



NEW GROUND SPRING 2016
Campaigning For Environmental Change & Social Justice

EUROPEAN REFERENDUM SPECIAL

*Why Climate Change and
Nature Need Britain
to Stay in the EU*

ALAN JOHNSON MP
*Environmental Progress &
Social Justice Need Europe*

MARY CREAGH MP
*Making Europe Work
for the Environment*

LISA NANDY MP
*What COP21
Means for the UK*

Welcome to our Spring Edition of New Ground

ANDREW PAKES

If you brush away the spin and rhetoric, big moments tend not to come along that much in politics. Britain's referendum on staying in the European Union is one of them. We face a huge choice in the referendum and it is our job to ensure the environment is part of the debate. As Alan Johnson MP says in this issue, environmentalists and internationalists understand the need to work together across borders to tackle climate change and protect our nature. We can't do that on our own.

This issue of New Ground looks at how a better environment is central to the EU's work. We get the facts from the RSPB and the political case

from new House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee chair, Mary Creagh MP.

The Labour movement and environmental groups know how to campaign. In a tough fight against the 'leave' camp we need to use all of our skills to get the green message across on Europe. But not just to defend the gains. Europe needs to do more to raise environmental standards and protect our natural resources; it needs to champion better markets that recognise social changes and workplace rights; and it needs to tackle inequality. These are a cause worth fighting for – one that we need to champion together.



ANDREW PAKES is editor of New Ground and a member of the SERA Executive. He tweets at @andrew4mk

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ABOUT

New Ground is published by SERA, Labour's environment campaign www.sera.org.uk
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The views expressed in New Ground are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the editor, SERA its executive or its members.

NEW SHOOTS FOR SERA

It was a new start for SERA at the end of 2015 with our first AGM since the General Election and a new team elected to the Executive Committee to help steer our work for the year ahead. Melanie Smallman and Jake Sumner were elected as co-chairs at our first Executive meeting with Andrew Pakes as New Ground Editor and Tony Belton as Treasurer.

The Executive brings together SERA veterans and new campaigners – and is always keen

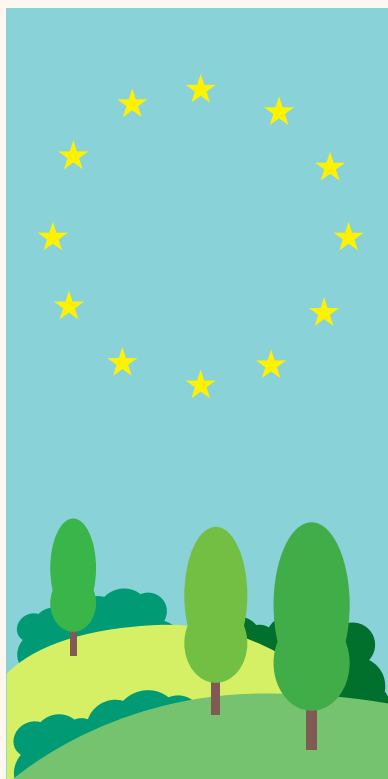
to to hear feedback and views from members, so get in touch with any ideas. SERA is also in the process of recruiting a new organiser to help expand of online, membership and campaigning work.



ENVIRONMENTALISTS FOR EUROPE

SERA took part in the launch of Environmentalists for Europe in early 2016, a new cross-party group campaigning to ensure that environmental matters are covered in the forthcoming European referendum. Labour's Baroness Barbara Young, former head of the Environment Agency and Chief Executive of the RSPB, and the Conservative's Stanley Johnson co-chair the group.

THE GROUP HAS LOTS OF USEFUL
RESOURCES ON ITS WEBSITE AT
environmentalistsforeurope.org



ALL CHANGE IN WESTMINSTER

This spring SERA says goodbye to longstanding Parliamentary supporter Huw Irranca-Davies MP who is standing down from Westminster to contest a seat in the Welsh Assembly. Huw has been a driving force for environmental progress in Parliament. As a Minister he was responsible for the Marine & Coastal Access Act (2009), he also led on energy and environmental issues as a Shadow Minister in the last Parliament. Good luck to Huw in the May elections. And it is welcome to Mary Creagh MP, former Shadow Environment Secretary, to her new role as the chair of the important House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee.

STAY IN TOUCH WITH SERA ONLINE

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CLEANER AIR FOR SCHOOLS

The Cleaner Air for Schools project by LSx (London Sustainability Exchange) is engaging parents, teachers, pupils and school governors of schools in primary and secondary schools in London to raise awareness of and

understand the importance of air quality as well as encourage more environmentally responsible behaviours around travel and transport. The project was launched initially to support Transport for London's Clean Air Fund and then was expanded across three London boroughs.

The project aims to improve the confidence, knowledge

and skills of both pupils and the wider school community, empowering them to understand the importance of air quality, what causes air pollution and what actions they can take to tackle this problem. Over 3000 pupils were engaged and LSx is now working with schools in Wandsworth, Croydon, Merton and Richmond for the next stage of this project.

GREENING BRISTOL'S STREETS

Bristol's streets are getting a green makeover. The 'Our Street Pockets' project aims to transform car park spaces into green hubs where people can enjoy for socialising, playing or just sitting in. Sustrans and 14 Neighbourhood Partnerships are converting the spaces with Bristol Green Capital into ones which communities can use to improve the character of the streets and bring more social capital into the city centre. It will provide an initial grant of £800 to help trial the improvements.

HEELEY CITY FARM IN SHEFFIELD

Heeley City Farm has been pioneering local food sustainability since 1981 and is one of the oldest community-led sustainable projects in Sheffield. The buildings are powered by wind and solar energy, while visitors can see the farm animals and visit the organic gardens, café, garden centre and shop. The project offers provides youth and adult training courses, adult education and work experience activities, volunteering opportunities, day care for adults with learning difficulties, play programmes for younger children, out of school play schemes for school children and other public activities.



INCREDIBLE EDIBLES, NEWCASTLE

Residents on Stanhope Street in Newcastle have planted a garden to grow food on their estate. The Incredible Edibles community-led project was supported by Places for People and Groundwork.

A local residents association constructed and maintained

four large high-quality raised planting bed. Over 26 weeks the association gradually grew fruit, vegetables and herbs in communal areas, grew food in containers for young people, ran tasting, cooking and eating activities and offered craft classes linked to fruit and vegetable growing.

SUNSHINE TARIFF TRIAL IN CORNWALL

A first of its kind new 'Sunshine Tariff' is helping residents in Wadebridge in Cornwall to subsidise their energy bills by generating their own solar power. The radical community pilot scheme that links peak daytime production of renewable electricity with smart technology to offer lower daytime prices to domestic consumers. The scheme is being conducted by Community

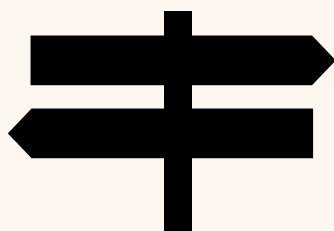
energy group Wadebridge Renewable Energy Network, local network operator WPD, innovative electricity supplier Tempus Energy and sustainable energy champions RegenSW. The scheme is a first for the UK and offers residents more control over their energy. It is similar to the Economy 7 tariff but with a daytime cheap rate when the sun powers the solar panels.



