

People's Plan  
for Nature

# The People's Plan for Nature

Report on outcomes of a RAPID  
democracy process

March 2023



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# Executive Summary

This document describes the creation of the People's Plan for Nature - the direct output of the UK's largest ever public conversation about the future of nature.

The **People's Plan for Nature** sets out the public's vision for the future of nature in the UK, and the actions we all need to take to protect and renew it.

The People's Plan has been developed through a creative, innovative and inclusive participatory process, split into two phases. The first phase was an open call for ideas and stories from the public. This fed into the second phase, the People's Assembly for Nature, in which 103 Assembly members deliberated over the contents and recommendations of the People's Plan. The People's Plan will now inspire a wider ongoing conversation about a nature-positive UK, as well as a practical shift from conversation to action.

## PHASE 1: THE NATIONAL CONVERSATION

Between 30 September and 30 October 2022, members of the public from across the four nations of the UK contributed nearly 30,000 responses to an open call for ideas and stories. People were asked to respond to three questions:

- **What do you love about nature in the UK? What would you miss if it disappeared?**
- **Imagine it's 2050 and nature in the UK is thriving. What is different from now?**
- **What exciting examples have you seen of people working together to restore and protect nature in the UK?**

Responses were invited via social media and gathered on a website, as well as through interactive installations at 74 locations across the four nations.

The aim of this phase was to start a conversation and build a groundswell of engagement and awareness, as well as to ensure that the Assembly could build on what citizens and communities are already doing.

## PHASE 2: THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY FOR NATURE

The People's Assembly for Nature was a robust and creative citizens' assembly.

- **103 people took part:** Assembly members were selected to represent a cross-section of the UK population, with weighted representation from all age groups above 16, different education levels, people living in different geographies across the UK, people from different ethnic backgrounds and people with differing levels of engagement with nature.
- **36 hours of deliberation:** Assembly members heard from expert witnesses, reviewed the ideas and examples shared in the National Conversation, shared their own experiences, reflected on different opinions on the future of nature and the changes needed, and engaged in facilitated discussions, from which they developed their recommendations.
- **4 weekends:** The Assembly met over the course of four weekends, two in person in Birmingham and two online, between November 2022 and February 2023.
- **40 speakers' perspectives** included academic leads, expert witness presentations, case studies and testimonials, question and answer sessions, group interactions and other resources.
- **45 commentaries and illustrations:** capturing the thoughts and visions of those who participated in the national conversation open call.

- **18 members on an independent Advisory Group:** to ensure the independence, freedom from bias and accessibility of the assembly design, the advisory group were selected for their knowledge and experience on a range of relevant topics. This includes the food industry; farming; nature conservation; health; participation; diversity, equity and inclusion; community engagement and national governments across the four nations of the UK.

## RESULTS

Based on this, Assembly members produced:

- **26 Calls to Action:** carefully crafted for national governments, local governments, charities and NGOs, businesses, individuals and communities.
- **Vision Statements** for the future of nature in the UK.

These form the heart of the People's Plan for Nature, a blueprint for decisions and action.

Above all, the Assembly members' work demonstrates the passion and power that exist among the people of the UK to work towards protecting and restoring nature.

“...Inspiring to be a part of the Nature Assembly - to feel part of the bigger picture, and make a difference going forward.”

— Assembly member

## WHAT WAS THE IMPACT OF THE ASSEMBLY?

Regular surveys of Assembly members' nature-related knowledge, attitudes and behaviours were conducted over the four weekends and compared to a control sample drawn from the general public. The survey results show early indications of the Assembly's positive impact on Assembly members.

Compared to the control sample, taking part in the Assembly had an impact on Assembly members' knowledge of nature, their views on who can and should be involved in protecting and restoring it in the UK, and on their own participation in nature-related activities.

Assembly members also said that taking part was an overall positive experience and felt that their contributions were valued. This indicates that the Assembly genuinely accounted for a diversity of perspectives and experiences, making its recommendations truly reflective of a breadth of views in the UK today.

The results also highlight the potential to support Assembly members to become more involved in nature-related actions and activities, including advocacy and campaigning.

The stage is now set for broader campaigns work, and the role of the Assembly members in this can be evaluated in the coming months.

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The People's Plan for Nature is part of an ambitious programme to build a sense of collective agency around the Save Our Wild Isles project.

The Save Our Wild Isles project is a unique partnership between WWF, the RSPB and the National Trust., centred around a landmark natural history TV series being broadcast in early 2023. Aiming to inspire people in the UK to value and protect nature, the project spans a full programme of activities including public engagement, mobilisation, campaigns and advocacy.

As the general public is inspired by Save Our Wild Isles and becomes more aware of the challenges UK nature faces, the People's Plan will be there to provide a clear way forward: demonstrating an irrefutable, independent case for political, business, and community-driven action, grounded in the will of the people.

We hope you enjoy reading this account of the Assembly and the resulting People's Plan. It provides genuinely citizen-led recommendations for long-lasting and vital change that will lead to transformative action for nature.

## DELIVERY PARTNERS

The UK's three leading conservation charities have come together to convene and fund the creation of the People's Plan for Nature: WWF, the RSPB and the National Trust.

New Citizenship Project designed the overarching strategic framework for the project, including the National Conversation, the People's Assembly for Nature, as well as the ongoing work to widen the conversation and translate it into action. This framework is based on a process called "RAPID Democracy" (the subject of a forthcoming publication).

89Up was the lead delivery partner for the National Conversation, with the responses analysed by the New Citizenship Project.

Involve was the lead delivery partner for the People's Assembly for Nature.

The Sortition Foundation led on recruiting participants via a democratic lottery.

# Calls to Action

The People's Assembly for Nature recommends all 26 Calls to Action as the **most urgent and influential actions to be taken now to deliver transformative change**.

The Calls to Action are written in Assembly members' own words and are provided in full in Section 4 of this report. The graphic below presents the key ideas of each Call to Action, grouped according to broad themes which emerged through the Assembly's deliberations.

We call for ↴

## Vision and Leadership

- Inclusion, in all commercial and policy decisions, of a way to assess the impacts on nature **(54)**
- More partnership working between campaign organisations working for nature **(29)**

## Regulation and Implementation

- Greater government accountability through a permanent Assembly for Nature made up of NGOs, industry, and public expertise **(51)**
- Leadership to assess the trade-offs between social and economic interests and nature protection, so that negative impacts of transition to nature protection can be mitigated **(42)**
- Stronger regulatory protections and enforcement **(38)**
- Businesses not to be disadvantaged by taking action to support the restoration of nature **(27)**

The number in brackets by each Call to Action is the **number of Assembly members who considered the Call to Action to be a "top ten" most urgent and influential action** in creating a nature-positive UK.

## Nature-friendly Farming

- An overhaul of current farming subsidy systems to prioritise sustainable and nature-friendly farming **(53)**
- Nature-protection-based farming subsidies **(31)**
- Inspiring more farmers to take a nature-friendly approach to their business **(29)**

## Food Production and Consumption

- A national conversation on how and why we should change our diets to support nature **(46)**
- Transparency about the sources of the food we buy, and its impact on nature **(41)**
- Companies involved in food production and retail to stop their negative impact on the natural environment **(39)**
- Food retailers to stop driving food waste **(32)**
- Increased access to sustainable, locally produced food **(28)**



We call for ↴

### Marine Protections for our Coastal Waters

- Sustainable fish stocks through reduction and reallocation of fishing quotas, regulating distribution, and remote monitoring to enforce standards (25)
- Establishment of Marine National Parks (22)

### Local Access to Nature

- Locally managed green spaces that support nature to thrive (36)
- A minimum of 12% of all space in new built infrastructure and retrofits is given to supporting biodiversity and linking people with nature for their health and well-being (32)
- Recognition of access to nature as a human right (19)

### Waterway and Catchment Management

- The establishment of a UK-wide water management framework that protects and restores the health of our waterways (39)
- Collaboration across river catchment areas to deliver ecological improvements that embrace nature-based solutions (31)
- Urgent investment in the UK's wastewater infrastructure to put a stop to sewage entering our natural environment (25)
- A fundamental change to habits and attitudes around domestic water use (22)

### Using Evidence Effectively

- Information about the state of nature in the UK to be more readily available and positively promoted to the public (45)
- A validated, transparent, and accessible evidence base to inform decisions and policies impacting on nature (37)
- Greater focus on renewal when talking to the public about the future of nature (28)



## 01.

# Introduction

This section introduces the People's Plan for Nature and the RAPID democracy model that supports the Plan.

It explains how the People's Plan for Nature has been informed by effective public engagement, and why it is a pivotal tool for galvanising transformative change.



## 1.1 Background to the Assembly

### CREATING THE PEOPLE'S PLAN FOR NATURE

The UK is home to some of the most incredible species on Earth — from puffins to orcas, beavers and butterflies. But our actions are pushing nature to the brink. The UK is now in the bottom 10% of countries globally for protecting nature<sup>1</sup>.

That's why three of the UK's leading conversation charities, the RSPB, WWF and the National Trust, have brought people and communities together to co-create a **People's Plan for Nature** to protect and renew UK nature.

Solving the nature crisis is a big challenge, requiring bold new solutions. Changing our approach to nature in the UK will also require the public to take a central role. As a policy issue, the nature crisis is not only urgent but also uniquely inclusive, in the sense that it fundamentally affects everyone regardless of age, ethnicity, social background, education level, personal interest in conservation, political views or geography. And because the nature crisis affects everyone, everyone should have a say in how we solve it.

To achieve this, the People's Plan was created using a process known as "RAPID Democracy". Developed by New Citizenship Project and inspired by the RAPID framework for corporate decision-making, RAPID Democracy breaks down the process of making a decision into five phases: Input, Recommend, Decide, Agree and Perform.

This structure allows different groups to participate in meaningful ways at different phases, leading to an output that has genuine public legitimacy and can therefore expect widespread support and participation in its implementation.

The People's Plan for Nature represents an intermediate output from this process, following the completion of the Input and Recommend phases.

The Input phase took the form of a National Conversation: an open call for ideas and stories, which received nearly 30,000 submissions in the space of a month.

<sup>1</sup>Source: Living Planet Index, Natural History Museum



This fed into the Recommend phase, the **People's Assembly for Nature**, which saw 103 members of the public spend a total of 36 hours hearing evidence, deliberating, and generating their recommendations: the 26 clear and robust **Calls to Action** which make up the People's Plan for Nature.

This report sets out these Calls to Action, which form the heart of the People's Plan for Nature. The Assembly members, acting as a representative sample of the national population, recommend these as the most urgent and influential actions to be taken now to deliver transformative change.

Different descriptor of who the actions are for here than in other places in the document: National Governments, Local Government, Charities and NGOs, Food Businesses, and Individuals and Communities.

The report describes how this, the biggest-ever conversation on the future of nature in the UK, was designed and carried out, and how all the components have led to the People's Plan.

## USING THE RAPID PROCESS TO DRIVE WHOLE-SYSTEM CHANGE

The RAPID process of participatory democracy is based on inclusion and innovation. It gives everyone a chance to influence the future of UK nature, whether as contributors to the National Conversation, as Assembly members, or in later phases.

The development of the People's Plan involved online and offline participatory methods, captured a huge breadth of views, and allowed for in-depth interrogation and expert perspectives. As such, it provides a firm basis for the wider public to now mobilise around its recommendations.

This is important because changing our approach to nature requires a whole-system approach. The RAPID process can unlock stalemates between different system actors (such as governments, businesses and communities) and allow the whole system to move. Indeed, this project demonstrates how all parts of the system can step into the power they have. As well as driving action for nature, this project contributes to a wider conversation about how power should be wielded and shared in the UK. This is highly relevant when it comes to nature but can also be applied to other complex systemic challenges the world will face in the 21st century.

The People's Plan demonstrates an irrefutable, independent case for political, business, and community-driven action, grounded in the public will. Using the People's Plan throughout 2023 and beyond can drive all actors through the Decide, Agree and Perform phases, unlocking stalemates in the system and encouraging transformative action for nature.

## 1.2 Navigating this report

### HOW THE PROCESS BUILT TOWARDS THE CALLS TO ACTION

#### 02.

#### **The National Conversation: an open call for ideas, hopes and stories about nature**

- Over **20,000 online submissions** from over 7,000 people across all four nations
- **8,000 people added leaves** to a specially designed tree-themed art centre activation
- **53 trees in England, 11 trees in Wales, 5 trees in Scotland, 5 trees in Northern Ireland.**

These insights then fed into the People's Assembly for Nature.

#### 03.

#### **The People's Assembly for Nature: a robust and creative citizens' assembly**

- **103 people** representing a cross-section of the UK population
- **40 expert perspectives**
- **4 weekends:** two online, two in person in Birmingham, with reflection time in between
- **26 Calls to Action:** recommendations for action carefully crafted for national governments, local governments, charities and NGOs, businesses, and individuals and communities

The Assembly was designed to create the core recommendations of the **People's Plan for Nature**. These **Calls to Action** are found in **Section 04.** of this report.

**Section 05.** explains the **Vision Statements** that Assembly members created.

**Section 06.** provides an initial **evaluation** of the Assembly.

## HOW THE INSIGHTS HAVE BEEN ANALYSED

The Assembly process gave rise to a huge volume of qualitative data. Raw data was generated through Assembly members' discussions with experts and each other, individual reflections and group work, as well as informal learning and thinking during breaks. The National Conversation also generated over 20,000 online responses which were thematically coded and analysed and fed into the Assembly in different ways.

The deliberations of each facilitated table at the Assembly were recorded on flip charts and Post-It notes. Structured handouts were also provided for the Calls to Action and Vision Statements.

The Involve team clustered the themes of the deliberations as the weekend sessions unfolded, and verified these with Assembly members during the later stages of the process.

The Calls to Action and other quoted comments in this report reflect Assembly members' own words. The Involve team has streamlined some Calls to Action where there was overlap, and clarified sense, spelling and grammar where relevant, but otherwise have not reworded them.



## 02.



# The National Conversation

This section describes the National Conversation which took place ahead of the People's Assembly for Nature.

## 2.1 Collecting ideas, hopes & stories from around the UK

The nature crisis affects everyone, so everyone should have the opportunity to be involved in the conversation about how we protect it. That's why the People's Plan for Nature process has created the UK's biggest-ever conversation about nature. This allowed the People's Plan to reflect the opinions of the public at large through a broad collection of ideas from across the UK, alongside the in-depth deliberations of the Assembly.

The National Conversation gave people across the country a chance to share their feelings, aspirations and ideas for the future of nature, as well as examples of what people and communities are already doing to restore and protect it. People were able to contribute via a dedicated website, on social media or in person through installations in 74 art centres, two football clubs and 26 historic houses of the National Trust spread across the whole of the UK.

Co-ordinated by communications agency 89Up, outreach for the National Conversation was conducted through the social media channels of the RSPB, WWF and National Trust, as well as through paid advertising and in-person experiential events. The resulting insights were analysed by New Citizenship Project and fed into the Assembly, where they helped to shape the People's Plan for Nature.

