

# ● GREEN BULLET

21<sup>st</sup> December 2021

**The Green Bullet connects and supports networks of voluntary, community and public sector organisations across a wide range of environmental and related issues**, in North West England and beyond, originally produced by North West Environment Link (NWEL).

NWEL was a partnership of environmental NGOs established to respond jointly to regional environmental challenges and opportunities. NWEL was wound down after regional governance arrangements ended, and remaining funds supported the continued production of this bulletin. More recently CPRE North West has supported its production and retained the same aim.

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 [VSNW](#), the regional voluntary and community sector network.

## CONTENTS

- **Campaigns** – 12 days wild, outdoors for all, public access, British farmers, Cambo
- **Information update** – Brexit & beyond, climate change & energy, planning, transport, nature & landscapes
- **Publications** – Marine carbon
- **Events** – Urban environments, nature connectedness & health, place-making & nature
- **Resources** – Climate engagement for local authorities, green infrastructure, green finance, climate risk indicators, Transition Together
- **Consultations** – Fossil fuel licensing, illegal deforestation & supply chains, economics & environmental sustainability, trade, climate & environment, Road Investment Strategy 3
- **Funding** – Cumbria Community Climate Grants, Gordon Frazier Charitable Trust

## Campaigns

### 12 Days Wild

[12 Days Wild](#) is the Wildlife Trusts' mini Christmas challenge, encouraging you to do one wild thing a day from the 25th December to the 5th January. In those weird days between Christmas and New Year, winter wildlife is just waiting to be explored! Your wild acts could be little things to help nature - like recycling your Christmas tree or feeding the birds – or ways to connect to the natural world, like walking off your Christmas dinner in the woods or admiring the beauty of a winter sunset. You can sign up now to receive lots of inspiration for wild, wintery activities!

### Outdoors for all

Amira, founder of Wanderlust Women, is creating a movement. She wants all women, from all backgrounds, to access the countryside and feel confident about doing so. CPRE spoke to her about her walking group and her plans for the future as part of their campaign to [ensure that the countryside is, and feels, open and welcoming to everyone](#).

### **Is public access a public good?**

The government are replacing EU CAP farm subsidies with a system to pay farmer 'public money for public goods' (the Environmental Land Management Scheme). However, despite previous ministerial promises, the latest update on this scheme does not include public access as a public good, and does not deliver on promises to use the scheme to help connect people to the natural world. The Ramblers are campaigning to ensure that [public access to the countryside is counted as an important public good](#) and are asking people to write to their MPs to reinforce the message.

### **Back British Farmers**

The [Back British Farmers](#) campaign is arguing for the UK public sector (including schools, Hospitals and the military) to spend more of its £2billion annual catering budget on locally-sourced, high quality, high-welfare British produce. Sustain is asking people to email their MPs in support of the campaign.

### **Cambo oil field**

Plans to licence drilling in the Cambo oil field [have been paused](#). Just a week after Shell pulled out, the firm behind the new oil field, Siccar Point Energy, have put the project on hold. Greenpeace are asking people to [ask their MPs to put pressure on the government to ditch all plans for new oil and gas](#) in the North Sea and make sure there is a just transition for workers from the oil and gas industry into renewable energy.

