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charity

● GREEN BULLET

29th May 2020

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.

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Campaigns

Climate change

- Climate campaigners have launched a [judicial review challenge against the National Policy Statement \(NPS\) for Energy](#) and its support for future fossil fuel developments. They are seeking to force the government to review the policy in light of the UK's commitments to curb carbon emissions, such as its 2016 ratification of the Paris Agreement that requires signatories to make efforts to curb global warming.

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- A UK government survey of more than 1,800 UK citizens has found that [the public is largely unaware of the net-zero movement](#) and what that means for the UK, despite more than three-quarters of citizens being concerned about climate change.
- The [COP26 climate conference](#), to be hosted in Glasgow and seen as a crucial moment to deliver on the pledges necessary to achieve the Paris Agreement targets, will be postponed until November 2021
- Research suggesting that global GHG emissions may, for a period of months, drop between 5-17%, also highlights the [need to fundamentally restructure our economy](#) to tackle the climate crisis. The most likely scenarios suggest a drop in annual emissions of around 7-7%. This is the scale of reduction that we need to be making every single year to 2050 in order to meet Paris targets.
- New research also shows that unless emissions fall, areas of the planet home to one-third of humans will become [as hot as the Sahara within 50 years](#)

Trees

Greater Manchester has published a tree and woodland strategy, [All Our Trees](#), which quantifies the incredible value of the city region's 11.3 million trees demonstrating why we should protect them, and outlines where to plant more trees. Produced by charity City of Trees and endorsed by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), the strategy sets out clear objectives on how to maximise the benefits of trees and woods in relation to tackling carbon, air pollution and flooding.

Air pollution

- A leading scientist urges caution in drawing [connections between Covid-19 and air quality](#). However, the number of [preliminary studies](#) linking the people suffering most severely from the virus with the areas that have long suffered most from air pollution is mounting.
- The UKGBC considers [how housebuilding can help improve air quality](#).

Planning and Covid-19

Planning is adapting quickly to the requirements of lockdown. But in some cases local voices are being sidelined and [public access to the planning process is being undemocratically bypassed](#), risking long-term loss of oversight and poor decision-making. [CPRE is urging people to write to their MPs](#) to ensure that public participation in the planning system is not compromised by the current crisis.

Information update

Covid-19

- The EU has proposed a [€750 billion Covid-19 recovery package with a strong focus on environmental sustainability](#): 25% of the fund ringfenced for climate action and, crucially, a principle of 'do no harm', to avoid the 'feelgood fallacy' of most governmental action on the environment, i.e. doing 'good stuff' while continuing to do the 'bad stuff' that the good stuff is needed in response to. This includes a €40 billion '[just transition fund](#)' to support areas that are currently reliant of heavily polluting industries.
- Boris Johnson, Dominic Raab and Alok Sharma have all [called on other nations to ensure a green recovery](#), but have yet to commit the UK to a sustainability-driven recovery, despite clear advice and [concrete recommendations from the Committee on Climate Change](#) and a range of [academics and experts](#).

- The [North West Metro Mayors have also called for an economic rethink](#) to avoid returning to business as usual as we drive the economic recovery
- As it gears up to lend \$1 trillion to governments hit by the coronavirus pandemic, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is giving [guidance on using the cash to tackle climate change](#).
- The IPPR has set up a cross-party [Environmental Justice Commission](#), which has called on the UK Government to “go faster, further and fairer” to deliver a green recovery from the coronavirus pandemic, including £30bn to be spent on a climate-focused recovery and a £5bn national Just Transition Fund. The Commission has been set up to explore the net-zero transition in the UK. It is focused on how the transition could improve societal and environmental issues, such as the protection of nature and improving wellbeing for citizens.
- A coalition of global healthcare organisations, backed by more than 40 million healthcare professionals, the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Global Climate and Health Alliance and campaign group Every Breath Matters, have coordinated a written plea to governments to deliver [health-based and climate-focused economic recoveries](#) from the coronavirus pandemic.
- A new report from global analyst firm McKinsey has found that [recovery packages from the coronavirus pandemic will be decisive](#) in putting the world on course to meeting the Paris Agreement – or failing to. It calls for low-carbon technologies and solutions to be prioritized. A group of leading international businesses have also called on national governments to [prioritise a low-carbon recovery](#)...
- ...While separate reports show how [Big Oil](#) and [Big Tech](#), including some of the very same companies, are attempting to turn Covid-19 into a lucrative profiteering scheme.
- Major UK nature, science and conservation organisations are warning that the impact of the [coronavirus has dealt a significant blow to nature’s recovery](#) and their ability to provide natural solutions to climate change, while scientists warn that continuing to encroach into and destroy natural systems will [lead to worse zoonotic pandemics](#) in the future.