### The National Conversation: an open call for ideas and stories about nature

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- **8,000 people added leaves** to a specially designed tree-themed art centre activation.
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People were asked to respond to three questions:

1. **What do you love about nature in the UK? What would you miss if it disappeared?**
2. **Imagine it's 2050 and nature in the UK is thriving. What is different from now?**
3. **What exciting examples have you seen of people working together to restore and protect nature in the UK?**

Responses were shared on the People's Plan for Nature website so that people could read what others had written, "like" their favourites and leave comments. Responses were also woven into the formal deliberative process of the People's Assembly for Nature, including through an opening-night exhibition, curated by New Citizenship

Project, of 45 illustrations by artist Graham Romeiu, who brought to life a selection of people's quotes. This stimulated and enlivened Assembly members' discussions by bringing the voices of ordinary people into the room, alongside the expert evidence.

## 2.2 Key themes taken forward to the People's Assembly for Nature

The National Conversation gave a strong sense of why nature matters to so many people<sup>2</sup>, what they would like to see change, and what is already giving them hope. The 20,000+ online responses were analysed by New Citizenship Project to understand the common themes.

### WHY NATURE MATTERS TO PEOPLE

Two strong themes emerged from the first question:

- **that many people experience nature as offering joy, wonder and fulfilment,**
- **that many people find nature to be a source of healing.**



“ I love the peace it gives me when I go for a walk, to watch the seasons changing, the joy in seeing birds and other wildlife. Being ecstatic at seeing an otter, sea eagle & osprey and the joy on my children's faces when they do too.”



“ For those who live in urban areas, it provides green spaces where you can enjoy the changing seasons, get away from crowds, breathe fresh air, observe wildlife in its entirety and exercise away from traffic.... all of which have a huge benefit to one's mental health.”

A smaller group of respondents also linked nature to their sense of **culture, heritage and pride of place.**



“ The sense of belonging to this place where I live. A rural village in Norfolk, where my children are the 5th generation to live here. As I walk the narrow roads and bridleways I have this intense emotional connection to the land, the trees and hedgerows. The ancient oaks that have watched over this community through good times and bad. This is what I would miss.”

<sup>2</sup>NB As above, outreach for the National Conversation was conducted through the social media channels of the RSPB, WWF and National Trust, as well as paid ads and experiential events. It was not based on a balanced representative sample of the UK public.

## THE DIFFERENCES PEOPLE WANT TO SEE

When people were asked to imagine how things could be different in 2050, five common themes emerged.

### #1 Nature is woven into everyday life

In 2050, we all enjoy more positive experiences and closer relationships with nature in our everyday lives. We all benefit from better health and cleaner air and water. Family life is planned around access to nature, communities organise projects to protect local wildlife, and citizens know how their everyday habits affect the ecosystems they depend on.

“Cities are filled with wilderness. It is common to see animals move safely in the city and town. The air is clean in cities. On a day in the office at least five different bugs fly creep or squiggle over you.”



### #2 Abundance & Biodiversity

In 2050, diverse native species and habitats are restored in abundance. The sounds of wildlife echo through the streets, there are nature-rich open spaces to enjoy, and animals move through their environments safely, without fear. Wildflowers grow freely.

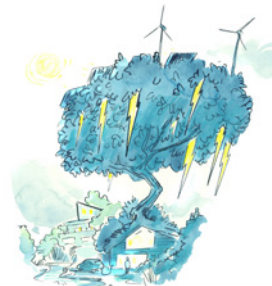
“Fewer bare hills and overgrazing, more woodlands, meadows and green spaces teeming with wildlife. All our towns and cities cloaked in green, from tree lined streets and green roofs to parks linked by walking paths and cycleways. Significant areas protected throughout the countryside, rich in biodiversity, where we can again find our place as one species amongst many.”



### #3 Resources & Production

In 2050, the way we farm, fish, develop land, build houses and produce goods and energy have all changed to become more nature-friendly and low-carbon. Nature corridors form a network throughout the UK, enabling free movement for wildlife. Solar panels and wind turbines are integrated into the built environment.

“100% Green energy owned by the government. Windmills everywhere. Wave turbine machines. Rewilded farms and arts communities. Sustainable eco-building allowed to create new villages. Cities with hydroponic farms in every basement and green roofs everywhere. A network of green corridors and funding to provide green space to join these up even further. Ponds on every street providing drainage, earth gullies with wildflowers lining every pavement, leaves swept into official compost heaps at every corner. What a glorious mess!!”



## #4 Ethos

In 2050, humans have fundamentally embraced an ethos of seeking harmony with nature. Humans are seen as an integral part of nature, not separate from it. Nature is no longer seen as an economic resource to be extracted, but as a life-giving resource to be appreciated, cultivated, renewed and protected.

“People aren't exploiting nature for profit. The way we live is alongside nature, not trying to dominate it - like making sure our roads don't stop animals crossing, or our industry doesn't pollute their habitats.”



## #5 Policy & Economic Design

In 2050, our political, economic and societal systems have transformed at the highest levels to reduce pollution and embed the protection, renewal and flourishing of nature. When it comes to policy-making, nature always has a seat at the table. Our economy no longer damages nature and is more circular and regenerative.

“Creation of a people's parliament for environmental protection and enhancement. To aid people empowerment and counter peer pressure from industry on our politicians that erode such protections. Much greater criminal laws bringing accountability against polluters and businesses that flout environmental standards.”



## WHAT'S ALREADY HAPPENING?

To celebrate and highlight the positive action that is already being taken, people were also asked to share examples they've seen of people working together to restore and protect nature. Over 5,000 suggestions were received covering a broad range of themes, including citizen-led and local community projects, initiatives from businesses, charities and NGOs, and actions and policies of local and national governments.

## HOW THE NATIONAL CONVERSATION FED INTO THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY FOR NATURE

The themes that emerged from the first two questions informed the design of the Assembly and which topics of information were provided and explored. They were also shared with Assembly members through a short video, as well as by being brought to life through the opening-night exhibition of illustrations based on people's quotes.

To inspire the Assembly with what people and communities are already doing, examples from the third question were collated on a private microsite for Assembly members to access. A selection of examples was also exhibited during the final weekend of the Assembly, to inspire and inform the Assembly members as they deliberated and formed their Calls to Action.

# 03.

# The People's Assembly for Nature



This section briefly defines a citizens' assembly and explains why this method was used to create the People's Plan for Nature. It gives an outline of the recruitment process and the demographic profile of who took part in the Assembly. The topics covered during each of the four weekends are summarised. More detail on all these aspects can be found in the Appendices.

## 3.1 Why use a citizens' assembly to develop the People's Plan for Nature?

A citizens' assembly is a robust and innovative form of deliberative democracy. It gathers a group of people who are broadly representative of a population, but likely to be different from one another, to learn and deliberate about a topic before making recommendations. Participants spend considerable time in facilitated environments learning from experts and from each other's lived experience.

Citizens' assemblies are designed according to strict principles. Using a citizens' assembly format for the People's Assembly for Nature means that the Calls to Action recommended in the People's Plan for Nature are highly legitimate. The principles include:

- **A democratic lottery:** Known as a sortition approach, this method enables a fair, transparent, inclusive and effective deliberative process by ensuring accurate representative and random sampling during the recruitment process.

Recruitment for this assembly began by sending some 33,000 introductory invitations to residents across the UK, chosen via a randomised sample.

- **A representative group:** Once people apply to take part, additional representative weighting is used to ensure diversity among participants. This assembly was weighted to ensure representation from:
  - ✓ All age groups from 16+
  - ✓ Gender
  - ✓ A range of education levels
  - ✓ The four nations of the UK, plus urban and rural areas
  - ✓ People from different ethnic backgrounds
  - ✓ Differing levels of existing engagement with nature

- **A cash honorarium to assembly members:** This ensures that a greater range of people will apply to take part and helps remove economic barriers that some people may have to their involvement. In this assembly, members were given £800 for participation across four weekends.
- **An independent Advisory Group:** This provides an unbiased expert perspective on the evidence and ensures that the materials are accessible. For this assembly, an advisory group of 18 people reviewed the structure and content of all sessions to ensure that they offered as comprehensive an introduction to the topics as was possible given the allotted 36 hours for deliberation, and that different perspectives were included. This included ensuring that a diversity of views and voices was heard in the process.
- **A huge range of expertise brought to the topic:** A citizens' assembly process ensures that every participant has the same foundational knowledge and that their discussions and deliberations are evidence-based. In this assembly, 40 experts gave wide-ranging and informative presentations on relevant issues from multiple perspectives. These were shared via a microsite so that Assembly members could review any evidence in between sessions. Assembly members also had access to a large database of exemplar projects from the National Conversation.
- **Expertly facilitated discussions and participant support:** Citizens' assemblies require highly experienced facilitators working to a plan based on best practice principles for group work. Recommendations must be developed in a timely manner while ensuring that each participant finds the event accessible. For this assembly, Involve provided the facilitation and support team, which offered participants specialised onboarding, materials in different formats, and support to attend events. Event design was carefully geared to ensure that different people's experiences and voices were given equal weight, and that differences in power and privilege were, as far as possible, considered and rebalanced.
- **Time and space:** Spacious deliberation is a deeper and more empowering approach than other forms of consultation, as it gives participants time to learn about and discuss issues in depth before coming to a considered view. This assembly ran over four weekends, with the first and last sessions held in person in Birmingham and the second and third sessions taking place online.

**The Assembly claims to be statistically reflective of the population** but is not a large survey or referendum. Instead, the recommendations reflect a proxy of wider public opinion.

If the wider public had the opportunity to undertake a similar process of learning and deliberation, could access a curated and diverse range of lived experiences to draw on, and were facilitated to explore evidence from multiple experts, their conclusions would be likely to be similar to those of the Assembly.





## 3.2 Recruitment and selection for the People's Assembly for Nature

Further detail of the selection and recruitment process and the full demographic profile of Assembly members is given in [Appendix 1](#).

### RECRUITMENT AND WEIGHTING

In late September 2022, 33,000 invitations to participate were sent to households across the UK, randomly selected from the Royal Mail Postcode Address File (PAF), the most complete and up-to-date address database in the UK.

Experience has shown that this method of recruitment typically tends to attract more expressions of interest from people from professional backgrounds and with higher levels of education. To help address this the Index of Multiple Deprivation was used to identify postcode areas with higher levels of deprivation and proportionately more addresses were selected in these areas. A deliberate choice was made in the recruitment phase to slightly over-recruit people living in the devolved administrations, rural locations and traditionally under-represented ethnicity groups. The invitation letter also included the offer of an £800 cash honorarium, to ensure barriers to entry were removed upfront.

A total of 277 members of the public applied to be part of the Assembly. This was a proportionally lower response rate than is typically achieved by this method, being just under 1%.

From the pool of applicants, a second, stratified random selection was performed, matching the latest available data on six dimensions: age, gender, ethnicity, geography, urban/rural socio-economic status, and level of agreement with the statement "I feel part of nature".

### DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE ASSEMBLY

The final make-up of the Assembly was considered to broadly reflect the demographic targets set at the beginning of the recruitment process.

A total of **103 people** took part throughout the whole Assembly process, representing a cross-section of the UK population, weighted to ensure representation from:

- **All age groups from 16+**
- **Gender**
- **A range of education levels**
- **The four nations of the UK, plus urban and rural areas**

- **People from different ethnic backgrounds**
- **Differing levels of existing engagement with nature**

The Assembly enjoyed a high retention rate:

- **277 people applied to be part of the Assembly**
- **110 people were selected as Assembly members**
- **107 members started the Assembly process**
- **103 members completed the Assembly process**

### SUPPORTING PARTICIPANTS TO TAKE PART

To ensure that all recruited Assembly members were able and likely to participate in the sessions, members were given additional information and support with regard to childcare, hotel or dietary requirements, travel assistance, and digital support for online sessions, with the aim of making sure that everyone felt they had all they needed to take part.

There was also an online shared resource area available to Assembly members where they could access resources relating to the Assembly, including slides and videos of speaker presentations, a database of information from the National Conversation, useful teleconferencing tips, and wider information about climate change and nature decline.

## 3.3 The Advisory Group

Further information on the role and membership of the Advisory Group is given in [Appendix 3](#).

To create a robust and accountable citizens' assembly process, a carefully selected Advisory Group provided advice and scrutiny, informed the evidence base and evaluated the resources provided to Assembly members. A key responsibility of this group was to ensure that Assembly members were presented with factually accurate, comprehensive, balanced and unbiased information.

The Advisory Group included two academic leads who were chosen as expert, highly qualified, well respected, and independent scientific researchers.

Other members of the Advisory Group were chosen based on their knowledge and experience of relevant topics including the food industry, farming, nature conservation, health, participation, diversity and equity, community engagement and national governments across the four nations.

## 3.4 The four weekends in summary

Further information on the content of the weekends is given in [Appendix 4](#).

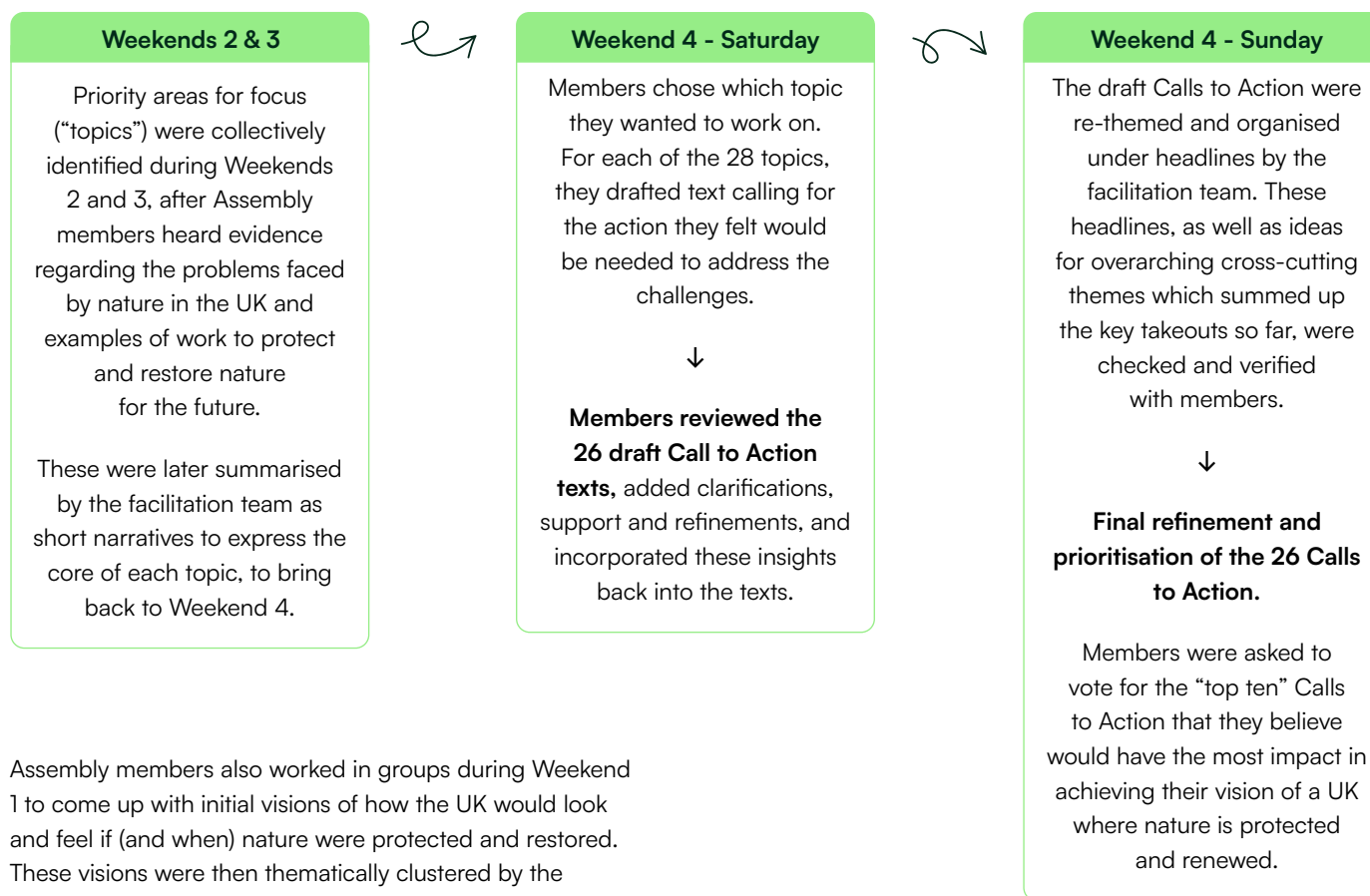
The People's Assembly for Nature took place over four weekends between November 2022 and February 2023.

