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charity

## ● GREEN BULLET

18<sup>th</sup> December 2019

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

- [Greta Thunberg is Time's person of the year](#), and that has to be a good thing. Meanwhile...
- To depressingly little surprise, the [25<sup>th</sup> COP climate change talks](#) in Madrid have ended in “disappointment” and a failure to make significant progress: “a far cry from what the science tells us is needed”, although the EU did unveil 50 sweeping plans to [enable it to reach net-zero emissions by 2050](#), under its Green Deal programme and following its [continent-wide declaration of climate emergency](#). [Observers, indigenous people and campaigners were](#)

[barred](#) following a protest outside the talks. Let's see if we can do better in [Glasgow next year!](#)

- Shipping companies are exempt from the Paris Agreement. A shipping company has for the first time entered the top ten emitting EU companies, showing that [this loophole needs closing](#).
- A new report for the UN Principles for Responsible Investment suggests that [highly polluting companies may see 43% wiped from their value](#), with the most sustainable outfits gaining 33%... although [UK banks have provided almost £25 billion support just to the coal industry](#) since the Paris Agreement was signed in late 2015, so that may not ring quite true
- The [Church of England](#)'s Environmental Advisory Group has called for all parts of the Church to recognise the climate crisis and step up its action to safeguard the world we live in. Staff have started work on projects such as energy audits, developing a way to measure the carbon footprint of churches, and preparing for a major Lent campaign on climate, along with a motion to the general Synod to debate and cement a revised carbon target for the Church.
- [Greater Manchester has been ranked as one of the top global regions](#) at taking action on climate change, named on the Carbon Disclosure Project's 'A List'. Only 43 cities worldwide scored the highest rating, out of more than 8,400 companies and 920 cities, states and regions that disclosed their data. Meanwhile, up to [60,000 residential and commercial buildings in Greater Manchester](#) need retrofitting every year, for the city to reach its target of becoming zero carbon by 2038.
- UK thinktank IPPR has called for the UK to [provide £20bn to a UN climate fund to account for the nation's "fair share" of ecological degradation](#) and climate change speed-up. To date, just £4.3bn has been committed globally to the fund with £2.5bn spent on projects under implementation. G20 nations had been expected to mobilise more than £100bn in climate funds for developing nations, but have [since quietly scaled back pledges](#).
- [Rising sea levels, storms and flooding](#) driven by climate change has placed more than £12bn of the UK's economy at risk, according to new findings from WWF, which warns that almost 2.5 million homes in the UK will be at risk of flooding by 2050.

### **Air quality**

- Global Action Plan have set out, based on extensive public surveying, [what 'the people' want from 'the People's Government' in terms of tackling air pollution](#)
- While new research shows that reducing air pollution has [immediate significant health benefits](#)

### **Plastic pollution**

Business signatories to WRAP's [UK Plastics Pact](#) are set to distribute one billion fewer pieces of "problematic" and unnecessary single-use plastic in 2020 than they did in 2018, according to WRAP's first annual report on the Pact, which publicly reveals, for the first time, baseline data regarding how much plastic signatory companies were putting onto the market before the Pact's inception in spring 2018. The report also tracks member progress against the Pact's three other 2025 targets: making all plastic packaging 100% reusable, recyclable or compostable; achieving recycling and composting rates of 70% or more for packaging, and including 30% recycled content across all packaging.

### **Green Care Code**

Nature Connectedness expert Miles Richardson is calling for a [Green Care Code](#) to help people notice nature, to prompt wellbeing improvements and pro-nature behaviours, which could

connect to other campaigns like the Wildlife Trusts' [30 Days Wild](#) or the National Trust's [walking in nature](#).

### **Information update**

#### **Brexit and beyond**

- A large Tory majority seems to have put paid to debates of 'Brexit – whether?' and leaves only the easy and straightforward question of 'Brexit – what and how?'. The [six key environmental questions about our future](#) after Brexit remain unanswered. Initial response from [environmental NGOs](#) and the [green business community](#) have been [mixed](#) – while the Tory's manifesto was [by far the least environmentally-friendly of any party](#), it was still nevertheless [greener than previous manifestos](#) from most major parties.
- Edie suggest [four top environmental priorities](#) for the incoming Government. Joint [evidence from Greener UK and Wildlife and Countryside Link](#) to the EFRA committee inquiry into the draft Environment Bill provide a more robust and thorough illustration of what the new Government needs to be doing.
- In his [victory speech outside 10 Downing Street](#) on 13 December, Boris Johnson promised "colossal new investments in infrastructure, in science, using our incredible technological advantages to make this country the cleanest, greenest on Earth with the most far-reaching environmental programme". However, his party have been promising, in government, to be the greenest Government ever for nine years, and this has very markedly not been the case. There are, however, [manifesto pledges](#) around carbon capture, usage and storage (CCUS); nuclear fusion; tree planting; energy efficiency; domestic plastics recycling infrastructure and measures incentivising businesses to use recycled materials. Just don't mention the [hundreds of thousands of pounds donated by the fossil fuel industry](#), which will surely not sway policy development in any way, or Boris' [refusal to attend a leaders' debate on climate change](#).
- Governmental reorganisations are expected to include the [reinstatement of a separate department for energy and climate change](#), and new, very powerful, economic development department.
- The UK has meekly accepted the [US insistence that future trade talks should not, in any way, reference climate change](#). Climate change is off the table. So, looking very hopeful for all other environmental issues, now that small distraction has been ruled unmentionable.