Brexit and beyond

- The [Agriculture Bill](#), which cleared the Commons on May 13th, is expected to become law within the next 60 days as the Government tries to rush it on to the statute book before the summer recess. It establishes that farmers may receive public money (made under the new Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme which will be rolled out nationally in late 2024) in connection with any one or more of the following purposes—
 - a) managing land or water in a way that protects or improves the environment;
 - b) supporting public access to and enjoyment of the countryside, farmland or woodland and better understanding of the environment;
 - c) managing land or water in a way that maintains, restores or enhances cultural or natural heritage;
 - d) managing land, water or livestock in a way that mitigates or adapts to climate change;
 - e) managing land or water in a way that prevents, reduces or protects from environmental hazards;
 - f) protecting or improving the health or welfare of livestock;
 - g) conserving native livestock, native equines or genetic resources relating to any such animal;
 - h) protecting or improving the health of plants;
 - i) conserving plants grown or used in carrying on an agricultural, horticultural or forestry activity, their wild relatives or genetic resources relating to any such plant;
 - j) protecting or improving the quality of soil.

- However, MPs backed the Government in [rejecting amendments to the Bill that would have protected UK farming](#)'s relatively high standards of animal welfare and environmental protection, meaning that the industry will be at risk of being undermined by cheap food products produced in ways that would be illegal in the UK.
- The committee scrutinizing the [Environment Bill](#), having been suspended due to Covid-19, is now due to report on June 25th.

Energy

- The charity Clientearth has begun its [challenge to the government's decision to approve Drax Power's plans](#) for a huge new gas plant in North Yorkshire, despite the Planning Inspectorate recommending that the project should not be granted a DCO because of climate change policy issues. The case is being dealt with at a remote videoconferencing hearing in the Planning Court.
- The UK Government has unveiled a £40m [Clean Growth Fund](#) to support start-up companies in the fields of low-carbon power, waste, transport and buildings, with hopes that funding could rise to £100m by 2021. It was launched with £20m of government investment matched by the same amount from charity fund manager CCLA.
- A new report by Renewable UK projects that [renewables could provide over 75% of the UK's power needs by 2050](#). This would entail the rapid development of renewable hydrogen and a huge increase in wind capacity.
- The Government has unveiled plans to roll out [6,000 new electric vehicle \(EV\) charging points](#) across A-roads and motorways by 2035, in order to spur the adoption of zero-carbon transport.
- The UK Government has outlined its intentions to [replace the Renewable Heat Incentive \(RHI\) with a new Clean Heat Grant](#) that will aim to help households and businesses decarbonise through technology and push the nation towards its net-zero target for 2050.
- A new report finds that, to nobody's surprise, recent announcements from European oil and gas giants such as Total, Shell and BP committing to net-zero [aren't actually aligned to the required, science-based cuts](#) to emissions needed to reach net-zero or the 1.5C target of the Paris Agreement.
- Britain's five gas networks companies have outlined plans for more than £900m of [zero-carbon energy infrastructure](#) and hydrogen deployment across the UK, subject to Government approval on funding.