The table below outlines the content and themes of discussion and deliberation for each weekend.

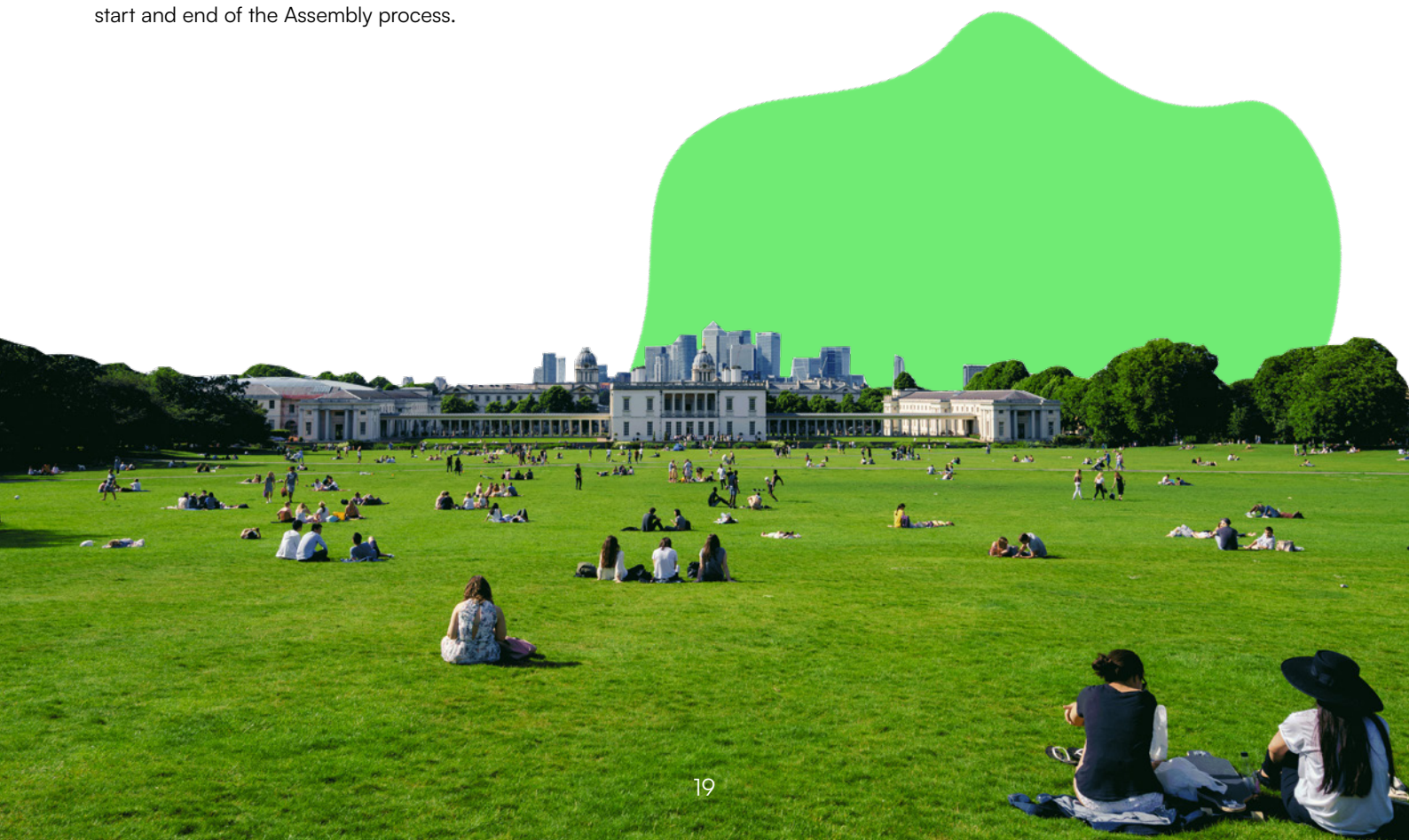


<p><b>Weekend 1</b></p> <p><b>What is Nature and Why Protect it?</b></p> <p>In person</p>	<p>During the first weekend, participants were introduced to what a citizens' assembly is, what to expect from the four weekends and what would happen with the People's Plan for Nature because of their commitment to the project. Assembly members arrived on Friday to a welcome, introductions and a group dinner, as well as an exhibition of illustrations inspired by the National Conversation.</p> <p>On Saturday, Assembly members were given an overview of what nature is and why it matters.</p> <p>On Sunday, Assembly members learned about how long-term thinking could help introduce the concept of environmental stewardship, and received an overview of existing solutions to the nature crisis. Fairness, equity and a just transition were also discussed.</p>
<p><b>Weekend 2</b></p> <p><b>Protecting &amp; Restoring Nature</b></p> <p>Online</p>	<p>The second weekend enabled Assembly members to build a picture of the historical, current and potential future extent of the UK's habitats and species, and how these interface with human activity.</p> <p>They deepened their understanding of what is driving nature loss, which protection frameworks are currently in place and how effective they are.</p> <p>Assembly members considered the impact of growing urbanisation and associated disconnection from nature, and how this could be addressed through policy and planning schemes. They also explored the "art of the possible" by hearing about successful protection and restoration projects.</p> <p>After each evidence session, Assembly members deliberated in smaller breakout groups with the aim of arriving at two insights or conclusions regarding what they felt to be the most significant issues to address within each topic.</p>
<p><b>Weekend 3</b></p> <p><b>Sustaining People &amp; Nature</b></p> <p>Online</p>	<p>The third weekend examined how we use land, fresh water and the sea to meet our basic needs, with a particular focus on food production. As in the previous weekend, Assembly members deliberated over their top two insights or conclusions following each evidence session.</p> <p>At the end of the weekend, around 200 such conclusions from the deliberative sessions were clustered into 28 areas, to support the creation of Calls to Action during the final weekend.</p>
<p><b>Weekend 4</b></p> <p><b>The Assembly Members Vision and Final Calls to Action</b></p> <p>In person</p>	<p>The final weekend was focused on deliberation and discussion, with no further input from experts.</p> <p>After arriving at the venue on Friday evening, Assembly members reviewed the weekend's tasks as well as inspiring examples from the National Conversation. During the weekend, they created Calls to Action using an iterative process. Finally, they drew together their hopes and aspirations by creating Vision Statements for the future of nature (described in Section Five of this report).</p>

The **Calls to Action** were developed by Assembly members through an iterative process spanning all the weekends.



Assembly members also worked in groups during Weekend 1 to come up with initial visions of how the UK would look and feel if (and when) nature were protected and restored. These visions were then thematically clustered by the facilitation team, with the clusters later shared during the last session on the Sunday of Weekend 4. Assembly members were then asked to create a statement of ambition drawing on their original insights from Weekend 1 while integrating the learning and reflection they had undergone between the start and end of the Assembly process.



# 04.

# Calls to Action

This section sets out the Calls to Action, which are the core outputs from the Assembly, and explains how they were developed.



## 4.1 The format of the Calls to Action

Each Call to Action follows the structure of the 'prompts' Assembly members were given when drafting them, making them consistent in format:



**To effectively protect and renew nature in the UK, we call for...**

- So that...
- Because...
- To achieve this... (with a choice of five key actors to focus on)

### DISCUSSIONS AROUND KEY ACTORS EVOLVED AS THE SESSIONS PROGRESSED

Creating transformative change for nature must involve several different types of actors. Assembly members considered the roles of five types of actors in creating change: (1) National Governments, (2) Local Governments, (3) Food Businesses, (4) Charities and NGOs, and (5) Individuals and Communities. During Weekend 1, they heard descriptions of the roles and remits of these actors, and returned to these throughout the process.

As the sessions progressed, Assembly members came to recognise that while governments (whether national, devolved, or local) hold a certain amount of power to drive change, they are often constrained by electoral and legislative processes, tend to make changes for the medium term, and are frequently in conflict with popular voices or other vested interests when it comes to complex issues. Businesses, charities, and community voices, meanwhile, were also seen to be often constrained in action and unsure of their own mandates to drive change.

While Assembly members gained more knowledge about different actors' scope for action, the Assembly could not provide a comprehensive briefing on the full details of how change might happen across the widely varying contexts of land use, fishing, food, farming, nature protection and other relevant areas across the whole UK.

When it came to creating Calls to Action for different actors across the different issues, some actors were felt to have more scope for action than others. Assembly members also often underlined that several actors working together would create more change than any one actor alone.

Above all, Assembly members acknowledge that it is **the action itself that is important**, as well as the principles underlying it, and that all of us bear a responsibility for taking action. This means that all actors should consider how they might contribute to any and all of the Calls to Action.

## Type of Actors



Most of the Calls to Action are directed towards “Government”: that is, the actor having the most power to drive political change and regulatory and legislative change at the relevant decision-making level. In principle, Assembly members want government action to take place at every level where change can be driven forward. It should be assumed that “National Governments” refers in this context to any national or devolved body which can answer their call and make a difference to the issue they want addressed.

### National Governments



Few Calls to Action are directed specifically to local government. Assembly members recognised that local governments across the UK have differing powers and responsibilities, and that this might make Calls to Action to local government overly specific. However, there are many Calls to Action where local and regional knowledge and implementation is important. As with national and devolved government, “Local Government” should be taken to mean any actor who can act on the issue at the specific level identified by Assembly members.

### Local Government



Assembly members considered the role of food businesses, while often adding that other kinds of business, both within and beyond the food supply chain, could play a role in protecting and renewing nature.

### Food Businesses



Assembly members valued the role of charities and NGOs, and tended by default to consider their campaigning role rather than any other potential scope for action.

### Charities and NGOs



Assembly members were very interested in the role of individuals and communities, especially in cases where groups could be supported to act together with other types of actors.

### Individuals and Communities

The full details of the Calls to Action are listed below. Each has been carefully reviewed by analysts from Involve’s expert public engagement team to ensure that the intended meaning of the Assembly members is clear, and is presented in the words of the groups that worked on them (with only minor changes made for the sake of clarification where necessary).

Each Call to Action is accompanied by contextual information from the facilitators, drawn from the range of materials, discussions and Assembly outputs that led to that Call to Action, to give further insight into what Assembly members discussed.



## WHAT ASSEMBLY MEMBERS BELIEVE IS URGENT AND IMPACTFUL

Each Assembly member was given 10 'votes' to select the Calls to Action that they believe to be most urgent and potentially impactful for the restoration and renewal of nature. The results of this exercise are included in [Appendix 6](#).

This gives added insight into what individuals believe to be the most urgent Calls to Action. It should not, however, be interpreted as a definitive order of priority, or as suggesting that Calls to Action further down the list are not important. Assembly members were clear that all 26 Calls to Action are part of their People's Plan for Nature.



## 4.2 Calls to Action in full

### Vision and Leadership

#### All commercial and policy decisions to take into account the potential impacts on nature

##### CALL TO ACTION

To effectively protect and renew nature in the UK, we call for...

Establishment of a Union of influential organisations (including leaders in business, civil society and relevant scientific institutions) to establish a mandate for the proportionate inclusion of impact on nature in decision-making at all levels.

They should quantify and inform society about the tangible and intangible benefits of having nature at the table, and the cost of not having nature at the table, so that, as a basic principle, we do no more harm to nature; and together set UK-wide and regional targets to renew nature and increase biodiversity, led by ecological experts.

##### This is needed because...

We are currently failing. We need to breathe, eat and drink with nature as a partner and to live better in the future.

To do this we need nature to have a voice at the centre of decision-making.



##### To achieve this...



**National Governments** have different roles to play.

- Welsh government should demonstrate benefits of its Future Well-being Act to the Union of organisations.
- The Westminster government should make a cross-party commitment to enacting a UK Future Well-being Act.
- All central and devolved governments should consider how to include the future of nature in all national and local policy and decision-making.



## Context around the discussion

This Call to Action has two aspects. First, Assembly members wanted to ensure that organisations are mandated in some way to consider the impact on nature when making decisions. The Call to Action asks organisations to commit to this kind of impact assessment, and to develop a way to accurately consider trade-offs in the risks and benefits to nature of different decisions. Assembly members believe shared responsibility will help this to happen (hence a “Union of organisations”, with “Union” capitalised by Assembly members to ensure that it was seen as a significant initiative).

Second, Assembly members want to help decision makers to bring nature into the decisions they make. This includes knowing how to act. The concept of ‘do no harm’ can help orient decision makers to consider what impact they are having and to implement mitigations. Assembly members understand that there is presently no obvious mechanism or method for modelling impacts on nature that people can turn to for advice, guidance or support when they discover an actual or potential impact on nature.

The mechanism they envisage would allow relevant experts to collaboratively provide advice and guidance to all levels of government and other actors, including on practical issues such as tendering and procurement where significant impact could be achieved. Assembly members feel that such a body (or bodies, at the right level of decision-making across devolved nations) should be neutral, independent of political control, and, as is mentioned in other Calls to Action, be grounded in research and data.

## Additional actions called for to help achieve this...



- **National Governments, Local Government, Food Businesses & Charities and NGOs** should build an ‘Impact on Nature Assessment’ [like an Equalities Impact Assessment] into their tendering and procurement processes, with scores allocated based on how well nature is valued and protected by the applicant.
- **Food Businesses** (and all businesses) should be required to have a Director for Nature on their Board whose role is to monitor and report on this.





## More partnership working between campaign organisations working for nature

### CALL TO ACTION

**To effectively protect and renew nature in the UK, we call for...**

More collaboration [between campaigners] and a framework [shared agenda] that provides leadership and promotes and facilitates communication and coordination between relevant key actors (charities, government, universities, industry and communities) to cooperate with a common purpose and vision for nature.