### **Information update**

#### **Brexit and beyond**

- Now that the [Environment Act](#) has become law, the real work starts! Consultation will begin in spring 2022 on the legally-binding environmental targets that the Act requires to be set, covering air quality, water, biodiversity, resource efficiency and species abundance. John Lawton sets out why these should include a [target to improve the condition of SSSIs](#).
- Defra have provided more details about how the [Sustainable Farming Initiative](#) will work in 2022, the first year in which it will be rolled out. Sustain provide a [briefing on the key points](#) and another on [what's still missing](#) from the scheme. The SFI is the entry-level tier of 'public payments for public goods' that will be replace CAP farm subsidies, and which are intended to make UK farming for environmentally sound. The full scheme will be rolled out in 2024. However, concerns are being raised that the [SFI sets a low bar and lacks ambition](#), and that [public access to nature is not adequately recognized as a public good](#). In a major victory, the Government has confirmed that farmers will receive payments for [improving and conserving soils](#) and grasslands, but is facing criticism from both green groups and farmers who argue that it does not pay enough or have a broad enough remit.
- The UK and Australia have [finalised the text for their post-Brexit trade deal](#), with green groups and trade bodies once again sounding the alarm about the implications for environmental and animal welfare standards and British farmers. A recent investigation connected Australian beef to [deforestation and the destruction of endangered species' habitats](#).
- The European Commission has unveiled a comprehensive package of legislation designed to [align its gas, buildings and transport sectors](#) with the EU's 2050 net-zero target.

#### **Climate change & energy**

- As part of its renewable energy auction scheme, the UK Government has pledged to invest [£20 million a year in tidal stream electricity](#). It said the investment starts a "new chapter" for the tidal industry and will create jobs across the UK. The ring-fenced money will be allocated

as part of the fourth round of the Contracts for Difference Scheme, which is due to open in December. It is hoped that the money will enable the marine energy sector to develop its technologies and lower costs.

- The International Energy Agency (IEA) has published a new analysis revealing that coal power generation did not decrease as much as anticipated in 2020, amid Covid-19, and is rebounding rapidly. In 2021, [global coal power generation is on course to increase by 9% to an all-time high](#). Demand for electricity has outstripped the growth in low carbon sources, the IEA also said. Director Fatih Birol warned that the record is “a worrying sign of how far off track the world is in its efforts to put emissions into decline towards net zero”.
- The government has made its [second cut to the EV grant scheme this year](#), cutting the level of its Plug-in Car Grant by £1,000 per person and also shortening the list of eligible vehicles
- Business and energy secretary Kwasi Kwarteng has approved plans for a new 1.8 gigawatt wind farm off the Norfolk coast against the advice of the planning inspectors examining the project. In [a letter confirming the decision](#) on the Norfolk Boreas wind farm, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy said the “urgent need” to decarbonise the electricity supply outweighed its “substantial” negative impacts.
- The UK Government has opened a funding competition for companies developing direct air capture (DAC) technologies and other greenhouse gas removal systems to [help deliver the carbon capture and storage requirements](#) that UK, and most international targets, rely so heavily on.
- Think-tank Policy Connect, supported by a cross-party group of MPs, is calling on the UK Government to [apply net-zero 'stress tests' to all major policy decisions](#) and to create a net-zero delivery authority to help turn long-term climate goals into joined-up action. Across heating, power, transport and industry, the report outlines key recommendations for government on how to create the governance, skills and standards, public engagement and business models required by the UK's target.
- [The CBI has sent a letter to Prime Minister Boris Johnson](#) and Chancellor Rishi Sunak, in collaboration with the Trades Union Congress, the UK Corporate Leaders Group, WWF UK, Green Alliance and E3G. The CBI represents around 1,500 member businesses and more than 188,000 non-member organisations. The letter recommends that the Government reviews how it implements green policies and also re-assesses remaining policy gaps, expressing concern that policies that support climate action are not being implemented rapidly enough or in a manner that is joined-up across Government departments. It urges more involvement from the Treasury, Foreign office and the Prime Minister's Office in particular.
- The Government has outlined plans to introduce [a climate stress test framework](#) which future domestic oil and gas extraction projects would need to meet in order to be licensed. It includes six potential climate conditions for projects, including whether the developer of a project has met its commitments to reduce emissions; whether the sector as a whole has met its commitments to reduce emissions; the UK's position in regards to oil and gas imports; consideration of indirect emissions from the project and consideration of the ‘global production gap’ (the global need to reduce fossil fuel production if the Paris Agreement commitments are to be delivered). However, it has not set an end date for licensing new fossil fuel extraction.

