



● GREEN BULLET

18th December 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.

CONTENTS

- Campaigns – Greener UK, Climate change, soils, trees, dark skies, housing, valuing nature
- Information update – Brexit & beyond, energy, planning, transport, waste & recycling
- Publications – Soils, trees, natural capital, wildlife crime, rural transport, wildflowers, the North
- Events – Health, wellbeing & environment, investing to green GM, organic growing, Community Forests
- Resources – Climate projection, nature connectedness, community energy, land-use change & ecosystem services, environmental monitoring, valuing nature, biodiversity for the private sector, recycling for the public sector
- Consultations – Biodiversity net gain in planning, water resource infrastructure
- Funding – Transport, waste reduction, community energy

Campaigns

Greener UK

Greener UK and its member organisations are [campaigning for a bold new environment bill](#) to frame environmental protection after Brexit, and need grassroots involvement to support their campaigns – ranging from a couple of clicks to meeting your MP with support from the Wildlife Trusts. Give nature a present for Christmas, click the link and take one of the actions.

Climate change

- The 24th Conference of the Parties (COP24) has taken place in Poland. The Conversation [summarises the institutions, issues, and science](#). The 197 signatory countries to the Paris Agreement [agreed on a rulebook for its implementation - but backtracked on the ambition](#) to keep global warming "well below 2°C" due to the big oil producers - US, Saudi Arabia, Russia and Kuwait – [blocking the adoption of the latest scientific report](#) setting out the risks of a 1.5C temperature rise, which was supposed to form the baseline for the negotiations. NGOs raised concerns about [human rights being written out of international commitments](#), while global investors managing \$32tn demanded urgent cuts in carbon emissions and the phasing out of all coal burning in order to [avoid a financial crash several times worse than the 2008 crisis](#).
- [The EU plans to go carbon neutral by 2050](#). Scientists say that net-zero emissions by 2050 are needed to have a fighting chance of keeping global temperatures under 1.5C this century. The EU says the move will also cut premature air pollution deaths by 40%. [Manchester has brought forward its pledge to go carbon neutral by 2038](#). The [UK is performing better than most](#) advanced economies at replacing fossil fuels. Progress is possible... But the latest UN report suggest that [efforts need to be at least tripled](#) even to stay within 2C.
- [Extinction Rebellion](#) is stepping up its programme of non-violent civil disobedience to draw attention to the urgency of the problem and the failure of Governmental responses

Save Our Soils

95% of our food production relies on rain falling on a thin layer of soil, often only a few cm thick. This thin layer of soil covering the Earth's surface is the difference between survival and extinction for most terrestrial life. Despite this, one-third of UK soils are thought to be degraded, with an area of farmland the size of Yorkshire at risk of erosion. Years of continuous cultivation, synthetic fertilisers and toxic pesticides have taken their toll on the soil. Add to that the increase in greenfield development plus the need to tackle the ever more immediate threat of climate change, and it's clear that something has to be done to [Save Our Soils](#).

Citizen Science – urban trees

Trees for Cities, Brillianto and Forest Research are hosting a [citizen science project to map out the canopy cover of Britain's urban areas](#). Building up from an existing database covering 283 English towns and cities this project aims to expand across the UK. The goal is to help improve urban tree management and identify areas that could benefit from future planting.

Dark Skies

Friends of the Lake District are looking for volunteers to take 'sky quality' readings in and around the national park as part of the bid to get it designated as a Dark Skies Reserve. They are also offering talks to Cumbrian groups on the project – contact johanna-korndorfer@fld.org.uk or phone 01539 720788. CPRE will also be conducting a national star count campaign in February as part of their [ongoing dark skies campaign](#).

Room to Breathe – housing reform

The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) has launched a campaign for better basic national housing standards, labelling [permitted development as one of the 'biggest mistakes' in postwar history](#). The charity, in unveiling its [Room to Breathe](#) campaign, said that "No one

should live without sufficient natural light, no child should have to play in a car park, everyone should have access to green and play space within a two-minute walk of their home. Converting building to homes can be great but only if it's done to the proper standards.”

