

Nature

Being largely confined to our homes during the pandemic has underlined how precious nature is and how important it is for our wellbeing. It has offered a mental space for reflection and connectivity, and a physical space for exercise and seeing friends (even if at a distance).

The government is failing to put in place protection of our natural world, something the Green Party would make a priority. Three important Green Party areas of focus within nature are:

Protection and restoration

- The Greens would strengthen protections given to the Green Belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Sites of Specific Interest. We would ban mineral extraction in all National Parks to preserve the havens they provide for wildlife.
- We would invest in peatland restoration to increase carbon capture and act as a natural defence against flooding in local communities.
- We would invest in ecotourism and rewilding schemes bringing about habitat recovery and benefiting local communities through tourism and job creation.

Reconnecting society with nature

- We would create pockets of green space throughout urban areas to promote biodiversity and help people access the physical and mental health benefits of nature.
- We would implement affordable, clean transport to reach National Parks through new cycling, walking and bus routes to encourage the enjoyment of the natural world on a wider scale.
- We would create a new 'ecocide' law to prevent crimes against the natural environment.

Agricultural transition

- An agricultural transition is needed to protect and regenerate nature. Intensive farming is harmful to the natural world through, for example, the use of toxic pesticides which affect the cognitive abilities of pollinators like bees. The removal of hedgerows and grass verges in an effort to maximise profit also leads to the destruction of habitat for wildlife.
- The Greens would work with farmers to transition them to more sustainable, diverse and environmentally friendly forms of land use, including organic farming and agroforestry in a move away from intensive farming.
- To facilitate this, grants would be given to farmers to encourage a new approach to farming, which would see millions of trees being planted and a radically scaled back use of toxic pesticides to restore a natural balance to the countryside.