



# ● GREEN BULLET

27<sup>th</sup> November 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

- The International Energy Agency has warned that the world has so many existing fossil fuel projects that it cannot build any more polluting infrastructure without using up [more than the entire global carbon budget](#) for meeting international obligations.

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- Carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, the main [greenhouse gas emissions driving climate change, have all reached record levels](#), the UN's meteorology experts have reported. The last time the Earth experienced a comparable concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> was 3-5million years ago, when the temperature was 2-3C warmer and sea level was 10-20 metres higher than now according to World Meteorology Organisation secretary general, Petteri Taalas. The Earth has been [warmer than average for 406 months in a row](#).
- The UN's climate change body published a [report on the Paris commitments](#) made in 2018. It found 9,000 cities in 128 countries were taking action, along with 240 states and regions in 40 countries and more than 6,000 businesses in 120 countries. However, new research shows that overall, [all but one of the G20 nations are failing to meet these commitments](#), and [very few countries have domestic emissions targets that match their Paris pledges](#) (including the UK)
- Everyone's favourite TV nature presenter David Attenborough is taking [the 'people's seat'](#) at the UN, where he will deliver the public's comments and concerns about climate change to the COP24 conference. The people's seat is meant to represent those around the world whose lives are affected by climate change. [You can express](#) your own opinion to be included in Attenborough's address.
- It will be ["technically and financially" possible](#) for the global transport and heavy industry sectors to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2060, new research from the Energy Transitions Commission (ETC) has concluded. They don't mention "politically"
- The UK is among a number of countries that signed a document [blocking efforts to make the world's top shipping regulator more transparent](#).

### Water

100 organisations across Europe have joined to launch the [#ProtectWater](#) campaign to defend the Water Framework Directive from being watered down. The European Commission has launched a public consultation and they are calling on people to [ACT NOW](#) to let the Government know we want to keep our water laws strong. These laws have driven the most investment and effort seen within the last 15 years to improve our waters. However, this needs to be sustained and built upon to increase and maintain the number of our water bodies considered healthy. These water laws protect our waterways and commit to repairing damage by 2027. Weakening them would have a significant impact on our rivers, lakes and wetlands, and everything that depends on them.

### Air pollution

- Client Earth, the environmental lawyers who have proven three separate times in the High Court that the Government's efforts to reduce air pollution are so poor as to be unlawful, have described current national plans as a ["shambolic and piecemeal mess"](#)
- Global Action Plan, organisers of the annual Clean Air Day, say that [£10 million additional funding is needed](#) from government for awareness campaigns to highlight the dangers of air pollution to public health
- A landmark ten-year study of the impact of exposure to London's air pollution suggests that children growing up in the capital are [at risk of developing lifelong breathing disorders](#). The researchers behind the study have suggested that the findings demonstrate the need for continued focus from policy makers on measures to address sources of air pollution.

### Plastic, waste and recycling

- [Local authorities spend an estimated £700 million annually](#) on collecting and treating packaging waste, but the businesses producing the packaging contributed just £73 million last year to reprocessing the recycling.
- New research from Friends of the Earth suggests that vehicle tyres and synthetic clothing are the [biggest sources of micro-plastic pollution](#) in the UK, and calls for a much deeper and further-reaching government strategy to tackle plastic pollution.
- A [roadmap](#) to help UK businesses tackle the global plastic waste problem has been published, aligned with the targets of the [UK Plastics Pact](#), the deal signed by 68 UK businesses to curb plastic waste. On the same day, new, “most comprehensive” ever research shows that British [supermarkets are still not doing anywhere near enough](#) to reduce their plastic footprint.
- Data from CPRE’s “Clean Green” litter picks this autumn clearly shows that [current recycling collection methods are failing](#). They will now be using this evidence to call on the government to create a well-designed deposit return system that includes bottles and cans of all materials and all sizes – not the limited system that drinks companies are lobbying for. Anything less, and our countryside will continue to be blighted by discarded drinks containers.

### **Land reform**

Onward have published an open letter calling on the Government to think radically about [reforming the way planning gain is captured](#) for the community. Join parliamentarians, councillors and campaign groups in calling for reform to help fix our planning and housebuilding systems.