We Value Nature

[We Value Nature](#) was launched at the natural capital week in Paris and will be supported over the next three years by €2 million in funding from the European Commission. The ambition of this collaborative campaign is to help increase the use of approaches such as natural capital and green infrastructure assessment, natural capital accounting, nature-based solutions and related ecosystem-based ways of working in businesses across Europe.

Information update

Brexit and beyond

- Greener UK and its member organisations are [campaigning for a bold new environment bill](#), and need grassroots involvement to support their campaigns – ranging from a couple of clicks to meeting your MP with support from the Wildlife Trusts.
- The Greener UK risk tracker shows that with less than four months to go until the UK leaves the EU [huge uncertainties remain](#) over the future of environmental safeguards, and the IPPR assess the [environmental implications of the four main alternatives](#) for the UK's future relationship with the EU, concluding that the closer the relationship between the UK and the EU, the stronger the safeguards for maintaining environmental protections.
- Defra are ramping up [preparations for a no-deal exit and establishing a crisis centre](#), including co-opting hundreds of Environment Agency's staff...
- ...while the number of [site inspections by the Environment Agency has fallen by more than a third](#) over the past four years, largely because it was already overwhelmed by staff and budget cuts and the demands placed on it by Brexit
- A high-profile report supported by hard Brexiters including David Davis, Boris Johnson and Jacob Rees-Mogg and proposing an [ultra-capitalist Brexit](#) (including scrapping environmental standards and regulations) has been withdrawn, after an investigation founds that its authors breached Charity Commission rules.
- Hold onto your hats. In one or another, everything will be different by the next Green Bullet.

Energy

- The [amount of carbon emitted by the world's most economically advanced nations](#) is set to rise before the end of 2018, bucking a five-year decline in emissions, the International Energy Agency (IEA) has warned. Its most up-to-date energy data shows that energy-related carbon emissions across the US, EU and Asia Pacific regions have risen year-on-year due to higher gas and oil use increasing at a faster rate than the shift away from coal. Overall, the IEA forecasts that the total carbon footprint of these three economies will have increased by 0.5% as a result of these trends.
- [Fracking at Preston New Road](#) has again been frequently suspended due to earth tremors.
- The cost of large-scale solar generation is expected to fall below £40/MWh by 2030, according to the latest assessment by the Solar Trade Association (STA). This suggests that under long-term power purchase agreements (PPAs) [solar could soon be the cheapest generation technology in the UK](#) (although the STA may not be the most neutral observer!)
- In a second major [blow to the North West's new nuclear programme](#), after Toshiba pulled out of Moorside in Cumbria, reports in the Japanese press claim Hitachi is set to scrap its investment in Wylfa Newydd.

Planning

- A High Court judgment agreeing that a developer could install 125m wind turbines following a 'section 73 appeal', when the original permission limited them to 100m, could set a precedent allowing developers far [greater leeway to amend existing permissions](#) without having to resubmit applications, limiting the scope for third party objections to such amendments
- Friends of the Earth are having their case to [have the NPPF declared unlawful](#) due to a failure to assess its environmental impacts heard at the High Court today, and expect a judgement by the end of January.
- A bill has been introduced to the House of Commons that would [ban the right to appeal against refusals](#) of applications that are inconsistent with both a neighbourhood and a local plan, if the local authority has an adequate housing land supply. The next stage for the Private Member's bill, its second reading, is scheduled to take place on Friday 25 January 2019.
- The Government has refused to endorse the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee's call for more of the [land value uplift created by granting planning permission](#) to be used by the state to fund much-needed infrastructure, preferring it to remain as unearned private profit.
- A revised draft of [Greater Manchester's emerging spatial plan](#) should be published for consultation in January
- The [area of green belt in England fell by 5,070 hectares](#) in 2017/18. The biggest losses were in the West Midlands, where Coventry and Warwickshire both lost around 1,500 hectares.
- The government has published its [2018 National Infrastructure and Construction Pipeline](#), which is projected to be worth £600 billion over the next 10 years. [Schemes include](#) the £28 billion national roads fund announced in the 2018 Budget; the East West Rail project; the M6 smart motorway upgrade; and Hornsea Project One, the world's largest offshore windfarm.
- The results of the [first Housing Delivery test results](#) – which will see councils that don't meet the test penalized – have been delayed.
- Housing numbers chaos around the standard methodology continues, with [St Helens](#) officers advising a reduction in its housing target as there is no longer any robust evidence to support the preferred option, and [the Wirral](#) requesting MHCLG to be able to use the most up-to-date household projections to determine its housing requirement.