### This is needed because...

It seems there is a risk of problems if lots of organisations are focused on only one aspect of protecting and restoring nature. More working together will achieve better outcomes for nature.

#### To achieve this...



- **Charities and NGOs** should lead on agreeing a collective pathway to protecting nature that they can all contribute to, as they are trusted organisations with extensive grassroots support with reach into communities.

#### Additional actions called for to help achieve this...



- **Local Government** could assist in creating grassroots coordination in local areas including creation of local directories of partners and projects.

### Context around the discussion

Knowledge is power and combining expertise can give greater direction and influence. The standout conclusion from the work of this group was a positive affirmation of the potential of collaboration.

This action grapples with the thorny issue of working together. It was recognised that this can be very difficult to achieve, but is also necessary if we are to make a difference to nature. Reasons to work together include increased efficiency, reduced waste and ensuring that one group does not impact adversely on the work of another.

Sharing knowledge and resources was seen as a good idea in its own right, as well as a way of creating a sense of being part of something bigger and more impactful.

The group acknowledged that organisations' agendas may not align when collaborating, as well as the issue of accountability. There is also the practical question of how groups prioritise which work to focus on. Attention must be paid to the processes of collaboration which enable effective joint working.

## Regulation & Implementation

### Greater government accountability through a permanent Assembly for Nature made up of NGOs, industry public expertise

#### CALL TO ACTION

**To effectively protect and renew nature in the UK, we call for...**

A new permanent, UK-wide Assembly for Nature [a new regulatory body] comprising appointed representatives from NGOs, industry and members of the public. Their role would be to scrutinise, challenge and hold to account government leadership and action that impacts on nature.

#### This is needed because...

Our current systems are failing to prioritise nature and halt its decline. This new body will help raise awareness of the urgency and need for action across the UK and demand responsible leadership.

#### To achieve this...



- **National Governments** need to introduce legislation that enshrines the Assembly for Nature as a permanent regulatory body. A need to show cross-party leadership and take a long-term position on protecting and restoring nature by adequately resourcing this Assembly and presenting transparent information to it, as well as acting on its recommendations.
- **Local Government** should ensure that regional and local needs and views are represented.
- All actors also bear some responsibility for supporting and participating in the Assembly, including members of the public (**Individuals and Communities**).

#### Context around the discussion

Assembly members consistently raised the question of why current protections are not working to reverse or slow the trend of nature loss in the UK. They concluded that it should be the national government's role, as the legislative and policy lead for everything that impacts nature, to stand tall and do what is necessary.

The Call to Action describes a single UK-wide Assembly for Nature, with representation from "across society". However, Assembly members also wanted to ensure that local and regional needs and views were at the heart of this, so regional or devolved assemblies may also be within the spirit of their Call to Action.

Assembly members felt that, too often, decision makers are distracted, hampered, and stopped from doing what is right by vested interests, politicking, short-termism and a focus on priorities that often conflict with nature protection.

Assembly members are not asking national governments to be responsible for all activity, but are asking that all governments do their job in terms of legislation and policy. To achieve this, they feel a focus on accountability is required. This, they propose, will give politicians the necessary support to make difficult decisions which they see as currently being avoided or kicked down the road.

Accountability could come in the form of a representative body containing all stakeholders that are invested in the health of nature, acting on all of our behalf. Its role would be clear: to hold government to account on nature protection and restoration.

## Leadership to assess the trade-offs between social and economic interests and nature protection, so that negative impacts of transition to nature protection can be mitigated



### CALL TO ACTION

To effectively protect and renew nature in the UK, we call for...

The urgent identification of a body to take responsibility for balancing social and economic interests in decision-making about nature protection and restoration.

This should include an honest identification of [those segments of society and the economy] that will be the “losers”, so that coherent plans can be formulated to mitigate these costs for the most disadvantaged stakeholders.

### This is needed because...

While nature needs to have a seat at the decision-making table the interests and livelihoods of people also need to be protected. Only then will our People's Plan be accepted by everyone.

#### To achieve this...



- **National Governments** need to identify or establish relevant bodies, at the right decision-making level, to explore the implications of focusing on renewing nature and make recommendations to ensure affected stakeholders are able to transition in fair and affordable ways.

### Context around the discussion

In this Call to Action, Assembly members focused on the issue of fairness and the need for a just transition when more decisions are made to protect nature. They highlighted how nature is an integral part of our everyday lives, from the air we breathe to the water we drink and the food we eat. Making decisions that separate nature from people leads to worse outcomes for both.

Some suggested that decisions cannot “prioritise nature”. The path lies in finding ways to enable positive solutions in the close interactions between nature and other aspects of life, like economics and well-being. Solutions must achieve multiple outcomes and enhance the synergies between different interests.

#### Additional actions called for to help achieve this...



- **Food Businesses** need to be clear of the costs of making changes to more nature-friendly practices and be able to pass some of these on to consumers.
- **Charities and NGOs** and the research community can provide evidence on solutions and how to manage trade-offs.
- **Local Government** can engage by taking account of any findings and applying them locally.

There was a sense that there will be “losers” (particularly in the farming and fishing industries) when it comes to significant moves to protect and restore nature, and that we must acknowledge this and support those affected. Otherwise, the transition will be too difficult for them. Some Assembly members were very keen to point out that if we do not smooth the transition for the “losers”, this might be enough to halt a whole programme of nature-positive activity.

## Stronger regulatory protections and enforcement

### CALL TO ACTION

**To effectively protect and renew nature in the UK, we call for...**

Existing legislation and designations to protect nature to be more robustly enforced and for stronger, more ambitious legislation and targets introduced to show that nature is valued.

### This is needed because...

Individuals, organisations and businesses must be deterred from damaging nature or punished if they do break the rules.

#### To achieve this...



- **National Governments** need to prioritise nature by adequately funding and resourcing regulatory and (regional, national, local) nature protection agencies and consider the concept of “a crime against nature” (a bit like “crime against humanity”) being introduced into law, with a high penalty for major offences. Devolved, regional and local governments can look at local policing and penalties for these crimes.

#### Additional actions called for to help achieve this...



- **Individuals and Communities** need to be knowledgeable about how nature assets in their area are supposed to be protected [particularly designated protection sites], take personal responsibility for their own actions within these spaces and be empowered to act around damage to nature where they live.
- **Charities and NGOs** can work with authorities and can provide a scrutiny function.

### Context around the discussion

Assembly members considered the reasons why businesses (in general) do not pay sufficient regard to nature protection. In essence, they concluded that it is because it is not profitable for businesses to do so, and nor are they required to do so by legislation. Therefore, there is a need for more comprehensive incentives and disincentives. Penalising undesirable behaviour goes hand in hand with incentivising businesses to do the right thing.

Assembly members were keen to express that penalties should be appropriate to each local and regional level, and that there should be regional and local feedback loops rather than generic legislation which is ineffective.

Each business sector can be asked to make its own contribution, from insurance to housebuilding to manufacturing. Another important aspect is the transparency of companies' actions. Moral and public pressure can be applied by publishing companies' performance in nature protection. Positive headlines from good performance can then become a marketing asset.



## Businesses to both value, and be enabled to create value from, actions to support the restoration of nature

### CALL TO ACTION

To effectively protect and renew nature in the UK, we call for...

A new norm that businesses can both value, and are enabled to create value, by protecting nature. We call for clearer reporting on activities and costs [of action to protect nature], tax breaks for nature-friendly research and development and league tables of nature-friendly businesses.

### This is needed because...

We need to break the cycle of prioritising profit over nature and business is the most important agent for this change.

#### Additional actions called for to help achieve this...



- **National Governments** need to provide incentives for businesses to transition to nature-friendly practices through subsidies, grants or tax breaks at the right level of decision-making, with central government devolving power where needed. This can include options like nature kitemarks. Governments could publish data on how companies are acting with regard to nature.
- **Individuals and Communities** need to change their consumption patterns to support nature-friendly businesses, even if the costs to themselves are higher.
- **Charities and NGOs** working in the nature sector need to allocate researchers to work with businesses to help them understand, monitor and reduce their impacts.

#### To achieve this...



- **Food Businesses** need to share examples of good practice in being nature-friendly, while still operating profitably, to lead by example.

### Context around the discussion

This Call to Action is about unlocking the potential of business to be a driver of change for the protection and renewal of nature.

Assembly members were impressed by the potential for businesses to act to protect nature. They also understand that profit is a key motivating factor.

Businesses should be rewarded for doing the right thing by consumers and governments, and penalised for actions that destroy nature. As consumers, we can all choose to act positively towards companies doing the right thing and avoid those who cause harm. Governments can also incentivise and disincentivise the actions of businesses.

Assembly members wanted to express that nature has more than a financial value: that even if a heavy penalty is paid for degrading nature, the damage has still been done. They explored novel ways of funding nature protection activities, such as ring-fencing monies raised through the levying of penalties on businesses.

## Nature-friendly Farming

### An overhaul of current farming subsidy systems to prioritise sustainable and nature-friendly farming

#### CALL TO ACTION

To effectively protect and renew nature in the UK, we call for...

An overhaul of the current subsidy arrangements to provide incentives to farmers who farm sustainably and commit to rewilding land which is non-productive, whilst penalising those who harm the environment by not farming sustainably. This should include providing support, information and peer-to-peer training in new and environmentally friendly methods by way of bursaries, placements, access to research findings and investment in the development of new technology to improve farming practices.

Subsidies should be provided at different rates for productive and non-productive land given over to rewilding and biodiversity enhancement and limit intensive farming practices to protect soil and water quality.



#### This is needed because...

We need to gradually wean farmers off non-environmentally friendly practices, through incentives for those who want to 'do the right thing'. Supporting high food output / low environmental impact production is one of the best use of subsidies.

#### Context around the discussion

Assembly members understand that farmers are a critical element in enabling a shift to nature-friendly food production. They also understand that farming practices are largely guided by economics, which means farmers must be supported both financially and technically for any shift to occur.

Assembly members want an incentive structure that makes it profitable to do the right thing while continuing to produce food from the land, alongside penalties for those that harm nature. They see a need for new thinking and innovation in farming practices and the adoption of new technologies, which means encouraging a new generation of farmers to be part of the solution.

They also emphasised that differences in landscapes and farming across the country must be taken into account, which means that devolved governments are key actors.

#### To achieve this...



- **National Governments** need to adjust subsidies so they can do three things at once: increasing food production, taking land out of farming and into nature, and reducing environmental impacts. Governments need to consider regional flexibility in managing and distributing grants, we want to see the four nations of the UK collaborating together and with local governments, devolving power and budget as the local areas know themselves best.
- **Food Businesses** can encourage this shift by integrating the principles of nature-friendly farming into their operations and they can help disseminate knowledge on environmentally friendly methods.
- **Charities and NGOs** can help to undertake research into best practice and make information available to farmers.

## Nature-protection-based farming subsidies

### CALL TO ACTION

**To effectively protect and renew nature in the UK, we call for...**

Long-term, cross-party commitment to ensuring that protecting nature is a priority for future farming practices across the UK. This means that there must be nature-protection-based subsidies provided to farmers to help them through this transition and incentivise farming practices that support both protecting nature and local food production.

### This is needed because...

The rights of nature to coexist with farming must be prioritised when developing agricultural policies. Government must invest in research and consult experts on how we can reach a balance between food security and protecting nature.

#### To achieve this...



- **National Governments** need to ensure that policies and subsidies to the agricultural industry call for fewer imported food products and maximise the amount of locally produced food that is grown/reared in nature-friendly ways.

#### Additional actions called for to help achieve this...



- **Individuals and Communities** need to commit to nature-friendly farming going hand in hand with diet change, otherwise this will increase the UK's impact on climate change and nature impacts overseas. This change needs to be accompanied by people in the UK adapting their diets to eat less meat if they want to value nature.
- **Food Businesses** need to be prepared to reduce the amount of land across the UK used for food production to give space to nature to re-establish its place.

### Context around the discussion

Assembly members recognised that farmers make decisions according to policy and economic incentives. To date, these incentives have prioritised food production over any other consideration, with a consequent impact on nature, including soil and water health. While it was acknowledged that there has been a shift in emphasis towards environmental considerations in farming in recent years, they felt that this is still far too little and too slow.

Assembly members concluded that the challenge is to empower farmers to do the right thing. They were keen to point out that any new policies will only succeed if they work both for farmers and for nature. They were not prescriptive about the precise solutions, but felt that policies should offer enough stability to encourage a fair transition to different ways of working.

It was recognised that nature-friendly farming involves trade-offs, with better soil health potentially coming at the expense of lower yields and farmer income. With this in mind, Assembly members wanted life to be made easier for farmers. This means working with them and other stakeholders like supermarkets, for example by changing the foods that are offered to consumers.



## Inspire more farmers to take a nature-friendly approach to their businesses

### CALL TO ACTION

To effectively protect and renew nature in the UK, we call for...

Better communication between farmers, and the bodies representing them, to ensure the promotion of sustainable and nature-friendly farming. We want more, and better ways, of sharing knowledge, experience and good practice, both regionally as well as nationally to reflect local needs and incorporate input from scientists and experts.

### This is needed because...

We need to act now to reverse the frightening speed of deterioration of nature and biodiversity. Farmers need to be able to share knowledge (as farmers are best inspired by other farmers). This will result in improved farming practice that supports nature, for example, by improving soil and river health.

#### To achieve this...



- **Food Businesses** should develop an internal accreditation system that rewards sustainable farming.
- **A Farmers' Assembly for Nature** should be convened to identify champions and support them (through fellowship funding) to inspire and advise other farmers.
- **The NFU** must be lobbied and persuaded and lead the industry in a more sustainable way that supports biodiversity and nature.  
**Charities and NGOs** could support this by helping with knowledge sharing, awards schemes for successful farmers.
- **National Governments** can provide incentives and can assist by reducing bureaucracy around grants and subsidies and by tightening legislation to discourage bad practice.
- **Local Government** can introduce local rules and projects to encourage farmers' markets, knowledge sharing locally and promoting local good practice.
- **Individuals and Communities** can support as consumers.



### Context around the discussion

Assembly members discussed the drivers of unsustainable farming practices, including current incentives that are both bureaucratic and inefficient for farmers, and recognised that there are many barriers to nature-friendly farming. Farmers need incentives to change, and must also navigate their way past organisations with different interests, including big business, the food processing industry, political agendas and others who are resistant to change.

If farmers can be recruited, then the potential for impact is huge. We could eat better, healthier and enjoy more locally produced food. There would be a level playing field for small farmers against the big producers and food companies.

Assembly members acknowledged the role that farmers already play in our food security, and how well farmers know and love the land they farm. They realised that knowledge about nature-friendly farming already exists, but now needs to be unlocked and shared with more farmers to enable a shift. They felt that responsibility for this knowledge sharing falls to agricultural colleges, farming organisations and to farmers themselves, as well as to supportive NGOs.

Assembly members recognised that farmers should not be expected to make this shift alone, but should be supported by governments, consumers and food distributors like supermarkets.



## Food Production and Consumption

### A national conversation on how and why we should change our diets to support nature

#### CALL TO ACTION

To effectively protect and renew nature in the UK, we call for...

