



● GREEN BULLET

26th April 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](http://www.vsnw.org.uk) website.

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Campaigns

Plastic, litter & recycling

- Friends of the Lake District are organizing [the Great Cumbrian Litter Pick](#) on July 6th to bring together people of all ages from all communities across Cumbria to rise to the challenge, come together and muck in to clean up the county.
- The Government has finally responded to many [years of campaigning](#) by agreeing to introduce a national [deposit return scheme on plastic](#) and glass bottles and aluminium cans

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- The Government has said that it will launch a consultation soon into [banning plastic straws, cotton buds and drinks stirrers](#)
- A [30% drop in the amount of plastic bags found in British seas](#) has been linked to the introduction of plastic bag charges in many countries across Europe (the first ones being Ireland and Denmark in 2003)
- Greater Manchester has launched the first [city region-wide campaign](#) to reduce single-use plastics
- A plastic polymer scientist gives a view on [the goods and bads of plastic use](#)...
- ...And an [enzyme that 'eats' plastic](#) and could allow the full-cycle recycling of plastic bottles (i.e. old bottles could make new ones) has been discovered. By accident.

Climate change

- The Climate Coalition are calling on individuals and organisations to [host a Speak Up Together event](#) this summer, sometime between 30 June and 8th July, from a small picnic to a town square takeover, to raise awareness of concern among the public and politicians.
- In light of new science that suggests 2C of global warming would be more catastrophic than previously thought, the [UK is looking into increasing its climate targets](#) above the commitment made in Paris in 2015. But a recent analysis of the government's 'clean growth strategy' found that even if ministers implemented every policy to the full, the UK would still fall short of its *current* goal, let alone a more ambitious one.
- Over 170 countries finally reached agreement this month to [reduce CO2 emissions from shipping by "at least" 50%](#) on 2008 levels by 2050, ending years of slow progress. International shipping (and aviation!) have been areas where emissions control and reduction agreements have been hardest to reach

Air quality

- After several failed versions so poor they were judged to be [illegal](#), Environment Secretary Michael Gove has told MPs that the government's latest attempt at a [Clean Air Strategy](#) to tackle the air pollution crisis will be published this summer.
- Entries are open for the [National Air Quality Awards](#) if you know of any individuals or organisations that are working particularly hard to combat air pollution!
- The EU has warned that it may have to take [legal action against member states](#) – including the UK – that have been failing to restrict air pollution to legal limits since 2010.
- [Liverpool City Region](#) and [Greater Manchester](#) are both rolling out city region-wide plans to tackle air pollution
- Defra have released details of [£220 million of funding](#) available to local authorities to assist in measures to improve air quality, along with £2.4 million for community projects to tackle air pollution at a grassroots level

Food & farming

A farming and environmental alliance has come together to call for farm diversity to be protected and improved in new agriculture legislation. Farm diversity helps to create a resilient and dynamic farming industry, which works for the wider community as well as for the environment. [The alliance argues](#) that having a range of farm sizes and types is vital to ensure thriving farming and rural industries, available and attractive to new entrants, helping farmers make progress and producing a healthy countryside.

Planning and people

To coincide with the consultation on the national planning policy framework, CPRE have launched a Planning for People campaign, calling for a system that:

- Supports local democracy by adhering to neighbourhood and local plans.
- Ensures realistic and high quality development based on genuine need not market demand.
- Delivers more affordable homes by closing legal loopholes that put developer profits first.
- Adopts a true 'brownfield first' approach to development.
- Protects our countryside for current and future generations.

Information update

Brexit and beyond

- The EU is seeking a 'non-regression' clause in the EU withdrawal agreement to [prevent the UK from undermining EU environmental standards](#) after Brexit by lowering UK standards for economic advantage – a key plank of the Leave campaign and [actively advocated by Michael Gove](#) before his Damascene conversion to environmentalism.
- A report commissioned by Friends of the Earth to identify "what, if any, are [the risks to the environment from the various post-Brexit relationships](#) currently being discussed". Clearly set-out evidence-based risk assessment finds that in general, the Norwegian model poses the least risk to current levels of environmental protection, whereas the chaotic 'no deal' model poses the highest risk – although even the Norway model represents a high risk for wildlife and habitats.
- Two reports identifying key rural policy questions for the devolved governments in Scotland and Northern Ireland are now available. [After Brexit: 10 key questions for rural policy in Northern Ireland](#) is published by Newcastle University's Centre for Rural Economy and [After Brexit: 10 key questions for rural policy in Scotland](#) is a joint publication by Scotland's Rural College and the Centre for Rural Economy.