Transport

- The first phase of a [373-mile walking and cycling route across the Liverpool City Region](#) is set to go ahead after securing £8.3m of funding. The proposed network is focused on upgrades to 31 key routes across the region, linking Liverpool city centre to Speke; Prescot with Runcorn; Seaforth to Southport; and Leasowe to Seacombe Ferry Terminal.
- Northern MPs are putting [pressure on the Labour Party to remove its support for HS2](#), saying that east-west Northern rail links are more important.
- Liverpool Mayor [Joe Anderson has quit the Northern Powerhouse Partnership](#), accusing the Chancellor of trying to kill it off and the Government of not listening to voices from the North, allegedly after the withdrawal of a promise to connect Liverpool into HS2

Waste & Recycling

- The Government has unveiled its long-awaited [Resources and Waste Strategy](#), with [proposals that include](#) businesses and manufacturers “paying the full cost” of recycling or disposing of their packaging waste, mandatory food waste prevention targets for businesses and weekly food waste collections from every home, compulsory electronic tracking of waste to prevent illegal dumping, tougher penalties for rogue waste operators and “consistent” recycling for every household, and a deposit return scheme on drinks cans and bottles. Proposal details will be consulted on next year. As with so much coming out of Defra recently, it all sounds very positive, but we need to see concrete detailed policy, funding mechanisms and institutional arrangements before it appears even vaguely credible that the Government would take an approach so radically at odds with its actual track record.
- [England's household recycling rates have increased by 0.3%](#) to 45.2% in 2017. Total ‘waste from households’ in England fell by 1.5% in 2017 to 22.4 million tonnes from 22.8 million tonnes in 2016. This is equivalent to 403 kg per person, down from 412 kg per person in 2016, a decrease of 2.2%. But the figures are undermined by the rolling 12-month household recycling rate to March 2018, which shows a 0.3% decline compared with the previous period between 2016/17.

Publications

Back to the land: Rethinking our approach to soils

This new report from CPRE calls for a [radical rethink of farming practices and soil management](#) in order to help regenerate the soils that underpin our supply of food and environment.

It explores why soils are important and their main functions, and looks at the key threats they face, from the way they are managed to their loss when developed. It also analyses why soils must be better protected in the future, including to secure the domestic supply of food, reduce the risks of climate change, improve water quality and restore the health of the natural world and sets out practical ways to restore soil and new approaches to policy.

City of Trees

[Greater Manchester's 11.3m trees add £33m](#) a year to the city region's economy, according to a survey completed by City of Trees, however around 9% are at risk from pests and diseases. Greater Manchester's trees act as a filtration system for harmful air pollutants, removing 847 tonnes of pollutants each year. They also assist with excessive storm water, absorbing 1.6m cubic metres of water run-off each year. Trees also process 56,530 tonnes of carbon each year, and the current carbon of all the trees in the region is 1.6m tonnes. Research by the University of Illinois and the University of Hong Kong shows that lining city streets with trees reduces physiological symptoms of stress in humans. [The thicker the tree cover, the lower the stress levels.](#)

This is Natural Capital 2018

The Natural Capital Coalition have published their [2018 edition of "This Is Natural Capital"](#) with a variety of articles covering topics including scaling-up natural capital, the multidimensional value of forest, cross-sector collaboration and more.

Wildlife crime

Wildlife and Countryside Link and Wales Environment Link published their second [Annual Wildlife Crime Report](#) – this time looking at crime in 2017. Data on wildlife crime in England and Wales collected by members show an increase of 24% in reported terrestrial wildlife crime

incidents, with a 9% rise overall. Shockingly, only nine individuals and businesses were prosecuted last year for the wildlife crimes on which Link members collect data. This is down two-thirds on the 22 people convicted in 2016.

Rural public transport

Whilst there is widespread recognition that rural public transport is vital and needs to be improved, there has been little coherent national leadership or support to achieve this. New research from the Campaign for Better Transport, ['The future of rural bus services in the UK'](#), shows how we can turn the tide of cut-off communities and make sure our towns and villages stay accessible for everyone.