A national conversation across the UK to explore, advise and encourage on the need to change our diets and how to do this. This would educate people on the impact of our food and food choices on nature and our health. We would seek for the majority of people to change their diet for the better and aim to reduce meat, dairy and fish consumption by at least 25% by 2030.

#### This is needed because...

We need to increase biodiversity and food security by creating space for nature and freeing up land for less intensive food production. We need to move away from growing food for animals to growing food for humans. Research shows it is healthier and will create a smaller impact on the NHS.

#### To achieve this...



- **National Governments** should create a national taskforce to lead a national conversation. They should do this as a cross-party initiative. Its remit would be to bring coherent messaging across all actors and reconnect people with food and diet.
- Enact the commitments in the **National Food Strategy** (in England) and comparable commitments in devolved administrations (e.g. Good Food Nation (Scotland) Act) and support the research community to provide robust evidence on the impact of diets on environment and health.
- Financially support **farmers** to facilitate changes to what they grow and produce to this diet shift e.g. rural payments, ELMS if/where necessary.



**Additional actions called for to help achieve this...**

- **Local Government** can aim to limit unhealthy food outlets, change food offered in schools and hospitals i.e. through procurement, and lead education/re-education initiatives in their area.
- **Food Businesses** should label food in terms of environmental impact and help the public change cooking habits by offering alternatives for recipes on products - e.g. swap chicken for chickpeas. They can recruit celebrities to endorse the conversation/campaign.
- **Individuals and Communities** can offer and participate in the conversation and take action on learning how to prepare food with different ingredients.

**Context around the discussion**

This Call to Action is about the impact our current diet has on nature. Assembly members explored the impact of our current diet and what it would mean to make it more nature-friendly. Recognising the scale of this undertaking, they considered some of the associated issues including animal welfare, the replacement of processed food with natural food, how our health is dictated by what we eat, and the carbon footprint of food (including food miles). Other considerations included affordability, the probable impact on farmers, and the need for effective labelling.

Enabling these changes will require many different people and interests along the food supply chain to change their habits, which can be difficult. Dialogue was seen as a good place to start. Assembly members tended to refer to UK-wide activity (a “national conversation”) rather than activity at the devolved level, but this mostly reflected their belief in the importance of large-scale, unified communications on the issue, rather than a particular need for this to be driven solely by the UK Government.



## Transparency about the sources of the food we buy, and its impact on nature

### CALL TO ACTION

To effectively protect and renew nature in the UK, we call for...

Supermarkets [and all food retailers] to be required to be transparent about the sources and nature impact of products through a clear quality standard.

### This is needed because...

Consumers need to be informed so that they can be motivated to make purchases that benefit nature. Because supply chains are complex it would be easier to understand with an independently developed, universal quality standard label.

#### To achieve this...



- **Food Businesses** should unite to innovate and drive the development of a transparent quality standard that can be applied to packaging as their contribution to the future of nature, but we recognise that there might need to be legislation to make it compulsory for all suppliers. This should also be done at no direct cost to consumers.

#### Additional actions called for to help achieve this...



- **National Governments** can oversee this work by ensuring that the appropriate body is overseeing the labelling and ensuring its quality.
- **Charities and NGOs** can partner with supermarkets and food businesses to assist with the work they are doing in labelling and implementing transparency policies.

### Context around the discussion

Assembly members explored the complexity of food supply chains as they pass from primary producers to processors to retailers. They came to understand that supply chains are opaque, and that in some cases unsustainable practices are not brought to light. For example, it is difficult to keep track when there are many suppliers, especially given the motive to keep prices low. They felt that supermarkets and their regulators can no longer operate in this opaque way, and must instead take actions to open up supply chains to make them visible and transparent.

They concluded that the most consumer-friendly method for increasing transparency would be a simple standardised labelling system that gives a product's nature-friendly credentials. Any such labelling system must be robust, trusted, and easy to understand. They felt the system could be self-financed by the supermarkets but managed independently to ensure trust.



## Companies involved in food production and retail to stop their negative impact on the natural environment

### CALL TO ACTION

To effectively protect and renew nature in the UK, we call for...

Policy, including legislation and incentives [if required], that forces all companies involved in food production and retail to stop their negative impact on the natural environment and to actively support the restoration of nature. We want to see that the “polluter pays” principle is enforced to reduce the amount of pollutants that impact the environment and our health and to ensure that food production, processing and retail do not destroy habitats in the UK or abroad.

### This is needed because...

Many food producers, processors and retailers currently have a negative impact on nature, particularly through the pollution of natural habitats. They need to be held to account for this, because of the big role they have in influencing consumer buying habits and choices.

#### To achieve this...



- **Food Businesses** need to be held accountable for the damage to nature that they have caused through the application and enforcement of the ‘polluter pays’ principle. They need to be prepared to take responsibility when something does go wrong. They should publish and promote annually their environmental credentials including what they have done to support the renewal of nature, not just its protection.

#### Additional actions called for to help achieve this...



- **National Governments** can ensure that there is legislation and policy that reinforces this work and to ensure that costs are not passed on unfairly.
- **Charities and NGOs** should prepare and publish a league table of good and bad companies.

### Context around the discussion

Assembly members recognised that food companies play a key role in the supply chain from production to consumption. They wanted to see food companies do their bit to help enable nature-friendly food production.

First, they felt food companies should acknowledge their influence and use it to enable a shift to nature-friendly practices through marketing activities and supply chain policies. Second, they called for legislation to ensure that companies are collectively required to implement more stringent environmental policies and enforce a “polluter pays” principle for those who act in ways that systematically harm nature.



## Food retailers to stop driving food waste

### CALL TO ACTION

**To effectively protect and renew nature in the UK, we call for...**

Governments to implement regulations that stop food retailers (supermarkets in particular) from driving wasteful producer and consumer behaviour that means a high proportion of the food produced is thrown away.

Eliminating unnecessary packaging would also make it easier for consumers to buy individual products or items in the required amount and help make retailers more accountable to their community's needs.

### This is needed because...

There are people who need food who are not getting it and this level of food waste is bad for the planet. We need better systems for distributing food at risk of being wasted before it reaches the bin. This will help resources like land, water, labour and money to be better utilised, distributed effectively and used for nature to thrive.

#### To achieve this...



- **National Governments** can set the agenda by introducing the policies and regulations that prevent unnecessary food waste.
- **Food Businesses** need to take greater responsibility for this and drive change through working closer with local suppliers and focusing on local distribution networks. They need to better support consumer choice to buy single fresh items or less packaged produce.
- **Local Government** can help with distributing excess food, introduce and enforce the rules that make food sharing easier, enable more composting of food waste and to undertake the education and communication with the public that is needed.

### Context around the discussion

Assembly members explored how food waste represents a waste of time, effort, raw materials, water, land, packaging, and money, and how it contributes to greenhouse gas emissions. This seemed particularly important to consider at a time when many are not able to afford to eat a healthy diet.

They concluded that changing consumer habits and reducing food waste would require changes to the way we preserve food, changes to our attitudes to food labelling such as sell-by dates, as well as changes to our preference for "uniform" food. Food marketing would also have to change to stop "buy one, get one free" offers and bulk discounts, both of which contribute to food waste and make life harder for those on lower incomes.



## Increased access to sustainable, locally produced food

### CALL TO ACTION

To effectively protect and renew nature in the UK, we call for...

Food hubs in local areas that are accessible to all, to enable people to have easy access to sustainable, locally produced food. Food hub coordinators should work with community organisations, supermarkets, farmers and growers, to sell food produced as locally as possible. Signs in supermarkets should indicate where food has been produced and “buy local” should be encouraged.

### This is needed because...

It will put nature and its relationship with food at the heart of the community and reduce the impacts on nature from ‘food miles’. It also has the potential to mean that more money goes back into local economies and farmers are paid a fairer price for their produce.

Additional benefits are that it could help revive rural town centres, create employment and create a sustainable future as people grow up understanding where their food comes from.

#### To achieve this...



- **Food Businesses**, both local producers and supermarkets, need to work together to bring local food directly to consumers, developing new relationships that are fair to all parties.

#### Additional actions called for to help achieve this...



- **Local Government** needs to prioritise making land available to communities for allotments and communal growing spaces to enable people to grow their own food. They must also help spread knowledge of local initiatives and enable local farmers markets.

### Context around the discussion

Assembly members acknowledged that food is a deeply unequal resource. In particular, local food produced using non-intensive methods has traditionally been expensive and therefore exclusive. In this Call to Action, Assembly members sought ways to enable everyone to access nature-friendly food at prices they can afford.

They were inspired by Food Partnership models where growers, producers and distributors are brought into direct contact with local people. Such partnerships can be seen as socio-economic initiatives as much as environmental ones. Each actor is understood by Assembly members to have a role in making this Call to Action happen, including the personal responsibility of consumers to take notice of the impact of the food they buy, as well as taking advantage of opportunities to consume local food that is produced in nature-friendly ways.



## Marine Protections for our Coastal Waters

### Ensuring sustainable fish stocks through reduction and reallocation of fishing quotas, regulating distribution, and remote monitoring to enforce standards

#### CALL TO ACTION

To effectively protect and renew nature in the UK, we call for...

Government and industry to ensure the balance of nature in the sea is restored. This will include a considerable reduction and reallocation of fishing quotas, using up-to-date technology and scientific knowledge, so that we can protect marine biodiversity and recover local fish stocks to a point that enables fishermen to take the maximum sustainable yield in any area.

It will also mean ensuring seafood is sustainably sourced and distributed.

We recommend the immediate mandatory introduction of remote electronic monitoring (REM) to enforce standards and regulations.

This should be delivered [paid for] through a Government-held fund made up of contributions from food supply chain fines for non-compliance regarding quotas and industry related taxation.

#### This is needed because...

We need to end the depletion and restore nature in our seas, or there will be a bridge of no return whereby there will be no fishing industry or opportunity for local livelihoods, and the whole marine ecosystem will be lost to us. We need to ensure that people have better food options and that seafood remains an accessible, healthy food choice for all!



#### To achieve this...



- **National Governments** should strengthen and expand regulation, including mandating the remote electronic monitoring and target setting for sustainable catch levels and ban destructive methods. Governments need to incentivise the fishing industry to fish sustainably.
- **Food Businesses** need to focus on meeting demands within the local market and encourage consumers to eat fished products that are sustainable, even if they are less familiar to them. They should be educating the public about the benefits of eating sustainable fish, actively promoting where seafood products have come from, and promote and support local fishing through integrated and shorter supply chains.

**Additional actions called for to help achieve this...**

- **Individuals and Communities** need to be prepared to vary their diets to accommodate what can be fished locally.
- **Charities and NGOs** should work alongside industry to help them know what to do and provide evidence and solutions to the key players.

**Context around the discussion**

A Call to Action about the reduction and reallocation of fishing quotas (with 28 votes) and another Call to Action about the need for all seafood to be sustainably sourced and distributed (with 22 votes), and a third specifically on remote electronic monitoring to protect fish stocks (with 24 votes) were all combined into one Call to Action. It may be worth noting that the marine protection element of this Call to Action was considered a higher priority than the food and diet element.

Assembly members considered how sound data and science are essential for making decisions on the measures needed to protect our marine environment, including monitoring compliance. They heard how fish numbers have declined and examined why this is the case. Ultimately, they concluded that we have to reduce the take, and that there is an opportunity to use science and data to reach sustainable fishing yields and stop depleting stocks.

There was concern about the impacts of overfishing globally, and especially about destructive methods for harvesting fish such as dredging, as well as frustration that the issue is not improving despite the protections in place.

Assembly members considered how the economics of the fishing industry is weighted towards the larger players, who are disproportionately responsible for the problem of large takes. There is a complex choreography between supporting the smaller boats and the communities they sustain, but who struggle to adopt new fishing techniques based on science, and who are impacted more by inshore limits. Very large boats can more easily apply scientific approaches but have a more detrimental impact on fish stocks.

Each needs incentives and support, which must be tailored to drive both towards fishing in the right way. Community-based support may be the way to drive change in the smaller boat communities. This could include the adoption of new aquaculture industries like seaweed.

The demand side of fishing was also considered. One of the core challenges for making fishing more nature-friendly was summed up well by one group: “out of sight, out of mind - we don’t think about the impact on oceans because most people don’t see it”. Shifting to more locally available varieties and using appropriate technology could enable us to consume more fish sustainably and to achieve healthy ecosystems.

In achieving a more sustainable fishing industry, Assembly members acknowledged the potential for trade-offs including the impact on communities that are dependent on fishing. They wanted to see a just transition for the fishing industry, ensuring that an increased emphasis on biodiversity and no further damage to coastal areas would also allow people to earn a livelihood from the sea. Emphasis was placed on fishing businesses moving towards more sustainable practices and the promotion of small, independent businesses providing food locally.





## Establishment of Marine National Parks

### CALL TO ACTION

**To effectively protect and renew nature in the UK, we call for...**

The creation of a series of Marine National Parks, using existing national park structures and incorporating currently protected areas. These would be designated as 'no-take zones' and be a mix of both coastal and off-shore sites, chosen to increase biodiversity and reduce fishing impacts in designated areas.

They should be overseen by the scientific community to monitor impacts of land and sea-based pollution and fishing demand on fish stocks and marine health. This monitoring should be funded in a blended way by governments, NGOs, the academic research community and the private sector fishing industry [to support industry sustainability], and managed as an independent local authority with a remit to increase biodiversity in the area by 30% by 2030.



### This is needed because...

We need to upgrade from having marine protected areas to increase biodiversity, protect fish stocks and recover our sea-beds in a sustainable way. This needs to be underpinned by strong regulation and consistent management.

### Context around the discussion

Assembly members felt that designations like Marine National Parks can be a helpful mechanism to focus efforts on reducing impacts on the marine environment from multiple sources. They were not prescriptive about what shape or form National Marine Parks should take, but were inspired by the functions of land-based national parks.

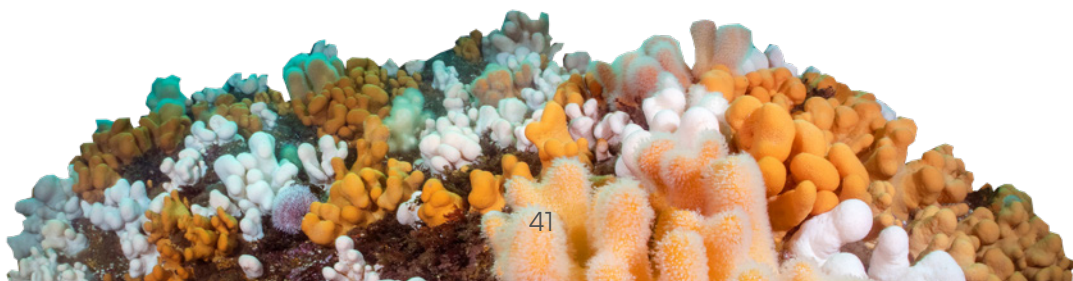
#### To achieve this...



- **National Governments** need to identify key sites across the country and legislate to give them National Park status.
- **Charities and NGOs** can provide knowledge and expertise and drive research and education projects around the Parks. They may also become custodians of the Parks.
- **Individuals and Communities**, especially local communities, can represent a powerful local voice in the Parks to ensure they are focused on nature protection and bring benefits locally.

