SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACY

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blue&green tomorrow

PUBLISHER'S LETTER

"Democracy will win -- because a government's legitimacy can only come from citizens; because in this age of information and empowerment, people want more control over their lives, not less; and be-cause, more than any other form of government ever devised, only democracy, rooted in the sanctity of the individual, can deliver real progress."
Barack Obama

We are incredibly lucky to number among a minority of the world's population who enjoy relatively free and fair elections. Only one in seven countries with an eighth of the world's population live in 'full democracies' as defined by the Economist's intelligence unit. Nearly a third of countries with just short of two fifths of the world's population live in authoritarian regimes.

Unsurprisingly, all five Scandinavian countries are in the top eight of full democracies, topped by Norway, Sweden and Iceland. Disappointingly the UK languishes in 16thposition behind our neighbour Ireland (12th) and similarly-sized European economy, Germany (13th).

Democracy matters. Democracy is fragile. Falling turnouts from voter apathy and disengagement removes the legitimacy of governments, allow them to be captured by vested interests and allow the rise of extreme parties.

In this guide we look a debates on how technology is changing democracies, views from Vote for Policies who had gathered 621,400 votes at the time of going to press and the Electoral reform Society. We publish the Blue Green Magna Carta based on 1400 votes on 24 constitutional reforms. We revisit the spat between the non-voting Russell Brand and active Robert Webb. As it's an election in a few days we look at the parties' policy priorities and policies on the environment and democracy.

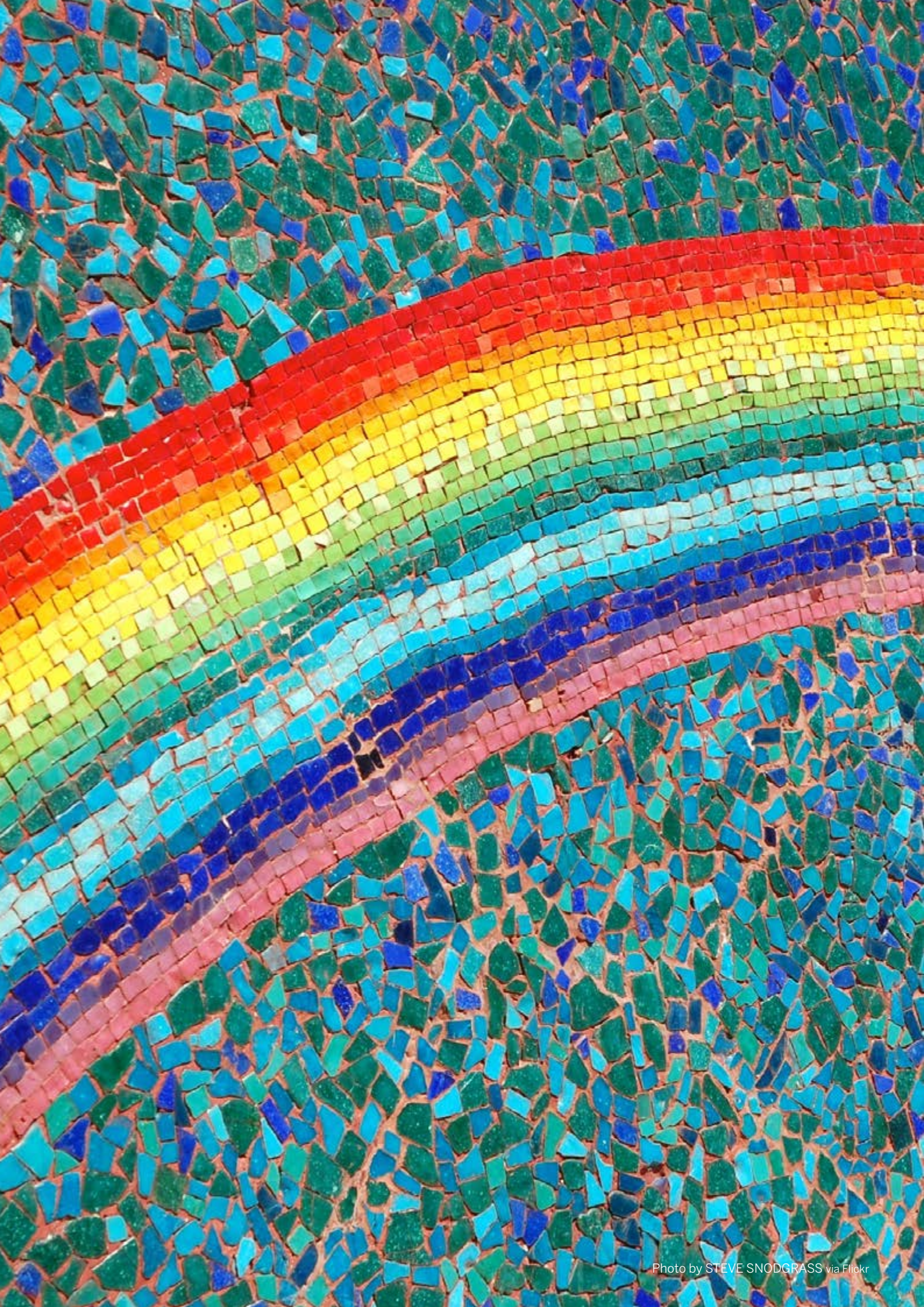
We hope you enjoy it and urge you to vote.

"We must recognize that democracies don't stop just with elections; they also depend on strong institutions and a vibrant civil society, and open political space, and tolerance of people who are different than you. We have to create an environment where the rights of every citizen, regardless of race or gender, or religion or sexual orientation are not only protected, but respected." Barack Obama



Simon Leadbetter
Publisher, Blue & Green Tomorrow





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wealth&ethics

Dear friend,

We're shortly launching our equity fund raising to registered subscribers of Blue & Green Tomorrow. The investment is pending EIS assurance so we believe we have both a highly attractive business model and investment proposition.

We are raising £300,000 for 15% of Blue & Green Communications Limited.

We are now approaching our subscribers to pledge to invest. Securing half or more of our required investment before we launch the share offer will guarantee its take up and success.

Remember, with crowd equity we don't get the investment unless we hit our target so the risk is mitigated across the crowd. If we secure all the funding we need from friends in advance of the launch we will seek over-funding to pursue even more rapid and ambitious growth.

Recent successes on Crowdcube have been sustainability consultancy and events play *TheCrowd* who raised £450,000 and *DoNation* who raised £167,440 for their sustainable living site. And on Seedrs, another crowd equity site, we have renewable energy platform *Trillion Fund* who raised £537,880.

Please pledge to support the Blue & Green share offer. You can also confirm whether you were a crowdfunder in 2014 and whether you wish to convert your crowdfunder support into equity.

With your help we can build a media business that simplifies and promotes sustainability globally, with millions of readers making millions of sustainable investment and spending decisions daily.

Kind regards,



Simon Leadbetter
Publisher | Blue & Green Tomorrow

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VOTE FOR POLICIES AT BIRKBECK: CAN THE INTERNET CHANGE VOTING?

"A technologist doesn't blame the user (voter) if they can't use the system (politics), they blame usability (elections)"

By SIMON LEADBETTER

Vote for Policies gathered inspirational speakers and more than 160 delegates at Birkbeck on March 24th this year. At the event it was debated whether the internet can change the way we think about politics, specifically the choice between policies and personalities? The view were diverse and the debate excellent.

Vote for Policies founder Matt Chocqueel-Mangan opened proceedings with his own story of how he became engaged in politics and what inspired him to create Vote for Policies before the 2010 general election. Having read all the party manifestoes he decided to create a website that allowed people to more easily compare and contrast party policies so that they could make informed choices at election time.

His own background in technology led him to the conclusion that people weren't engaged in policies not because of their own failure but because the system is broken. A technologist doesn't blame the user (voter) if they can't use the system (politics), they blame usability (elections).

The panel was chaired by Emran Milan of the Social Market Foundation and on the panel were Birkbeck reader in politics, Dr Rosie Campbell, John Curtice, Professor of politics at Strathclyde University, Former University of Newcastle Students' Union President, Vote for Policies crowd funder and entrepreneur Laura Perry and prolific political blogger and academic Sunny Hundal. Quite a panel.

Each panellist addressed the debate's subject in different ways with a polite divide between the academics who saw our institutions as functional but flawed and Laura who was keen to delete the system and start again.

Rosie gave us the ideal model of citizens armed with facts making rational choices, but using shortcuts such as a politician's charisma to inform that decision. Vote for Policies, as a way into understanding policies, was more of a '*shopping list*'-style of policy decision-making, which she saw as '*not a good thing*'. She saw politics as more about compromise on a basket of policies.

John challenged the premise that personality-based voting is necessarily uninformed voting. In reality, rather than creating more rational choices, the internet amplifies personality. Fundamentally elections are not just about a party's policies but our belief in the leading politicians' competence and ability to communicate and negotiate on a national and international stage. He made the



Photo by
STEVE PARKER
via Flickr

point that an election is about putting trust in someone who can handle an "*unknown unknown*" in the future, such as a crisis with Russia or another banking crash.

Laura gave the young voters' perspective. They're less willing to follow parents or be loyal to one party during their lifetime. Politicians seem inaccessible to most young people and the mainstream media has their own agenda, mainly about maintaining their own influence. To Laura a tool like Vote for Policies allowed her to "*get by the spin*" and read the parties' policies in their own words. She then described our current system as crazy, arguing that if you were going to create a political system on a blank sheet of paper you wouldn't create what we have.

One of her asides was a dip into technology and big data, and her puzzlement that parties weren't using the technology available to them to more accurately target messages at specific groups, which led to the first dissent on the panel. Rosie felt that would be a sad development as politics was about not just our own needs, but the needs of the country.

Sunny opened with the insight that rational debate and politics rarely go hand in hand. He powerfully argued that politics is not driven by rational choices but emotional connection – our "*gut feeling*". We reject facts that don't fit our own narrative and project our own stories onto politicians as we did in 1997 with Blair and the Americans did in 2008 with Obama. He suggested that our politicians are stuck in the era of mainstream press dissemination and ignoring new technology which would allow more engagement with policies. He also made the debatable point that "*most people get their information through social media*."

Questions from the floor followed and there was a clear view from some of the audience that technology allowed for more direct democracy. This was challenged by Rosie and John with the rebuttal that direct democracy can lead to dystopia - the tyranny of the majority rather than the wisdom of the crowd. The idea of a direct online democracy caused even more concern with the risk that it isn't the people who decide but a section of the people who decide. The majority of online activity in Scotland supported independence, but voters backed the Union.

Rosie pointed out that many issues were more complicated that a simple yes-no vote and Sunny gave the example of California where people





"We need to make informed choices at elections, but we also need root and branch reform of our entire electoral system..."

Left photo by MATT BROWN via Flickr

Right photo by SHIROKAZAN via Flickr

vote for contradictory things such as more public spending and lower taxes.

John gave an excellent argument on why the three main parties are failing, with a simple exercise. If you write a paragraph for each of the parties in the next election that explains the vision each party would like to create. This would relatively easy for the Greens, UKIP and SNP, but much harder for Labour, the Conservatives and LibDems. They don't have a narrative, despite the evidence being they are more different than at any election in the last twenty years.

Dr Ben Worthy summarised the debate saying that policies and personalities are bound together. Obama and Google crunched the data now available to win the last two elections, and Vote for Policies puts those tools in our hands. We do live in a new digital and political landscape and the internet amplifies the good and the bad of the current system. The internet is disruptive and part of the political ecosystem now, but it is still in its infancy. At this stage with the printing press there had been no reformation or schisms.

The one word that didn't come up in concerns about personalities was demagogue - a political leader who seeks support by appealing to popular desires and prejudices rather than by using rational argument. The politics of a popular personality has worrying precedents in human history. The examples of politicians who distort facts (or lie) to suit their narrative, use a supportive media to create a public image that belies extreme political ideology or ignore firm policy commitments once in office are numerous and rising.

We need to make informed choices at elections, but we also need root and branch reform of our entire electoral system rather than a vote every five years.

You can use the Vote for Policies survey here [*https://voteforpolicies.org.uk/*] or access their 2010 data here [*https://voteforpolicies.org.uk/blog/announcing-vote-for-policies-data/*].

WRITE FOR US



Whether anonymously, under a pseudonym, or with your name published loud and clear.

Journalism is changing rapidly through a digital and social media revolution. It is no longer the preserve of press barons and elite groups; journalism is now democratic and everyone has a voice.

And though that means there's a lot of noise and rubbish out there, there's a lot of great stuff too.

The role of media has changed. We still write stories every day about the amazing people and organisations that make a positive difference to the world in which we live, but we also promote and publish the most relevant blogs, tweets and articles from our readers.

We want to report on the diverse voices of our audience and beyond—regular people writing as travellers, investors and consumers.