Wildflowers increase margins

A three-year study on Britain's biggest courgette farm has found that [planting wild flowers in field margins](#) attracted bees to pollinate crops and ultimately increased yields by almost 40%. The extra flowers removed the need to pollinate by hand, saving £1,375 per acre, and the boost in crops was worth £3.6 million in one year. Next year the farm will plant wild flowers at the normally empty 'headlands' at the ends of rows and in the fields' corners.

State of the North 2018

The IPPR's [fifth State of the North report](#) says that the north of England has rarely faced such threat and opportunity. Brexit looms; budgets in essential NHS and council services are at breaking point. The world's major, long-term challenges – globalisation, climate change, AI, automation and an ageing population – continue to test the North's energy and innovation, but there are also opportunities: new infrastructure – long promised – could soon be brought forward; industrial strategy could support the North's world-leading frontier industries to innovate and advance; new and established mayors can consolidate city-region leadership across the North. It calls for a strengthening of the Northern Powerhouse to help address these issues

Events

Health, wellbeing and the environment: opportunities and challenges

28th January, Isla Gladstone Conservatory, Stanley Park, Liverpool. Join other individuals and organisations with an interest in improving health and wellbeing by using the environment - including voluntary, public sector, business and the arts - to help launch Liverpool City Region's Year of the Environment. The aim is to promote the region's 'blue and green' assets – coast, river, parks and woodlands – as well as some of the fantastic activities which support good health. They will also be looking at how place based care teams across Cheshire and Merseyside can respond to the challenge of how we use our environment for health.

Investing to Green Greater Manchester conference

Museum of Science & Industry, Liverpool Road, Manchester, M3 4FP. With the first [Natural Capital Investment Plan](#) being developed for Greater Manchester, the [Natural Capital Group's conference](#) will explore how we can promote investment in opportunities that protect and enhance Greater Manchester's natural capital to support a healthy population and economy. It is aimed at professionals working in the environment, finance and public policy including investors, policymakers, land owners and managers, environmentalists and business executives. The event is free to attend but registration is essential – in fact tickets are already 'sold' out, but you are encouraged to [join a waiting list](#).

Organic Growers Alliance - Eliot Coleman at Glebelands City Growers

Eliot Coleman has over 50 years experience in all aspects of organic farming. He is one of the most respected organic growers in the world, has written widely on many aspects and runs a commercial market garden in Maine. Eliot is in the UK to promote the 30th anniversary edition of his seminal book, *The New Organic Grower*, which has been updated to reflect the changes over the last 30 years. Eliot's talk will cover those changes, reflect on the latest developments in the USA, and look forward to future progress. There will be opportunities for questions and discussion during the morning session, and there will also be an introduction to Glebeland City Growers, their history, current activities and future plans, and an organic/fair trade lunch.

[Tuesday 8 January, Metrovick Rugby Club, Finney Bank Road, M33 6LR. Tickets: £27.50 - £32.50.](#) In the afternoon there will be an opportunity to join Eliot and his wife Barbara Damrosch on a short walk around the adjacent Glebelands.

Community Forests Conference

20th March, Birmingham Midland Institute, 9:30 to 4:00. This year's Conference celebrates [25 years since the Forests were formally approved](#) and moved into full scale delivery. Since then over 16 million new trees have been planted and thousands of woodlands brought back into management. Perhaps as significantly, the Community Forests have shown how trees and woodlands in and around our towns and cities help to improve image, health and biodiversity, reduce flood risk and create new opportunities for business and jobs. The conference will be looking ahead to the next 25 years of Community Forestry in England.

Resources

UK Climate Projections

[The UK Climate Projections](#) provides the most up-to-date assessment of how the climate of the UK may change over the 21st century, with [warmer summers and increased flooding](#). This information may be particularly useful for making local climate change risk assessments and adaptation plans for natural assets.

Pathways to nature connectedness

Research into nature connectedness has been named by Universities UK as one of the UK's 100 best breakthroughs for its impact. Central to that impact has been work on pathways to nature connectedness: the types of activities that lead to nature connectedness, which is the measurable psychological construct associated with human well-being and pro-nature behaviours. [This blog tells the story of the application of the pathways](#), firstly with the Wildlife Trusts, then the National Trust and others. Nature For All have published a set of [recommendations for policymakers](#) to help foster nature connectedness.