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THE NEXT EDITION
OF NEW GROUND IS
DUE OUT IN EARLY
SUMMER 2016



WHAT DOES THE PARIS ACCORD *MEAN FOR BRITAIN?*

LISA NANDY

SHADOW ENERGY & CLIMATE SECRETARY LISA NANDY MP WRITES FOR NEW GROUND ON WHAT THE PARIS ACCORD MEANS FOR BRITAIN AND HER ROLE IN HOLDING THE GOVERNMENT TO ACCOUNT ON CLIMATE CHANGE.

At December's Paris Summit, for the first time ever leaders from nearly every country in the world came together to agree to cut carbon pollution and set us on the path to a cleaner, greener future with the goal of building a carbon-neutral global economy within a generation.

All countries agreed to raise their ambition every five years until the job is done. The Paris Accord is something to celebrate, not because the agreement is sufficient — we must be honest about the fact that the pledges made by each country do not add up to a commitment that will keep temperature rises well below 2°C — but because it gives us enough to take us much, much

closer to climate safety, and sends a clear signal to global financial markets that the era of unchecked fossil fuel use is coming to an end.

The agreement is a phenomenal achievement that marks the culmination of years of diplomacy. It is testimony to the fact that we are stronger and safer when we work together, both at home and abroad. Labour has a strong record on climate change, from the Kyoto agreement to the 2008 Climate Change Act. The cross-party consensus on climate change that has existed in Britain since 2008 helped to build the road to Paris, and gave the United Kingdom its voice in the negotiations. Another reason our voice was heard more loudly was because we worked closely with our friends in the European Union and we spoke together - united and with one voice. This consensus in Britain, and cooperation with the rest of Europe, is precious and we must not allow it to be destroyed.

But what does the Paris deal mean for us now?

On news of the agreement the director of the CBI told the BBC, "Businesses will want to see domestic policies that demonstrate commitment to this goal." Yet in recent months, in spite of the success of the UN talks and even as other major economies doubled down on their clean energy transitions, the Chancellor has made a series of decisions that have reversed our progress on the road to climate safety.

Ministers have attacked the cheapest options for achieving emission reductions, and household energy bills may rise as a result. Hundreds of millions of pounds will go to dirty diesel generators even as investment in wind, solar and home insulation is slashed. The Government have wasted no time in blocking new wind farms even where they enjoy strong local support. The

We must take action where we are in power in towns, cities and counties across the country



Lisa Nandy with Shadow Environment Secretary
Kerry McCarthy MP at the recent COP21
climate change march in London

Green Investment Bank is being sold off in a manner that could see its green mandate removed and a new tax on more efficient vehicles has been introduced. Thousands have lost their jobs, and thousands more could still do so.

Ministers have also undermined our progress on carbon capture and storage, which is crucial to ensuring a just transition and support for climate change action from the communities of Britain who work in the important industries that rely on fossil fuels. In Yorkshire and Scotland, communities, scientists and engineers are reeling from the Chancellor's decision to axe a £1 billion fund for CCS.

David Cameron was right when he said when we look back we will ask, "What was it that was so difficult when the world was in peril?" Yet his positions are taking us backwards. His own advisers, the Committee on Climate Change, have warned that his energy policy is "failing."

That is why I have referred the Chancellor's decision to axe CCS investment to the National Audit Office who have agreed to investigate, and why the shadow Energy team have consistently used the House of Commons to expose the short term nature of the decision to make such deep cuts to investment in solar and wind.

We must hold Cameron to account and not let him forget his words, but more importantly we must take action where we are in power in towns, cities and counties across the country. Ahead of the Paris summit 60 Labour Councils pledged to go carbon neutral by 2050. In the coming months we will work together to breathe life into this commitment, building on the good work of councils like Nottingham, Oldham and Plymouth who are already leading this clean energy revolution.

It is through real action that Labour will defend our legacy

of leadership on climate change, and play our part in reducing the risks posed by flooding and extreme weather in Britain and around the world.



LISA NANDY is the
Shadow Energy & Climate
Change Secretary.
She tweets at @lisanandy

RACE TO THE TOP ON EUROPE

Interview with Alan Johnson

NATAN DORON



FORMER HOME SECRETARY ALAN JOHNSON IS LEADING LABOUR'S CAMPAIGN FOR THE UK TO STAY IN EUROPE. HERE SERA'S NATAN DORON SPEAKS TO ALAN ABOUT THE CHALLENGE OF THE REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN – AND WHAT SERA SUPPORTERS CAN DO TO HELP.

It already feels like the EU referendum debate has been going for an age. If Alan Johnson is daunted by concerns the public might be suffering from referendum fatigue, it certainly doesn't show. "It's the most profound political decision of my lifetime and I think there will be an enormous amount of interest in it".

Environmentalists certainly have an interest. Europe has, in the main, been a huge force for both environmental protection and action on climate change. It's a point not lost on the chief of Labour's 'In' campaign. "SERA members more than anyone understand this need to work together, understand the crucial principle of internationalism in the Labour Party and understand the danger of going off into splendid isolation on our continent and in the world."

I put it to him that leading Labour politicians often talk about how great the environment is (especially

when talking to New Ground correspondents) but in the heat of an election it gets forgotten about. Won't that just happen again?. "I'd be surprised at that", he points out that while the overall umbrella group to remain in might not talk about it, the Labour campaign will be different. "We'll be emphasising the social dimension of Europe and we'll be emphasising the environmental aspects of Europe very strongly. This is our only hope, if we're serious about implementing [the] Paris [climate change agreement] and we can only do it through organisations like the European Union."

As well as stating the importance of green issues for the Labour 'In' campaign, Johnson turns his politely-worded fire onto the people leading the 'Out' campaign. "If you look at where all the climate change deniers are, largely, and I don't want to insult anyone on this, but largely they're in the 'Out' campaign, Nigel Lawson is one of their major figures."

Johnson is keen to contrast the supposed commitment of the Conservative Party to climate change with their reputation for Euroscepticism. "I really don't see how having identified the problem of climate change, identified that the problem is man made, all of the work that scientists have done, that a solution to it could possible

be leaving Europe." Indeed, when it comes to the importance of Europe for the environment he is unequivocal. "There's no issue bigger than the environment as one of those examples of something that no country can tackle on its own."

European cooperation played a key role in securing an ambitious climate deal in Paris last year and policies like the birds and habitats directives have protected the natural environment within and beyond our borders for years now. I ask what a leave majority would mean for Britain's environment. "[The environment] is one of those issues [that] all counties in the European Union work together on. I think that becomes more difficult to realise and you go back to trying to find other ways to trying to coordinate your activity on the environment with other countries having just left the best forum for doing it." In essence, if the European Union wasn't there, environmentalists and socialists would have to create it.

What about the need for Labour to articulate its own vision of what needs to be reformed in the EU? "For us to just be adding to the long list of whinges about Europe instead of stating the positive of staying would be a huge mistake which is why we're not getting into that argument." Does that mean the Labour 'In' campaign

FEATURE

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE
LABOUR 'IN' CAMPAIGN
PLEASE GO TO

www.labour.org.uk/index.php/inforbritain



thinks the Europe Union doesn't require reform? "[P]eople have concerns about Europe but they have concerns about this place (parliament). There is no institution that is perfect, certainly not this place with an unelected House of Lords and the voting system that puts us here in the first place but there's no referendum on whether we leave our seat of democracy in this country. So to have a campaign where we're constantly focused on what's wrong with Europe and the reforms when the referendum will be on do we stay or do we go will be a big, big mistake in my view."