So, if you blog, tweet or write about sustainability we want to hear from you. You don't need to be an experienced or aspiring writer or worry about article length, spelling or grammar—we'll tidy that up for you.

We can't publish everything, but if it's likely to resonate with our readers or challenge them in some way, you'll fly to the top of our list.

Join us today by emailing editor@blueandgreentomorrow.com with your thoughts and contributions.

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38 DEGREES
people. power. change.

INSTITUTE FOR GOVERNMENT

Vote for Policies

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THE LEADING INDEPENDENT VOICES IN BRITISH POLITICS

full fact

Unlock Democracy

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Keeping tabs on the UK's parliaments & assemblies

HANSARD SOCIETY

Read the article about Vote for Policies on page ## and the article about the Electoral Reform Scoiety on page ##.

38 Degrees
(UK rank 877, sites linking in 1,011)

38 Degrees is an independent British not-for-profit political-activism organisation that campaigns on a wide range of issues. It describes itself as being "*progressive*" and claims to "*campaign for fairness, defend rights, promote peace, preserve the planet and deepen democracy in the UK*".

In October 2013, it was reported to claim 1.9 million UK members. 38 Degrees takes its name from the critical angle at which the incidence of a human-triggered avalanche is greatest.

38degrees.org.uk

TheyWorkForYou
(UK rank 6,601, sites linking in 2,657)

TheyWorkForYou tracks speeches and activities of Member of Parliament, including presenting an accessible version of Hansard. TheyWorkForYou is a website run by mySociety, a project of registered charity UK Citizens Online Democracy, and is a tool for political campaigners and those interested in the Parliamentary activities of UK MPs, Lords, and Northern Ireland MLAs.

The site aggregates content from the Hansard records of the House of Commons, House of Lords, Scottish Parliament and the Northern Ireland Assembly, along with other publicly available data such as the MPs Register of Members' Interests, election results, Wikipedia entries, and voting records, providing a "*digital dossier on your local MP*". It also has a facility to alert users by email to speeches by an MP or specific words appearing in Hansard.

In 2008, The Daily Telegraph rated it 41st in a list of the 101 most useful websites.

theyworkforyou.com

Full Fact
(UK rank 13,178, sites linking in 367)
Full Fact is an independent fact checking organisation. They provide free tools, information and advice, so that anyone can check the claims they hear from politicians and the media. Since they launched in 2010, nearly every national newspaper — from the Sun to the Financial Times — and politicians from across the political spectrum have issued corrections at their request.

Full Fact has a cross party board of Trustees with extensive experience in politics, business and the media. Their work has been used by people of all parties, and their research has appeared in a range of media outlets. They link to all their sources so that people can judge issues for themselves.

fullfact.org

Institute for Government
(UK rank 82,124, sites linking in 330)

The Institute for Government is an independent charity working to increase government effectiveness. They work with all the main political parties at Westminster and with senior civil servants in Whitehall. They provide evidence based advice that draws on best practice from around the world. They undertake research, provide the highest quality development

"...campaign for fairness, defend rights, promote peace, preserve the planet and deepen democracy in the UK"
38 Degrees

opportunities for senior decision makers and organise various events to invigorate and provide fresh thinking on the issues that really matter to the government.

instituteforgovernment.org.uk

Hansard Society
(Global rank 2.5m, sites linking in 446)

The Hansard Society was formed in 1944 to promote parliamentary democracy. Founded and chaired by Commander Stephen King-Hall, the first subscribers were Winston Churchill and Clement Attlee. The Society's co-Presidents are the Speaker of the House of Commons John Bercow and the Lord Speaker Baroness D'Souza, and the Vice-Presidents are the leaders of the Labour, Conservative and the Liberal Democrat parties. The Society is named after the Hansard Parliamentary Record, which publishes the proceedings of the British parliament.

More than 60 years on, the Hansard Society claims to be universally recognised as the independent and non-partisan authority on Parliament and democracy. Their work encompasses a wide range of areas, from citizenship education to the role of Parliament, from devolution to the impact of new media on politics today.

In addition, the Society organises a variety of events in Westminster with high-profile speakers, influential seminars and popular fringe events at Party Conferences.

hansardsociety.org.uk

Unlock Democracy
(Global rank 3.1m, sites linking in 191)

Unlock Democracy is a British pressure group, based in London. The organisation campaigns for a more participatory democracy in Britain, founded upon a written constitution.

Unlock Democracy works to promote democratic reform across the political spectrum and is not aligned with any political party. The organisation's activities include producing a range of publications, lobbying politicians and political parties and working on projects to promote greater public involvement in politics, at both a local and a national level.

Unlock Democracy is governed by an annually elected membership council and from that a management board. It is funded from three main sources: grant income for specific projects from various foundations and trusts, subscriptions and donations from its members and supporters, and income from its subsidiary company Rodell Properties Ltd.

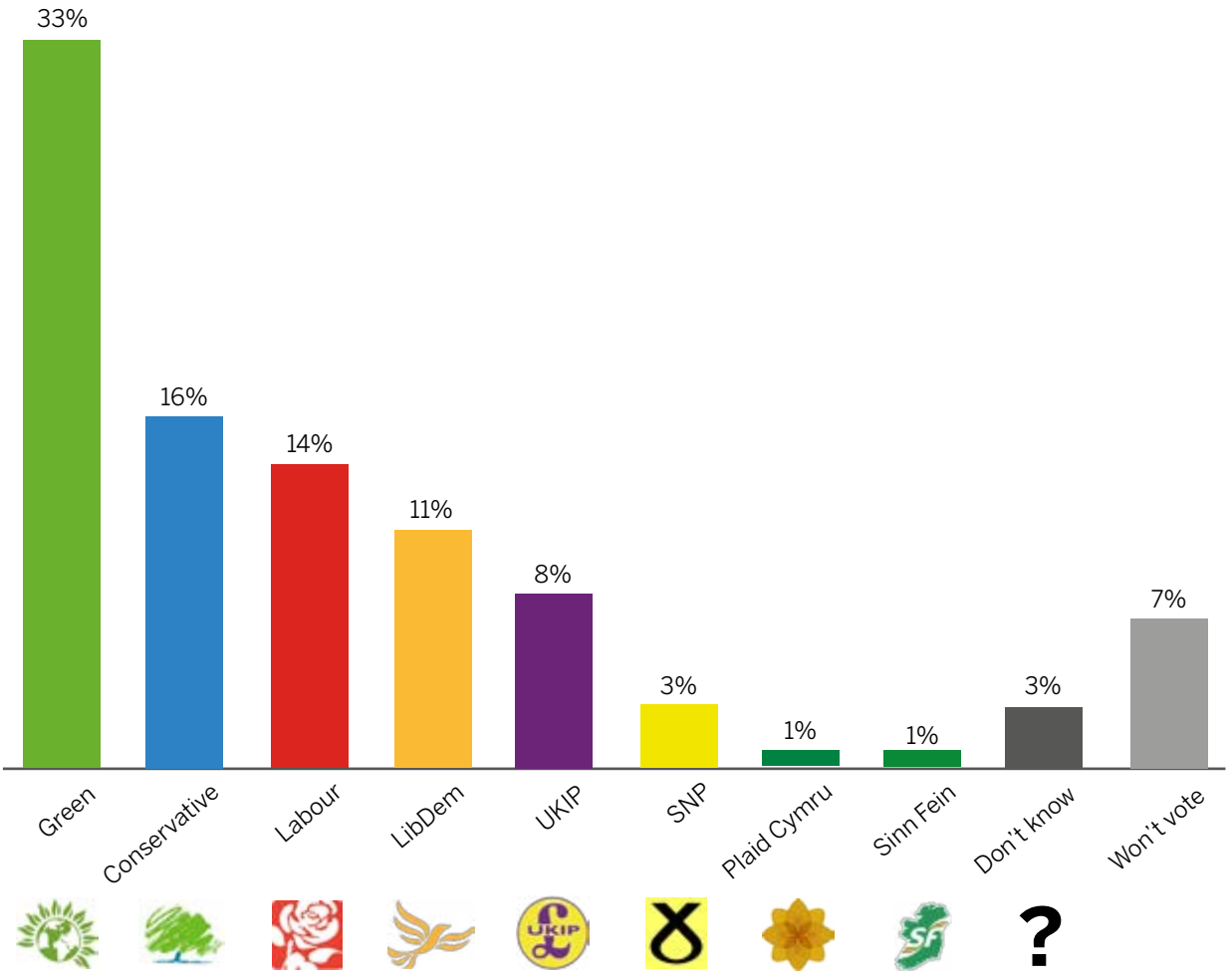
The founding Director was Peter Facey. He was Director of Unlock Democracy's predecessor organisation the New Politics Network in 2001 and latter also becoming Director of Charter 88. He was responsible for merger of the two organisations in 2007.He was replaced as Director in 2013 by long time deputy Director Alexandra Runswick.

unlockdemocracy.org.uk

From Wikipedia, the free online encyclopedia.

IF THE GENERAL ELECTION WERE HELD TOMORROW, WHICH PARTY WOULD YOU VOTE FOR?

In the run up to the May 7th general election we have been running an online poll of Blue & Green Tomorrow readers, exploring which party they intended to vote for. 550 of our readers responded, with 33% of them saying they would vote for the Green Party. Conservatives marginally pipped Labour with 16% of the vote, with Labour on 14%. LibDems came in not far behind Labour at 11%, UKIP got 8% of the vote and 5% voted for the Nationalist parties. Interestingly, out of those who voted 93% said they will be voting in the general election, which is significantly higher than the UK population. Only 65% of the electorate turned out in 2010.





POLICIES AND THE PATH TO A SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACY

By MATT CHOCQUEEL-MANGAN

"...it seems that knowing what a party actually stands for appears to have a significant impact on increasing voting intention, according to our research, by as much as 25%"

It's simple. If we want a sustainable democracy, we need to focus on policies.

If we want higher turnout rates, we need to focus on the policies on offer. If we want a more accountable government, we need to focus on the policies they promised. If we want our society to adapt and evolve, we need to focus on the policies that work (and those that don't). I may be repeating myself but just to be clear... we need to focus on policies

Vote for Policies, the policy comparison service I set up before the 2010 general election, demonstrates the power of policies in increasing voter engagement and - according to the research that we are doing with The Birkbeck Institute for Social Research - voter turnout too. That's right, it seems that knowing what a party actually stands for appears to have a significant impact on increasing voting intention, according to our research, by as much as 25%.

Our focus after May 7th will turn to accountability - using policies to close the loop in the election process by measuring how well the government or coalition meets their election promises. To do this, we need a new, highly inclusive and accessible service - something for the disengaged majority as much as the policy nerds (including me). And crucially one that provides balanced and fair explanations as to why some promises are met and others aren't. Because despite our appetite for certainty, the reality is rarely black and white. Darn it, we might learn something about the political process - and the challenges our politicians face.

And then to the role of policies in society. If we want our society to evolve, we need to see which policies work, which policies don't, and why. This is probably the biggest challenge as it requires two key changes. Firstly, listening to a wider range of expertise to understand how our society works - particularly those people who work at the coal face, such as teachers, social workers, psychologists, the police, charities and social enterprises. Secondly, we need to become better listeners and therefore be able to discuss new ideas and viewpoints that challenge our own values, without defaulting to adversarial 'I win, you lose' exchanges. Our ability to learn from each other is what will enable - or stifle - our progress as a society.

Back to the present

The 2015 general election will be seen as a landmark election for digital democracy. The number of online voter advice services has rocketed compared to 2010. All of these services offer slightly different approaches depending on the audience they're serving. But what unites them all is their focus on policies. And the fact that they all work.

The task before us is to make sure our government is accountable to the policies that have been pledged. Vote for Policies is going to do this by tracking progress and reporting it back to the public, and creating discussions that engage the electorate more than once every five years. We going to make it clear that policies (and promises) matter.

It's not about designing the solution, it's about designing a system that allows solutions to be found, and one where we can change and adapt much more quickly than we do now. Greater focus on policies is the key that unlocks it all. Simple. Not easy. But achievable.

HOW DO WE MAKE OUR DEMOCRACY MORE SUSTAINABLE?

By Josiah Mortimer





Photo by MAURICE via Flickr

"Taking big decisions out of the hands of politicians and putting them directly in the hands of people can help rebuild some trust in politics."

There are three core principles for a sustainable democracy: it needs to be representative, participatory, and open.

Unfortunately, we're failing on all those fronts. And that's reflected in the fact that so few people vote these days – just 65% at the last election compared to nearly 80% in 1992.

'Out of touch'

Let's start with our democracy's representativeness. As things stand, less than a quarter of MPs are female. That means we're 56th in the world in terms of gender equality in Parliament. At the Electoral Reform Society, we've predicted that this will rise to 29% on May 7th. But that's still a long way off what we would need for women to be fairly represented. And even with this expected rise, we'll still be 36th in the world, which is very far behind most advanced democracies.