Energy

- The [public inquiry into the potential fracking site](#) at Roseacre in Lancashire is due to conclude this week, while [daily protests](#) continue outside the Preston New Road site, where Cuadrilla hope to [start fracking this summer](#), following horizontal drilling that has been ongoing since January.
- In 2017 UK greenhouse gas emissions dropped by 3% as coal use dropped and renewables rose, and towards the end of the year, [wind and solar produced more energy than nuclear](#) for the first time.

Planning

- A letter by the Government's Chief Planner provides [updates on a variety of changes](#) to the planning systems
- New research shows that councils are sitting on [£375 million earmarked for affordable housing](#), despite the growing crisis in housing affordability, while CPRE makes some suggestions for [getting affordable rural housing built](#)
- Sajid Javid has rejected [three major housebuilding appeals](#) around Farnham due to conflict with a neighbourhood plan, against the advice of the three inspectors. Between the appeal inquiries closing and Mr Javid making his decisions, both the neighbourhood plan and Local

Plan were formally adopted, adding weight to the neighbourhood plan and giving the district a five year housing supply. He also dismissed an appeal due to a conflict with a neighbourhood plan at Blackwell, in a decision which appears to [widen the criteria for a plan to be considered as 'allocating sites for housing'](#), and therefore gaining some protection from the five year rule.

- A Labour government would remove the viability loophole which allows developers to dodge affordable housing obligations, establish an 'English Sovereign Land Trust' to work with councils to buy land at a price closer to existing use value, suspend the Right to Buy scheme, link affordability to income, enable councils to build more social housing, and do away with the flawed assumption that affordability can be tackled primarily by building more market homes, according to its [new housing green paper](#).
- [Reform of the land market](#) could reduce the upfront cost of an affordable housebuilding programme by more than a third, and save billions for councils wanting to build, according to cross-party think tank Civitas.
- The Landscape Institute is calling for a strategic review of planning policy to [redefine the purpose of Green Belt land](#). It suggests that Green Belt policy should be addressing issues such as flood risk, air pollution, and biodiversity enhancement, not just keeping land open and maintaining separation between settlements
- More than 50 organisations have called for [Garden City principles](#) to be reinstated in the draft revisions to the NPPF
- The court of appeal has [upheld two cases](#) of campaigners [fighting to register village greens](#), against strong resistance (including legal action) from the public bodies opposing them
- A court of appeal ruling has clarified the meaning of ["isolated" homes](#) in terms of the NPPF policy
- To coincide with the NPPF consultation, CPRE have been writing about its possible impacts on undermining protection for [AONBs](#), and the system's need for [Green Belts](#), and strong [local democracy](#)
- Fewer starts are being made on building new homes, than affordable homes are being [sold off under the Right to Buy](#)
- The government has introduced legislation that would allow English local authorities to charge [double the rate of council tax on homes left empty](#) for years in an attempt to bring them back into use

Transport

- Greater Manchester has launched a '[Congestion Deal](#)' to tackle congestion across Greater Manchester. It will invest in and promote alternatives to private car use, but has ruled out any form of congestion charging
- [Transport for the North](#) has become the first sub-national transport body to begin operating with formal statutory powers
- Campaigners at [Transport for Quality of Life](#) argue for free bus fares, in the light of figures showing that outside London, public funding for bus services has fallen by 38% since 2009/10

Publications

How many wells?

A new report commissioned by Friends of the Earth finds that if [fracked gas was used to replace imports](#), over 6,000 wells would be needed to halve estimated gas imports. If gas produced per

well was at the lower end of possibilities, the report suggests this figure could rise to as many as 16,500 wells.