### **Information update**

#### **Brexit and beyond**

- The Environmental Audit Committee has called on the Government to [strengthen the commitments made in its 25-year Environment Plan](#) in order to prepare for the event of a no-deal Brexit scenario, claiming that the UK is currently at risk of losing one-third of green legislation if no agreement with the EU is agreed, and that a strong environmental watchdog is needed to enforce legislation...
- ...while at the same time the government is actively [undermining the independence and capacity of their current conservation advisor](#). The outgoing chair of Natural England, during questioning in Parliament, revealed that Natural England’s financial, press, communications and HR functions were now under the control of Defra. He told MPs: “Five years ago we could determine very largely what we did with our money and how we made announcements. Now we can’t.” This comes on top of [repeated criticism](#) that government funding cuts have “gutted” the agency and that [staff have been “poached”](#) to help deal with Brexit, leaving vital positions unfilled.
- [The budget happened](#), and was described as “[the most environmentally-disappointing for years](#)”. Climate change wasn’t mentioned. Biodiversity wasn’t mentioned. ‘Green business’ and environmental groups [lined up to criticize the Government’s failure](#) to take meaningful action on everything from roads to plastics to energy. Green Brexit here we come.
- The National Council for Voluntary Organisations has produced a report with guidance and information which [voluntary sector organisations may find useful when preparing for EU exit](#).

## Energy

- Ongoing difficulties for nuclear power – highlighted by the [likely collapse of the new Moorside power station in Cumbria](#) (although [local leaders](#) have vowed to fight on) – have prompted more [calls for a national strategic re-think](#) – and for [transparency about government support](#) for the industry.
- In the past five years, the amount of renewable capacity in the UK has tripled while fossil fuels' has fallen by one-third, as power stations reached the end of their life or became uneconomic. The result is that between July and September, [UK renewables capacity outstripped fossil fuels for the first time](#).
- [Scotland's wind farms](#) have produced record amounts of electricity – enough for 5 million homes
- Planning permission applications to install [energy storage facilities](#) in the UK have quadrupled since 2016, with a massive increase in capacity expected in the next few years.
- A new report commissioned by the Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit (ECIU) suggests that a [smart grid based around wind and solar generation could meet half of Britain's energy demands by 2030](#), even during “wind and solar lulls” in the middle of winter, using today's commercial technology, at price parity with fossil fuels. But [the UK has fallen](#) in a ranking of the world's most attractive renewable energy markets for investors, with apprehensions around Brexit cited as a major reason for a year-on-year drop in investment.
- In the three weeks following the start of [fracking at Preston New Road](#), 36 minor earthquakes were recorded in the vicinity. Six of these triggered 18 hour halts to operations, as per the regulations governing fracking. No fracking has taken place for the last three weeks. Cuadrilla say that this is to allow them to better optimize their programme.
- Industry and green groups have described the government's decision to allocate just over 10% of the funds available to support the next round of renewables projects as “[genuinely bewildering](#)”
- New research warns of a ‘two-tier economy’ opening up as some areas of the UK – particularly the north and midlands of England – [fall behind in the transition](#) to a low carbon economy.
- An application for the [first solar park to be dealt with through the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project \(NSIP\) regime](#) has been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS), on a 491.2 hectare site on the north Kent coast.

## Planning

- The Government have launched the [Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission](#). The Commission, chaired by aesthetics philosopher Sir Roger Scruton, is intended to expand the debate on design quality and style. Their focus will be on the creation of places and homes that are popular with local communities, attractive, and respect the character and identity of the area in which they are located, whilst meeting the needs of people now and in the future. While it's hard to see this as anything less than a very important step in the right direction, the [choice of chairman](#), and the [apparent sidelining of planners, architects](#) and other built environment professionals, have led to critical [questioning over how effective it will be](#)
- The Government has reacted to the confusion and upheaval caused by its introduction of a standard method for calculating housing need which gave answers that it didn't want, by [telling councils to ignore new household projection figures](#) while it works out how to fix the methodology so that it provides the figures it wants. Details are in the [consultation document](#) on how to change the standard methodology (para 19).
- A judge has [quashed a decision](#) taken by Sajid Javid to refuse permission for an opencast coalmine in Northumbria on the grounds of landscape damage and climate change impacts.