The figures for ethnic minorities, disabled people and working-class representation are even worse. Parliament, let's face it, does not look like the public. And that's a big problem in a supposedly 'representative democracy' – how are people expected to trust a House that doesn't accurately represent them?

There's another element to representativeness. People's votes aren't truly reflected in election results. We will see this clearly in May. Why?

Our '*First Past the Post*' electoral system was designed for another era, when two parties went head to head against each other. That's not what politics looks like today. As the leaders' debates have shown, we're now a truly multi-party democracy. And that's a good thing. There are a wide range of voices, with different policies and different visions for Britain.

Yet our electoral system isn't cut out for it. And that makes it, well, unsustainable. On May 7th, the Green Party and UKIP could get up to a fifth of the vote – but less than 1% of seats in Parliament. That's because the small constituencies and majoritarian nature of the current voting system favours big parties. Larger, multi-member constituencies elected with a proportional voting system would represent these other parties more accurately – almost eliminating *'safe seats'* and stirring up politics.

Moreover, the vote shares of the major parties are in long-term decline as the party system fragments. An electoral system which ignores that fact cannot – and probably will not – hold. Introducing proportional representation at a local level would be a great first step towards the kind of democracy people deserve. That's not to mention the House of Lords, a chamber which just keeps on growing with party hacks and donors, and which is even less representative than our pale, male and stale Commons.

Opening Up

But as well as being unrepresentative, our politics isn't particularly participatory either. Politics and parties need to open up to the modern age.

That means making it far easier to register to vote, opening up parties to non-members and supporters, and introducing votes at 16.

Of course, it's not for us to decide how to make politics more participatory.



Photo by
BERNT ROSTAD
via Flickr

The Scottish independence referendum has left the UK's territorial settlement hanging in the balance. It's the perfect time for citizens of the UK to be given the power to shape the future of our country.

A '*Constitutional Convention*' - citizens coming together to properly debate these issues, and crucially, to come up with a plan for long-term reform - would make this process far more democratic than our usual, closed-doors approach to constitutional reform.

Taking big decisions out of the hands of politicians and putting them directly in the hands of people can help rebuild some trust in politics.

Levelling the Playing Field

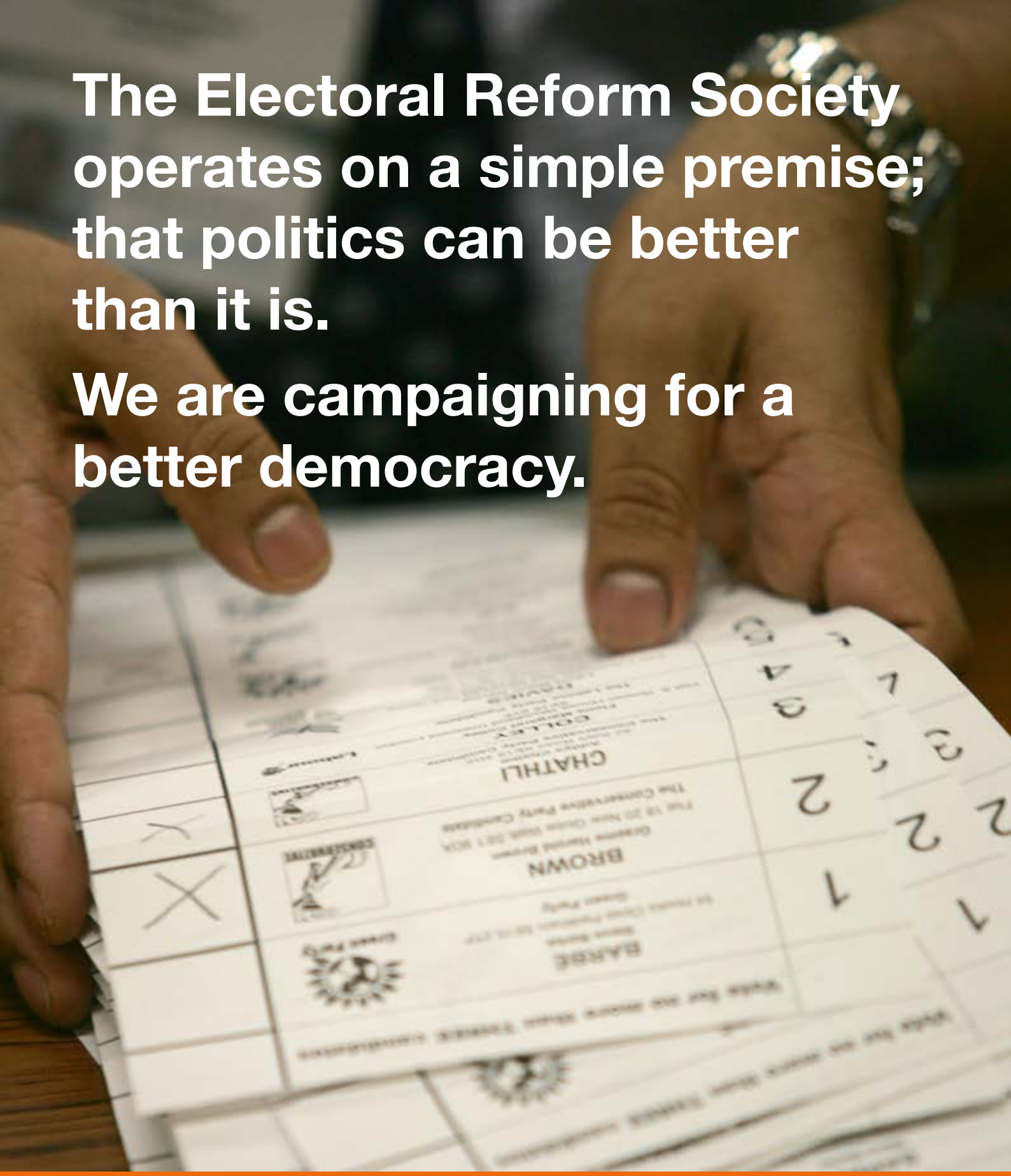
One of the problems is that we don't have a level field to even begin to do this. Parties are overwhelmingly funded by big players – whether that's rich individuals or massive organisations. With the main parties' memberships in decline, they have become increasingly reliant on these vested interests.

Greater public funding of parties, alongside maximum spending caps to stop the current campaigns *'arms race'*, and a cap on donations, would clean up our politics and take us some of the way to putting power back in the hands of ordinary voters.

Towards a sustainable democracy

All this may seem like an unachievable wish list. But in fact they are practical, sensible policies which all the parties can get behind. And if there's a cliché about May 7th, it's that the result will be an unpredictable one. In a hung parliament, small parties could actually push for these changes and win them. Our democracy would be all the better for it.

'Josiah Mortimer works for the Electoral Reform Society'



The Electoral Reform Society operates on a simple premise; that politics can be better than it is.

We are campaigning for a better democracy.

Electoral Reform Society

Join today at electoral-reform.org.uk

ElectoralReform ElectoralReformSociety



HOW DO WE ENSURE POLITICS LOOKS AFTER OUR FUTURE AS WELL AS OUR PRESENT?

By STEPHANIE LANDYMORE



All photos kindly supplied by RSPB

The health of our environment is absolutely crucial to our future. This isn't just about our enjoyment of nature: landscapes, birdsong, the scent of wild flowers. A healthy, well-balanced world ensures the quality of the air we breathe, the water we drink and the soils which produce our food.

At the RSPB we believe that to protect these things for our future, they need to be recognised in UK law, so together with the Wildlife Trusts and a growing movement of environment, outdoor recreation and health organisations we're calling for a Nature and Wellbeing Act to do exactly that.

There's an urgent need for this Act. In 2013, the State of Nature report, a review by 25 conservation organisations in the UK and its overseas territories, showed that something was very wrong with the environment. The report revealed that 60% of all species assessed had declined over the last 50 years. Nature conservation efforts have led to some remarkable success stories, but the overall trend for wildlife populations is downward. The reasons behind these declines are linked to the activities of people, and the things we do in pursuit of economic growth.

Meanwhile in human society, things are looking just as gloomy. Austerity measures in the UK following the financial crash in 2007 may be reducing our deficit, but economic challenges are still taking their toll on people. Income inequality has risen faster in the UK than in any other OECD country since 1975. We're living longer, but not healthier, and our National Health Service is straining under the pressure. And one in four of us will experience a mental health problem in the course of a year. Less than 10% of our children now play in wild places: that's 50% fewer than a generation ago. For many people, nature seems completely removed from their everyday lives and their communities.

The future of our economy and health service continue to dominate newspaper headlines and



public consciousness. But in these tough times, the future of our environment has been sidelined in the discussions ahead of elections. In fact, over the past five years it's often become a scapegoat, accused of being a "*barrier to growth*" despite there being no evidence to support this. The facts show the contrary: the environment is a net contributor to growth.

The reality is that this is an important issue for many people. YouGov's polling since the beginning of 2015 shows that the environment remains one of the top three challenges facing the country for around 9% of the population. In a European attitude poll last year, 94% of UK citizens said that protecting the environment was very or fairly important to them personally.

So the environment still clearly matters to the UK population, but when we come to vote it gets forgotten in favour of more apparently immediate concerns. So how can the next Government ensure that when the going gets tough, they are obliged to look up from the day-to-day grind of politics to think about our future?

They will have a good basis to work from. National and European laws protect our special sites from damaging development, our rivers and lakes from sewage and our air from pollution. These laws protect what we have. The importance of our natural environment for our economy, and to our health and wellbeing, has been recognised in a multitude of Government reports. From Defra's Natural Environment White Paper to the Marmot Review of health inequalities, there's a large stack of evidence supporting the case that the quality of our environment is a key contributor to tackling some of our most pressing societal challenges.

But we know that our environmental quality could be much, much better. Our 2008 Climate Change Act commits us to reducing emissions by at least 80% in 2050 from 1990 levels, with legally-binding five year carbon budgets. We need to secure nature's recovery, as well as our climate's recovery. It's clear we need to go much



further and for that we'll need new political tools. We need an equivalent of the Climate Change Act for nature, with an equivalent target: to restore nature in a generation.

That's why we believe it is time for a Nature and Wellbeing Act. The Act would have long-term targets achieved through policies to value, protect and connect people with nature.

If we keep measuring our country's success in terms of economic growth, our politics and economy will carry on ignoring nature. Of course the economy should be a primary concern. But when we try to address that concern we need to look beyond the financial perspective, and start factoring in our environmental future. Nature is an important part of the political debate around austerity and financial prudence.

We're calling for a stronger Natural Capital Committee, or Office for Environmental Responsibility, which would hold Government to account for meeting our nature targets. This committee would also ensure that the value of nature is built into decision-making from the outset, identifying environmentally sympathetic savings and avoiding costly mistakes that undermine progress elsewhere.

This isn't about monetising nature. It's not about opening the door to development. It's about valuing nature where before it's always been regarded as free.

The Parties have all presented their solutions to the housing crisis. But how do we expect to build hundreds of thousands of homes a year unless we take nature into account? How can we stop the mentality that means houses end up being built on floodplains, for example, unless we help people to plan for nature at a local level? We're calling for Local Ecological Network Strategies which identify where we need more nature locally. These would be factored into local planning decisions so that new houses and accessible green spaces can be planned together in a positive way, helping to reduce the delays to development that can take place now when nature and development are thrown into conflict with each other.

Often the wildlife that matters most to us is that near our homes. We need to give people the chance to look after those places.

And of course education and healthcare will remain amongst society's top concerns. In both cases, the environment can help. People who live within 500m of accessible green space are 24% more likely to meet recommended levels of physical activity. Reducing the sedentary population by just 1% could bring health benefits valued at £1.44 billion. The most deprived



Over 4.5 million people in the UK are members of environmental organisations – isn't it time their democratic voice was listened to?

communities are 10 times less likely to live in the greenest areas, showing that nature is also be part of the debate about living standards and equality.

There's no silver bullet that will save nature and ensure a sustainable future. But introducing a Nature and Wellbeing Act is one of the biggest things the new Government could do now to support our economic, health and housing solutions, ensure that environmental sustainability is properly integrated into our political system, and set us on the right path for well beyond their time in office.

Over 4.5 million people in the UK are members of environmental organisations – isn't it time their democratic voice was listened to?

To find out more about the Nature and Wellbeing Act and read the Green Paper visit rspb.org.uk/ActforNature or wildlifetrusts.org/NatureWellbeingAct.

Stephanie Landymore is a Parliamentary Campaigner for the RSPB.