Soil & water

A new report by [WWF, The Rivers Trust and The Angling Trusts](#) shows that we need to spend approximately £10 million a year on soil protection measures to ensure a future for agriculture and reverse the decline of our precious rivers. 86% of England's rivers are currently classed as unhealthy, with pollution from agriculture as one of the main causes. The report also shows that using current farm subsidies to encourage farmers to turn small areas of farmland into grassland, woodland and/or wetlands would create huge benefits for nature and society.

Complex environments

The [Centre for Evaluation of Complexity Across the Nexus](#) (CECAN) is sharing its experience of working in complex policy areas across the food-energy-water-environment "Nexus". The team has published its manifesto [Policy Evaluation for a Complex World](#), looking at policymakers' needs for evaluation and developing new methods that can be applied in across the nexus.

NERC Act: select commit report

The House of Lords Select Committee on the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 has accused the Government of [failing both the environment and rural communities](#) in its report on whether the Act is still fit for purpose.

Events

Basecamp

[Basecamp](#) is a three day environmental festival organised by Friends of the Earth, offering a mix of training sessions, interesting talks on a variety of topical subjects, creative workshops, great music and new friendships, all set in the heart of the beautiful Peak District. Whether you're a seasoned campaigner looking for new allies or a new activist needing to gain key skills, Basecamp is the place for you.

Nature Connections 2018 Conference

Derby, 20th June 2018. [Nature Connections](#) brings together research, policy and practitioner communities with an interest in engaging people with the natural world for nature's and human wellbeing. The day will provide a forum for sharing and learning from the latest research and practice in nature connection. Taking the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan as a starting point, the conference will be focussed on the core themes of: Connecting people with nature for wellbeing; Nature friendly education - encouraging children to be close to nature; Connecting people with nature in towns and cities; Connecting with the beauty of nature.

Friends of the Lake District Leaders' Landscape Training

The [2018 Leaders' Landscape Training programme](#) is now available, providing training sessions for outdoor leaders to help deepen their understanding of Cumbria's landscapes and enable them to pass on their new-found knowledge to those with whom they work. Workshops on geology, birds of the Lake District, landscape and cultural history, woodland management and wildlife of the Cumbrian fringe will run from April to June. More dates and sessions to follow.

North West Eco-Schools conference

All primary and secondary schools are invited to be part of this [learning for sustainability event](#) at Blackburn Rovers stadium on June 28th. Everyone will learn from marketplace activities. Primary school children will have a workshop session, secondary students will engage in team challenges. Adults will be offered CPD. Organizations get the opportunity to network and promote the work they do with schools. Everyone leaves with new ideas and contacts. It's an event worth travelling to and being part of!

Greater Manchester Green summit

In case you couldn't make it, there are reviews of the Greater Manchester Green summit both from the [Combined Authority](#) itself, and from [Viable Economy](#) advocates [Steady State Manchester](#).

Community-led Housing Training Events

ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) are running a series of training events designed to increase awareness of and knowledge about [community-led housing in rural communities](#), and help more residents consider the local potential for such a project to address housing need in their area.

Resources

Tool Assessor

The Ecosystem Knowledge Network's [Tool Assessor](#) provides information about the wide range of tools that analyse the environment, e.g. in terms of ecosystem services, natural capital and green infrastructure. It's intended to provide a guide to what tools are available, what their strengths and weaknesses are, how they work, and help you decide which one(s) are most appropriate for your needs. Two new tools have just been added: ORVal, which assesses and values visits to green space, and the TESSA toolkit, which assesses ecosystem services at individual sites.

30 Days Wild

This June, take the challenge and do one wild thing every day. Why? Because it's [30 Days Wild!](#) The Wildlife Trusts are giving away free packs of goodies to help you plan your wild month, plus lots of ideas to inspire you (and the people you work with) to stay wild all throughout June (and beyond!). Join hundreds of thousands of people taking part in 30 Days Wild and doing something a little bit wild every day: that's 30 Days of fun, exciting and simple [Random Acts of Wildness](#). It's easy!