Planning

- MHCLG has issued [updated guidance](#) to ensure that the planning system in England can 'play its full part' in the national and local economic recovery to come after the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. This includes encouragement to councils to [update Statements of Community Involvement](#) to ensure that public participation in planning is not unfairly limited. The [Planning Advisory Service's coronavirus resource page](#) on adapting to Covid-19 is regularly updated.
- A coalition of eight built environment organisations has called on the government to establish a dedicated body to oversee design quality in new development: a '[Design Unit for England](#)'. They claim that the UK is "systematically failing to delivery good quality urban design" and highlight a "once in a generation opportunity for the government to show real leadership and ambition to help turn the tide". Their manifesto aims to build on the work of the government's [Building Better Building Beautiful Commission](#), which [published its final report in January](#). In October last year, the government published [its first National Design Guide](#) which is intended to drive up the quality of the design of new buildings.

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- Housing secretary Robert Jenrick has called in [six planning applications for major industrial and logistics schemes](#) and associated infrastructure on green belt sites in Merseyside, Lancashire and Cheshire. A 92,900 square metre warehouse scheme at Parkside (and associated link roads), a 133,696 square metre warehouse development on green belt in Wigan and a 100,000 square metre industrial development in the Bolton green belt will all be considered at the same inquiry, while a 59,000 square metre distribution centre for logistics firm Eddie Stobart on green belt land in Warrington will be considered separately.
- Essential social distancing measures implemented to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 have highlighted the [critical importance of quality green spaces within housing developments](#), which EPR say should be prioritized in local plans.
- The North West Metro Mayors have suggested that [town centre regeneration plans may have to be substantially revised](#) following the Covid Crisis, with more focus on residential and less on retail.
- Homes England is conducting [research](#) into how [modern methods of construction](#) (MMC) can help meet housing targets and to encourage the uptake of MMC

Transport

- The Government has pledged to release [£250m to councils for the reallocation of road space to active travel 'within weeks'](#), backed by [statutory guidance](#) effective immediately, to support quickly-deliverable schemes like pop-up bike lanes, wider pavements, cycle and bus-only streets and cycle repair vouchers. However, councils need to start spending their indicative allocations within four weeks, and complete spending within eight weeks – so contact your local Transport Officers with ideas for specific, quick, easy schemes today! This is part of a wider £2 billion package to support active travel to help the country emerge from coronavirus crisis, requiring reallocation of road space for significantly increased numbers of cyclists and pedestrians. This comes from a previously announced £5 billion fund to increase active travel
- Liverpool are investing £2million in a [network of temporary cycle lanes](#) to help kickstart the city's recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic
- Transport secretary Grant Shapps has announced [10 schemes that will benefit from plans to reverse the rail cuts made in the 1960s](#) as part of the now infamous Beeching report
- Highways England has revealed its preferred options for a [series of upgrades to the A66](#), including proposals for five new bypasses and dualling the single carriageway sections.
- Grant Shapps has allocated £283m to bus and light rail services across the country, including [funding for Manchester's Metrolink](#) until the end of July. However, [Merseyrail has not been funded](#) and is still in discussions with the Government
- The Northern Powerhouse Partnership has called for [spending on roads and railways](#) to help the North out of the Covid recession,

Biodiversity

- While some have argued that nature is tagging a comeback during the lockdown, scientists point to the reasons why the pandemic could ultimately be [devastating for global biodiversity](#)
- The [EU has published its biodiversity strategy to 2030](#), with a focus on benefits to society, a large-scale restoration plan and a commitment to protect 30% of its land and sea territories. [Campaigners](#) have tentatively welcomed it, but with the caveat that its far-reaching ambition needs to be implemented and not just remain on paper
- The Wildlife Trusts have published a [5-year review of their 30 Days Wild campaign](#), using data from over 1,000 people who have taken part since 2015, while a [national study by](#)

[Essex University](#) also showed that volunteering with your local Wildlife Trust for just six weeks improved 95% of people's mental health. [30 Days Wild](#) is still doable, even under the lockdown!