Photo © PAUL COLLEY

AN UNLIKELY PRE-ELECTION CONSENSUS EMERGES IN MARINE CONSERVATION

By CLARE BROOK

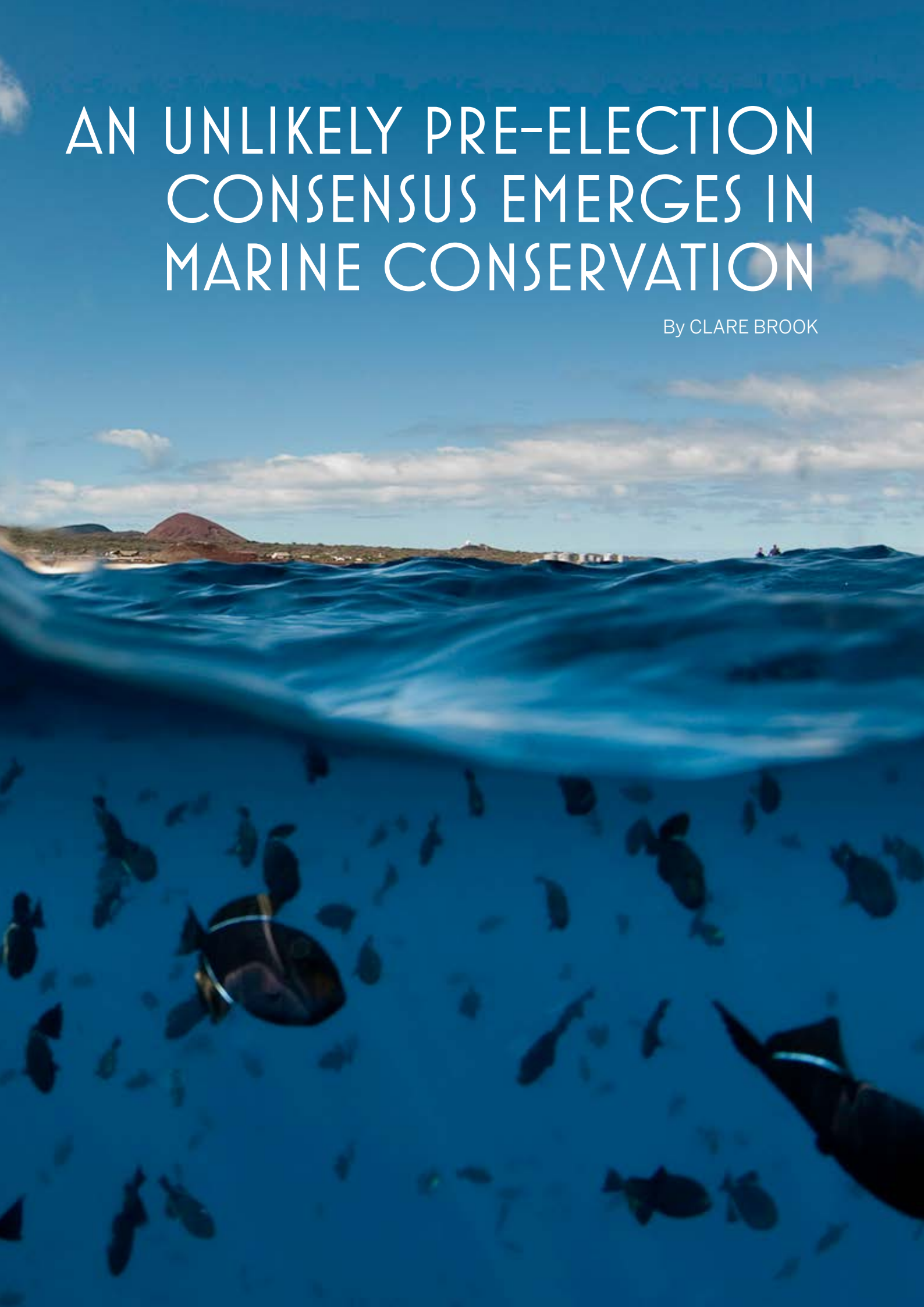




Photo © SMSG

Amid the clamour and rancour of the election campaign, and the psephological parlour game of who will be anointed kingmaker come May 8th, it is sometimes easy to miss an unusual visitor to our political waters: that of environmental consensus. Within each of the main parties' manifestos sits a commitment to ocean protection that, if fully implemented, will place the UK as the leader in international marine conservation.

The debate on the UK's relationship with the rest of the world often seems to be focused on how to keep as much of it out as possible. Yet one fact escapes many people's a ttention: we still possess, as one of the legacies of empire, 14 overseas territories that are dotted, like tiny pulsars of biological diversity, across the vast expanses of the high seas.

From Ascension in the mid-Atlantic to Pitcairn in the Pacific, from South Sandwich and Georgia in the far south to Chagos in the Indian Ocean, the directly-governed UK Overseas Territories - or UKOTS - and their surrounding waters lie in such varied territories that they each have extraordinary biological diversity. In fact it has been estimated that the 14 overseas territories contain 94 per cent of the UK's biodiversity. Many of their waters contained rare and endangered species. Ascension, for example, is a green turtle mecca and one of the last remaining hotspots for Atlantic megafauna such as tuna, marlin and shark.

The Great British Oceans campaign has succeeded in securing the commitment of the three main UK political parties to create reserves around three of these territories – Pitcairn, Ascension and South Sandwich and Georgia - with a prohibition on industrial fishing and a planned programme of economic and environmental management. In principle, this means that whoever enters Downing Street on



Photo © PAUL COLLEY



Photo © TONY PROBST

May 8th will bring with them a pledge to give protected status to the largest area of ocean in the world.

Two interesting comments can be made about the Great British Oceans campaign: It is formed out of a coalition of non-governmental organisations (including the Blue Marine Foundation, Greenpeace, the Marine Conservation Society, Pew, RSPB and ZSL). These organisations have found consensus in a common goal, and it was the strength of this unified voice that undoubtedly made the campaign so successful in such a short time. The success of the campaign suggests that coalitions can and do achieve results that are in the interests of the public – both now and for future generations.

Secondly, the speed with which this campaign achieved its success (just a few months from launch) must make it one of the fastest succeeding environmental campaigns ever. This suggests that not only was it a well run campaign, but that it was an idea that was timely.

For far too long, protection of the oceans has been out of sight, out of mind. In the pecking order of environmental concerns, the oceans are often forgotten. Political consensus and non-governmental consensus in the run-up to this Election has helped to reverse that position. For the first time, ocean protection is being given proper attention, and the UK is leading the way.

Charles Clover, Chairman of the Blue Marine Foundation said:

"We are absolutely delighted that the 'green' commitments in this general election now have a strong tinge of blue. This commitment throws down the gauntlet to other countries in the world with vast territorial waters to step up to the plate and create reserves of their own."

Clare Brook is the Chief Executive of the Blue Marine Foundation

www.greatbritishoceans.org
www.bluemarinefoundation.com

Reasons to Join BLUE

#1

An adult Bluefin tuna eats
around 31lbs of jellyfish a day.
So the fewer Bluefin,
the more stings.



We live on a blue planet. 71% of our earth's surface is water. Yet 90% of our big fish are gone. 90% of world fish stocks are fully or over exploited.

BLUE's mission is to get 10% of the world's oceans protected by 2020. We endeavour to bring about marine regeneration on a massive scale by creating a worldwide network of marine protected areas. In five years we have already helped to double the area of ocean under protection to over 3%. There is still a long way to go. If you care about keeping our oceans beautiful there are plenty of reasons to join BLUE.

To find out more,
visit **www.bluemarinefoundation.com/joinblue**
or call **0207 845 5850**

BLUE MARINE FOUNDATION

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PRASINUS CARTA

THE "BLUISH-GREEN CHARTER"

By SIMON LEADBETTER

"Welsh and Northern Ireland assembly to receive the same devolved powers as the Scottish Parliament."

In 2014, we gathered the detailed views of 1,426 readers and asked which of the 24 suggested reforms would improve or worsen our democracy. These are the 17 reforms that more than half of our respondants thought would improve our democracy.

The numbers in parentheses are the percentage of people who said that the reform would improve our democracy.

There will be:

1. MP recall for constituencies. Recall means that an MP who is found guilty of serious wrongdoing could be forced to stand down and face a by-election (supported by 93%).

2. None of the above option on ballot papers. A '*none of the above*' option means you can reject all the candidates, a formal spoiling of the ballot paper. If none of the above '*wins*', nominations are reopened and a new slate of candidates is put forward (83%).

3. Greater citizenship/political education in schools. Some argue that the level of political understanding in schools is poor, which is bad for democratic engagement. Others argue that this would be a back door for political instruction by teachers with specific political perspectives (82%).

4. Proportional representation - the number of seats reflects the proportion of votes cast. If you get 35% of the vote, you get 35% of the seats (80%).

5. Disestablishment of the Church of England. Parliament enjoys certain rights within the Church of England and the Church of England enjoys certain privileges in our democracy, including seats in the House of Lords. It is the '*established Church*'. Other democracies separate Church and State to avoid direct church involvement in legislation and political involvement in matters of worship (76%).

6. Greater devolution to countries and regions. The UK is politically and economically centralised in London. Germany and the United States adopt a more devolved federal structure, with more hubs of economic and political activity. Centralisation creates a globally significant megacity. Devolution creates a more dispersed democracy and therefore distribution of economic and political activity (76%).

7. Abolition of party whips and all votes to be '*free*' or unwhipped in Parliament. Whips encourage MPs to vote along a party line. It is seen as a way of making our parliament function more efficiently but seen by some as placing party over constituents (73%).

8. Welsh and Northern Ireland assembly to receive the same devolved powers as the Scottish Parliament. Scotland currently has more powers than the Welsh and Northern Ireland assembly (68%).

9. Equalising the electorate size of the Westminster constituencies (these currently range from 22,000 electors to 110,000. The average size of constituencies in Wales is 56,628, in Scotland 65,475, and in England is 71,858) (63%).

10. Compulsory voting. Ancient Athens did it and today, Australia, Brazil, DR of Congo,

"Legally binding manifestos - with areas of compromise in a hung parliament clearly spelled out."

Luxembourg, Singapore and others all have compulsory voting for some elections. As the ballot is secret, you can leave it blank or spoil it – but you have to turn up and vote (63%).

11. Creation of an English Parliament with the same devolved powers as the Scottish Parliament or other devolved assemblies. This would then address some people's concern about MPs from devolved countries voting on laws that won't affect their constituents (61%).

12. Legally binding manifestos - with areas of compromise in a hung parliament clearly spelled out (60%)

13. A codified or written constitution – the UK constitution is '*uncodified*'. It is a mix of statute, case law, precedent and convention. Many countries and UK devolved legislatures have '*codified*' constitutions i.e. a single document that describes who has what powers and how the democratic institutions work (59%).

14. More direct democracy, for example referenda, directly elected Mayors. The Athenians did it (57%).

15. A fully elected second chamber to replace the current part-appointed/part-hereditary House of Lords (55%)

16. MPs, rather than government, to determine the business of the House, currently the government sets the agenda for parliament. In other legislatures they set the agenda and government must encourage a member to bring forward government legislation (55%).

17. Lower the voting age to 16. At 16 a person can apply for legal aid, receive a community sentence, be detained in custody, have sex, move out of the family home, get married or join the armed forces with parental consent, choose their own doctor, work full time and drink with a meal. Some argue it is unreasonable that they can't vote (54%).

Five rejected reforms

The numbers in parentheses are the percentage of people who said that the reform would worsen our democracy.

1. Raise voting age to 21. It's at this age you can adopt a child, teach someone to drive and be sent to prison. Some argue that this is when you become an adult and therefore should be able to vote (72%).

2. Maintain the status quo. If it ain't broke, don't fix it (54%)

3. Independence for your country of residence, be that England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (48%).