Alan Johnson has little patience for any notion that Labour is split on Europe. "I think in terms of where the party stands we are absolutely united." He cites the size of the parliamentary group to remain in (214 out of 231 Labour MPs) as evidence of his point. "I'm willing to listen to an argument that we're divided on lots of things but not on Europe."

He concedes this doesn't mean there aren't splits in the party. "I suppose in a sense the fault line that runs through the Tories is Europe. The fault line that runs through us and creates huge differences of opinion every five to ten years is nuclear weapons, nuclear disarmament so yeah there's big debates on that, not on this (Europe). We're trying to get this argument over to the press who have been reluctant to recognise this. On the Monday

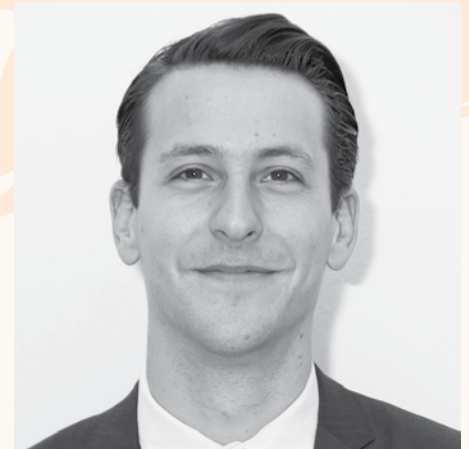
of our conference we carried a proposition that was very clear – we'll campaign to remain in Europe."

It's of course true that the same party conference also carried a majority vote in favour of multilateral nuclear disarmament as official Labour Party policy in opposition to the views of Jeremy Corbyn. The difference on Europe is, as Johnson points out, that the front bench are all united behind the Labour 'In' campaign. And it's this campaign that he's keen to focus on, becoming animated as he sets out some of the arguments.

"The fact that totalitarian regimes of Eastern Europe were converted from oligarchs into democracy without a shot being fired couldn't have been done without the European Union. Couldn't have been done. So there is the poetry to this ... but there's also a lot of prose and it's the prose that's going to win or lose it – it's like 'what does it mean to me' rather than the great high-flying principles. But we shouldn't forget those principles because it led a generation after the Second World War to say we need to do things differently."

It's a strong case that harks back to a bygone political age. In 2016 angry speeches and outlandish promises attract thousands of passionate supporters to events for Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders in the United States. Closer to home and not too long ago people flocked to rallies during the Scottish referendum

and even in the Labour leadership race. Remaining in Europe hasn't inspired people to go to raucous rallies in Britain just yet. It does something more radical. It brings real change. Whether that's improved terms and conditions for workers, or protection for nature and species that move across boundaries, Europe delivers. Slowly at times and often without fanfare, Europe has brought progress for both people and the environment. In that sense, Alan Johnson may just be the ideal person to lead the Labour 'in' campaign.



NATAN DORON is a Labour Councillor and Cabinet Adviser on Carbon Reduction at the London Borough of Haringey. He is also the author of the Fabian Society pamphlet 'Green Europe'

EVIDENCE IS CLEAR ABOUT *ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF BEING IN EUROPE*

MARY CREAGH MP

A COUPLE OF MONTHS AGO, SCIENTISTS DECLARED THAT WE ARE NOW LIVING IN THE ANTHROPOCENE AGE. HUMANITY'S IMPACT ON THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE, OCEANS AND WILDLIFE HAS, THEY ARGUE, PUSHED THE WORLD INTO THIS NEW EPOCH. BRITAIN IS A WORLD LEADER ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND HAS PLAYED A PIVOTAL ROLE IN THE EU ON THIS ISSUE EVER SINCE 1986, WHEN MARGARET THATCHER SIGNED THE SINGLE EUROPEAN ACT, WHICH ESTABLISHED THE EU'S COMPETENCE IN THIS AREA. IF WE ARE TO PLAY OUR PART IN ENSURING A GREEN FUTURE FOR THE UK, WE MUST REMAIN IN THE EU.

Yet the impact that leaving the EU would have on the UK's environmental standards rarely features in discussions about the referendum. The Environmental Audit Committee, of which I am a member, is currently reviewing this. The evidence so far is clear: families in Britain and our rivers, beaches and special places would pay the price if we voted to leave.

In 1995, under the last Tory government, the UK was dirty man of Europe. 83% of our household waste went to landfill and just 7% was recycled or composted. By 2014, thanks to a series of EU directives, the UK's recycling rate had reached 45%. The UK currently recycles 90% of construction materials, well ahead of other countries.

99% of our beaches now comply with EU minimum standards on cleanliness. Gone are the days of my childhood when I emerged from the sea at Blackpool covered in oil! Seaside towns also benefit as cleaner beaches mean more tourists and stronger local economies. In 2014, the Environment Agency estimated that the net benefit in England and Wales of implementing the EU Water Framework Directive by 2027 was £9 billion.

The EU has cleaned up our air. Between 1970 and 2014, UK nitrogen oxide emissions fell by over two thirds, reducing the risk of respiratory diseases. Over the same period, sulphur dioxide emissions in the UK dropped by 95%. Blonde Swedes can safely

wash their hair without fear of their hair turning green from acid rain stripping copper from water pipes! DEFRA estimates, in reply to my Parliamentary question, that bringing the UK in line with EU emissions directives will have a net benefit of £1.45 billion by 2020.

Biodiversity loss is another significant environmental challenge the EU faces. The Birds and Habitats Directives are the bedrock of the EU's nature policies and have enabled bird species and some large carnivore species to recover, while the Natura 2000 Directive obliges the UK government to provide protected nature zones.

Meanwhile, our renewable energy capacity is growing, thanks to national targets set by the Renewable Energy Directive. In 2013, 15% of electricity produced in the UK came from renewable sources. Not only is our carbon footprint shrinking as we reduce our reliance on fossil fuels, but this has created opportunities for renewable energy companies to grow. Anyone who thinks the environment will be better off if we left the EU should take a

The evidence is clear. The EU has more influence globally with the UK as a member

long hard look at the Tory record. The Tories have talked green but acted blue. First they tried to sell off England's forests, then they reduced solar subsidies by 87%, scrapping support for onshore wind and selling off the Green Investment Bank.

EU environmental legislation means a better deal for consumers. Phasing out inefficient light bulbs on an EU-wide basis has saved British consumers £110 off their energy bills every year. Higher standards on new car efficiency have saved UK customers billions in petrol and diesel costs. New car annual fuel consumption is set to be half of what it was in 1997 by 2020.

EU legislation helps keep our environmental standards on track. It forces successive governments of whatever colour to maintain a long-term view and gives businesses the certainty they need to invest. Many of the environmental challenges we face are cross border, so we must continue to work with our European neighbours to tackle them. Our record is strong, but all that progress is at risk if the UK votes to leave.

All those who have given evidence to the EAC's inquiry on the impact of the EU on UK environmental policy, from the American Chambers of Commerce to the RSPB have been clear that we should remain in the EU. Meanwhile, the Chinese and Indian governments have invited the European Commission to help them to clean up their water and air. The EU has global expertise in the environment.