## Planning

- Planning Bill? Maybe. One day. Levelling Up white paper? Soon. Probably.
- According to Michael Gove, the government is seeking to [change the way local housing need is assessed](#) to “achieve a fairer and more equitable distribution of need across the country”. But still nothing more than rumours on what that might mean.

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- A coalition of planning and environmental groups has urged the housing secretary to immediately issue a ministerial statement [requiring all planning applications and strategies to be consistent with the government's climate change commitments](#)
- New polling reveals that [two-thirds of people want planning rules to be linked to carbon emission targets](#).
- A new report from the County Councils Network is calling on Michael Gove to use the reformed planning reforms to [re-introduce a strategic planning model](#) to align housebuilding and infrastructure in county areas, arguing that there has “never been a better time” to reintroduce strategic planning back into the system, as county infrastructure is subject to intense pressure from excessive housing numbers.
- The latest government figures show that a total of 363 planning applications, including plans for 2,227 homes, were permitted between 2016/17 and 2020/21 [against sustained Environment Agency objections on flood risk](#) grounds.
- The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has made a second [£11 million allocation from the £75 Brownfield Land Release Fund](#), including to unlock brownfield sites in Barrow, Chorley, Warrington, Pendle and Blackpool. Meanwhile, the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority has approved [£3.15 million from its Brownfield Land Fund](#) to unlock two brownfield sites in Southport and Bootle.
- According to Lord Deben, the chair of the Climate Change Committee (CCC), there is [nothing in the planning system to enable the promotion of net zero](#), which needs rapid change so that no planning decisions, however small, can be made “without first considering its effect on the climate”.

### Transport

- UK efforts to cut transport emissions by switching to electric vehicles (EVs) won't be enough to hit mid-term climate targets, with [new research from the Green Alliance thinktank](#) calling for policies to be introduced to incentivise an uptake in non-car modes of transport. It notes that the UK Government has implemented some welcome policies in an attempt to decarbonise the transport sector, but that a more holistic approach that encompasses different modes of transport, like cycling, walking and public transport is required.
- Transport for the North has published its [Transport Decarbonisation Strategy](#), following consultation earlier this year. It brings together the tools, capability and evidence of TfN and their partners across the North to help shape our pathway to near net zero emissions by 2045.
- Recently permitted housing schemes are twice as accessible by car than by public transport. Access to key amenities from recently consented housing developments is twice as fast by car than it is by public transport, according to a report from the Royal Town Planning Institute. The research, the latest in the RTPI's [Location of Development](#) series, was conducted using data provided by public spending watchdog the National Audit Office (NAO), the Department of Transport and LandTech.
- Fake news was circulating this month with the headlines about [a report](#) appearing to say that London is facing a surge in congestion on account of cycle lanes. But a [closer look at the research](#) showed that the report itself doesn't actually say that, that congestion has actually fallen, that the 'most congested' roads it lists do not have cycle lanes, and that the entity behind the report and the more incendiary media quotes is part-owned by Porsche.

### Woods & landscapes

- The Government published the final report of the Glover review into protected landscapes back over 2 years ago. The Campaign for National Parks sets out [the most important things that need to happen](#) to implement the review's recommendations, and why they need to be started now.

- A [new coastal community forest will be created in Cumbria](#) to help bring people closer to nature. The aim is to create a minimum of 5,000 hectares of new woodland along a 56 mile stretch of the western coast of Cumbria over the next 25 years. The proposed area of Cumbria where the forest will be planted has high levels of economic and social deprivation and woodland cover below the national average.
- Visits to the UK's woodlands boosts mental health and is estimated to save £185 million in treatment costs annually, a report published by Forest Research has found. For England specifically, [woodlands save £141 million costs](#) associated with mental health illnesses, including visits to GPs, drug prescriptions, inpatient care, social services and the number of days lost due to mental health issues.