Online community group energy support

The Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) has launched a new section on their website to [help community groups involved in energy and sustainability](#). The online resources should be helpful to a range of groups, whether you want to develop a renewable energy project, make your village hall or other building more energy efficient, encourage your local authority to introduce more sustainable energy or put climate measures into your neighbourhood plan.

Land use change and ecosystem services

Defra and Natural England are working with a consortium led by the University of Oxford to develop the 'eco-metric', which aims to [measure the ability of habitats to deliver ecosystem](#)

[services](#). It can be used to measure the net change in natural capital and the ecosystem services it provides as a result of land-use change or development.

Open Foris – environmental monitoring

Open Foris is a set of [free and open-source software tools](#) that facilitates flexible and efficient data collection, analysis and reporting for environmental monitoring. E.g. Collect Earth provides augmented visual interpretation for land monitoring and Collect Mobile provides intuitive data collection and validation in the field. GIS is key for understanding and protecting natural resource commons (forests, water resources etc). Geotechnologies and open data will play a key role to guide policy and improve conservation efforts around the world.

Valuing Nature conference outputs 2018

All [presentations and posters](#) from the 2-day 2018 Valuing Nature conference, which brought together people from diverse research areas and from business, policy and practice with the common goal of tackling Valuing Nature challenges, are now available to view and download.

Mainstreaming biodiversity goals for the private sector

A report published by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee outlines [14 case studies](#) that demonstrate the impacts and dependencies of business on biodiversity across multiple social and economic contexts. These examples are analysed with the intention of showing the links between business decisions and international biodiversity policy, aiming to raise the visibility and relevance the Sustainable Development Goals.

Waste & resources toolkit for local authorities

WRAP have produced a new toolkit to help local authorities navigate the complexities of waste and recycling service design. 'Waste and Recycling Resources for Local Authorities' categorises WRAP's most popular resources under key themes such as contamination and food waste collections. It also provides details about the bespoke one-to-one support that WRAP offers. To receive a copy, please email sophie.hadden@wrap.org.uk.

Consultations

Net biodiversity / environmental gain in planning

Aiming to deliver on aspects of the 25 Year Environment Plan, [the consultation covers](#): the objectives of net gain policy, the core concepts of biodiversity net gain and environmental net gain, and whether to make biodiversity net gain a requirement for development planning permission. CPRE have suggested that the government should [focus on preventing development causing harm in the first place](#), and not on offsetting avoidable harm with unrelated improvements elsewhere, saying that 'there must be measures that ensure developers do not use net gain as a way to build what they want, where they want'. Deadline: 10th February.

National Policy Statement for Water Resources Infrastructure

The draft [National Policy Statement for Water Resources Infrastructure](#) is supposed to set out the need and government's policies for the development of nationally significant infrastructure projects relevant to water resources in England. However, unlike other NPSs, rather than declaring need in the NPS itself, it says that each water company's five-year Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP) will contain the need for new infrastructure, although it does

mention a need for 150-200 megalitres per day of desalination plants in London and the south east of England. Deadline: 31st January

Funding

Transport project funding

The grant-making charity Foundation for Integrated Transport is currently in the process of establishing a Social Investment Fund to invest in [transport-related projects with a social or environmental benefit](#). Priority will be given to projects and innovations that will have a demonstrable benefit, will be financially sustainable and are scalable over a wider geographical area. Projects are expected to raise a target sum from supporters, the local community or members of the public.

Waste prevention funding – Merseyside & Halton

A share of £115,000 is up for grabs from a [community fund to help make the Liverpool City Region a cleaner and greener place](#). The community fund has been made available for Merseyside and Halton community and voluntary groups, schools, faith groups and not-for-profit organisations, who can reduce household waste, encourage recycling and resource re-use and prevent carbon emissions. The projects will also have to demonstrate wider positive impacts on the environment, health and education.

Innovative community energy

Do you have an idea for how community energy could work in the future? There's a new grant fund that might help you bring it to life. [The Next Generation fund](#) will provide grants of up to £100,000 to ten community energy groups to work on new business models for community energy in their area. 1st round expressions of interest due by 13th January

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