The evidence is clear. The EU has more influence globally with the UK as a member. And as a member, we have more influence globally: our voice in the Paris climate change talks was amplified because we were part of a club of 28 countries. If we leave, we will have to implement EU environment law without a seat at the table and a vote in decisions. When the UK can lead from the inside, why would we walk away? Ensuring the UK has a cleaner, greener future relies on our EU membership. Anyone who argues otherwise will be on the wrong side of history.



MARY CREAGH MP is the Labour Member of Parliament for Wakefield and Chair of the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee. She is helping to lead the Labour 'In Europe' campaign

BALANCE SHEET *FOR EUROPE*

PAUL MCNAMMEE

Paul McNamee from the RSPB takes a look at how Europe has influenced environmental and conservation policy in the UK

THE UK'S WILDLIFE IS PRETTY WELL-TRAVELLED. FROM THE HUMPBACK WHALES THAT TRAVEL PAST THE WEST COAST OF SCOTLAND ON THEIR THOUSAND-MILE MIGRATIONS EACH YEAR; TO THE SWIFTS THAT ARRIVE EVERY SPRING TO BREED BEFORE HEADING BACK TO SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA AT THE END OF SUMMER; VIA THE COUNTLESS BIRD, INSECT AND MARINE SPECIES THAT RESIDE IN THE UK BUT DO NOT CALL IT SOLELY THEIR HOME. THE ONE THING THEY ALL HAVE IN COMMON IS THAT THEY DO NOT RECOGNISE NATIONAL BOUNDARIES.

Add to these species the shared resources of the world such as air, freshwater, the seas and oceans, and the natural capital vital for tackling climate change such as forests and peatlands, and it is obvious why there is general agreement that most environmental problems are best dealt with on a trans-national basis.

This is why it is vital over the next few months that the

environment plays a pivotal role in our conversations around the EU referendum. There are many examples of EU legislation being beneficial for the natural environment but there have also been several disadvantages due to the UK's ongoing membership. The question to be asked is whether there are realistic alternatives to the EU in its current structure for dealing with environmental threats and climate change on a global scale.

The environmental advantages of the UK being a member of the EU are numerous. When I was at school in the early 90s there were three core principles for any playground joke: Skodas were slow; people only went into bars in groups of three varying nationalities; and Blackpool beach was absolutely filthy. Fast-forward twenty years and Britain's beaches are a completely different place to be, thanks to the EU's minimum water quality standards, and strong implementation from successive UK Governments. The UK's seaside towns have become more attractive places to go and, as a result, have seen an upswing in tourist

numbers and the various economic benefits that accompany them.

The UK renewable sector has also seen economic benefits from EU policies – incentivising ambition and development whilst keeping costs down through innovation and competition. The sector has benefitted from the level playing field and market access created by the EU that has given UK Governments the confidence to start a successful domestic transition to sustainable energy production.

In terms of the natural environment, the minimum standards set by the Nature Directives (the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive) across the 28 member states have been the backbone of nature conservation for the past 30 years. These standards have meant that business and Governments in every country have been working on the same page, providing stability and avoiding a race to the bottom that can so often occur to nature when it comes to development. The Directives have also created a network of protected sites across the continent, connecting



people at a local level to some of the most important environmental sites in the world.

Often, not only does the process of working as a collective avoid a race to the bottom, but actively pushes our aims further. Being part of the EU negotiating bloc has given the UK a significant voice at international talks in the fight to tackle climate change. The EU has long been the most ambitious developed-countries bloc in the international climate negotiations, raising the bar and framing the debate for other countries in attendance. We have also seen this happen on issues such as illegal wildlife trade where EC Wildlife Trade

Regulations are more stringent than the international trade convention (CITES) that the UK is also signed up to.

Finally, there is the practical argument of shared resources having to be managed collectively. We are surrounded by the waters of several other countries, share water catchments with the Republic of Ireland, and only last year saw how dust from the Sahara quickly turned into smog over the south of England. Increasing globalisation and connectivity also leads to new problems for nature. Climate change is an obvious one but invasive species and foreign plant

diseases are increasingly seen as some of the biggest threats to the natural world. We can only manage our alien species, our fish stocks, our air quality, our carbon emissions, our rivers and lakes, by actively engaging with the countries around us and setting out the frameworks that we all can work towards.

But the EU is not perfect. Some of the policies the UK is signed up to through Europe are actively harmful to the environment. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) which makes up over 30% of the EU budget has watered down the principle of public money for public goods and led to a system where farmers are

It is undoubted that the natural world is best managed across national borders

paid for the amount of land they own and rewarded for unsustainable land management practises. With farmland making up 70% of the British countryside, this is having a negative impact on many of the UK's most iconic species and habitats.

EU legislation can also suffer from flexibility between member states and individual responsibility for implementation. The Water Framework Directive is a piece of legislation that committed all member states to achieve a good quality status of all their water bodies by 2015. But control of implementing this was put into the hands of individual member states and has led to widespread use of derogations to avoid full implementation. The stability and level playing field that such a piece of legislation should create has been made almost redundant thanks to the differing standards of separate Governments.

Finally, there is the argument that by setting a minimum standard across all 28 countries, we encourage the most progressive to go no further. A stringent EU-wide framework on nature protection could be seen to thwart ambition of the more environmentally-friendly EU states with the standards being set seen as a ceiling rather than a floor.

We know that the environment is rarely a top issue for the general public during elections. However, the upcoming referendum gives an exceptional opportunity to push this agenda forward and ensure it is central to any vision for the future of the UK. It is undoubted that the natural world is best managed across national borders and polling shows that the general public understand this. The challenge to the two campaigns now is to show why they believe the environment is best managed either in or out of the structure of the EU.

The Remain campaign must set out a vision for the European environment that builds on the good work already done whilst aiming to reform the areas that are currently lacking (and often damaging) and not trading away vital environmental protections in the name of deregulation. The Leave campaign needs to demonstrate that the strong environmental protections that currently exist can be guaranteed in the case of a Brexit and to identify how the UK will engage in addressing international problems once outside of the EU structure.

Either way, it is vital that the environment becomes a visible factor in the discussions about the UK's future: I hope to see it as an issue on the doorsteps, in

campaign literature, and in the debates and hustings across the country as we get closer and closer to the big question. Because the environmental presence of the European is substantial and needs to be protected and championed if we remain; likewise, it is reasonable to demand that answers are given to the environmental risks presented by leaving the European legislation we currently adhere to.



PAUL MCNAMMEE works for the RSPB and is a leading conservation campaigner

CAMPAIGNING AGAINST *POLLUTED STREETS*

SAMANTHA HEATH

INCREASINGLY MORE AND MORE PEOPLE ARE GETTING FIRED UP ABOUT THE POLLUTION IN OUR STREETS – AND I AM PROUD THAT MY CHARITY LONDON SUSTAINABILITY EXCHANGE (LSX) HAS BEEN ABLE TO SUPPORT COMMUNITIES ALL OVER LONDON BY FINDING OUT WHERE POLLUTION IS MOST CONCERNING AND HELPING THEM ADDRESS THE PROBLEM BY WORKING WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES AND CHALLENGING THEIR LOCAL POLITICIANS TO ENHANCE LOCAL POLICIES.