Publications

What's the Plan?

New research by CPRE raises questions about the government's target for all councils to have an up-to-date local plan in place by 2023, after it found just a third of English councils have one. [What's The Plan?](#) assesses local plans across England and challenges whether or not the system is "genuinely plan-led". It highlights that the majority of local planning authorities do have an adopted local plan, but 10 per cent do not, and most of them are relying on older policies from plans developed before 2004. Only 40 per cent of local plans, however, are less than five years old, or have been updated or reviewed in the past five years. And only 30 per cent of local plans can be considered up to date on the basis of being able to demonstrate sufficient land for five years' housing development. Over 80 per cent of local planning authorities will need to review an existing plan – or adopt a new one – to meet the government's proposed 2023 deadline. The report clearly disputes claims by ministers that England's planning system is plan-led, and makes a number of recommendations to help move to a genuinely plan-led system.

The Tragedy of Growth

A new report by Positive Money, [The Tragedy of Growth](#), calls for The Office for National Statistics (ONS) to stop publishing gross domestic product (GDP) figures and instead place more emphasis on a wider basket of social and environmental indicators to help save lives and the environment. It goes beyond calls for 'green growth', showing that the commonly assumed benefits of higher GDP, such as poverty alleviation and increased quality of life, are also unfounded. It argues that a dashboard of wellbeing indicators, published on a quarterly basis, should be used to target the Treasury's macroeconomic framework and budgeting process, instead of GDP.

Climate change adaptation manual

Effective climate change adaptation requires local insight to be combined with other forms of knowledge and an understanding of practical options for change. This [Adaptation Manual](#) is a resource to support decision-making by bringing together recent science, experience and case studies. It is intended to be an accessible entry point to a range of available resources and tools.

Resilient Infrastructure

The National Infrastructure Commission has published a new report urging the UK Government to set "clear resilience standards" that enables energy and water networks, transport, essential services and all infrastructure sectors to [stress test and plan against hidden climate challenges](#) on the horizon. It claims that it "offers the tools to face uncomfortable truths, value resilience properly, test for vulnerabilities and drive adaptation before it is too late."

National Natural Capital Atlas

The [Natural Capital Atlas](#) uses the best available data to map out Natural England's Natural Capital Indicators to show the quantity, quality and location of ecosystem assets, as well as the flow of some ecosystem services. This atlas provides a nationally coherent baseline assessment to show the state of natural capital in England. This summer atlases for forty four

country / combined authority areas will be produced showing the data in more detail, along with the GIS layers in a data package with user guidance.

Greater Manchester Environment

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority has published its [Annual Environment Report for 2019/20](#), covering the work of Greater Manchester Authorities and partners in delivering the first year of the GM 5 Year Environment Plan.

Events

Natural Capital Atlas – introduction

There is a webinar to introduce the Natural Capital Atlas described above on June 25th: [Register your place](#).

Planning the urban forest

Treeconomics - a social enterprise that champions the value of trees is running a series of free webinars over the summer, in association with arboricultural practice Davey. These events aim to [simplify the process of planning the urban forest](#). Designed for anybody involved in the design of their town or city's green infrastructure, those looking for nature-based solutions to urban challenges, and anyone looking for inspiration on how to involve their local communities.

Green Cities webinar series

The Town and Country Planning Association, host of the Green Infrastructure Partnership, is running a series of webinars focused on the learning needs of local councillors and others who need to understand the importance of networks of natural features in and around urban areas. You can [register for future webinars or watch past ones](#).

Volunteers Week

Next week is Volunteers' Week. Usual coordination by NCVO has been dropped due to Covid-related capacity reasons, but there are a whole pile of [resources available on their website](#) to help you celebrate and promote the amazing volunteers in your organisation!