#### **Energy**

- [Wind produced more than 40% of UK electricity](#) for this first time on 8 December.
- The [UK's largest ever subsidy-free solar farm](#), a 40MW plant on the Bedfordshire / Cambridgeshire border, has come online
- The number of planning [applications for battery storage projects](#) in the UK continues to increase 'rapidly' a companies anticipate deep changes to the way the grid will operate in future
- The UK Government has finally released its [secret report on the shale gas industry](#), although it remains heavily redacted.
- A number of [core staff have quit Cuadrilla](#), compounding their problems with the new moratorium on fracking, as their permit for operations at Preston New Road expired.

#### **Planning**

- Commentators are suggesting that the Tory victory is likely to result in yet more 'simplification' and deregulation of the planning system, tipping the balance of power further

towards speculative developers and away from local councils and communities ([Planning Resource](#), password protected)

- However, if they stick to their manifesto pledges on planning, they will:
  - give councils powers to use developer contributions to discount new homes for "local people" by a third "in perpetuity".
  - provide infrastructure in new developments (roads, schools, etc) before any housing is occupied
  - give every community the power to "decide on its own design standards for new development, allowing residents a greater say on the style and design of development in their area, with local councils encouraged to build more beautiful architecture".
  - build at least a million more homes, of all tenures, over the next five years
  - "protect and enhance the green belt", and "continue to prioritise brownfield development"
  - invest in decarbonisation schemes, flood defences, electric vehicle infrastructure, low energy homes, trees and the UK's first "carbon capture storage cluster" by the mid 2020s.

So – watch this space and hold them to account!

- Existing [registrations of town and village greens on publicly-owned land could be removed](#) (as well as new applications rejected) where such registrations conflict with the site's "statutory purposes" following an important [Supreme Court ruling](#) this month
- Whether or not a proposed development is actually capable of being delivered [will not normally be a material consideration](#) for the purposes of granting planning permission, the High Court in England has ruled.
- The Centre for Cities is calling for 26,000 acres of [Green Belt around train stations in Greater Manchester](#) to be released for housing
- The long-disputed [Parkside site in St Helens](#) has had permission given by the council for a 1 million sq ft business park, but the final decision will rest with the Secretary of State
- Highways England is due to [update the entire Design Manual for Roads and Bridges](#) (DMRB) by March 2020, and has announced that it has already updated 40% of the document. The update aims to introduce a consistent and concise format, as well as improve the usability, structure and content of the existing DMRB.
- Plans for the [49 government-designated garden towns and villages](#) add up to more than 400,000 homes. However, almost a third have no formal planning status at all (ie allocation in an adopted or emerging local plan or planning permission), and more than a third are allocated in draft plans that still face objection.
- Planning Resource (password protected) predicts that, based on [the Government's latest figures](#), 112 councils will face sanctions in the next Housing Delivery Test round in November 2020: 8 would have the presumption in favour of development applied, 77 would have to add a 20% buffer to their 5 year housing land supply, and 27 would have to produce an action plan setting out how they would increase the numbers of houses built. More councils will be caught each year as the Test becomes more stringent, opening up more and more land to speculative development.

## Transport

- The Greater Manchester Combined Authority has put forward plans for an additional 25 schemes to [improve walking and cycling routes across the City Region](#), bringing the total number of projects to 82, at a cost of £493m. According to the GMCA, the projects identified

so far make up a third of the overall Bee Network plan, which is set to reach £1.5bn of investment.

- Transport emissions have doubled in the last 40 years and continue to rise – research shows that [expanding railways](#) remains an effective way to cut them back

### **Waste & recycling**

- [Recycling for Greater Manchester](#) have published some tips for recycling (and how to not contaminate recycling loads!) for this festive season.

### **Publications**

#### **State of the environment 2020**

Europe's environment is 'at a tipping point' and faces environmental challenges "of unprecedented scale and urgency," according to a [comprehensive overview of air, land and water ecosystems](#) published by the European Environment Agency. Even though some progress was made in areas like air and water pollution, these are "not nearly enough" to meet the EU's long-term goals. Biodiversity and nature conservation "remains the biggest area of discouraging progress," the agency said, pointing the finger at intensive farming as the main culprit. Air and noise pollution are also causes for concern, with recent trends highlighting slowing progress in reducing greenhouse gases, industrial emissions, waste generation, improving energy efficiency and boosting the share of renewable energy. Worryingly, policy responses to those challenges "haven't really worked".

#### **State of the North 2019**

IPPR's latest [State of the North report](#) indicates that Britain is more regionally unequal – in terms of health, jobs, disposable income, and productivity - and with more centralised power and funding structures than any comparable developed country. Only countries such as Romania and South Korea are similarly divided. The authors advocate greater devolution of power and funding to Northern cities and regions to address the imbalance.