Whilst in London, Oxford Street has officially been named as one of the most polluted places on earth because of poor air quality, some areas such as Elephant and Castle, Putney High Street and Clapham Junction are hot on their coat tails. Over the past two years I have been working with a number of communities in Wandsworth, Waltham Forest, Haringey, Islington, Merton, Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Newham and Brent. Here is Lynne Jackson's story from Battersea:

"In Battersea groups such as Battersea Society, Wandsworth Society, Wandsworth Living Streets have been working with LSx, looking at pollution in Tooting and Clapham Junction. Public Health England data estimates that about 113 people a year die in Wandsworth from the impact of pollution. From our citizen science studies we know that some of most polluted areas in Battersea is along Falcon Road next to Clapham Junction Station – where people stand to queue for buses! We also found some worrying spots around Battersea Park Road / Albert Bridge Road junction near the Lighthouse pub.

Other groups have been working around Tooting Bec and Tooting Broadway collecting similar data. We have been lobbying the council for a few things; better monitoring and better engagement with the shops around Clapham Junction. If deliveries can cause less pollution in the area that would be a good thing, but most importantly it's clear that there is scope for better guidance to workers and shoppers in the shops to know how to protect themselves from pollution

The Air Quality Action plan was out for consultation last year and we put in a response. We are keen to maintain vigilant monitoring especially since Defra have indicated that monitoring of pollution may no longer be mandatory. We were pleased that monitoring was augmented around Clapham Junction and Tooting Bec - but we need to be vigilant as this is funded by specific grants and therefore things are liable to change.

Fundamental to changing this is for residents to be informed of what's going on. One initiative supported by LSx was to gather people together last June with some technical wizards as part of Big Data Challenge set by the Future Cities Catapult to help develop apps/data programmes relating to air quality. It is hoped these will help give the means for residents to both gather real live data and identify where action needs to be taken. Some great apps are being developed: one will make your phone vibrate (through its GPS system) when you are likely to be in a known pollution hotspot.

So for 2016 there is plenty to be getting on with - pollution has figured largely in Mayoral campaigns and we

need to keep it that way. Looking at health and transport budgets need to work together better - public health campaigns working with all residents not just the most vulnerable. But most importantly we need diesel off our roads – 'Volkswagengate' has made us think again about car manufacturers data, so we need to get on with reducing diesels full stop - so for example in London we need a network of logistics centres so the last mile of delivery can be pollution free".

Last year LSx 1,000 volunteers reached out to over one million people to save on their fuel bills and lead healthier more sustainable lifestyles.

6,194 TONNES
of CO2 saved

8,351 M3
of water saved

1,691 TONNES
of waste diverted
from landfill



SAMANTHA HEATH is chief executive of the LSx: London Sustainability Exchange www.lsx.org.uk

A FAILURE *OF LEADERSHIP*

JAKE SUMNER

THE EXTENSIVE FLOODING IN NORTHERN ENGLAND IS JUST THE LATEST EXAMPLE OF EXTREME WEATHER, NOT JUST HERE BUT GLOBALLY. CLIMATE CHANGE IS BECOMING A GROWING THREAT TO FOOD, ENERGY, HEALTH, JOBS AND ECONOMIC STABILITY AS WELL AN INCREASING FACTOR IN MASS MIGRATION. AS DECEMBER'S COP21 TALKS UNDERLINED, WORSE IS TO COME IF GLOBAL TEMPERATURES RISE ABOVE TWO DEGREES, WITH LAND OCCUPIED BY 280 MILLION PEOPLE LIKELY TO BE UNDERWATER.

Climate change is a security issue. Given the security of a nation is normally paramount - it's considered the first duty of government - and climate change poses an existential threat, we should expect leadership and action.

Yet this Government's head is in the sandbags. At best Ministers talk about climate change action

as a nice extra when it can be 'afforded'; at worst it's attacked for being 'green crap'. This shouldn't be a surprise. Politicians from the right still deny the science of climate change, chirpily lambast low carbon measures, yet are silent on the recent floods.

Ministers are dismantling the Labour Government's leadership in passing the landmark Climate Change Act. The DECC Secretary recent leaked letter revealed Britain will miss its 2020 renewables energy target by 25%. The renewables industry is having the rug pulled from under it while the fracking industry is welcomed with a gilded carpet. Solar investment in 2015 dropped to £3.5bn from £5bn the year before due to government changes and cuts to support. The Carbon Capture and Storage trial has been scrapped. Environmental legislation and standards are being axed like the low carbon homes requirement, budgets reduced, and institutions cut or sold like the Green Investment Bank. Ministers flirt with leaving the EU, failing to recognise it's a bulwark to

maintaining and strengthening environmental standards and driving global action. Even policies like the new Marine Nature Reserves (belatedly) announced in January were accompanied by an abandonment of a fishing ban for the most critical areas.

It isn't just each decision. It also isn't just about the lost green opportunity: how is buying gas from states like Russia making our energy more secure when we could be producing our own renewable energy? It's the pervasive short-sightedness: action now costs less than paying for failure later. So what would a progressive government be doing? President Obama is showing leadership. So is Germany: just five per cent of renewables are owned by the big utilities. It is communities, unions and councils that have a stake. Energy is greener, decentralised and democratic, more secure and the changes are enormously popular. Leadership here could bring these benefits alongside improved environments, more sustainable

While the PM is shirking his responsibility we are seeing leadership elsewhere

homes using less energy and lower bills, better transport and less pollution, less waste, green spaces enhanced, new jobs, and a global contribution to greater security and a low carbon world.

Using COP21 as a reference, a Prime Minister might give a landmark speech with an honest account of the challenges we face at home and abroad but also the shared benefits of a low carbon path. The idea of a Just Transition, as the TUC has articulated, could be supported. Progress points could be identified with independent verification.

Britain could play an active role in global institutions, building alliances to renew them to support effective action. It could be at the heart of the Commonwealth agenda, given its unique membership straddling richer and poorer countries. EU reform could be rooted in an effective response to climate change (surely a better use of political capital than the current renegotiation aimed at pleasing recalcitrant Tory MPs) and it could top the agenda when Britain has the EU Presidency in 2017.

A PM showing leadership would champion action across government: purposeful not piecemeal. There could be a credible industrial strategy aligning Britain's science base, research institutions, businesses and technologies to create and scale low carbon solutions including in energy, transport, and construction. Instead of the No 10 Nudge Unit what about a Low Carbon Ambition Unit? National administrations and local councils would be engaged as partners in change; communities empowered to drive action from the ground upwards. It was after all local leadership that saw the GLC build the Thames Flood Barrier to protect London.

While the PM is shirking his responsibility we are seeing leadership elsewhere. In May, Londoners can elect a Mayor - Sadiq Khan - committed to making the capital a low carbon leader. Environmental progress will feature high in Welsh Labour's manifesto and Labour local government is driving environmental innovation.

They know a low carbon economy isn't a burden to shoulder but an ambition to embrace. It's a path to social justice, opportunity, security, and prosperity.



JAKE SUMNER is Co-Chair of SERA and involved in a number of sustainability and community projects around north London

REWILDING *BRITAIN*

HELEN MEECH

BRITAIN IS ONE OF THE MOST ECOLOGICALLY DEPLETED NATIONS ON EARTH.