### **Publications**

#### **Marine carbon**

Three quarters of the UK lies beneath the sea, yet when it comes to climate policy our focus remains concentrated on the quarter of the UK above the shoreline. Carbon is captured in the UK ocean by habitats such as saltmarsh, seagrass, kelp forests and biogenic reefs, and vast amounts of carbon is stored in marine sediments. Recognition and protection of the sea's contribution to the fight against climate change has not kept pace with developments on land. However, [a new report](#) by WWF, for the first time, maps and quantifies the English North Sea's carbon assets, following in the footsteps of similar studies carried out in Scottish waters. The report reveals that in just the top 10cm of sediment, the study area contains roughly the same carbon as ¼ of all the UK's forests and woodlands. But crucially, marine sediments are likely to reach hundreds, if not thousands of meters in depth – meaning we are currently only measuring the tip of the iceberg.

### **Events**

#### **Linking the Quality of Urban Environments with Nature Connectedness and Health**

Lancaster and Liverpool Universities are launching an exciting new project to bring together researchers, practitioners and policy-makers with an interest in urban environments, nature connectedness and health. The QUENCH network will develop our understanding of the links between the quality of urban ecosystems, the ways in which people connect to nature, and the resultant health benefits. It aims to build our capacity to mobilise urban nature to reduce health inequalities and generate wider environmental benefits. A series of network-building workshops will run in February-March 2022 to foster connections between different communities of practice, share knowledge, and help develop long-term collaborations. Participants will also co-design their own research projects to explore the links between urban environments, nature connectedness, and health. Five of these projects will be funded by the network and delivered in April-September 2022. More details are available [on the QUENCH website](#), where you can [sign up to their mailing list](#) to hear more about the project as it progresses, or [apply for a place on the network building and project funding workshops](#) (deadline January 17<sup>th</sup>). The project is supported by the Natural Environment Research Council's Healthy Environment programme.

#### **Place-making & nature**

The 25 Year Environment Plan encourages local organisations involved in the stewardship of land, water and nature in England to adopt a natural capital approach. Join these webinars to gain insight into local initiatives that have been working to create a common understanding of place through natural capital evidence. Across the two events, you will hear from various examples of how natural capital evidence has informed decision-making and underpinned new partnerships. Register now for [Session 1](#) (including Liverpool City Region) & [Session](#)

2 (including the Tees Valley). The events will also include an introduction to the Natural Capital Evidence Handbook, published earlier this year.

### **Resources**

#### **Climate engagement programme for local authorities**

Applications are open for local authorities in England to join Involve's new [Local Climate Engagement \(LCE\) programme](#). LCE will enable local authorities and partnerships to plan, commission and deliver high quality public engagement in their climate decision-making, in a way that benefits both them and their local population. Deadline for expressions of interest: 24 January.

#### **Green Infrastructure**

- The [Green Infrastructure Framework](#) is a commitment in the UK Government's 25 Year Environment Plan. It will help local planning authorities and developers meet requirements in the National Planning Policy Framework to consider Green Infrastructure in local plans and in new development. The Framework is also being developed to enable parks and green space managers, as well as local communities, to plan for the creation or improvement of natural outdoor spaces. The launch of the full Green Infrastructure Framework is planned for 2022.
- Natural England and Defra have launched a new online [Green Infrastructure Mapping Tool](#) for England. It has been designed to support Local Planning Authorities in incorporating Green Infrastructure into local plans. It brings together data from over 40 individual environmental and socio-economic datasets, to create an evidence resource about green infrastructure in England.

#### **Green Finance**

A new hub to increase private investment in nature restoration, nature-based solutions and nature-positive outcomes in and for the UK has been launched. The [GFI Hive](#) works with the finance sector, government, academia, environmental NGOs and land managers to identify and unlock barriers to this mission, acts as a knowledge hub to increase shared learning, best practices and investment appetite, and supports the work of stakeholders with similar aims, including identifying private investment opportunities.

#### **Climate risk indicators**

The [UK Climate Risk Indicators project website](#) allows users to see how extreme temperatures, droughts, river floods and wildfire will affect risks in their local area and at the national scale. The estimates are available for different time periods up to the end of the century and for different assumptions about how greenhouse gas emissions change. They are presented using accessible maps and graphs.