Resources

Guidance in the time of coronavirus

There is a wealth of guidance and advice to support charities and voluntary sector organisations out there:

- [Charity Commission: Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) guidance for the charity sector](#)
- [Gov.uk: Claim for your employees' wages through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#)
- [Gov.uk: Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) guidance for Community Interest Companies \(CICs\)](#)
- [NCVO: Coronavirus advice for charities, voluntary organisations and volunteers](#)
- [Big Society Capital: COVID 19 Information for Social Investors](#)
- [UK Youth, National Youth Agency, The Mix: COVID-19 Guidance for young people, youth workers and youth organisations](#)
- [NHS: Coronavirus - advice for everyone](#)

My Community

[My Community](#) is a web-based resource that has been created by 12 leading community support organisations. They have combined their knowledge and skills so that you can access

support and advice in one place. You can find solutions to the most common problems that communities and community organisations are trying to solve with resources, tips and tools all in one place.

Local planning and the environment

As part of the 25 Year Environment Plan, Defra initiated four 'Pioneers' in England to experiment with applying a 'natural capital approach' (considering the value of the natural environment for people and the economy). In its recently-published Strategy, the Pioneer for North Devon identifies [four key environment-related challenges and the ways they can be addressed](#). A 'root cause analysis', evidence base and investment plan have also been published. These can be adapted or drawn on to help local planning in other local authorities better take the environment into account.

Greenkeeper

[Greenkeeper](#) is a new online tool to support public authorities, developers and managers of urban greenspaces in the UK to make evidence-based planning and investment decisions. The tool uses 'big data' and academic research to estimate visits to urban greenspaces and the benefits provided in terms of health, wellbeing, local value and carbon sequestration.

Land management

Over the last two months, The Land App and the Duchy of Cornwall have brought together experts from across the land management sector to help shape best practice for the future of land management. Discussion topics have included: natural capital payment opportunities, landscape scale demand for ecosystem services, whole estate planning and baseline appraisals. The list of weekly webinars, together with recordings, are available [here](#).

Urban trees

The Trees and Design Action Group (TDAG) is an open collaborative forum facilitating dialogue and projects that promote the role of trees in urban areas throughout the UK. The resource section of its website contains links to [information, advice and case studies](#) to inform decision-making on urban trees, which tool or method to choose and how to get started.

Consultations

Technological innovation and climate change

The UK Environmental Audit Committee has launched a [Technological Innovation and Climate Change Inquiry](#), with its first focus on offshore wind power. Following the Government's Offshore Wind Sector Deal in March 2019, the Committee will consider the opportunities that will maximise the industry's potential, and that challenges it faces in delivering greater capacity. The Committee is inviting written submissions to inform its first session.

River basin management

The Environment Agency consultation on [River Basin Planning: Challenges and Choices](#) has extended its closing date to 24 September. It is seeking views on: the challenges that limit the benefits society obtains from the water environment in the river basin districts in England (the challenges), and the best way to address these issues (the choices).

Funding

Guidance on funding and fundraising during the pandemic

[Government funding opportunities](#) - The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has published a new resource to enable charities to view current government funding opportunities and other support for civil society organisations during the Covid-19 pandemic. The following resources were also highlighted in last month's bulletin and may be useful reminders:

- [UK Community Foundations](#): Enter your postcode to find your local Community Foundation to view funding opportunities during COVID-19.
- [The National Lottery Community Fund](#): Overview of all National Lottery funding opportunities and the changes to their programmes due to COVID-19.
- [Other funding opportunities for charities](#) - a list of the key national and regional funds open for applications.
- [Charity Finance Group: Guidance for charities](#): CFG provides financial management advice & support to the VCSE sector. This page sets out their COVID-19 guidance.
- [Fundraising Regulator: Events Guidance](#)

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To contribute to the NWEL Bulletin, please contact:
Andy Yuille
andyyuille@gmail.com
01524 389 915

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