4. MPs minimum age raised to 30 to ensure prior 'real world' experience. Not having had a job outside politics is the characteristic voters most dislike in politicians (42%)

5. Abolition of devolved assembly/parliament members (297 politicians) and replace with MPs of those countries from UK Parliament (646 politicians) e.g. the same Scottish MP sits in Westminster for UK-wide legislation votes and sits in the Scottish Parliament for devolved powers (39%)


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FAIR TRADE
THE GUIDE
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SUSTAINABLE
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GUIDE TO
ETHICAL ISAs
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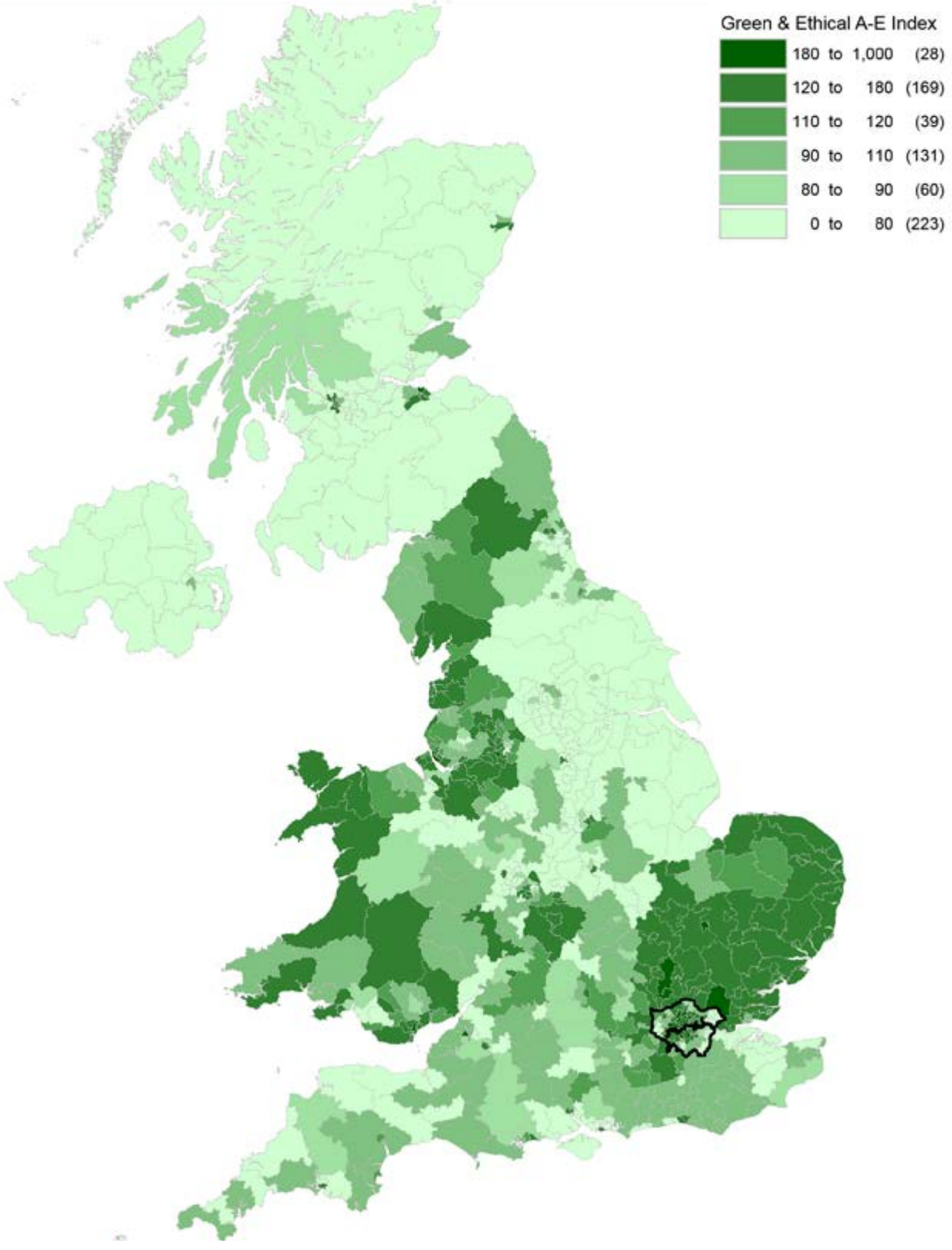
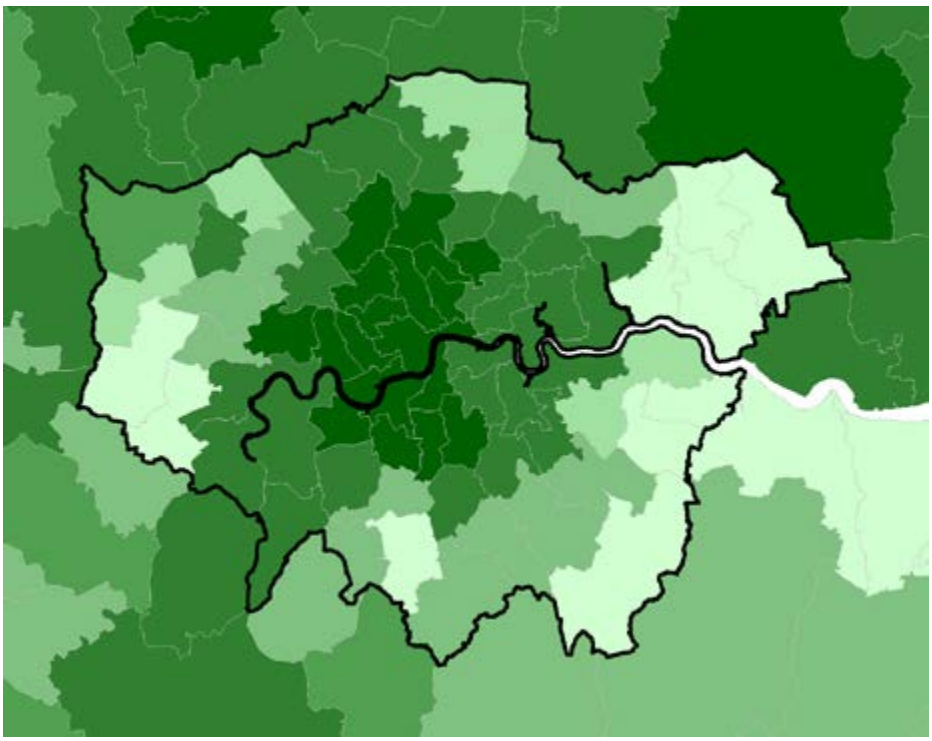
DIRECTORY
SUSTAINABLE
HOMES

THE GREEN & ETHICAL SEGMENTS





Green & Ethical is an individual level consumer segmentation system consisting of 13 groups ranging from those committed to the cause, those who care but do not act to those who are indifferent and do nothing.

In today's society, environmental and ethical issues are increasingly influencing consumer behaviour and purchasing decisions. These issues are starting to have a positive impact on the way consumers live their lives, how they shop, how they choose their energy provision and transport and even how they manage their finances.

This unique classification has been built to segment individuals based on their behaviours and attitudes towards green and ethical issues at a local, national and global scale.

Green & Ethical assesses the way in which consumers think about and act upon environmental and ethical concerns in their daily lives; whether through their purchase of goods and services, their consideration of provider or in their individual attempts to make a difference.

It considers such factors as:

- Environmental awareness, views and feelings
- Green living – including energy, transport, garden and recycling
- Eco and ethical shopping
- Green and ethical finances

The Green & Ethical

32% of the population

A The Righteous Rich – *5.8%*
They can afford to pay premium prices and almost always take ethical credentials into consideration

B Green Is The New Black – *7%*

These consumers see green and ethical issues as in vogue and consider them a fundamental part of their daily lives

C Eco Enthusiasts – *5.6%*

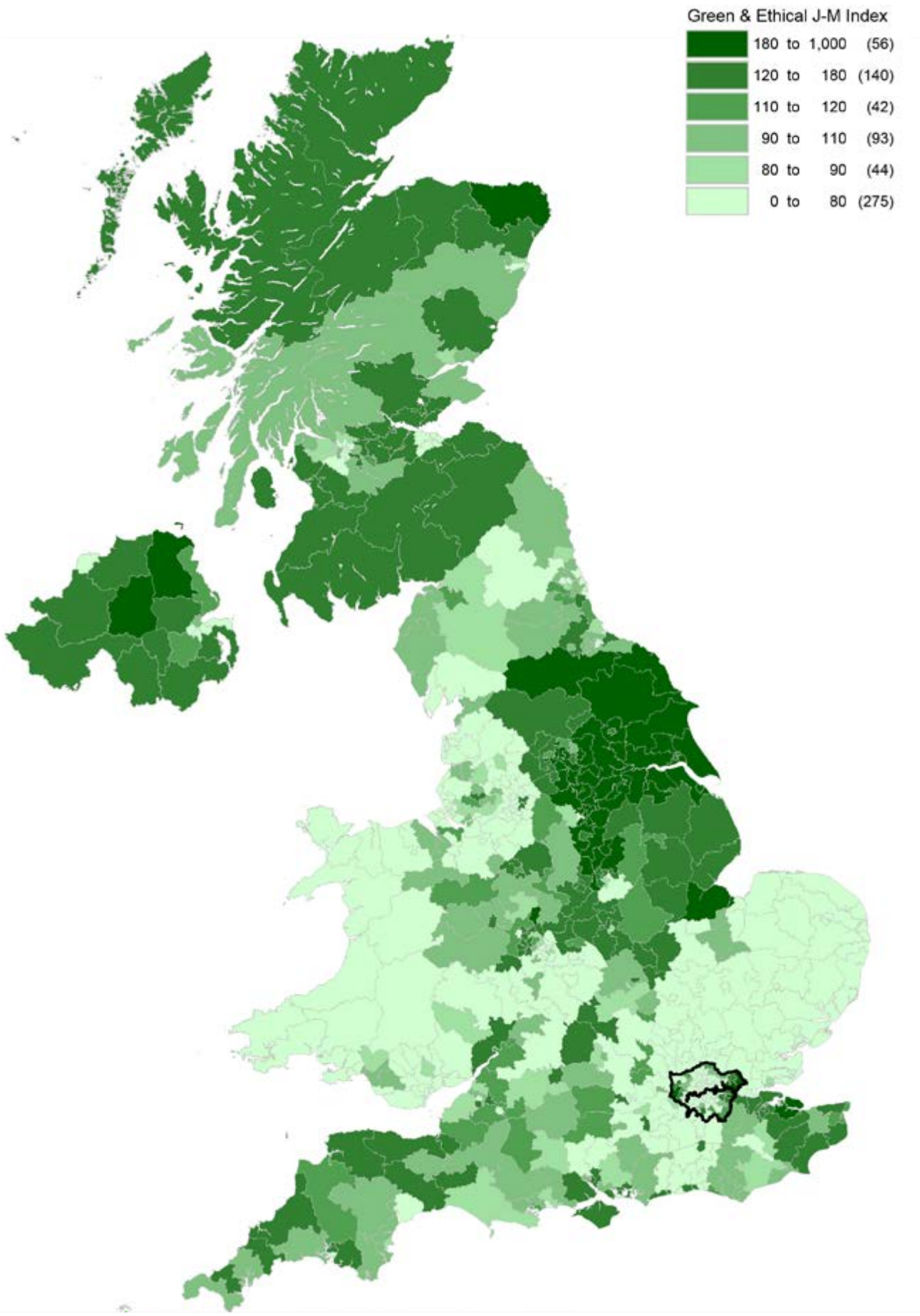
Keen to make a difference, they integrate green living into their daily routine

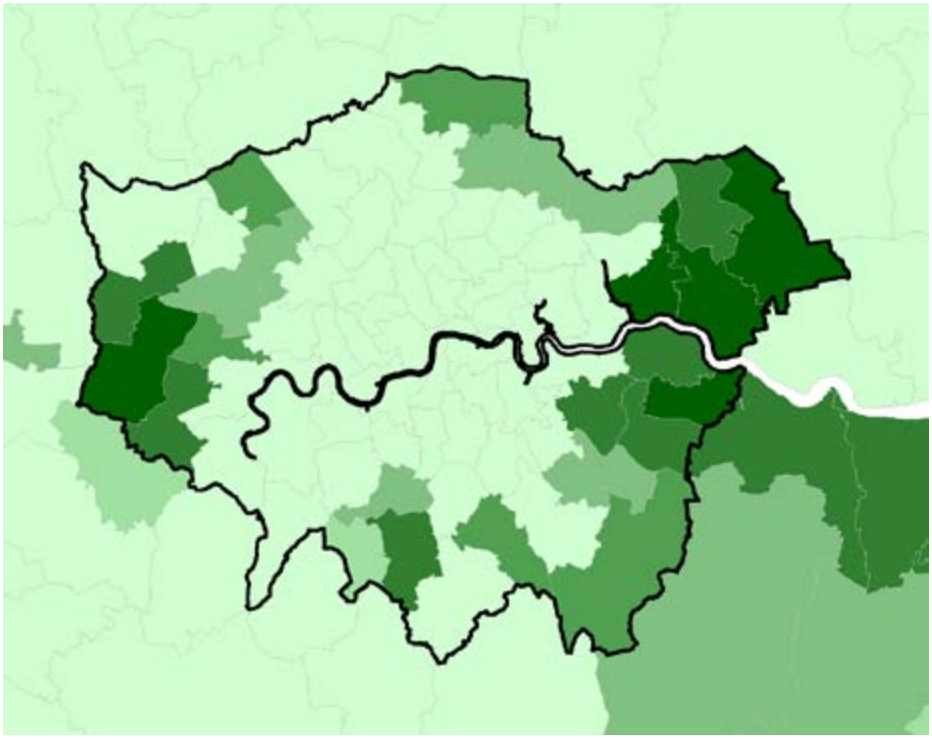
D Money Talks – *6.5%*

They believe they can personally make a difference and are prepared to contribute financially to fighting the issues

E The Good Life – *7.2%*

They always recycle anything they can and around half have a compost heap to help the garden or veg patch grow


Green & Ethical J-M Index
180 to 1,000 (56)
120 to 180 (140)
110 to 120 (42)
90 to 110 (93)
80 to 90 (44)
0 to 80 (275)



In the Middle
38% of the population

F Doing Their Bit – *7.8%*

Being on mid to high incomes, purchasing is sometimes influenced by green and ethical issues, but they often fail to put their money where their mouth is

G Green Drivers – *12%*

They contribute in their own way by driving green vehicles and trying to cut down on unnecessary car journeys

H Stuck In The Middle – *9.6%*

They would be willing to spend extra if they could afford it, but as it stands they are not willing to part with the cash

I It's Not Easy – *8.8%*

Some will have a family to support and may have to stretch finances further, meaning no budget is spared for green or ethical premiums

Not Green & Ethical
30% of the population

J Not My Problem – *9.3%*

They don't see these issues as their problem and are neither perturbed nor influenced by what other people think

K Skint Sceptics – *8.2%*

With relatively low incomes, budgets are tight so fairtrade, organic, ethically sourced products are avoided

L Other Priorities – *6.7%*

Juggling busy lives with low incomes, these consumers have neither the money nor the inclination to think green

M Am I Bothered? – *5.2%*

The general attitude is that if it costs money or takes any effort, they are not willing to get involved



THE MODERN MAGNA CARTA

By ASHLEY SUMMERS

Photo by MIKE KNELL via Flickr

In the lead up to the 800th Magna Carta Anniversary this year we're taking a look at the original and a series of modern '*versions*' of the Magna Carta such as the US Constitution and UN Declaration of Human Rights and various conventions on climate change and sustainability, Magna Carta for the Earth.