#### **Transition Together**

[Transition Together](#) supports the Transition movement across Britain to develop and grow. They do this through helping groups to connect and learn from one another, amplifying inspiring stories, giving out seed funding grants and running workshops and events. They will also support the emergence of a democratically representative structure that can coordinate the movement across England and Wales. They are part of the [CTRLShift Coalition](#) and work with other community organisations across Britain to build community resilience and move towards a just transition.

## **Consultations**

### **New fossil fuel licensing**

The Government is consulting on plans to introduce [a climate stress test framework](#) which future domestic oil and gas extraction projects would need to meet in order to be licensed. It includes six potential climate conditions for projects, including whether the developer of a project has met its commitments to reduce emissions; whether the sector as a whole has met its commitments to reduce emissions; the UK's position in regards to oil and gas imports; consideration of indirect emissions from the project and consideration of the 'global production gap' (the global need to reduce fossil fuel production if the Paris Agreement commitments are to be delivered). However, it does not set an end date for licensing new fossil fuel extraction, and a substantial body of research suggests that most fossil fuels need to stay in the ground in order to meet the Paris targets. Deadline: 28 February 2022

### **Illegal deforestation and UK supply chains**

Defra are consulting on the implementation of the new Environment Act provisions to tackle the use of illegally-produced 'forest risk' commodities in UK supply chains. The Environment Act will make it illegal for large businesses in the UK to use forest risk commodities produced on land illegally occupied or used. Secondary legislation is needed to implement these Environment Act provisions, and they are seeking views to inform the design of this legislation and accompanying guidance. Deadline 11 March 2022.

### **Aligning economic goals and environmental sustainability**

The Environmental Audit Committee has [opened an inquiry](#) into how HM Treasury could incorporate environmental sustainability into its leading measures of the UK's economic success. The current primary measure - GDP growth - is often presented as a proxy for economic prosperity. However, GDP only measures current flows of investment and consumption, and does not measure stocks of human or natural capital, or distinguish between good spending (eg planting trees) and bad spending (eg the economic activity generated by a motorway pile-up).

### **Trade, climate and environment**

The International Trade committee have launched an inquiry into [the extent to which the Government's approach to trade reflects its environmental and climate ambitions](#). Deadline 22 February 2022. The inquiry will examine:

- how the Government's approach to trade, including free trade agreements, supports its wider environmental goals;
- the Government's approach to engagement with international forums to help create framework for an environmental trade policy;
- the extent to which the Department for International Trade and UK Export Finance consider the Government's wider environment and climate change goals in their work and decision-making; and
- measures through which the Government can support and develop trade in green technologies and environmentally-friendly goods and services.

### **Road Investment Strategy**

The government has published a new document setting out how they intend to prepare the [Third Road Investment Strategy](#) (RSI3) and explaining how stakeholders can get involved. The current strategy, RIS2, is amounts to a commitment to spend £37bn inducing traffic and increasing carbon emissions. RIS3 is due after 2025 and is likely to risk more environmentally damaging new roads being built, as well as drawing funding away from public transport and

other sustainable methods of travel. “Interested stakeholders are invited to contribute to this process and this document explains how to get involved” – and so we should!

### **Funding**

#### **Cumbria Community Climate Grants**

CAfS has launched its Community Climate Grants, funded by the National Lottery as part of the Zero Carbon Cumbria project. Applications are now open for local groups to gain funding of up to £10,000 to support the creation of [activities that will help take Cumbria towards net zero carbon](#).

#### **Gordon Frazier Charitable Trust**

Grants are available for charities in Great Britain. The Trustees have complete discretion as to the type of charitable work supported, however the Trust has focussed on supporting projects relating to young people, people with disabilities, the environment and the arts over the last few years. Funding is at the discretion of the Trustees. Grants tend to range from £500 to £2,500. [Applications may be submitted at any time](#) and will be considered quarterly in January, April, July and October.

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