They highlighted the need to go beyond the existing designations to offer greater focus and hence better protections, for example by introducing no-take zones in some areas, and for the UK Government to honour its commitment to 30% of seas designated as protected areas by 2030.

They felt that stronger designations in these areas would bring together the potential for science and research to intersect with marine policy, industry and community action, although they also noted that the responsibility is not with any one local community, but with devolved regions and all communities in the UK.



## Waterway and Catchment Management

### The establishment of a UK-wide water management framework that protects the health of our waterways

#### CALL TO ACTION

To effectively protect and renew nature in the UK, we call for...

The urgent restoration of all rivers and wetlands to a healthy ecological status, driven by a Water Management Framework with incentives for compliance and penalties for non-compliance (based on the polluter pays principle). Monitoring, maintenance and accountability for this framework should be held by the Environment Agency / Natural Resources Wales / NIEA / SEPA or other relevant bodies.

#### This is needed because...

In order to safeguard a healthy ecosystem, now and in the future, and contribute to climate change reversal, a robust and sustainable water system is essential. We need to ensure, therefore, that we have healthy rivers and wetlands for the restoration of wildlife, to meet our water consumption needs, and to provide spaces for recreation.

#### To achieve this...



- **Local Governments** and **National Governments** need to work together to identify priority sites across the country and resource executive agencies to plan action, alongside local communities, to drive change.



#### Context around the discussion

Assembly members concluded that regulatory enforcement is a critical piece of the puzzle for ensuring clean water. Regulations can cover a range of waterway polluters, from those polluting in domestic settings to farming and industry. However, it was felt that the current enforcement of regulations is too weak for them to be a deterrent in preventing behaviours that harm and pollute water bodies.

There is already a structure in place through the Water Framework, and Assembly members felt that this would be an appropriate mechanism for organising this work. They named the Environment Agency and its equivalents in devolved administrations as the appropriate executive agencies to carry out this work. This will require more funding, which could come from alternative sources.

## Collaboration across river catchment areas to deliver ecological improvements that embrace nature-based solutions

### CALL TO ACTION

**To effectively protect and renew nature in the UK, we call for...**

[Collaborative action to deliver] Significant ecological health improvements to river catchments based on long term, legally-binding targets, with repercussions for any targets not met. Partners [local authorities, landowners, communities, water companies and government agencies] need to develop a shared masterplan for renewal that includes improved sewage management and treatment, eliminating harmful chemicals especially in non-essential roles, improved agricultural practices to reduce run-off to rivers, reducing flooding and which are focused on nature-based solutions.



### This is needed because...

It is essential that all parties collaborate to manage whole catchment areas if we want to create healthy habitats for nature and for human well-being, recreation and interaction with nature.

### Context around the discussion

Assembly members saw river health as essential to a wide range of interests, including public amenities, species health, habitat health, water cleanliness for consumption and as an asset for future generations. They also realised that rivers are important assets for flood management. They wanted to see more benefits from healthy river catchments, including safe bathing, growing biodiversity, and better flood and drought management.

Potential obstacles to effective catchment management include the sheer scale of the issue and whether or not anything can be done about the distributed nature of the problem (e.g. the chemicals dispersed through everyday living). Most rivers are degraded, many severely, and the cost of action will be high. To address this issue in an effective way, Assembly members wanted to mandate the cooperation of many parties within a long-term approach.

### To achieve this...



- **Local Government** should lead on bringing together relevant partners to develop a plan as they hold planning responsibility within their areas and have routes into local communities to get them involved.

### Additional actions called for to help achieve this...



- **Individuals and Communities** need to understand and support changes to land use and access to open spaces that support rewilding and the renewal of nature. They need to be given opportunities to get involved in managing and protecting their rivers and catchment areas so that they understand their interconnections and how to help them.
- **Charities and NGOs** need to use their expertise about what supports the renewal of nature to get people involved in 'Citizen Science' projects (inspired by the river examples from the inspiration database) and foster community ownership of their spaces for nature.

## Urgent investment in the UK's wastewater infrastructure to put a stop to sewage entering our natural environment

### CALL TO ACTION

**To effectively protect and renew nature in the UK, we call for...**

A long-term national strategy to create a wastewater system that [reduces the risk of sewage entering our natural environment] and supports nature's restoration and renewal by upholding relevant frameworks and standards.

The delivery of this should be overseen by a publicly representative independent body (established by central or devolved governments), with investigative powers to inspect, impose and enforce criminal [and financial] sanctions upon polluters in ways that raise funds for investment in infrastructure.



### This is needed because...

Our sewage infrastructure is not fit for purpose and needs modernisation. There are far too many leaks and sewage discharges within the system that pollute our waters and harm nature, and harm people's well-being. We need significant investment in the UK sewage infrastructure to create more efficient waste management systems that protect nature and do not pollute our water.

### Context around the discussion

As with the previous Call to Action, Assembly members sought to achieve clean water for recreation, use and wildlife, but this time by focusing specifically on the infrastructure needed to treat our wastewater effectively and to overhaul the inadequate system currently in place. This was in response to concerns about how current wastewater management impacts on biodiversity, sanitation, fisheries and the microbiome of soil and waterways.

It was recognised that further clarification is needed on questions of responsibility and accountability. Assembly members also considered the amount of money that would be needed to properly upgrade our wastewater infrastructure, and acknowledged the risk that the cost might fall disproportionately on those who can least afford it.

### To achieve this...



- **National Governments** must work with water regulators to promote standards\* and enforce the regulations. They must demand that water companies invest more of their profits in upgrading infrastructure as well as providing finance. This can't come out of consumers' pockets.
- **Charities and NGOs** must campaign for access to clean water and assist with the research into impacts and solutions.

*\*for example WINEP industry standards in England, WQNEP in Wales, outcomes in SEPA's Framework for Water in Scotland.*



## A fundamental change in habits and attitudes to domestic water use

### CALL TO ACTION

**To effectively protect and renew nature in the UK, we call for...**

All household water usage to be valued [and metered] and the consequences of misuse recognised [because it will be measured and paid for by the consumer directly].

### This is needed because...

There needs to be a fundamental attitude and habit change — financially and socially — about how we use water, including what we allow to go down drains. If everyone is water metered we know how much water we are using, because we cannot manage what we don't measure.

Meters are not something to be feared, but a tool for awareness and education so people can consider where they can save in water use (like a smart meter).

### Context around the discussion

Assembly members heard a great deal about the complexities of managing wastewater, and eventually concluded that the best solution is to avoid pollution in the first place by preventing the misuse of wastewater in the home. They highlighted issues like medications, chemicals, fats, plastics and other products which, when put down the drain, can cause problems both for water utility and ultimately for nature.

They felt that there was a wider cultural need in the UK to shift our appreciation of water and to value it as the scarce, valuable resource that it is. That may mean better management of water usage and increased water conservation. Assembly members saw a pressing need for better information that people can use to make better decisions, and as well as potential benefits of linking issues of water scarcity to wastewater treatment. This could include making it compulsory to have good water management systems in place in new builds. They also highlighted the social justice aspect, suggesting that social tariffs be put in place for the less affluent.



### To achieve this...



- **Local Government** in all parts of the UK needs to work with water suppliers to establish and implement a consistent system for introducing water meters to domestic properties and introducing domestic water billing that is not associated with Council Tax.

### Additional actions called for to help achieve this...



- **Individuals and Communities** need to become more aware of water consumption and the impacts of wasting water, not just as a financial cost but because of its costs to the environment. People need to take more responsibility for their water use and what they put down drains. Households need to consider options for grey water use and water conserving appliances.

## Local Access to Nature

### Locally managed green spaces that support nature to thrive

#### CALL TO ACTION

To effectively protect and renew nature in the UK, we call for...

A network of local biodiverse and health focused green spaces owned and run by the people, for the people. We call for local people to be involved in initiating this process in alliance with local charities and wildlife NGOs so that ownership starts with the community and we create areas that are effective 'wildlife corridors', enhance biodiversity, enable more local food production and bring communities closer to nature.



#### This is needed because...

Many people do not have access to local green spaces where they live and we need to increase connections to nature and access to it where wildlife is scarce.

#### Context around the discussion

Assembly members felt very positive about this Call to Action, as it's all about enabling and celebrating local action. They highlighted the positive aspects of communities taking action themselves and enabling cooperation across the whole diversity of society. If communities across the UK each took responsibility for curating a green space, then a massive network opportunity becomes available and a huge array of activities and outcomes becomes possible. This includes activities related to local food, community gardens, biodiversity, cooking, children's education, community happiness, and more local green spaces that communities own and are responsible for.

It's important that people enjoy the experience of taking part, so Assembly members gave thought to how to get people involved and the practicalities of hosting activities, such as getting access to spaces, maintenance and management, tools and equipment and training.

#### To achieve this...



- **Charities and NGOs** should work with local communities and local authorities to identify underused spaces that can be used for this purpose. They should invest in community mobilisation and provide seed funding to groups to kick-start locally driven projects.
- Large UK-wide **Charities and NGOs** should establish and publicise a database of local projects that are working towards improving the future of nature to inspire people to action and demonstrate the change that can be achieved by local action.
- **Local Government** can provide funding to projects, help groups to navigate the rules and regulations, and provide land directly for projects to get going.
- **Individuals and Communities** can get involved by starting action and ensuring that engagement spreads.
- **Food Businesses** can provide sponsorship for equipment and donate seeds and plants to local communities.

## A minimum of 12% of all space in new built infrastructure and retrofits is given to supporting biodiversity and linking people with nature for their health and well-being



### CALL TO ACTION

To effectively protect and renew nature in the UK, we call for...

Legislation to require a minimum of 12% of all new build infrastructure [land area] and retrofits [of public places] are given over to nature and supporting biodiversity, and to ensure that people are able to access nature every day (e.g. time outside during curriculum and employment.) The legislation should be informed by relevant expertise (e.g. ecologists working with engineers) and ongoing investment and management should be expertise-driven. Doing this will improve the environment and bring it to the forefront of people's lives.

### This is needed because...

Everyone, regardless of where they live or work, needs access to nature to help them recharge mentally, to have a healthy lifestyle and to improve work productivity.

#### To achieve this...



- **Local Government** must use their planning powers to enforce this minimum allocation. They also need to secure the relevant expertise, coordinate local community groups, consider how green decisions are part of planning decisions, research what local communities want for their green and natural spaces and activities, encourage walking meetings and volunteering in green and nature-based activities (with time given by employers, during working hours) and contribute to the cost of upkeep of local green spaces.
- **National Governments** must pass legislation, informed by relevant ecological expertise.

### Context around the discussion

People are happier and healthier when they access nature regularly. Assembly members valued the link between nature and people's health and well-being of people, and want more people to experience nature. This Call to Action proposes a concrete and tangible way to link nature and personal well-being, with developers and local authorities appropriately guided by science and expertise.

Assembly members felt that integrating biodiverse spaces into built-up areas can enable community gardens and parks that bring nature right to our doorsteps, while setting a minimum requirement of 12% of land use for nature and biodiversity offers a specific and challenging target to aim for. They also felt it essential that people are enabled to be in nature, for example through employers being asked to facilitate more time spent in nature, or by medical practitioners encouraging or prescribing time in nature.

## Recognition of access to nature as a human right



### CALL TO ACTION

To effectively protect and renew nature in the UK, we call for...

A legal right to equitable access to nature [as a human right] and for this to be supported by clean air legislation and funding to realise it. This will support people to [connect with] value and protect nature and improve people's well-being, health and happiness.

### This is needed because...

Many people across the UK are disconnected from nature due to where they live or other life circumstances and do not recognise the practical, economic and social benefits nature provides to the UK. Access to nature is not equal across the country and some communities miss out on these benefits, especially if they live in poorer urban areas (where concentrations of ethnic minorities live) or have a disability that restricts their ability to travel to areas where nature is. It also seems that governments have previously prioritised improving natural environments in more affluent areas of the country.

### Context around the discussion

Assembly members were vocal about the need for equitable access to nature, ensuring that everyone, no matter where they live or how wealthy they are, has access. They felt that people from different communities have vastly different experiences of nature, depending on how they access it and interact with it. Nature, they feel, is a fundamental right.

It was also recognised that if people do not have opportunities to connect with nature, they are less likely to value it and thus support the other Calls to Action, making enabling access to nature integral to the whole People's Plan.

Assembly members concluded that the right to access nature should be enshrined in legislation. Such legislation would require many relevant bodies, from local authorities to developers, to consider how to bring nature closer to everyone.

It was also recognised that there are trade-offs involved, as some areas could potentially suffer from more people visiting to access nature, creating "hot spots" which might negatively impact the immediate natural environment.

#### To achieve this...



- **National Governments** need to enact legislation recognising access to nature as a human right, with conditions that protect nature's renewal in the UK from potential harms caused by humans using natural spaces.

#### Additional actions called for to help achieve this...



- **Local Government** need to ensure that there are well maintained, nature-rich green spaces and fresh water sites accessible to everyone, especially in urban areas. They need to use their planning authority powers with nature protection and increasing biodiversity in mind in all areas.
- **Charities and NGOs** can help improve access to the countryside with their own assets and also invest more in bringing nature into urban areas.





# Using Evidence Effectively

## Information about the state of nature in the UK to be more readily available and positively promoted to the public

### CALL TO ACTION

To effectively protect and renew nature in the UK, we call for...




Fact-based locally/regionally relevant information about nature to be more readily available and positively promoted to the UK public so that public knowledge of the state of UK nature is deepened.

### This is needed because...

'Knowledge is power' and enables everyone to make informed decisions concerning nature.

**To achieve this...**



- Charities and NGOs** should lead on providing high-quality factual information to the public and examine how to provide greater access to nature and properties e.g. National Trust. They should work with natural and social scientists to produce a growing evidence/knowledge of why nature matters and make this more accessible and understandable.

**Additional actions called for to help achieve this...**




- National Governments** need to ensure nature has a more prominent role at the table/on the agenda and ensure everyone has readily available access to nature.
- Charities and NGOs** should be empowered and resourced to protect and care for nature locally and involve local community in the process.

### Context around the discussion

Assembly members felt that people would appreciate nature differently if they knew what was happening and what was at stake. People would not only act differently, but demand that governments and others act differently too.

It was felt that a deep understanding of nature is lacking among politicians and the general public. Facts and evidence-based information can be the bedrock of better understanding, as long as they can be properly disseminated and understood. This means exposing people to more than isolated headlines, and instead promoting a deeper and more detailed understanding of the issues.

A key challenge (and opportunity) is to ensure that this information is relevant and relatable to different people's situations, making it more likely that they will change their behaviour.

## A validated, transparent, and accessible evidence-base to inform decisions and policies impacting on nature

### CALL TO ACTION

**To effectively protect and renew nature in the UK, we call for...**

A validated, transparent and accessible evidence base, drawing on both public and private research which must be used to inform decisions and policies impacting on renewing and protecting nature in the UK so that we have confidence decisions will have the most appropriate impact.

### This is needed because...

Currently evidence is not used to best effect and is contested.