- The “Appropriate Assessments” of development plans affecting European conservation areas must identify and examine the implications for habitats and species to be found *outside* the boundaries of that site, and for species within the site for which it is not listed, according to the [latest European Court of Justice ruling on how European habitats protection rules should be interpreted](#).
- Twenty four sites in the North West have been added to [Historic England’s Heritage at Risk Register](#), the annual snapshot of the health of England’s historic places, and 19 sites were removed
- The government has updated the statutory criteria and general principles applied by the Secretary of State when deciding [whether a building is of special architectural or historic interest](#) and should therefore be “listed”
- The CLA have released a policy briefing calling for a redefinition of [how the sustainability of villages is assessed](#), in order to promote more housebuilding in rural areas.
- New research shows that Government support for housing programmes in England is [heavily skewed towards more affluent areas](#) in the South East

### **Transport**

- A two-year review of the National Cycle Network, ‘[Paths for Everyone](#)’, suggests that overhauling the Network so that it is open to more people – including those who face mobility challenges – could generate £7.6 billion in benefits to the public purse every year. The review makes 15 recommendations to help realise this potential.
- TfL has published research that shows improvements to make it easier and safer to walk and cycle in London’s town centres and high streets lead to an [increase in retail rental values, more retail space being filled and a 93% increase in people walking](#) in the streets.

### **Publications**

#### **Raynsford Review**

The [Raynsford Review of Planning has been published](#). It warns that planning has been reduced to a ‘chaotic patchwork’ of responsibilities which is not compatible with promoting the health, wellbeing and civil rights of communities. The report makes clear that while planning has a huge potential to make people’s lives better this opportunity has been undermined by deregulation and by the attacks on the profession by Government. Findings collected over the last 18 months show that people no longer perceive councils as able to protect the public interest, with the economic gain of landowners and developers taking precedent over all else. The report’s author, Rt Hon Nick Raynsford said that “We ignore at our peril the anger and disaffection felt by so many communities at the failure of current planning policies and procedures to listen to their concerns and respond to their needs. Restoring public confidence in the planning system is one of our generation’s greatest challenges.” It makes a set of 24 inter-related recommendations that are intended to make a simpler, fairer system which works for all sectors and in the public interest, with strong democratic accountability and in-built incentives to deliver greater certainty and consistency.

#### **Letwin Review**

[The Letwin Review](#) into the gap between planning permissions granted and homes actually built concluded that greater differentiation in the types and tenures of housing delivered on large sites would increase the market absorption rates of new homes – the binding constraint on build out rates on large sites. To achieve this, it recommends new planning rules that require developers to offer a variety of property types, and suggests local authorities have a more

muscular role in home building with the creation of European-style development companies that use master planners to shape developments. However, it has been [suggested that the review was “got at”](#) as it failed to deliver the expected recommendations to reform the system of land value capture, thereby protecting private sector profits over the needs of communities for affordable housing and decent infrastructure. The government will respond to the review in full in February 2019.

### **Living Planet Report 2018**

Humanity has wiped out 60% of populations of mammals, birds, fish and reptiles since 1970, leading the world’s foremost experts to warn that the annihilation of wildlife is now an emergency that threatens civilisation. The new estimate of the massacre of wildlife is made in a [major report produced by WWF](#) and involving 59 scientists from across the globe. It finds that the [vast and growing](#) consumption of food and resources by the global population is destroying the web of life, billions of years in the making, upon which human society ultimately depends for clean air, water and everything else.

### **Climate change and land use change**

The latest Committee on Climate Change report entitled ‘[Land use: Reducing emissions and preparing for climate change](#)’ finds that fundamental reform is required to ensure land becomes a more effective carbon store, whilst early action is needed to maximise the benefits from changing how land is used: “*Unless addressed in advance, some of the downside risks of climate change could be effectively irreversible and endanger the supply of essential ecosystem services from the natural environment*”. It recommends the planting of 1.5 million hectares of new forest and 1.2 million hectares of bioenergy crops by 2050, combined with a 26-36% reduction in grasslands. A further recommendation of the report is for the Government to implement legislation that promotes “radically different” uses of land, including the construction of semi-artificial wetlands, woodlands and peat bogs.

### **Transport interchanges**

[Integrated Transport: A New Generation of Interchanges](#) says that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) should be supplemented to guarantee that it contains more detailed guidance on planning and locating interchanges. The report finds that current bus, rail and coach services are poorly integrated. This makes door-to-door public transport journeys difficult and forces people to be more reliant on cars. The operation, investment and planning of different modes of public transport is made in isolation so opportunities to link them are missed. The resulting network doesn’t provide connections between the different modes of public transport – and it is also expensive. To make sure that public transport serves communities better, the report recommends that the government should develop priority national transport interchanges and examine opportunities for regional ones – and prioritises them in the planning system.