We have lost all our large carnivores and most of our large herbivores. While the average European forest cover is 37%, ours is just 12%. Our ecosystems have almost ceased to function. Because of the absence of trees and loss of soil, our watersheds no longer hold back water, with rainfall flashing off the hills and causing flooding downstream. Species are declining, and space for nature is limited to small reserves that are disconnected from each other and the natural systems that should support them.

Rewilding offers a chance to reverse that: a chance to bring nature back to life and restore the living systems on which we all depend. A chance work with communities to restore to parts of Britain the wonder and enchantment of wild nature; to allow magnificent lost creatures to live here once more;

and to provide people with some of the rich and raw experiences of which we have been deprived.

Rewilding is an approach to environmental restoration that works with the grain of nature, giving natural systems space to function and thereby securing all the benefits they provide - clean air and water, carbon storage, flood control, and amazing experiences which benefit our health and wellbeing. It often requires some initial supportive measures, to kick-start natural processes again, or to help reintroduce lost species, but the goal is to reduce human intervention and create wilder spaces, both on land and at sea.

Rewilding benefits nature, by connecting nature with nature, creating diversity and making room for species to move through landscapes as they adapt to environmental change. The Oostvaardersplassen is a fenced area of reclaimed land not far from

Amsterdam that covers 6000 ha. It has been allowed to rewild since the nature reserve was formed in 1968 and has delivered a wide number of biodiversity benefits including the establishment of high numbers of breeding birds that had become very rare in The Netherlands, including Spoonbill, Bittern, Marsh Harrier and Bearded Tit.

Rewilding benefits the wider environment too. In the Belgian Ardennes, where beavers were reintroduced in 2003, a series of six beaver dams on the River Cheval resulted in a significant lowering of flood peaks on the downstream reaches of the river, and an increase in the interval between flood events (Nyssen et al. 2011).

But it's not just about the environment – rewilding can bring significant economic benefits. According to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation, the world on average has just 60 more years of growing crops. Rewilding can

Rewilding is as much about people as it is about the planet. It can revitalise local communities.

be farming's greatest ally. It helps restore nutrients, worms and mycorrhizal fungi to the soil, provides for pollinating insects, purifies water, reduces flood risk and helps resist droughts. Perhaps rewilding will give us a few more harvests yet?

Rewilding is as much about people as it is about the planet. It can revitalise local communities. Across Europe, large mammals and birds making a comeback are generating tourism. The Brown bear is being marketed as a flagship species for the Somiedo National Park in northern Spain and is increasing tourist numbers. In Finland, an increase in tourism due to visitors coming to see predators such as brown bear and wolverine was associated with an economic turnover of €4-5 million in 2012.

But there are more intrinsic benefits too. Time in nature improves concentration and behaviour, benefits health and wellbeing, and increases environmental awareness. Which is why rewilding is as much about rewilding ourselves as rewilding land. It's about experiencing the enchantment of wild nature, about noticing and experiencing what's around us, about an increased connection with the living planet – "to love not man the less, but nature more".

Rewilding is our big opportunity to leave the world in a better state than it is today. To turn our silent spring into a raucous summer. To introduce one of the rarest of all species into Britain's environmental vision: hope.



HELEN MEECH is the director of Rewilding Britain

JOIN THE MOVEMENT
TO REWILD BRITAIN
WWW.REWILDINGBRITAIN.ORG.UK

TAKING FORWARD *THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS*

LORD JACK MCCONNELL

2015 was the year the interests of People and Planet united

WITH A POWERFUL VISION FOR 2030, THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS ADOPTED AT THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN SEPTEMBER LAST YEAR WERE A TESTAMENT TO HOPE AND A TESTAMENT TO CHANGE. GLOBAL LEADERS UNITED TO FACE THE CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE, CONFLICT AND CAPACITY AFFECTING LIVES TODAY AND IN THE FUTURE: 17 AMBITIOUS GOALS TO BUILD UPON THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS.

Specific goals, especially Goal 16 on peace and justice, fought a long and hard to keep their place in the line up – and I am glad that they did for it is fragile states that pose the greatest threat to development. And issues of

gender, climate and marginalised groups provided the backbone to the call to 'leave no one behind.'

I was able to attend the UNGA as Labour Party representative and experience the energy and enthusiasm all participants had in the way forward, the activism on combating climate change and the compassion people had for meeting the needs of those previously overlooked. Three key events kept the momentum for change running throughout the year. Summits in Addis, New York and Paris showed the need for a multicomponent approach of finance, climate and development to correct past mistakes and build upon previous successes.

In June of 2015, we established the UK All Party Parliamentary Group

on the Sustainable Development Goals to promote the Goals and monitor their implementation in the years that follow. We had a successful first six months – holding meetings with Rt Hon Helen Clark [former Prime Minister of New Zealand], Secretary of State Justine Greening MP and European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven Mimica. But for 2016, our focus is moving from promotion of debate to the monitoring of implementation and holding those in charge to account. We, as a group and as a country, need to deepen our commitment to change to embrace the mechanisms that will get us there.

Here, the universality of the Goals is fundamental. Gone are the days when a handful of men sat in a



We, as a group and as a country, need to deepen our commitment to change to embrace the mechanisms that will get us there

basement in New York and decided the future of the world; we were all there at the UN, we all made a commitment, and now is the time to follow through on this. On one hand, this means an international approach. We must continue our commitment to 'leave no one behind' and make sure these Goals tackling inequalities, helping the most marginalised and those most in need. But on the other hand, and as a Labour Party, we need to hold our own UK government to account on what they are planning domestically. 'Universal' means we are not exempt. 'Universal' means we do not just look out with but within our nation as well. The UK should set out a national agenda for reaching the targets of the SDG's. It cannot follow manifesto promises made before the Goals were adopted

– it needs an agenda that spans longer than an election term.

We have made a commitment to the climate for fifteen years, we have made a commitment to development for fifteen years, and we have made a commitment to 'leave no one behind.' Climate change, poverty and poor government hurt some more than others but the consequences of these are not felt by some but all – disasters and crises no longer stick to state lines. It is in the national interest for Labour to take the lead, holding the UK and the EU to account, while using power where we have it – in devolved nations and in local government – to show what is possible. This agenda can change the world, so the time for debate is over and the time for action is here.



LORD JACK MCCONNELL
was First Minister of Scotland 2001-2007 and is Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on the Sustainable Development Goals

VIEW FROM WALES

Putting words into action



ALUN DAVIES

POLITICIANS HAVE AN EASY WAY OF SOLVING THE WORLD'S PROBLEMS. WE PASS LAWS AND THEN HONESTLY AND EARNESTLY BELIEVE THAT THE NEW LAW WILL TRANSFORM LIVES AND CHANGE THE FUTURE. IT SAVES US WORRYING ABOUT THE REAL WORLD AND GIVES US COMFORT ABOUT OUR PLACE IN SOCIETY. IN THIS WAY, LEGISLATION IS THE HALLUCINATORY DRUG OF CHOICE FOR POLITICIANS.

But it may be that legislation can change the future. And that's the intention of the new Future Generations Act which became law in Wales at the end of last year. This is probably one of the most ambitious pieces of legislation to reach the statute book in any UK administration for some years. The vision and scope of the Act is nothing short of revolutionary. In short it compels every part of the Welsh public sector to proactively create our sustainable future.