Almost 800 years ago, on June 15th 1215, the Archbishop of Canterbury's draft of the Magna Carta was finally agreed upon, in an effort to establish peace between King John of England and a group of powerful barons. This Great Charter, as it translates from Latin, included components calling for *"the better ordering of our kingdom"*.

When the despotic king immediately decided to ignore the outlined principles, the charter's intended significance was effectively lost in civil war until nearly the end of the 13th century, when Edward I rooted the principles into England's statute law. The charter was renewed by the ruling monarchy and became a prime constitutional foundation of political life within England.

Over the centuries, even as the Magna Carta's defined codes became less relevant, it was still maintained in parliament. Towards the end of the 16th century, there was an increased and revived interest in the Magna Carta because it was seen as a foundational basis for individual English rights. In fact, it was these individual liberties

"Such was "Magna Charta," obtained by the Barons, swords in hand, from King John"

that ultimately influenced and shaped the US Constitution as we know it today.

There were just over 60 original principles, although as they lost their relative significance, they were superseded by legislation. What remained was related to land ownership, resource appropriation, protection from illegal imprisonment, maintenance of church rights, limits to payments to the Crown, standardization of measurement and comparison, legal provisions, including anti-corruption/ abuse-of-power, property ownership, or post-mortem disbursal of possessions, individual or community-held rights, such as the promise of swift justice, and debt resolution.

Today the only remaining legacy is the powerful myth of Magna Carta and three clauses that concern the freedom of the English Church and City of London, and a right to due process, which famously declares that,

> *"NO Freeman shall be taken or imprisoned, or be disseised of his Freehold, or Liberties, or free Customs, or be outlawed, or exiled, or any other wise destroyed; nor will We not pass upon him, nor condemn him, but by lawful judgment of his Peers, or by the Law of the land. We will sell to no man, we will not deny or defer to any man either Justice or Right."*

There was intense debate over whether the U.S. Constitution needed a declarative statement of the rights citizens possessed. Some thought any powers that were not mentioned in the Constitution remained in the hands of the people and their states,

> *"Bills of rights are in their origin, stipulations between kings and their subjects, abridgments of prerogative in favor of privilege, reservations of rights not surrendered to the prince. Such was "Magna Charta," obtained by the Barons, swords in hand, from King John".*

Others, recalling how the British had changed laws during the colonial period, thought an explicit list of limitations to governmental power necessary,

> *"Ought not a government, vested with such extensive and indefinite authority, to have been restricted by a declaration of rights? It certainly ought. So clear a point is this, that I cannot help suspecting that persons who attempt to persuade people that such reservations were less necessary under this Constitution than under those of the States, are wilfully endeavoring to deceive, and to lead you into an absolute state of vassalage."*

Though this Bill of Rights, passed in 1789, was not part of the original Constitution, Congress had promised to pass it as its first order of business. These amendments include language taken from the Magna Carta, not least trial by jury (6th amendment), due process (fifth amendment) and cruel and unusual punishment (8th amendment).



Photo by
ROB YOUNG
via Flickr

The Declaration of Human Rights – to be human means that these proclamations are intrinsically woven into your existence; they are endowed upon you from birth and can never be withheld, retracted, or violated. These 30 Articles, applicable to all peoples, all around the world, encompass the truest sense of what it means to be human—to experience life itself with unalienable freedoms, liberties, and rights.

Adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 10th 1948, the Declaration of Human Rights was almost a direct result of the experiences of the Second World War. After essentially back-to-back World Wars, people were inspired to recover and establish an international layout for human equality. Article One sets the foundation for the Declaration, citing,

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

Articles Two through Six further shape the designation of treatment and rights as a human being, including: inherent freedoms of conscious thought, belief, choice, motivations, and modification therein, protections and liberties—purely and wholly—without bias. The additional Articles assert intrinsic liberties of nationality, justice, privacy, affiliation, marriage, movement, the right to own property, as well as participation in politics and government. Furthermore, the Articles stipulate an incorporation in society, the right to work, to have access to an adequate standard of living, health, education, community, development, and the rights to rest and leisure.

The General Assembly vote ushered in 48 votes in favour, zero against, and eight abstentions including those from the Soviet Union (and other former-communist bloc States), the Union of South Africa, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. South Africa's abstention can be seen as an attempt to protect its apartheid system, which violated numerous Articles. Saudi Arabia's disinterest stemmed from ideological aversions to Article 18 (right "to change religion or belief") and Article 16, on equal marriage rights. The additional abstentions claimed to be related to the notion that the Declaration didn't go far enough



with condemnation of Fascism and Nazism. Biographer Mary Ann Glendon suggests in her book, A World Made New, that Eleanor Roosevelt connected the latter's withheld in-favour vote to the Declaration provision of the right for citizens to leave their countries.

Partially an expansion of the Declaration of Human Rights, which was accepted by Allied Partners in 1948, the European Convention on Human Rights hones and addresses the geopolitical connectivity of European States. Originally drafted in 1950, it was put into effect 3 Sept 1953 by the Council of Europe. It provides that anyone who feels his or her rights have been violated under the Convention can take the case to court.

The document is comprised of Articles and Protocols that affect all 47 Council of Europe Member States. While similar in content to the Declaration of Human Rights, this Convention is designed with the European Continent in mind, focusing on the geographic, political, and historical closeness of the region. Additionally, it addresses the increase of communism in Central and Eastern European countries, thereby creating a protection for the Council of Europe from communist disruption.

While the first Article binds all signing States to uphold the Convention's Articles, Article Two and Three go into preserving and protecting an individual's life as far as State jurisdiction spans, and prohibiting torture and *"inhuman or degrading treatment of punishment,"* respectively.

Subsequent Articles cover servitude, liberty and security, fair trial, retroactivity, privacy, conscience and religion, expression, association, marriage, effective remedy, discrimination, derogations, aliens, the abuse of rights, and permitted restrictions.

Protocols in the Convention cover topics of property, education, elections, civil imprisonment, free movement, expulsion, restriction of death penalty, crime and family, discrimination, the complete abolition of the death penalty, and institutional protocols.



Photo by WWF ENGRO GREEN OFFICE TEAM advocating to protect ozone layer on the the guidelines of UNEP Montreal Protocol under the lead of Wajid Hussain Junejo

Other Modern Magna Cartas

Charter 88 (1988)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charter88#The_Original_Charter88

The Original Charter of Charter88 was brief, to the point and had echoes of the United States Declaration of Independence. It was explicitly concerned with institutional change, creating a list of demands on the government of the day.

Montreal Protocol (1989)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montreal_Protocol

The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (a protocol to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer) is an international treaty designed to protect the ozone layer by phasing out the production of numerous substances that are responsible for ozone depletion.

Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Framework_Convention_on_Climate_Change

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is an international environmental treaty (currently the only international climate policy venue with broad legitimacy, due in part to its virtually universal membership) negotiated at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), informally known as the Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro from 3 to 14 June 1992. The objective of the treaty is to *"stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system"*

Kyoto Protocol (1997)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kyoto_Protocol

The Kyoto Protocol is an international treaty, which extends the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) that commits State Parties to reduce greenhouse gases emissions, based on the premise that (a) global warming exists and (b) man-made CO2 emissions have caused it. The Kyoto Protocol was adopted on 11 December 1997 and entered into force on 16 February 2005.

The Earth Charter "seeks to inspire in all peoples a sense of global interdependence and shared responsibility for the well-being of the human family, the greater community of life, and future generations."

Declaration of Human Duties and Responsibilities (1998)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Declaration_of_Human_Duties_and_Responsibilities

The Declaration of Human Duties and Responsibilities (DHDR) was written for reinforcing the implementation of human rights under the auspices of the UNESCO and the interest of the UN High Commissioner of Human Rights and was proclaimed in 1998 "to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights"(UDHR) in the city of Valencia. Therefore it is also known as the Valencia Declaration.

Chapter 2: The right to life and human security
Chapter 3: Human security and an equitable international order
Chapter 4: Meaningful participation in public affairs
Chapter 5: Freedom of opinion, expression, assembly, association and religion
Chapter 6: The right to personal and physical integrity
Chapter 7: Equality
Chapter 8: Protection of minorities and indigenous peoples
Chapter 9: Rights of the child and the elderly
Chapter 10: Work, quality of life and standard of living
Chapter 11: Education, arts and culture
Chapter 12: Right to a remedy

FINE (1998)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FINE

FINE was created in 1998 and is an informal association of the four main fair trade networks: **F** Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International (FLO), **I** International Fair Trade Association, now the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO), **N** Network of European Worldshops (NEWS!) and **E** European Fair Trade Association (EFTA).

The Earth Charter (2000)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth_Charter

The Earth Charter is an international declaration of fundamental values and principles considered useful by its supporters for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society in the 21st century. Created by a global consultation process, and endorsed by organizations representing millions of people, the Charter *"seeks to inspire in all peoples a sense of global interdependence and shared responsibility for the well-being of the human family, the greater community of life, and future generations."* It calls upon humanity to help create a global partnership at a critical juncture in history.

The Earth Charter's ethical vision proposes that environmental protection, human rights, equitable human development, and peace are interdependent and indivisible. The Charter attempts to provide a new framework for thinking about and addressing these issues. The Earth Charter Initiative organization exists to promote the Charter.

Millennium Development Goals (2000)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Millennium_Development_Goals

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight international development goals that were established following the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000, following

"The 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference objective is to achieve a legally binding and universal agreement on climate, from all the nations of the world."

the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. All 189 United Nations member states at the time (there are 193 currently), and at least 23 international organizations, committed to help achieve the following Millennium Development Goals by 2015:

- To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- To achieve universal primary education
- To promote gender equality and empower women
- To reduce child mortality
- To improve maternal health
- To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
- To ensure environmental sustainability
- To develop a global partnership for development

The Cape Town Declaration on Responsible Tourism (2002)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainable_tourism#Responsible_tourism

The Cape Town Declaration on Responsible Tourism will have the following characteristics:

- minimises negative economic, environmental, and social impacts
- generates greater economic benefits for local people and enhances the well-being of host communities, improves working conditions and access to the industry
- involves local people in decisions that affect their lives and life chances
- makes positive contributions to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, to the maintenance of the world's diversity
- provides more enjoyable experiences for tourists through more meaningful connections with local people, and a greater understanding of local cultural, social and environmental issues
- provides access for people with disabilities and
- is culturally sensitive, engenders respect between tourists and hosts, and builds local pride and confidence.

Principles for Responsible Investment (2006)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Principles_for_Responsible_Investment

The United Nations-supported Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI) Initiative is an international network of investors working together to put the six Principles for Responsible Investment into practice. Its goal is to understand the implications of sustainability for investors and support signatories to incorporate these issues into their investment decision making and ownership practices. In implementing the Principles, signatories contribute to the development of a more sustainable global financial system.

1. We will incorporate ESG issues into investment analysis and decision-making processes.
2. We will be active owners and incorporate ESG issues into our ownership policies and practices.
3. We will seek appropriate disclosure on ESG issues by the entities in which we invest.
4. We will promote acceptance and implementation of the Principles within the investment industry.
5. We will work together to enhance our effectiveness in implementing the Principles.