### **Civil Society Futures**

A two-year independent inquiry has concluded that charities and other [civil society organisations must make radical changes](#) and behave differently to ensure they are fit for the challenges of the future, or risk becoming irrelevant. It recommends change around the axes of:

- Power: power needs to be shifted so that everyone is involved in decision-making
- Accountability: organisations must be more accountable to communities they serve
- Connection: civil society must build broader and deeper connections within and between communities

- Trust: organisations need to put effort into building and earning trust and ensure they are behaving in line with their values

## **Events**

### **Community Land summit**

Join Shared Assets and Community Land Scotland for [this opportunity](#) to network with practitioners, support organisations, communities and policy makers, and take part in workshops on the pros and cons, benefits, opportunities and pitfalls of community land ownership, and [whether and how it could work in your community](#).

### **Marine Planning in the North West**

Come along to a free North West Coastal Forum workshop to learn about marine planning, what it means for you and how to have your say in the [development of the North West Marine Plan](#), stretching from the Dee to the Solway. Midland Hotel, Morecambe Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 5:30 – 9.30pm, with a hot buffet supper served part way through. For more information and to book contact [info@nwcoastalforum.org.uk](mailto:info@nwcoastalforum.org.uk).

### **North West Social Prescribing Network Conference 2018**

Following a sequence of successful conferences and events across the North West, there is a growing movement across the region to [position social prescribing as a cornerstone for creating good health and wellbeing](#). This event will build this work by bringing together people from health, local government and voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors to continue the conversation, explore the benefits of social prescribing and plan how to spread social prescribing.

### **Northern Forest – Creating value from woodlands**

The Institute of Chartered Foresters, the Mersey Forest and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) are hosting a joint event focused on the [value of woodland creation and management](#). In light of changing land management priorities and the plans for planting 50 million trees as part of the Northern Forest announced in the government's 25 Year Plan for the Environment, the Institute, Mersey Forest and RICS are bringing together an exceptional team of speakers to highlight current opportunities and challenge traditional thinking around this often undervalued asset class.

### **Local Charities Day**

Local Charities Day 2018, an opportunity to highlight and showcase the work, opportunities and needs of local charities, takes place on December 14<sup>th</sup>. [The website](#) provides a variety of ways to get involved and to promote the local charity that you run, work or volunteer at.

### **Irish Sea Maritime Forum Conference**

The [Irish Sea Maritime Forum Biennial Conference 2019](#), Cardiff, 15 January, aims to bring together stakeholders from across the Irish Sea to learn about issues of current and shared interest and contribute to work updating the ISMF's 2012 Irish Sea Issues and Opportunities report. It will cover marine planning and the development of the network of Marine Protected Areas, Irish Sea related projects, the latest UK Climate Change Impact Programme projections and associated activity and what Brexit might mean for the Irish Sea region and the role that the ISMF might play.

## **Resources**

### **Innovation in democracy**

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Ministry for Housing, Communities, and Local Government (MHCLG) are launching the Innovation in Democracy Programme, that will run from January 2019 to March 2020. The programme will involve citizens in decision making at local government level through innovative models of participatory democracy. They are looking to support 8-10 local authorities to open up a policy decision to citizen deliberation through a Citizens' Assembly process, complemented by a digital strategy that will extend the reach, transparency, and accountability of the process. To support the successful local authorities to implement the Citizens' Assemblies and digital strategy, they will provide up to £60,000 to cover costs and the assistance of an expert Democracy Support Contractor. The tender is [available here](#) and the expression of interest will go live on the [DCMS website](#) in the coming weeks.

### **Demystifying Health**

The latest of the Valuing Nature Network's 'Demystifying' papers focuses on [health](#): asking and attempting to answer big questions with input from a wealth of experienced collaborators to help develop the links between health and the environment. This builds on a report from last year from a workshop for the Valuing Nature Programme on the cost-effectiveness of [addressing public health priorities through improved access to the natural outdoors](#).

### **Public attitudes to greening**

A [report published by Green Alliance](#) presents findings from research carried out by the Centre for Industrial Energy, Materials and Products (CIEMAP) on public attitudes towards policies intended to improve resource efficiency. Nearly everyone who responded indicated a belief that we must shift towards a more resource efficient society, even if that altered the way we live in the future. Measures offering the biggest carbon savings, and over which the government has most control, are those that are most popular with the public.