The National Assembly had been born as the world's only legislature

which had a commitment to act sustainably written into its constitution. The Future Generations Act began life as the Sustainable Development Bill which was a Welsh Labour manifesto commitment designed to give a real meaning to this commitment but which had delivered only opaque reports, endless analysis and pious speeches since the creation of the National Assembly back in 1999.

The Act gives Wales a new way of living and working. It places a comprehensive definition of sustainable development and a new commitment to tackling climate change on to the Welsh statute book for the first time. It tells all parts of the public sector that they have a new duty to deliver on those commitments. But it does so in the context of economic, community and cultural sustainability underpinned by a new commitment to health outcomes of decision-making which is essential in a country where public health remains our greatest unspoken emergency.

The Act places new and extensive demands upon all public bodies and authorities in the country. Now all decisions taken by local authorities or health boards or any other Welsh public body must reflect the needs of future generations in terms of our impact on climate and a raft of other comprehensive indicators - from the place of the Welsh language in planning decisions to health impacts of transport decisions and to follow the principles of sustainability in all decisions at all times. The expectation is that not only will the decisions be different but also the way of reaching and making those decisions. The ambition of the Welsh Government is that this process will also extend and deepen our democracy.

If this happens then it will be truly transformative. A landmark piece of legislation which is actually a landmark.

This new act will sit alongside the new Environment Act and a new planning regime, the Welsh Government is slowly and

The Welsh Government is slowly and quietly creating a revolution in the intelligent far-sighted and sustainable management of our natural resources

quietly creating a revolution in the intelligent far-sighted and sustainable management of our natural resources.

By creating a statutory framework for the management of emissions the Welsh Government foresaw the decisions taken in Paris. And by putting in place a wholly new and comprehensive framework for government actions and decisions it is putting in place the UN's ambitions for resource management in the new century. And it is doing so in a way that seeks to provide accountability and transparency but without the bureaucracy that all too often bogs down truly creative thinking and acting.

But it also creates major new challenges for the Welsh Government. The most obvious being its commitment to the building of a new motorway across some of the most precious and protected landscapes in the Gwent Levels.

Can the same government legislate so profoundly for a sustainable approach to policy and then drive the most environmentally destructive road scheme since 1999? I fear that this may be a challenge too far. A second challenge will be to change the shape and culture of government and decision-making in the public sector. This will be equally as difficult but also more difficult to understand and assess its success or otherwise.

So the Government has won the argument and the votes in the National Assembly. It now has the tools and the powers to make Wales one of the most sustainable countries in Europe. But this is also where the talking stops and the action begins. The success of the Welsh Government's ambitious vision will be judged now on its future decisions and not simply on its legislative record.



ALUN DAVIES is the Labour Assembly Member for Blaenau Gwent and a former Minister for Natural Resources in the Welsh Assembly Government. He tweets at @alundaviesAM



THERE AND BACK AGAIN...

HUW IRRANCA-DAVIES

TOP MARKS TO THOSE WHO RECOGNISE THE TITLE OF THE PIECE. IT'S PART OF THE SUBTITLE FROM TOLKEIN'S THE HOBBIT, AND MORE SPECIFICALLY IT'S FROM THE RED BOOK OF WESTMARCH. SO AS A "RED" (AND GREEN) WHO CAME FROM WALES TO LONDON, HAD SOME VERY EXCITING ADVENTURES, AND IS NOW GOING BACK WEST TO WALES, IT SOMEHOW SEEMS APPROPRIATE. THERE AND BACK AGAIN ... AND LOOKING FORWARD TO SOME MORE ADVENTURES TO COME.

I'm heading back shortly to stand for the National Assembly for Wales. The Welsh Government has been carving quite a reputation in environmental issues and sustainability: from being the first country in the UK to introduce the carrier bag charge, to creating a single body for the environment in Natural Resource Wales; leading the UK by introducing the Wales coastal path; ground-breaking "Made in Wales" legislation like the Well-Being of Future Generations Act, enshrining the principles of real sustainability in all policy-making; and so much more.

This is the difference a Labour government can make, and we should never forget that. We don't hug huskies for photo-ops then take them round the back to put them out of their misery. We don't

talk green one day, then dismiss it all as "green crap" the next (Prime Minister Cameron ... allegedly). We don't say one thing and do another, talking big internationally (and well done by the way PM at COP 21) but creating havoc and uncertainty back home with shocking decisions on solar and wind energy, CCS, zero-carbon homes and so much more.

So yes, for someone like me with the environment and sustainability running through my veins, it's an exciting prospect to be heading back to my big little motherland of Wales and a progressive Labour government led by Carwyn Jones, and a country which continues Labour's ceaseless advance on environmental matters.

I never hold regrets. It's bad for the soul. I'm truly excited about the prospects for my BIG little country of Wales under devolution. But I'll have some sadness too. For the people and organisations I've worked with over many years as a Minister and shadow minister and as a backbencher, trying – and sometime succeeding – in doing great things for the environment. For the agony and the ecstasy of being in government and opposition (I'll leave you to work out which the agony relates to, or both?).

So before I head West for another exciting adventure, here are some passing thoughts which – Hobbit-

like - I'm scratching down in my notebook for future generations to read. And here is my first message to you, and to those to follow:

**NEVER, EVER, NEVER
STOP CAMPAIGNING**

It is the long, enduring campaigns by the public, politicians, NGOs and others which push government and help government to do good things. Sometimes it may seem futile and frustrating, but nothing comes easy. In fact the harder it is, sometimes makes the climb even more worthwhile.

The establishment of the South Downs National Park was possibly one of the longest campaigns ever. It began in 1929, or even earlier in the '20s, so when I had the privilege under then Secretary of State for Defra Hilary Benn in 2009 to help make it finally happen, that was some happy day for conservation and access to the countryside. It built on Labour's proud track-record reaching from the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Acts of the 1940s, through the Right to Roam legislation, and culminating too in the England Coastal Path which I was delighted to have a hand in too.

So my thanks to all those campaigners, from the South Downs folk to the Ramblers and Open Space Society and others, but right

back to the campaigners from the start of the last century and the Kinder Scout trespassers. You have a fine tradition, and the work is unfinished. Keep campaigning.

From the green open spaces to the big blue yonder. One of my proudest achievements was taking helping take the Marine and Coastal Access Act through parliament and onto the statute book. This pioneering legislation which has the power to change the way we manage and respect our seas around the UK. There is still much to put in place to achieve a genuinely ecological network of MCZs, and to roll-out the coastal path, and to adequately resource the management of the contested space of our busy seas. But the mechanisms are now in place, the current government is (slowly and painstakingly) taking the right actions. But when Labour is back in government, we'll need to finish the job we began.

The same applies to flood and water management. What has happened to the SUDS (sustainable natural drainage systems) approach we put in place? Why hasn't water catchment management - adequately-resourced and with everyone playing their part and working with natural fluvial systems - been taken forward across the country? Where is the long-term plan for resourcing flood resilience, defence and maintenance in the face of increasingly traumatic weather events? Where is the action on water scarcity? There is so much we began under a Labour government, which has ground to a halt under the Conservative government.