Photo by
JOE WOLF
via Flickr

6. We will each report on our activities and progress towards implementing the Principles.

International Renewable Energy Agency (2009)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Renewable_Energy_Agency
The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) is an intergovernmental organization to promote adoption and sustainable use of renewable energy. It was founded in 2009 and its statute entered into force on 8 July 2010. The agency is headquartered in Abu Dhabi.

United Nations Summit to adopt the post-2015 development agenda (2015)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Post-2015_Development_Agenda

The Post-2015 Development Agenda refers to a process led by the United Nations that aims to help define the future global development framework that will succeed the Millennium Development Goals.

2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference (2015)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2015_United_Nations_Climate_Change_Conference

The United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP21 or CMP11 will be held in Paris, France in 2015. The international climate conference will be held at the Le Bourget site from 30 November to 11 December 2015. This will be the 21st yearly session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 21) to the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 11th session of the Meeting of the Parties (CMP 11) to the 1997 Kyoto Protocol.[2]

The conference objective is to achieve a legally binding and universal agreement on climate, from all the nations of the world. Leadership of the negotiations is yet to be determined.

LINCOLN'S MAGNA CARTA YEAR



By EMMA TATLOW

Magna Carta, meaning Great Charter is one of the most famous documents in the world and was sealed by King John in 1215. Magna Carta was the first recorded attempt in England's feudal history to limit the power of the monarchy, leading to the democratic society we live in today.

It is argued that without Magna Carta we wouldn't have Charter of The Forest; a charter that protects the rights of the common man, first agreed in 1217.

The heritage city of Lincoln is the only place in the world where these two documents can be seen side by side. Displayed in the David P J Ross Magna Carta Vault they form the centrepiece of the new visitor experience at Lincoln Castle - that has recently reopened following a £22m refurbishment project.

A programme of arts and cultural activity across the city will interrogate Lincoln's historic role in Magna Carta and what it means for us today.

A full list of events and festivals can be found at www.visitlincoln.com. Here are some highlights:

Magna Carta Lecture Series
30 January - 1 October
Financial figures, professors, lawyers and other thought leaders are taking part in a packed programme of lectures at various venues throughout Lincoln. The programme includes:

Lord Charles Powell - *May 15, Lincoln Cathedral*
Mark Carney - *July 16, Lincoln Cathedral*

The Great Magna Carta Weekend
13 - 14 June - City wide
Lincoln will celebrate the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta with a weekend full of entertainment. Including carnivals, live music, Medieval story telling, the launch of the Baron's trail and live entertainment at the Castle.

Lincoln Baron's Charter Trail
13 June - 13 September
A trail of 25 life size Baron's all designed by artists will be in the city for three months. The trail supports the Trussel Trust.

Eastern Three Choirs Festival
18 - 21 June
Tasmin Little and Piers Lane join the choirs of Lincoln, Peterborough and Southwell for a festival of music including specially commissioned pieces for Magna Carta Year.

Lincolnshire's Great Exhibition
27 June - 27 September
A magnificent exhibition of treasures, artwork and public and private collections - all with connections back to Lincolnshire. Significant items will be on display at the Collection, Usher Gallery, Wren Library at Lincoln Cathedral and Lincoln Castle.

Frequency Festival of Digital Culture
23 October - 1 November
Hidden architectural gems across the city will be transformed by artists responding to the concept of liberty and freedom.

visitlincoln.com/magnacarta for information.



LINCOLN
THE CATHEDRAL CITY









TAKE TIME & DISCOVER

LINCOLN

Castle Revealed

Take time to explore the stories of Lincoln Castle's history following a £22m restoration. Visit the David P J Ross Magna Carta Vault - the only place in the world where 1215 Magna Carta and 1217 Charter of the Forest are side by side.

Then explore the Medieval Castle Walls and visit the imposing Victorian prison.

The Castle and magnificent Cathedral are both William the Conqueror buildings and together they dominate Lincoln's skyline.

Browse the cafés, speciality and vintage shops which line the historic streets of Bailgate, The Strait and Steep Hill, 'Britain's Best Street.'

Magna 800 Carta

THE LINCOLN KING JOHN MAGNA CARTA
1215 - 2015









LINCOLN CASTLE

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THE PARTIES' MANIFESTOS

Over the next few pages we list the parties' manifesto commitments for the 2015 general election.

We cover three policy areas:

The Key Priorities
Environment
Democracy

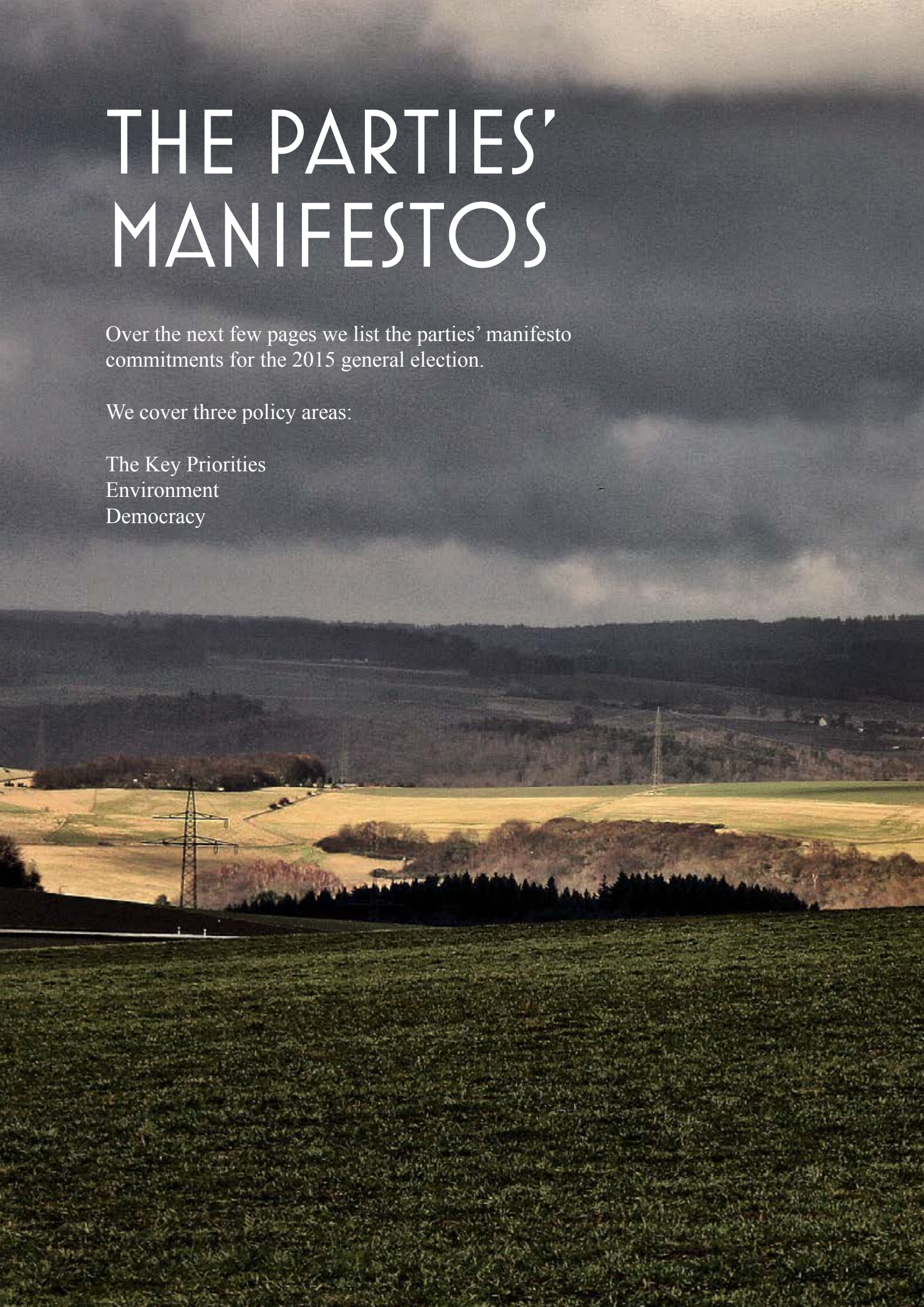



Photo by FAN D via Flickr

Manifesto: "public declaration explaining past actions and announcing the motive for forthcoming ones."

But what does manifesto mean?

EtmyologyOnline.com describes its origin as a *"public declaration,"* first coined in the 1640s, deriving from the Italian manifesto "*public declaration explaining past actions and announcing the motive for forthcoming ones,*" originally *"proof,"* from Latin manifestus (or manifest (adj.) late 14c., *"clearly revealed,"* from the Old French manifest *"evident, palpable,"* (12c.), or directly from the Latin manifestus *"plainly apprehensible, clear, apparent, evident;"* of offenses, *"proved by direct evidence;"* of offenders, *"caught in the act,"* probably from manus *"hand"*).

Possibly the most notable British political manifesto was The Tamworth Manifesto. Issued in 1834 by Sir Robert Peel, historians give it credit for having dissolved the Tories and laid down the principles of the modern British Conservative Party.

You can read the manifestos in full here.

- Green: *www.greenparty.org.uk/we-stand-for/2015-manifesto*
- Conservative: *www.conservatives.com/manifesto*
- Labour: *www.labour.org.uk/manifesto*
- LibDem: *www.libdems.org.uk/manifesto*
- UKIP: *www.ukip.org/ukip_manifesto_summary*
- SNP: *www.snp.org/*
- Plaid Cymru: *www.partyof.wales/2015-manifesto*

Party key priorities

Green
- End austerity and restore the public sector, creating jobs that pay at least a living wage
- End privatisation of the National Health Service
- Work with other countries to ensure global temperatures do not rise by more than 2C
- £85bn programme of home insulation, renewable electricity generation & flood defences
- Provide 500,000 social homes for rent by 2020 and control rent levels
- Return the railways to public hands

Conservative
- Eliminate the deficit and be running a surplus by the end of the Parliament
- Extra £8bn above inflation for the NHS by 2020
- Extend Right to Buy to housing association tenants in England
- Legislate to keep people working 30 hours on minimum wage out of tax
- 30 hours of free childcare per week for working parents of 3&4-year-olds
- Referendum on Britain's EU membership

Labour
- Responsibility "triple lock": fully funded manifesto, cut the deficit every year, balance the books as soon as possible in next Parliament
- Extra £2.5bn for NHS, largely paid for by a mansion tax on properties valued at over £2m



Photo by NIGEL'S EUROPE AND BEYOND via Flickr

- Raise minimum wage to more than £8ph by 2019
- No rise in VAT, NI or basic and higher rates of income tax
- Access to childcare from 8am-6pm for parents of primary school children
- Freeze energy bills until 2017 and give energy regulator new powers to cut bills this winter

Lib Dems

- Balance the budget fairly through a mixture of cuts and taxes on higher earners
- Increase tax-free allowance to £12,500
- Guarantee education funding from nursery to 19 with an extra £2.5bn and qualified teachers in every class
- Invest £8bn in the NHS. Equal care for mental & physical health
- Five new laws to protect nature and fight climate change

UKIP

- Rapid referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union
- Control immigration with points system, limit of 50,000 skilled workers a year and a five-year ban on unskilled immigration
- Extra £3bn a year for the NHS in England
- No tax on the minimum wage
- Meet Nato target of spending 2% of GDP on defence, and look to increase it "substantially"

SNP

- Wants new job-creating powers for Holyrood
- Will protect Scotland's NHS budget; cut waiting and introduce a one-stop cancer diagnosis
- Stands by free tuition and commitment to smaller classes
- Backs minimum pricing for alcohol to cut cheap booze and make "towns and neighbourhoods safer"
- Has a zero-waste strategy and backs low carbon transport
- Wants independence to "determine our own destiny and build the best future for Scotland"

Plaid Cymru

- Living wage for all employees by 2020
- Extra 1,000 doctors for Welsh NHS
- Scrap Bedroom Tax
- Transfer control of criminal justice system - including policing - to Wales
- Oppose renewal of the Trident nuclear weapons system
- Wales to get same powers as Scotland. Also similar funding - additional £1.2bn each year

"Double renewable electricity by 2020, aim to decarbonise the power sector by 2030, leading to a zero carbon Britain by 2050"
Lib Dem Environment Policy

Environment Policies

Green
- Phase out fossil fuel-based energy generation and nuclear power
- Reduce all UK greenhouse gas emissions to 10% of their 1990 levels by 2030 to tackle climate change
- Invest in renewable energy sources, flood defences and building insulation
- Ban fracking

Conservative
- Protect the environment and Green Belt in the planning system
- Spend more than £3bn to 2020 improving the environment
- Phase out subsidies for new onshore wind farms
- Invest £500m over the next 5 years towards making most cars & vans zero emission vehicles by 2050

Labour
- Freeze energy bills until 2017 and give energy regulator new powers to cut bills this winter
- Reduce carbon emissions generated during electricity production to zero by 2030
- Prioritise flood prevention
- End the badger cull

