#) (mostly in London but with one in Leeds) to discuss how to address the failure to bring planning and sustainable transport together.

Nature4Health

Nature4Health was a three year project funded by The Big Lottery's Reaching Communities Programme that aimed to tackle health inequalities in targeted communities across The Mersey Forest. The effective use of natural outdoor spaces was at the centre of this. The ['impact' report](#) released this month shows the physical and mental health benefits of the scheme to nearly 2,000 participants, as well as the impacts on social isolation.

A Just Transition?

Around 46,000 new [green economy jobs could be created in the North of England](#) by 2030, according to a new report from the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), while the area faces losing 28,000 fossil-fuel based jobs. However, significant changes to Government policy and action would be needed – they set out recommendations.

Events

Calling Greater Manchester environmental campaigners!

Tuesday 30th October, 6.30- 8.30pm Patagonia Store, 51 King Street, M2 7AZ. This Green Drinks event is an attempt to [bring together all the diverse environmental campaigners and groups from across Greater Manchester](#). Join them for informal discussion to identify where the movements currently stand, where they're strong and how you think they could move forward. Green Drinks will be presented and hosted in partnership with GM Climate & Environmental Alliance (a coalition of existing campaigning groups).

Is capitalism unsustainable?

Sunday 4 November 2018, 6pm, University of Manchester, Political Economy Research Centre, University Place, Lecture Theatre B. Oxford Rd. [Join leading international figures to debate](#): What does the ecological crisis mean for capitalism? And what does capitalism mean for the ecological crisis? What kind of economic transformation is required to get us back within safe ecological and planetary boundaries? Does that imply economic growth, green growth or degrowth? What should we be pushing our political representatives and leaders to do? of a 'post-growth' economy political viable? Free but booking essential.

Natural Capital conference

The Natural Capital Initiative is calling for sessions, speed talks and posters on natural capital research, policy ideas and business solutions, for their third [Valuing our Life Support Systems summit](#) on 21-22 May 2019 in The Crystal, London.

Locality Convention

[The Locality Convention](#) is the biggest community sector event of the year. Join them to get connected, be inspired, gain insight, skills & ideas, influence the debate and celebrate the power of community! 7-8 November, Bristol.

Celebrating Community Resilience

Saturday 30th & Sunday 31st March 2019, West Yorkshire. The [Celebrating Community Resilience weekend](#) in West Yorkshire is an opportunity to share lessons from community-based flood risk management, with a special focus on the Calder Valley. It will include speakers

from the Environment Agency and National Flood Forum and site visits. Organised by Slow the Flow Calderdale. Saturday 30th & Sunday 31st March 2019

Coastal Partnerships Forum

Tuesday 27th & Wednesday 28th November, Cardiff. The [Coastal Partnerships Network Annual Forum](#) is the national event for the UK's network of Coastal Partnerships and anyone who works in partnership on the coast. The 2018 event includes workshops on 'valuing social and natural capital' and 'deeper stakeholder engagement in marine planning'.

Retrofitting Suburbia

Steady State Manchester are hosting a discussion on [retrofitting suburban spaces for lower environmental impact](#) and greater resilience in the face of climate change and supply shocks, particularly to energy and food supplies. Monday 26th November at 7pm, Manchester Metropolitan University. Free but booking required.

Duddon Fell Care Day

Join Friends of the Lake District for [an invigorating day in a remote, beautiful valley](#) taking part in one or more of a wide range of activities to help conserve and enhance this amazing place. Their hub for the day (Thursday 8th November) is Seathwaite Parish Rooms. Volunteers sign in at hub from 9.00 am for 9.30 and set off in groups on tasks led by skilled leaders. Everyone returns to the hub at the end of the day for tea and cakes (hurrah!) Activities finish by 3.00 pm.

Natural Environment Valuation On-line

Webinar: Wednesday 31st October 2018, 1 to 2 pm. The new [Natural Environment Valuation On-line \(NEVO\) tool](#) is a map-based decision support tool to inform decisions that affect the natural environment of England and Wales. It assesses the value of ecosystem services relating to agriculture, recreation, forestry, carbon emissions, biodiversity and water quantity/quality. NEVO has been funded by Defra. The webinar will include an invitation for volunteers to be involved in case studies of the tool.

Resources

People and Nature

The British Ecological Society has launched a broad-scope open access journal, publishing work from across research areas exploring [relationships between people and nature](#). It comes with a [blog](#) about relational thinking too.

Scottish Living Cities vision

The Scottish Wildlife Trust has set out an approach to [urban planning that has nature at the centre](#) of the design process. The guide includes a checklist for developers, planners, architects, landscape architects and urban designers. Equally useful for designing in nature south of the border!

Economic value of urban trees

Consultancy firm Green Blue Urban has published a guide to highlight the [economic value of urban trees](#). Using various case studies, the document provides insight into the long-term benefits of trees, finding that the return on investment rises “exponentially” after 50 years.

Appraising green infrastructure benefits

The international green infrastructure project PERFECT has published a guide to promote the [‘health, wealth and happiness’ benefits of green infrastructure](#). The paper provides evidence in support of further public and private investment in green infrastructure. It was written by environmental consultancy ettec (Economics for the Environment Consultancy).

Climate scientists

For the Twitterati: Katharine Hayhoe has compiled a [list of researchers working on climate change](#).

How to build healthy new towns

The NHS England Healthy New Towns Programme has published a [set of principles for building new communities](#) in a way which addresses modern health and wellbeing challenges. These principles are aimed at housebuilders, local government, healthcare organisations and local communities. Demonstrator sites have been designated across England, including Ebbesfleet in Kent and Darlington in County Durham.

Webinar library

Selected webinars organised and hosted by the Ecosystems Knowledge Network are recorded and available for viewing afterwards. [The library](#) includes recordings of the recent 'Partnerships for People, Place & Environment' webinar series of the 25 Year Environment Plan Local Delivery Project commissioned by Defra.

Consultations

National Parks & AONBs

The Glover review into England's National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) has opened its consultation and has launched an [online call for evidence](#). It addresses issues such as how access can be improved, how communities could be better supported, whether and how housing and transport in protected landscapes could be improved, and which parts of the country could benefit from greater protection. Glover and Gove have already said [that protected areas will have to accept higher rates of housebuilding](#). Good job they're doing a wide-ranging consultation before they come to any conclusions... Deadline: December 18.

HS2 Northern routes & environmental impacts

The Secretary of State for Transport has announced the launch of two HS2 consultations for the section of the route from Crewe to Manchester and West Midlands to Leeds, which is known as Phase 2b. These consultations are on:

- The [working draft Environmental Statement](#) that describes the potential environmental effects of building and operating Phase 2b of HS2; as well as proposed ways to avoid, reduce, mitigate and monitor the effects.
- The [working draft Equality Impact Assessment Report](#) that considers the potential effects of the construction and operation of HS2 Phase 2b on people with protected characteristics.

HS2 have provided [more information and a special navigator tool](#) to help you find your way around the documents and maps. Both consultations will close at 23:45 on 21 December 2018. There will also be a programme of [community consultation events](#) from late October to early December 2018.

Regional Inequalities – UK2070

The UK2070 Commission is an independent inquiry into city and regional inequalities in the UK. Chaired by Lord Kerslake, former head of the civil service, it has been set up to conduct a review of the policy and spatial issues related to the UK's long-term city and regional development. The Commission's [Call for Evidence](#) is open until 16th November.

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