And that's before we begin on the deliberate hollowing out of Defra by Osborne with brutal cuts, the odd climate-

change-denying Tory Secretary of State, the crazy scrapping of the Sustainable Development Commission, attempts to flog off our forestry estates, the failure to deal with health-impacting chronic air pollution in our cities, and so much more. We have work to do now in opposition. We'll have much more to do when we return to government at a UK level.

But when I look back, I am immensely proud of what we have achieved in government, and in opposition. Labour has always led on climate change, sustainability, the environment, and access to the countryside. I take pride in little wins, like the time I banned the cruel practise of shark-finning in the UK (yes we did still do shark-finning till recently) or the establishment of a "National Trust for the Waterways" by transferring British Waterways to a not-for-profit Canal and River Trust, which goes from strength to strength. Labour and co-operative values in action.

But most of all, I am immensely proud and thankful for the work put in by others who believed in the intrinsic and extrinsic value of our natural environment, and in protecting and enhancing our environment for this and future generations. The passionate grass-roots activists – including in SERA – and the campaigning organisations, the experts and the officials who want to change the world, my parliamentary & ministerial colleagues ... without of all of you, nothing gets changed.

I've loved working with you all in Westminster. We'll keep on working together to the same aims, and sometimes together, even when I've headed west to Wales.

So for my final words in departing from Westminster (as I'm partial to a little bit of a Tolkein puzzle) I refer you to the last words of Thorin Oakenshield. If you can't be bothered to look them up, then this will do instead ...

*KEEP ON
CAMPAIGNING. IT
REALLY MATTERS.
YOU CAN CHANGE
THE WORLD ...
LITTLE BY LITTLE!*



HUW IRRANCA-DAVIES is the Labour MP for Ogmore. He is retiring from Westminster in May to contest the Ogmore constituency in the Welsh Assembly elections. He tweets @irrancadaviesMP



MAKING A DIFFERENCE ON *CLIMATE CHANGE IN HARINGEY*

CLLR JOE GOLDBERG

START TALKING ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE AND PEOPLE IMMEDIATELY RUSH TO TALK ABOUT RENEWABLES, SOLAR, WIND, WAVE AND COMMUNITY ENERGY. AS IMPORTANT AND EXCITING AS THESE ARE THE NEED TO FOCUS ON RETROFITTING AND MAKING IT AS 'SEXY' IS UNDENIABLE.

It should be obvious that the easiest way to slow climate change is to find painless ways to burn less fossil fuel, without freezing yourself. Put simply we can burn a lot less fuel without sacrificing any comfort or warmth.

In the London Borough of Haringey, we are continuously working hard to deliver on our promise on reducing carbon emissions by 40% by 2020 – and recently we pledged to be the UK's first zero carbon borough – no later than 2050.

Promises are easy, but the task of government must be to fulfil such promises. That is why in 2010 we worked with Andrew Sims, from NEF among others to produce the 40:20 Carbon Commission. It set out a clear plan about how emissions would be reduced in the

borough – and believe this remains the only such document in the UK.

It identified no less than 25% of the reduction in emissions would come from retrofitting the borough's housing stock, especially as homes account for 50% of Haringey's total emissions and only 20% coming from transport.

In fact the UK's housing stock is amongst the most wasteful, in terms of energy consumption, and we have been amongst the poorest in improving our properties. In Northern Europe it has been said that only Estonia has a worse record of introducing efficiency measures. The cost both economically and environmentally is almost criminal, whilst fixing this problem is not without its economic benefits.

Last year we secured funding from the Department of Energy and Climate Change for Haringey's Smart Homes Project to kickstart demand for such measures, which is now in its final phase. We have successfully managed this project on behalf of Camden, Enfield, Islington, Waltham Forest and Hackney Councils delivering the benefit and economies of

scale across the North London boroughs. Historically a lack of collaboration has been responsible for London not getting its fair share of energy grants.

The programme has incentivised uptake of solid wall insulation alongside other energy efficiency measures. At the same time we want to increase awareness of energy efficiency, reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions to deliver the boroughs carbon targets.

Residents in the Smart Homes project were offered a grant of £6,000 for solid wall insulation, or up to £3,000 for heating and windows upgrades. To receive the grants they were required to contribute at least 25% extra to the total cost of the works. The Smart Homes project received over 4,000 expressions of interest through the advice line in the first 6 months. Over 25% of these calls moving from interest to installations this shows that the homeowners market is there but needs support to enable action. It is a case of simple behaviour change – raise awareness, provoke interest, and offer a not insignificant carrot. For those who



complain that these incentives are going to wealthier homes, we need to remain focussed on the fact the majority of emissions come from such homes, and letting things carry on unabated will only leave the poorest to deal with the outcomes of unabated climate change.

In Haringey, we are always looking to do things differently. Alongside the benefit to residents, the Council supported the local supply chain through the development of a "RetrofitWorks Cooperative". This meant small businesses could compete in a Green Deal market that has been made too complex for small tradespeople to otherwise compete, and make it more likely it would stimulate local job creation.

There are now over 30 locally approved installers working within Haringeys RetrofitWorks Cooperative. These local companies are delivering a higher standard of service and are leading the way number of installations measures. This has led to retaining existing jobs and creating new short-term employment opportunities. Alongside the installation process Haringeys community groups focusing on energy and energy efficiency were active

in working alongside Smart Homes delivering energy advice and promoting the scheme.

All in all to date we are have awarded over 1000 grants to residents, businesses and landlords to install energy measures, and with it a cohort of advocate for the next phase of engagement.

This involves three key strategies. Firstly we are exploring how we may continue a similar scheme across the 6 boroughs with support from either the private sector or DECC. Secondly we need to see how we can use our planning powers, to stimulate activity when people are doing home improvements. Finally we have launched a zero-fifty carbon commission being led by my colleague, and SERA exec member Natan Doron. It will look at how we can drive the highest standards in the large parts of the borough that are likely to be regenerated and it is chaired by Andrew Gould. The hope is that we can achieve design standards that will mean we won't have to retrofit in the future.

Our first test was the recent planning permission granted to the Spurs stadium where the

energy infrastructure of the plans occupied a significant part of the committees discussion, with some positive results. We will need to do a lot more of the same if we are to achieve our goals but, in Haringey, we are determined to show it can be done.



CLLR JOE GOLDBERG is the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Social Inclusion and Sustainability in the London Borough of Haringey



SERA - EUROPEAN REFERENDUM SPECIAL EDITION

See inside for the environmental reasons
for the UK to be part of Europe.

With Alan Johnson MP, Mary Creagh MP, Lisa Nandy MP

EUROPE BENEFITS WILDLIFE AND OUR NATURAL WORLD

KERRY MCCARTHY MP

*Shadow Environment Secretary Kerry McCarthy writes
about why Europe matters for nature and wildlife:*

"Britain has gained much from its membership of the European Union, with co-operation across national borders to preserve the natural environment, protect wildlife and promote better food and welfare standards.

From the Birds and Habitats Directives, to clean water and beaches, species protection and much more, our membership of the EU has been so important in making progress on environmental issues, and in encouraging other EU countries to make progress too.

The environmental challenges of the 21st century, from climate change to air pollution, cannot be faced alone."

JOIN SERA



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LABOUR'S ENVIRONMENT CAMPAIGN

Full details at www.sera.org.uk/join-sera

SERA is a member-led campaigning organisation working towards environmental progress and social justice.

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