Lib Dems
- Double renewable electricity by 2020, aim to decarbonise the power sector by 2030, leading to a zero carbon Britain by 2050
- Plant 750,000 trees a year
- Charge for plastic bags
- Promote use of electric cars and public transport

UKIP
- Repeal the Climate Change Act 2008
- Protect the greenbelt
- End so-called "green taxes" to cut fuel bills
- Prioritise support for organic farms

SNP
- By 2020 wants 80% of electricity to come from renewables
- No new nuclear power stations in Scotland
- Electrify much of Scotland's rail network, delivering big carbon savings
- Plant millions of trees and expand marine carbon sinks

Sinn Fein
- Sinn Féin is committed to protecting and preserving the environment
- Totally opposed to hydraulic fracking in Ireland, vowing to block it at the executive
- Actively exploring alternative energy sources to ensure protection of environment
- Committed to promoting and supporting sustainable growth in rural and agricultural communities

Plaid Cymru
- Oppose fracking
- Welsh Climate Change Act to set carbon emissions targets for 2030 and 2050
- Increase investment and energy generation from renewable energy sources



Photo by DAVID HOLT via Flickr
Anti-fracking Demo Parliament, January 26th 2015

"Change all voting systems in the UK to ensure proportional representation"
Green Party Democratic Reform Policy

Party democratic reform policies

Green
- Establish a People's Constitutional Convention to radically change UK governance
- Give 16-year-olds the right to vote
- Further devolution within the UK
- Change all voting systems in the UK to ensure proportional representation

Conservative
- Devolve further powers to Scottish Parliament & Welsh Assembly
- Introduce "English votes for English laws" in the House of Commons
- Reduce the number of MPs in Parliament
- Equalise the size of parliamentary constituencies

Labour
- "Home Rule Bill" to give extra powers to Scotland over tax, welfare and jobs.
- Set up a "people-led Constitutional Convention" to determine the future of UK's governance
- Replace the House of Lords with an elected senate
- Votes for 16 and 17-year-olds

Lib Dems
- Devolve further powers to Scotland and Wales
- Bring in votes for 16-year-olds, and the Single Transferable Vote system for local and national elections
- Reform the House of Lords
- Cap annual political donations at £10,000 per person

UKIP
- Recall of MPs where 20% of local electorate sign a petition in eight weeks
- Reduce the Barnett formula and give devolved parliaments and assemblies further tax powers as compensation
- English only votes in Westminster

SNP
- Believes Scotland should be independent
- Wants full fiscal controls; would get rid of Trident from Scotland; but would keep the Queen as head of state and would retain sterling
- Wants full control of benefits, pensions and wants to stay an EU member
- Wants a written constitution

Plaid Cymru
- Same powers as Scotland, including similar funding - additional £1.2bn each year
- Additional powers over criminal justice, broadcasting and energy and areas of welfare and jobs
- Create stronger network of Joint Ministerial Committees between the four governments
- Support votes at 16, reform lobbying system to make it more transparent

Sinn Fein
- Committed to bringing about the reunification of Ireland via peaceful and democratic means
- Seeking new, agreed and united Ireland for all of us who share the island
- Wants to build a just, fair and equal Ireland, an economically, socially and culturally diverse Ireland
- Committed to ensure Westminster governments will no longer be able "to inflict right-wing motivated cuts" to public services and welfare

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Photo by MIKE JOHNSON via stock.xchng

WHAT DO I DO NEXT?

Having read through the Guide to Sustainable Democracy 2014, you might be wondering how else you can make a difference in your life. We encourage you to read our other in-depth reports, from both this year and last, on topics as varied as investment, energy and the media. But above all, we encourage you to act upon what you've read.



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FIND A SPECIALIST ETHICAL FINANCIAL ADVISER NEAR YOU

Sustainable investment is what we write about day in, day out. Contrary to the early-90s Des'ree hit 'Crazy Maze', which begins, "Money don't make my world go round", money is what governs almost every decision we as consumers and businesses make.

It's important, therefore, that we use it as a force for good. All the financial advisers listed are specialists in ethical investment and will help you choose the best possible financial solutions that match your values.

RELATED REPORT: The Guide to Ethical & Sustainable Financial Advice 2013 - http://bit.ly/GZegUA



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RELATED REPORT: The Guide to Sustainable Clean Energy 2014 - http://bit.ly/1nCNKU0



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While we wax lyrical about the wonders of doing good with your money, we're also of the mindset that consumers also want to have fun, kick back and relax. That's why we encourage sustainable tourism and responsible travel.

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RELATED REPORT: The Guide to Sustainable Tourism 2014 - http://bit.ly/1hD1MxQ

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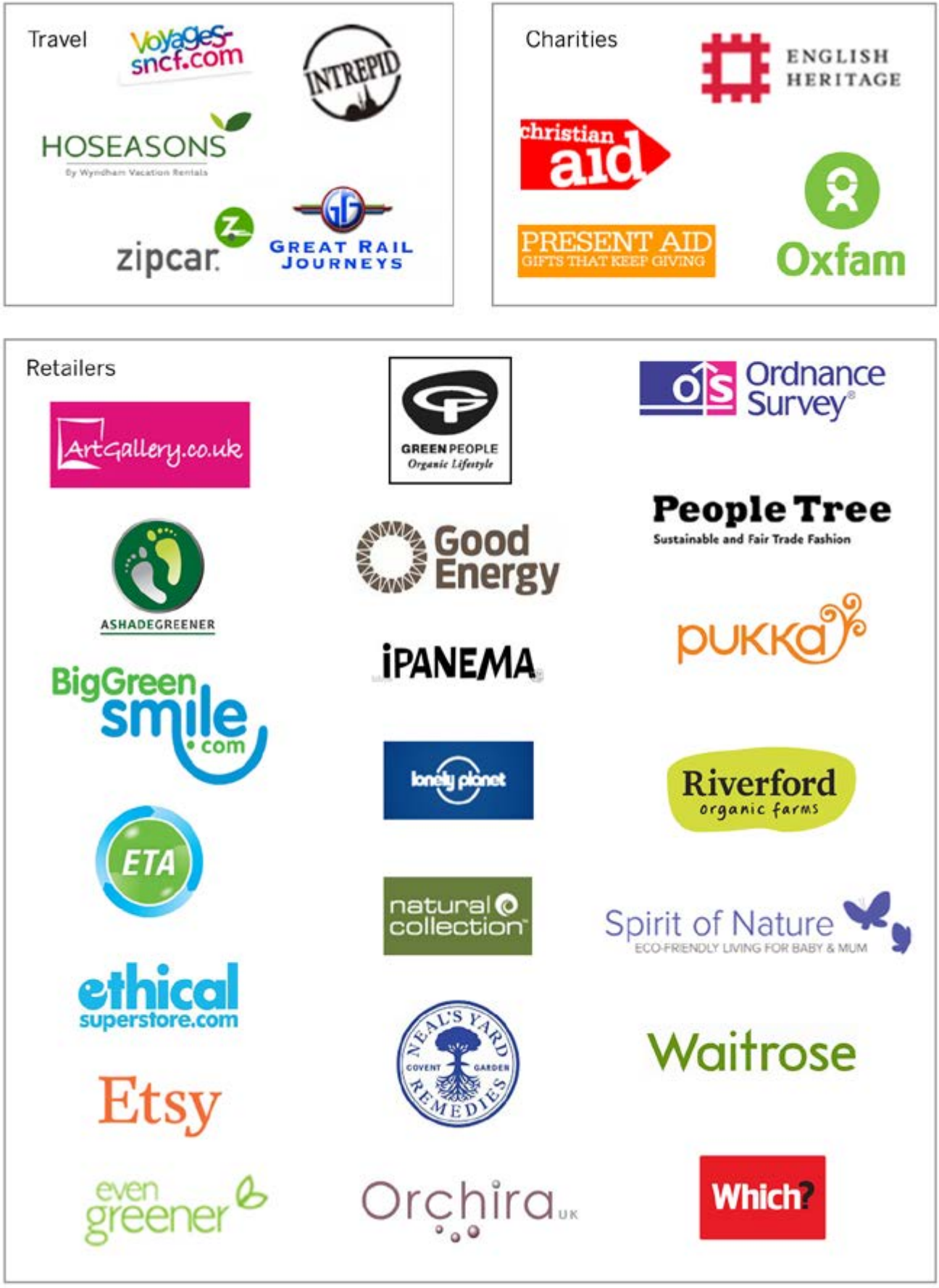

ETHICAL FINANCIAL ADVISER DIRECTORY

Blue & Green Tomorrow works with experienced independent financial advisers who specialise in ethical investment and understand how money can be used to create a secure future for you, for your families and for our planet. Give one of them a call and talk about your plans

You may even find you sleep easier at night if, like us, you want a better future for all. Your hard-earned money can do some of the hard work of making that happen while you sleep.



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3 **Equity Invest**
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w. equityinvest.co.uk

4 **Ethical Futures**
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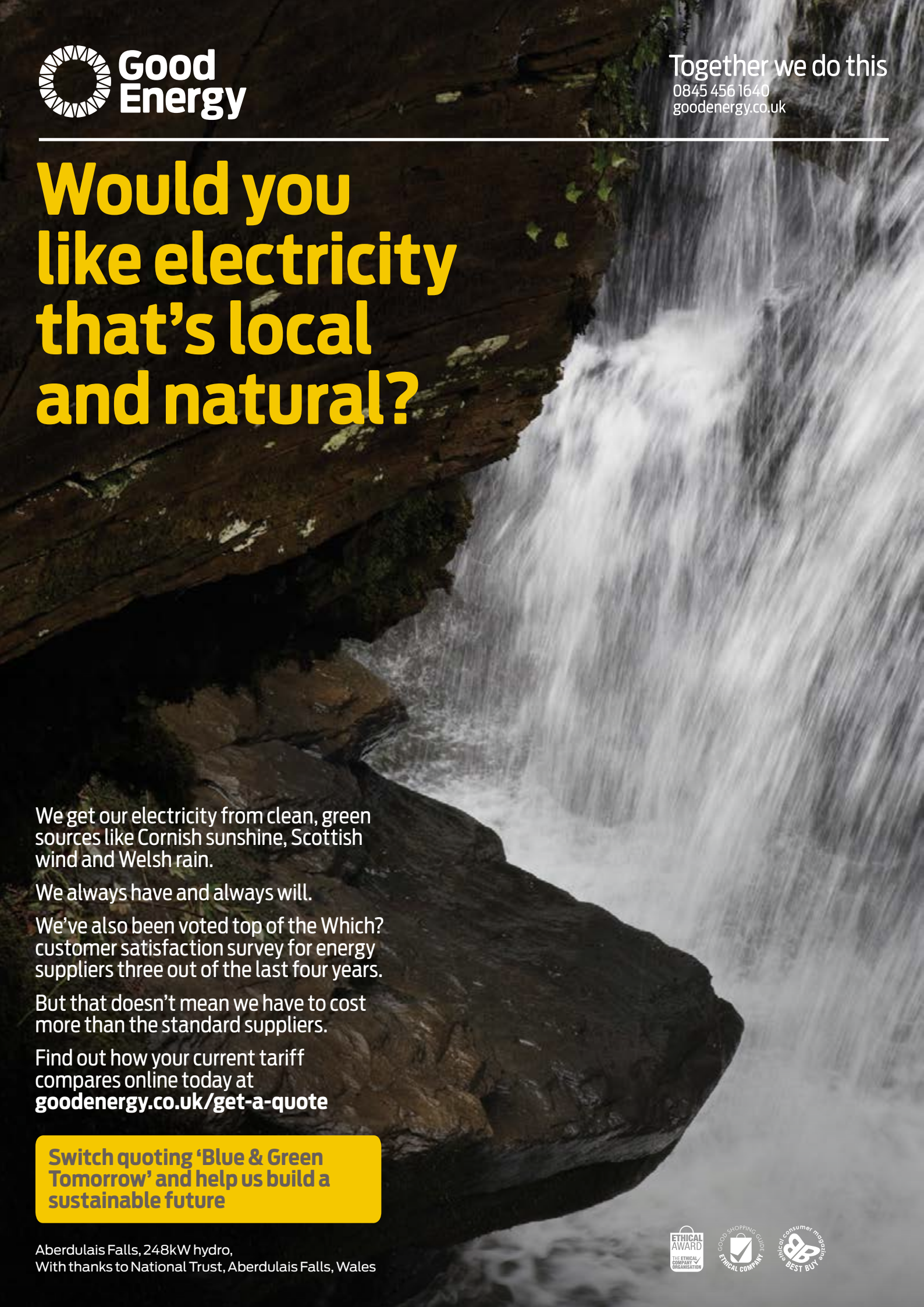

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Italy – TA049 – Centrally located Tuscany is set within a gentle hilly region known for its vineyards and olive groves. Therefore stay in a rustic farmhouse or a cosmopolitan town house and enjoy the Mediterranean fayre and of course the wine.