#### To achieve this...



- **National Governments** need to ensure that peer-reviewed evidence informs government policy and that this is legislated for. They should create a body with appropriate powers to oversee and fund the evidence process.

#### Additional actions called for to help achieve this...



- **Local Government** can provide interpretation so that evidence takes into account local needs. Others can get involved by sharing “what works” and best practice/impacts.

### Context around the discussion

Throughout the Assembly process, participants constantly deliberated over the role of information, data and evidence in making decisions about how to protect and restore nature. They understand that many decisions regarding how, where, and at what level to act are technical and require sound evidence, but that policymakers and other decision makers often do not know where to find reliable information or how to interpret it for their own circumstances. They also felt that once the evidence is made available, it should be acted upon rather than ignored or endlessly contested.

Assembly members explored the role of a mechanism that would enable evidence-based decisions to become more normal and acceptable in society. This could include a legal basis, or something more informal, depending on the context of the decision. Without a thorough explanation of the UK research infrastructure, this remains a principled rather than a targeted Call to Action, but it is one that is important to Assembly members.



## Greater focus on renewal when talking to the public about the future of nature

### CALL TO ACTION

**To effectively protect and renew nature in the UK, we call for...**

The revision of the language used by experts, policy and decision makers in communicating to the public about nature. By focusing on renewal and not just restoration, we are looking to the future and not to the past.

### This is needed because...

Renewing nature is for everybody, not just the few. Changing the language is needed to help **everyone** to access information so they can be informed, empowered, and people will be guided to better decision-making.

#### To achieve this...



- **National Governments** should lead the change by working with stakeholders, especially education and through its agencies to use new [accessible] language in decision-making and policy.

### Context around the discussion

Assembly members explored how the language of conservation and environmentalism has failed to engage the mainstream public. They concluded that part of this is due to jargon and a perception of conservation as a backwards-facing worldview, rather than one that looks to a future of renewal.

Instead, they wanted to see a forward-looking approach that uses plain and simple language to engage people and support them to perceive this agenda differently: making it less about “eco-shaming” and more about opening people’s eyes to the role of nature and all of the ways it intersects with everyday life. We don’t need to be experts, we just need enough knowledge and opportunity to act.

The overarching challenge is to figure out how to improve engagement in complicated and complex issues that are closely intertwined with our lifestyle aspirations.

#### Additional actions called for to help achieve this...



- **Local Government** needs to act as a bridge between stakeholders and communities to communicate this change of language, support action locally, encourage more public involvement.
- **Businesses** can help with the language they use in marketing and employ language that leads a refocus toward nature and use the word “renewal” in practice and communication.



# 05.

# Visions for the future

This section describes co-created visions for the future of nature developed by Assembly members, as well as cross-cutting themes from their deliberations.

## 5.1 Vision statements

The Calls to Action described in the previous section are a vibrant, accurate reflection of the considered view of Assembly members. They are Assembly members' own words and represent many hours of hard work, deliberation and reflection.

The spirit lying behind those words can be further understood by reading the Calls to Action in the context of the **vision statements** that Assembly members also created, which are shared below.

These vision statements are also the Assembly members' own words, collectively drafted in response to the 'prompt' statement.



**IN A FUTURE UK, WHERE NATURE IS EFFECTIVELY PROTECTED, RESTORED AND RENEWED...**

**“ Nature is valued and respected by all.** There is a collaborative, long-term approach to prioritising nature in all decision-making. This has created an empowered, happier, healthier world, with nature connected to everyday life. This has laid a foundation for the well-being of all future life.”



**“ There is a balance between human and non-human needs, and we are taking individual and collective responsibility to enhance, sustain and enable nature to flourish.** The journey we have been on has ingrained nature in our consciousness. This balance is now second nature to us, and is affordable for us and nature. Nature’s gift to us is to make us more connected as a society. We all have improved well-being and mood, and future generations are inspired.”



**“ Humans and nature are in sync and people across the country experience nature on their doorstep.** People are aware of the improved air quality and diverse array of species that they encounter daily. Politicians, charities, NGOs, scientists work together, in informed ways, to ensure thriving wildlife is kept at the front of all decisions. We understand that we need nature to thrive, to benefit all of our lives.”



**“ Evidence-based nature renewal is central to lifelong education and involves real life experiences.** The practical application of nature’s renewal is integrated across generations and cultures; creating memories driven by the thirst for knowledge of our children.”



“ We are able to spend time in nature every day, whether to play, work or spending time where we live. We are educated in the benefits of nature for mental and physical well-being at all points in life — and understand that by us protecting nature, nature helps us. We protect, enhance & renew habitats and ecosystems to highest ecological standards. We turn to nature for its intangible benefits on our health and well-being.”



“ Nature is prioritised, looked after valued and cared for. There are abundant species and nature is thriving. Everyone plays their part in looking after nature and this has happened because government has acted and, through being better informed, people have spoken up and become a voice for nature.”



## 5.2 Cross-cutting themes: the mood in the room

In addition to drafting Calls to Action and vision statements, Assembly members were also shown some **cross-cutting themes** on the last day of the Assembly. These themes summarised the thoughts, words and ideas that had been captured as they discussed the details of the People's Plan for Nature.

Assembly members agreed that the proposed cross-cutting themes broadly reflected a general set of principles which informed the development of the Calls to Action, although some members stressed that the themes are somewhat generic and should not be used as substitutes for the Calls to Action.

The themes are shared below. They are not given in priority order: rather, they give a flavour of the mood in the room.

Verbatim comments are taken from the **discussions and context around the vision statements**.

### KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

We need to understand nature, to know how to protect it.

In a world like this...

“The physical and mental health benefits of nature are clearly understood by everyone, are acted on, and clear, rigorous evidence for this is available.”

“Regular time in nature, [as well as] knowledge and appreciation [of the role of nature is] built into the school curriculum throughout school life.”

“Wildlife and species are thriving. Children at school will be surrounded by nature and wildlife, not concrete yards. Playtime will consist of exploring wildlife and green space, and school trips to clean rivers and seas.”

### EQUALITY OF ACCESS TO NATURE

And make sure everyone has a say in change.

In a world like this...

“Everyone knows how and where they can access nature, and we are all confident to do this.”

“We have free, frequent transport between urban and rural areas [to] ensure everyone has equal, accessible access to nature.”

“We have more nature corridors and urban environments have green spaces, so everyone has easy access to nature. Planning legislation has changed so access to nature is built into new infrastructure.”

“Employers give their employees space and time to access nature. People's mental health and productivity has risen as a result.”

### NATURE AT THE HEAD OF THE TABLE

Nature should be at the head of the table, promoted in every decision, and people in power should care.

In a world like this...

“People understand that their entitlement to accessing nature is secondary to nature's entitlement to thrive.”



## DESIGNING CHANGE IN WAYS THAT ARE LIKELY TO WORK

If we are asking actors to change to protect nature, think about how to make the change achievable for them (even if it's not easy).

In a world like this...

“ Affordable nature-friendly food is the basis for everybody's diet. Farmers use sustainable methods producing less meat, more plants and people choose seasonal foods. Land is renewed for nature and people are healthier.”



## ENFORCEMENT OF RULES & REGULATIONS

Don't let wrongdoers off the hook, create independent scrutiny.

## WE MUST PAY ATTENTION TO THE RIGHT MEASUREMENTS

Use the best evidence and thinking to value nature's resources in ways that mean we can measure our success, create KPIs and hold ourselves to account.

## FOCUS ON INNOVATION & THE FUTURE

While parts of nature need to be restored, the UK as a whole should look to renew our relationship with nature, as well as restoring and enhancing biodiversity.





# 06.

# The People's Assembly for Nature: Evaluation

This section reports on the feedback Assembly members have given us in three areas: first, on the experience of taking part in the process; second, on their views regarding the implementation of the People's Plan for Nature and the overall impact of the Assembly; and third, on the longer-term impact it has had on their own views and behaviours. While assessing the overall impact of the Assembly will be a longer-term process, this section collates the immediate feedback from Assembly members, which can be used as a baseline for future analysis.



## 6.1 Evaluation of the Assembly Process

At the end of each weekend, all Assembly members were asked to give feedback on what it was like to take part in the Assembly process. Not all Assembly members chose to complete the evaluation forms, and there was a drop in completion rates at the two online weekends. Between the first and fourth weekend, however, the number of people taking time to evaluate their experiences in the Assembly increased from 82 to 91 people.

### ASSEMBLY MEMBERS GAVE A POSITIVE RATING TO THEIR OVERALL EXPERIENCE

When asked to rate their overall experience of taking part in the final weekend, the majority of respondents awarded top marks of 5 out of 5, with 5 denoting 'Excellent' and 1 labelled as 'Terrible.'

#### Overall, how would you rate your experience of taking part in the Assembly meetings?

*NB Respondent rates varied each weekend and not everyone completed an evaluation survey. Of those who did, some questions were not filled in, which accounts for variance in the data.*

#### Across all four weekends, the vast majority of respondents indicated that the experience had been positive overall, giving a rating of between 4 and 5:

- **Weekend 1** — 96%
- **Weekend 2** — 92%
- **Weekend 3** — 98%
- **Weekend 4** — 94%

Weekend 2 was the exception, as 61% of respondents gave the experience a rating of 4. This may be explained in part by some of the technical difficulties Assembly members experienced in moving online.

This also reflects the dynamics of the Assembly process: forming a new group and finding commonalities during the first weekend, listening to evidence and deliberating in the middle weekends, and feeling more confident in the process to arrive at consensus on the final weekend.

A free text option was linked to this question. A combined total of 253 comments were added across all weekends, explaining why people had chosen their rating. This represents 80% of those who completed the evaluation. Given that this question was always optional, this shows a high level of willingness to share views, particularly on Weekend 1.

#### Across all four weekends, the breakdown of the overall sentiment of the comments was as follows:

- **Positive** — 79%
- **Negative** — 6%
- **Both** — 15%
- **Neutral** — 0%

The majority of positive factors highlighted by participants in Weekend 1 related to the process, which was praised for being well organised with a strong combination of professionalism and interesting learning content. Assembly members also commented on how friendly, safe, fun, diverse and interesting the experience was.

“ I learnt so much about the environment and how just simple steps by individuals could encourage others to follow suit. There were also some excellent speakers and the facilitators were very good at explaining each aspect of the questions we were asked to consider.”

“ Very stimulating, and good to meet a lot of interesting and friendly people. Also good that there were many different and sometimes opposing points of view coming from fellow participants. I would have been concerned had there been unanimity of views at this stage, as it might have indicated insufficient variety of social groups being represented in the way participants were chosen.”

“ I was very nervous about meeting lots of strangers, but everyone was really friendly. The facilities, food and accommodation were top notch too. I found it to be a very pleasant experience. All of the staff were lovely too.”

**Negative comments were also made about the process.**

A very small number felt unsure about how the Assembly would have real-world influence, and about the nature of the evidence presented.

“ I was unclear about farmers/landowners’ general opinion in our suggested changes. Were they well represented at Assembly weekend?”

“ Words are nice and all but there is little link to action.”

**Some participants offered both positive and negative feedback;** sometimes in relation to feeling overwhelmed, rushed by tight timings, confusion over travel payments or connected with the venue and food provided.

“ Really enjoyed it, felt a bit overwhelmed with the amount of people and all the figures presented. Sometimes there was no slides and the presenter said so much I would have found some slides helpful, as they spoke so quick I struggled to take notes. Not the best social person and find meeting people a bit difficult so changing groups everyday was challenging for me.”

“ I found it overwhelming and was out of my comfort zone as most of the people there were far more knowledgeable about the preservation of nature.”



## PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE OF SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS: A JOURNEY OF DELIBERATION

Assembly members were asked about their experience of participating in the small group discussions each weekend.

People's comfort in expressing their views was noticeably high at the start of the process in Weekend 1. It dipped a little in Weekend 2, mainly due to switching from in-person to being online. However, this increased in Weekend 3 and was at its highest by the final weekend, with participants having spent time together over four sessions.



“ Feel somewhat uncomfortable about talking during the group discussions because of the online aspect - awkward when two people try to talk at once, but the facilitator moderated this well.”

We also asked Assembly members whether they had changed their views as a result of listening to others. The highest percentage of people agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement was seen in Weekend 4. This is unsurprising, as it illustrates how Assembly members reflected back on their journey of deliberation across all weekends.

**Both datasets demonstrate the success of the process in terms of enabling Assembly members to take part effectively and learn from one another.**

I felt comfortable in the small group discussions to express my views											
Weekend 1			Weekend 2			Weekend 3			Weekend 4		
Q2	No.	%	Q1a	No.	%	Q1a	No.	%	Q1a	No.	%
Strongly agree	41	50%	Strongly agree	37	45%	Strongly agree	39	66%	Strongly agree	74	81%
Agree	37	45%	Agree	38	46%	Agree	17	29%	Agree	15	16%
Neutral	3	4%	Neutral	4	5%	Neutral	1	2%	Neutral	1	1%
Disagree	0	0%	Disagree	2	2%	Disagree	0	0%	Disagree	1	1%
Strongly disagree	1	1%	Strongly disagree	1	1%	Strongly disagree	2	3%	Strongly disagree	0	0%
<b>Total Evaluations</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Total Evaluations</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Total Evaluations</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Total Evaluations</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>100%</b>

*NB Response rates varied each weekend and not everyone completed an evaluation survey. Of those who did, some questions were not filled in, which accounts for variance in the data.*

My initial views changed through listening to others											
Weekend 1			Weekend 2			Weekend 3			Weekend 4		
Q2	No.	%	Q1a	No.	%	Q1a	No.	%	Q1a	No.	%
Strongly agree	13	16%	Strongly agree	11	13%	Strongly agree	8	14%	Strongly agree	16	18%
Agree	33	40%	Agree	30	37%	Agree	22	38%	Agree	39	44%
Neutral	22	27%	Neutral	29	35%	Neutral	22	38%	Neutral	24	27%
Disagree	10	12%	Disagree	10	12%	Disagree	5	8%	Disagree	10	11%
Strongly disagree	4	5%	Strongly disagree	2	2%	Strongly disagree	1	2%	Strongly disagree	0	0%
<b>Total Evaluations</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Total Evaluations</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Total Evaluations</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Total Evaluations</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>100%</b>

*NB Response rates varied each weekend and not everyone completed an evaluation survey. Of those who did, some questions were not filled in, which accounts for variance in the data.*

It should be noted, however, that a small number of participants found it harder to contribute in small group discussions because they felt that one or more fellow Assembly members dominated the discussions.

“ I don’t know how you get through to people who don’t want to give others the opportunity to speak. Maybe the facilitators should just tell them to “shut up” so that others can participate. Can they “mute” them on zoom?!!”

“ It felt like three or four people, arguably myself included, did dominate and provide the most input. I kind of wish more effort was given to encouraging the younger people in the group to talk.”