## **Consultations**

### **Standard method for calculating housing need**

This consultation covers several matters, but crucially includes a key consultation on the government's [standard method for calculating local housing need](#), which is the main factor in determining local plan housing targets, and therefore five year land supply, and therefore the outcome of most planning applications for housing. Closes on 7 December.

### **Planning reform: high streets and new homes**

Covers a variety of matters, including major proposals to [further extend permitted development rights](#) (ie further deregulate the planning system, removing council's control over development and their ability to capture land value increases to fund infrastructure or affordable housing), changes to use classes, and changes to the rules around disposing of publicly-owned land. Closes 14 January 2019

### **Compulsory pre-application consultation on fracking**

Asks whether applicants should be required to conduct [pre-application consultation with the local community](#) prior to submitting a planning application for shale gas development. Short but to the point answers are fine. Closes 7 January 2019.

### **Energy efficiency of buildings**

MPs in the BEIS select committee have launched an inquiry which will examine the Government's approach to [improving the energy efficiency of buildings](#) in the UK, with current progress deemed as "far too slow". Research suggests the UK will not meet its 2030 goals to boost energy efficiency in its housing stock until the end of the century. Deadline: 17 January 2019.

### **National Parks & AONBs**

The Glover review of England's [National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty](#) (AONBs) remains open until December 18. CPRE are asking people to share photos that show what makes particular landscapes special to them directly and on Twitter and Instagram using [#MyLandscape](#). They'll retweet the ones they like and use them favourite to illustrate their response to the consultation

### **HS2 Northern routes & environmental impacts**

Consultations on the [HS2 Phase 2 draft Environmental Statement](#) (that describes the potential environmental effects and proposed ways to avoid, reduce, mitigate and monitor them) and [draft Equality Impact Assessment Report](#) are still open until 21 December.

### **Funding**

#### **Grow Wild Grants**

Grow Wild are offering grants to groups to run projects related to UK native wildflowers, plants and fungi. [Community projects fund](#): Grants of £2,000 or £4,000 for groups and organisations trying something new or different to engage hundreds of people in their community about native wildflowers/plants/fungi, where there are opportunities to help people connect with, learn about and give to each other and nature. Deadline 10 December. [Youth-led projects fund](#): Grants of £500 for young people aged 14-25. Projects should be creative, actively engage other people in their delivery, and be inspired by native wildflowers or fungi. Rolling deadlines.

#### **Powering our communities fund**

Got an idea for a project to put community and local energy at the heart of your area? [Electricity North West's new grant fund](#) might be able to help. Projects should deliver one of these priorities: Engaging communities in energy issues, particularly energy efficiency; supporting vulnerable customers and/or reducing fuel poverty in our communities; or investigating or delivering new ways of working to support a smart, flexible low-carbon grid. A wide range of organisations can apply, from charities to schools, and the money can be used for activities like producing materials to promote initiatives, supporting staff time or technical expertise, buying equipment or research. Grants range from £1,000 to £15,000. The deadline is midnight on 19 December.

### **Vacancies**

#### **Community Engagement Coordinator – Woodbank Community Food Hub**

The Kindling Trust are seeking a highly motivated and driven individual, with experience of community engagement and project development, to work full-time with the existing team at Woodbank, on this innovative and ambitious project. They recently secured funding and with it the chance to make Woodbank a truly thriving and pioneering hub for community food. They are

looking for someone to help us make this happen over the next 4 years. Applicants must be able to work Saturdays and some evenings. [Download the job description, person specification and application form](#) from their website, or email [corrina@kindling.org.uk](mailto:corrina@kindling.org.uk) for more information. Closing date: 5pm on Tuesday 18th December.

### **Awards**

#### Green Heart Hero awards

The Climate Coalition is celebrating how people around the country are helping to protect the lives and places they love from climate change. Green hearts reflect the belief in the possibility of a cleaner, safer future; the ambition and efforts of projects big and small that are transforming communities everywhere; and the force of millions who are protecting the things they love. [The Green Heart Hero Awards](#) are a chance to celebrate these extraordinary endeavours and give individuals, communities, businesses, politicians and more recognition for all they are doing to create a cleaner, more secure future. Nominations close 3<sup>rd</sup> December.

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To contribute to the NWEL Bulletin, please contact:  
Andy Yuille  
[andyuille@gmail.com](mailto:andyuille@gmail.com)  
01524 389 915

To contribute to the policy work of VSNW, please contact:  
Warren Escadale  
[warren.escadale@vsnw.org.uk](mailto:warren.escadale@vsnw.org.uk)  
0161 276 9307