#### **Valuing parks and greenspace**

Fields in Trust conducted research to provide a robust economic valuation of parks and green spaces in the UK. [Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces](#) aims to establish a baseline for the value that parks and green spaces contribute to health and well-being. The research findings demonstrate that parks and green spaces across the UK provide people with over £34 billion of health and well-being benefits.

#### **Hill farming – less is more**

The RSPB, National Trust and The Wildlife Trusts have published a [new report, "Less is More"](#), about increasing the profitability and resilience of hill farming whilst [also improving environmental outcomes](#). It shows that focusing on margin over volume could help farmers weather formidable trading conditions and political uncertainty. The report's authors call on the future government to support hill farmers with business advice packages and to offer greater stability through payments which recognise their role as guardians of nature and the environment.

## Events

### **Nature-based solutions conference**

This conference brings together leading researchers from the social and natural sciences, engineering and economics with policymakers, civil society actors and business leaders to discuss the [potential of Nature-based Solutions](#) (NbS) to meet societal goals in a warming world. It will draw together the current state of the interdisciplinary evidence for the socioeconomic and ecological effectiveness of NbS, and explore the social, technical, ethical, ecological, governance and financial challenges around scaling them up. As well as highlighting avenues for further research, it aims to generate guidelines on the design and implementation of NbS, targeting decision-makers in business and government. Outcomes will be synthesised in policy briefs, a special issue, and made available to a wide audience through a creative outreach campaign.

### **Great Manchester - a people's spatial framework?**

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) is developing a spatial framework for the city's development based on highly specialised zones, for retail, commerce, warehousing and logistics, housing and amenity, the whole dependent on moving people around quickly via roads, motorways and public transport links, all assuming high levels of "economic growth". Opposition has focused on the housing models and on the erosion of green space, in the green belt and elsewhere. People know what they are against, but do they know what they could have instead? How would they plan for a different kind of city? [Steady State Manchester has organised a workshop](#) to discuss these issues on January 23, 6.30 – 8.30pm. It will build on their explorations of other models, including the "[retrofit garden city](#)", "[continuous productive urban landscapes](#)", "[rurban](#)" or "[urbal](#)" "[retrosuburbia](#)", and the "[20 minute neighbourhood](#)".

## Resources

### **Ecosystems Knowledge Network webinars**

Previously broadcast [Ecosystems Knowledge Network webinars](#) are available in an online library, covering a very wide range of topics around knowing, valuing, managing and protecting the natural environment.

### **Significance of heritage?**

Historic England Advice Note (HEAN) 12 - [Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets](#) - has been published. It offers guidance on how applicants might describe heritage significance to help decision makers assess the impact of proposals for change to heritage assets. Understanding the significance of heritage assets, in advance of developing proposals for their buildings and sites, enables owners and applicants to receive effective, consistent and timely decisions – and objectors to effectively resist inappropriate development. Historic England provide a range of other [Good Practice Advice notes and Historic England Advice Notes](#).

### **Greenspace for housing associations**

A new guide has been produced for [housing associations who want to enhance the quality of their existing green space for wellbeing and biodiversity](#). The guide uses examples from Wales and is set in a Welsh context but will be useful for housing associations and their partners UK-wide. It has been produced by Growing Green Spaces.

### **Creativity and climate change**

Adaptation Scotland provides advice and support to help Scotland be prepared and resilient to the effects of climate change. It recently hosted a webinar exploring types of [creative work that engage citizens with climate change and adaptation](#). The presentations are focused on facilitating public engagement, climate communication and forming creative collaborations

### **Water management and planning**

Recent heavy rainfall and subsequent flooding in parts of the UK heightens the importance of CIRIA's (the construction industry research organisation) recently published guidance entitled '[Delivering better water management through the planning system](#)'. It identifies the critical factors required for successful integrated water management. The guide reviews and showcases good planning policies necessary to deliver better environmental, social and economic outcomes.

### **Consultations**

#### **Liverpool City Region Spatial Development Strategy**

There's still time to comment in the first round of consultation on the [Liverpool City Region's high-level spatial development strategy](#) (SDS). The consultation is seeking views on the main policy issues in six areas - environment and climate change, housing and communities, town centres, transport and connectivity, inclusivity and infrastructure, giving you the opportunity to shape policy from the outset. After the current consultation, a draft of the SDS will be prepared, after which specific policies will be consulted on again. LCR hope to publish the final strategy within 2 years. Deadline: 14 January.

### **Vacancies**

#### **Natural England – Marine and Coastal Lead Adviser, Cumbria**

Natural England are seeking a [Marine & Coastal Lead Advisor](#) who will play an integral part in Cumbria's marine and coastal work. This is an exciting opportunity to work on a beautiful coastline that is highly designated for its conservation value. You will have a broad range of responsibilities from the Solway Firth on the border with Scotland down to Morecambe Bay in the south of the county. Deadline for applications: 10<sup>th</sup> January.

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