Green building guides

The UK Green Building Council (UKGBC) has launched a new resource that aim to help developers and local authorities (and those campaigning to persuade them!) [boost housing sustainability standards](#) through policy. Meanwhile, Berkeley Homes have created a design guide called The Nine Concepts, to help them achieve their commitment to a [net gain in biodiversity on all new developments](#). It contains ideas on how to retain and create the right habitats for plants and animals and encourages ecologists, landscape architects and local wildlife trusts to work together and make it happen.

Keep it Local

Localities have produced a set of resources to help [harness the power of community organisations](#) and help councils to commission them to provide local services, simultaneously creating better, more responsive services, saving money and building a fairer, more resilient local economy where every community thrives.

Consultations

National Planning Policy Framework

Make sure you get your response to the [revised NPPF](#) in by the deadline of 10th May. CPRE has produced a [2-page briefing](#) on key elements of the proposed changes and their asks from the revisions. Andy Boddington has produced a more detailed [summary of the key changes and their implications](#). The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) has produced [a highly critical briefing](#). The Planner points out some key [changes to legal definitions](#) that might look small, but could have major effects.

Food and farming

There's also still time to respond to the Government's consultation on [farming policy post-Brexit](#), one of the most significant sets of environmental decisions to be taken in our lifetimes, before the deadline of 8th May. [The Wildlife Trusts](#) have prioritised a set of asks and actions to help people respond, [Friends of the Earth](#) make the case for pesticide reduction being a central policy, while [CPRE](#) provides the case for landscape and the [RSPCA](#) for animal welfare.

Affordable rural housing

The IPPR have launched a [call for evidence](#) to help them develop a series of policy solutions aimed at tackling the shortage of affordable homes in rural areas. They are particularly interested in policy solutions specific to rural areas rather than system-wide reforms.

Raynsford Review Regional Events

Over the past 10 months, the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) has been progressing the [Raynsford Review of Planning](#). The interim report, which will be launched on Tuesday 15 May, aims to promote debate about the future of the planning system in England. The TCPA are running a series of events to discuss the interim report and feed in to the final output of the review, including two in the north and one in the Midlands: 25 May, 1-3pm, Birmingham City Council; 4 June, 1-3pm, Leeds City Council; 14 June, 1-3pm, Gateshead City Council. To attend, email raynsfordreview@tcpa.org.uk, stating the event you wish to attend, your name, role and organisation.

Funding

Historic rural buildings in National Parks

The [Historic Building Restoration Grant](#) is being piloted in Dartmoor, Lake District, Northumberland, Peak District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks, with £2 million of funding available. The aim of the scheme is to help save the iconic historic farm buildings in the English National Parks from falling out of use. Owners of these buildings can apply for a grant offering 80% towards the cost of restoration. The scheme is open for applications until 31 January 2019 and, once approved, agreement holders will have two years to complete the works.

Call for volunteers

Branch Chair, CPRE Cheshire

CPRE Cheshire are looking for someone with a keen interest in the environment and with leadership, management, organisational development and communication skills to lead and inspire their volunteers and staff. As [Branch Chair](#), you would take overall responsibility, alongside the management committee, for directing the activities of the branch, supported by CPRE national office and the dedicated branch team.

Citizen Scientists Needed!

The UK Pollinator Monitoring Scheme (PoMS) is looking for volunteers to collect data on pollinating insects, to help inform their conservation. There are two ways to get involved. Anyone can carry out a 10-minute Flower-Insect Timed Count between April and September, at any location where there are flowers and insects. A full survey guide is provided. A smaller group of volunteers is also needed to help with the systematic surveying of random sites across England, Scotland and Wales. This involves 'adopting' a 1km survey square, meeting on site with a PoMS team member, and visiting the square on three further occasions during summer to collect insects with water-filled pan traps. Visit the [website](#) for more details, including short videos introducing the two PoMS surveys. You can follow the work on Twitter @PoMScheme. If you would like to volunteer please email poms@ceh.ac.uk.

To subscribe or contribute

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