I found it hard to contribute because one or more of the people in my small groups dominated the discussions											
Weekend 1			Weekend 2			Weekend 3			Weekend 4		
Q2	No.	%	Q1a	No.	%	Q1a	No.	%	Q1a	No.	%
Strongly agree	6	7%	Strongly agree	7	9%	Strongly agree	7	12%	Strongly agree	6	7%
Agree	3	4%	Agree	5	6%	Agree	2	3%	Agree	3	3%
Neutral	19	23%	Neutral	10	12%	Neutral	5	9%	Neutral	16	18%
Disagree	30	37%	Disagree	36	44%	Disagree	23	40%	Disagree	43	48%
Strongly disagree	24	29%	Strongly disagree	24	29%	Strongly disagree	21	36%	Strongly disagree	22	24%
<b>Total Evaluations</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Total Evaluations</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Total Evaluations</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Total Evaluations</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100%</b>

*NB Response rates varied each weekend and not everyone completed an evaluation survey. Of those who did, some questions were not filled in, which accounts for variance in the data.*

This was the case for 11% of participants in Weekend 1 and 10% in Weekend 4.

Notably, the percentage increased to 15% in Weekend 2 and 16% in Weekend 3. This is in keeping with the intensity of input and level of deliberation during the middle part of the process. It also reflects how people reached a more consensual position by Weekend 4, in which they aligned around their recommendations.

Not having enough time to discuss issues during each weekend was an issue emphasised by a significant percentage of Assembly members. This was at its peak in Weekend 1 and Weekend 3, when 28% and 36% of participants respectively disagreed or strongly disagreed that “there was enough time to discuss the issues properly”. This correlates to the main phases of input and deliberation.

The feeling that there was insufficient time was at its lowest on the second weekend. This was experienced by 23% of people, indicating that the online timings worked well for the majority. It also dipped to 22% for the final weekend, when small groups worked together to reach agreement on their final outputs.

“**Time is the biggest problem.** Perhaps the presentations could be viewed at home before the meeting. Questions could be sent to Involve and the presenter discuss these at the actual meeting.”



There was enough time to discuss the issues properly											
Weekend 1			Weekend 2			Weekend 3			Weekend 4		
Q2	No.	%	Q1a	No.	%	Q1a	No.	%	Q1a	No.	%
Strongly agree	18	22%	Strongly agree	17	22%	Strongly agree	11	19%	Strongly agree	22	24%
Agree	24	29%	Agree	32	39%	Agree	14	24%	Agree	34	38%
Neutral	17	21%	Neutral	14	17%	Neutral	12	21%	Neutral	14	16%
Disagree	19	23%	Disagree	16	20%	Disagree	20	34%	Disagree	17	19%
Strongly disagree	4	5%	Strongly disagree	2	2%	Strongly disagree	1	2%	Strongly disagree	3	3%
<b>Total Evaluations</b>	<b>82</b>	100%	<b>Total Evaluations</b>	<b>82</b>	100%	<b>Total Evaluations</b>	<b>58</b>	100%	<b>Total Evaluations</b>	<b>90</b>	100%

*NB Response rates varied each weekend and not everyone completed an evaluation survey. Of those who did, some questions were not filled in, which accounts for variance in the data.*

## VERY POSITIVE RESPONSE TO THE FACILITATORS

This question was asked in relation to the first three weekends only. The responses tell an extremely positive story of how effective the facilitator role was. Only nine people out of 233 [4%] who completed the evaluation graded this as 'average.' No one selected the option of 'not great,' or 'poor' at any stage of the Assembly process.

**“ It’s a very hard job! I was very impressed. How come, so far, I have not found a person who irritated me??”**

Notably, a few people thought that some of the facilitators tried to influence their group with their own ideas. This was slightly more of an issue [for 13% of people] on the first weekend than by the third weekend [for 10% of people].

**“ If anything, the facilitator this time, compared to my previous experience, could have given some direction to the group, rather than simply allowing anyone to say what was on their minds - which occasionally led to periods of silence.”**



**The facilitators' role is to support the group to have constructive conversations - ensuring that everyone has the chance to speak and be listened to, and keeping the discussions focused on the task. How effective were the facilitators in your opinion?**

Weekend 1			Weekend 2			Weekend 3		
Q2	No.	%	Q1a	No.	%	Q1a	No.	%
Excellent	55	67%	Strongly agree	49	60%	Strongly agree	36	61%
Good	25	30%	Agree	28	35%	Agree	20	34%
Average	2	2%	Neutral	4	5%	Neutral	3	5%
<b>Total Evaluations</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Total Evaluations</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Total Evaluations</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100%</b>

*NB Response rates varied each weekend and not everyone completed an evaluation survey. Of those who did, some questions were not filled in, which accounts for variance in the data.*

## THE ASSEMBLY AS A BROADLY POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT TO SUPPORT LEARNING AND DISCUSSION

Across the first three weekends, Assembly members were asked how well they thought the Assembly worked overall as an environment for learning and discussion. A different set of questions was asked at the final weekend, drawing learning and insight from across all sessions.

The results show that for the vast majority, each of the first three weekends was a conducive environment for people to learn in. A small minority found it average, and one person did not find it supportive during Weekend 3.

Participants were also asked how sure they were that the information they received through presentations and content was fair and balanced between different perspectives and viewpoints. In Weekend 1, 17% of participants were unsure, but this dropped to 9% during both Weekends 2 and 3. This reduction in uncertainty about the information presented allowed for an increase in confidence and critical thinking, a core part of the process.

Overall, people scored the learning that they received from the presentations and Assembly content highly, with an average of 82% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the evaluation question across the first three weekends.





## PARTICIPATING IN THE ASSEMBLY WAS AN OVERWHELMINGLY POSITIVE EXPERIENCE OVERALL

On the final weekend a new section was added to the evaluation, inviting people to look back on their Assembly experience as a whole. Questions sought to gauge both the feelings and attitudes of Assembly members as a result of having been through the Assembly process. The results show that for the vast majority, the experience was overwhelmingly positive.



For the first three questions (see table below), an aggregated percentage of 98% of people agreed or completely agreed with the evaluation statements. This is clear-cut evidence of enjoyment and pride in the process, which is further supported by 100% of participants telling friends and family about their involvement in the Assembly.

1. I found taking part in the People's Assembly for Nature enjoyable			2. I am proud to have taken part in the Assembly			3. I have told my friends/family/other people about my participation in the Assembly		
Weekend 1			Weekend 2			Weekend 3		
	No.	%		No.	%		No.	%
Strongly agree	66	73%	Strongly agree	72	79%	Strongly agree	70	78%
Agree	23	25%	Agree	15	16%	Agree	20	22%
Neutral	1	1%	Neutral	0	0%	Neutral	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%	Disagree	3	3%	Disagree	0	0%
Strongly disagree	0	0%	Strongly disagree	0	0%	Strongly disagree	0	0%
Unsure	1	1%	Unsure	1	1%	Unsure	0	0%
<b>Total Evaluations</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Total Evaluations</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Total Evaluations</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100%</b>

*NB Respondent rates varied each weekend and not everyone completed an evaluation survey. Of those who did, some questions were not filled in, which accounts for variance in the data.*

When asked for the reasons for their scores, the majority of respondents gave positive or extremely positive answers. Many commented on how well organised they found the weekend, with comments including:

“ **The organisation and facilitation has been amazing** - enabling us to pull together clear ideas for action from a mass of thoughts. Suggestions (and passions) from a very diverse group of people.”

“ **Well organised, productive and feel like the weekend makes a big impact.**”

“ **Was well organised, and the facilitators were extremely helpful.** The discussions were also very fair and balanced, disagreements were handled maturely.”

“ **As usual it was jam-packed but extremely well organised.** There was a lot of work together though but the facilitators did their usual good job of keeping us on task. It was lovely to meet everyone in person again.”

**Collaboration** was a primary driver of positive ratings. This included having fun and being with new people in the exploration of a shared purpose. Respondents enjoyed and valued meeting people and working with others who they would not usually encounter. For example:

“ **Enjoyed talking to such a varied collection of people, about such an important topic...**”

“ **Met some interesting people from around the UK who all gave and listened to views.**”

“ **It was a wonderful collaborative experience with a variety of people who were very passionate.** Has a good time despite [the] seriousness of subject.”

“ **It's been a very involved weekend but well overseen to allow all to share thoughts ideas to come together as one voice.**”

“ **It was rewarding in terms of pride that I had been able to contribute, and well-being derived from meeting a lots of new people with common cause.**”

Participants thought the **process** was smooth and well run, particularly in how the work from across all four weekends was brought together. Reasons included the knowledge gained, and the quality of information and facilitation and clarity provided. People described themselves as feeling proud, positive and thankful for being invited to take part.

“ **Everything has been brought together. Such a worthwhile and inspirational forum.** Thank you.”

“ **This weekend was a pleasantly concise accumulation of everything we had learned and worked on in the previous weekends,** it really felt like everybody had been given the right amount of experience to be comfortable talking and sharing their opinions on these topics.”

“ **This weekend has brought all our work over the last 3 weekends together.** It's been very informative, just going over all the subjects has been great.”

Assembly members thought that the topic vision was compelling, highlighting the importance of nature. Being part of the Assembly and the content presented genuinely inspired people to work together and feel that they were able to make a difference.

“ **It put a lot of perspective into how much difference we as people can make. The community we built was great.**”

“ **Created awareness of how important nature is.**”

Other people said that the event felt friendly, inclusive, and productive.

“ **The energy was really positive, and the conversations were empowering.**”

“ **It's been [sic] such an incredible experience.** Everyone involved has been so helpful and inclusive.”

“ **It was, in my opinion, very productive. A wonderful bunch of people too.**”

“ **Meetings were inclusive and very productive.** They felt warm and friendly as we got to know each other fairly well during the 4 weekends!”

## OPTIMISTIC, BUT CAUTIOUS, ABOUT THE POTENTIAL OF THE ASSEMBLY TO HAVE IMPACT IN THE WIDER WORLD

In relation to the second set of questions, about the potential of the Assembly to effect real-world change, people were less sure. Here, the aggregated percentage of people agreeing or completely agreeing with the evaluation statements falls to 89%.

98% of respondents agreed or completely agreed that it is important to have a plan for nature. 93% of Assembly members also agreed or completely agreed that having the plan for nature written by people from all walks of life makes it a powerful call for change.

However, a lower figure of 77% were confident that the plan for nature will make a difference. While this is still a significant majority, it is worth noting that the value of the People's Plan for Nature will come from its implementation, and that without effective follow-up, Assembly members will feel that their efforts have not made a difference.



4. It is important that there is a plan for nature			5. Having the plan for nature written by people from all walks of life, makes it a powerful call for change			6. I am confident that the plan for nature will make a difference		
Weekend 4			Weekend 4			Weekend 4		
Q2	No.	%	Q1a	No.	%	Q1a	No.	%
Strongly agree	66	73%	Strongly agree	72	79%	Strongly agree	70	78%
Agree	23	25%	Agree	15	16%	Agree	20	22%
Neutral	1	1%	Neutral	0	0%	Neutral	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%	Disagree	3	3%	Disagree	0	0%
Strongly disagree	0	0%	Strongly disagree	0	0%	Strongly disagree	0	0%
Unsure	1	1%	Unsure	1	1%	Unsure	0	
<b>Total Evaluations</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Total Evaluations</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Total Evaluations</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100%</b>

*NB Respondent rates varied each weekend and not everyone completed an evaluation survey. Of those who did, some questions were not filled in, which accounts for variance in the data.*

## 6.2 Attitudes of Assembly Members to taking part in the People's Plan for Nature

Building on the hopes expressed by Assembly members that the plan would make a difference, all participants were asked at the end of the final weekend to share their thoughts on staying involved in the wider Save Our Wild Isles project and acting as champions for the People's Plan for Nature.

A range of potential opportunities was offered to gauge Assembly members' interest in different types of continued involvement. The survey also sought other ideas for ways they might like to stay involved. The survey was completed anonymously, so did not in any way commit individuals to particular actions. 96 Assembly members completed this part of the survey.



### INTERESTED IN ONGOING PRACTICAL ACTION

When asked about continuing to explore ways to protect and restore nature at home, work or local community, the vast majority of people (84%) said they would be interested, with a further 10% saying that they might be interested.

Finding out what you can do yourself to protect and restore nature at home, at work or in your local community				
	I would be interested	I might be interested	I wouldn't be interested	Did not answer
Number of responses	81	10	2	3

### SOME INTEREST IN GETTING INVOLVED WITH WIDER LOBBYING

When asked about contacting national and local decision makers to help win their support for protecting and restoring nature, 54% of respondents said they would be interested and 24% said they might be interested.

Contacting national and local decision makers, and others, to help win their support for protecting and restoring nature				
	I would be interested	I might be interested	I wouldn't be interested	Did not answer
Number of responses	52	33	7	4

## FEWER MEMBERS PREPARED TO TALK WITH THE MEDIA, THOUGH THIS INCREASED AS THE ASSEMBLY PROGRESSED

This question received a wider range of responses, with 44% of participants expressing clear interest and 24% expressing possible interest in talking to journalists and the media to help win support for the People's Plan for Nature. By contrast, almost a third of Assembly members said they were not interested in media involvement. However, when supported by the three sponsoring charities' representatives and offered ongoing help, more people became interested over the course of the Assembly process.



Talking to journalists and the media to help win support for the People's Plan for Nature				
	I would be interested	I might be interested	I wouldn't be interested	Did not answer
Number of responses	42	23	27	4

## SOME INTEREST IN PEER-TO-PEER AWARENESS RAISING

A similar pattern of responses was received in relation to the option of learning how to run an informal meet-up to give others a chance to learn about and discuss some of the issues covered during the Assembly. While over two-thirds of Assembly members said they would be interested (43%) or might be interested (24%), just under a third (28%) said they would not. As with the option of media involvement, empirical observation at the event suggests that participants would need a clearer idea of what would be involved and support to do it, in order to become more familiar with the meet-up option and thus potentially more interested.



Learning how to run an informal meet-up to give others the chance to learn about and discuss some of the issues we covered during the Assembly				
	I would be interested	I might be interested	I wouldn't be interested	Did not answer
Number of responses	41	23	27	5

## THE MAJORITY WANT TO STAY IN TOUCH

Assembly members were positive about keeping in touch with each other online or offline, for example through a “one year on” reunion, with 73% saying they were interested in this idea. A further 20% said they might be interested.

Meeting up with your fellow Assembly members, online or offline, e.g., for a one year on reunion				
	I would be interested	I might be interested	I wouldn't be interested	Did not answer
Number of responses	70	19	4	3

## MEMBERS ALSO BROUGHT THEIR OWN IDEAS FOR OPPORTUNITIES

The final question invited Assembly members to share suggestions of other opportunities they would be interested in.

- Two people wanted to pursue volunteering, one a volunteer in similar projects and the other in a specific group to establish a food standards label.
- Four people expressed interest in how the work could be promoted, including a People's Plan podcast (two suggestions) and other promotional materials on a range of different media platforms.

“ Create a podcast with other Assembly members to talk about the Assembly and how others can do more.”

- Five people suggested ways to stay connected including Facebook (two suggestions) an annual Christmas party, plus regular or permanent assemblies and meetings (two suggestions).

“ To be part of a permanent ‘People’s Assembly for Nature’ and develop local/ regional connections.”

- Seven people wanted to be kept up to date on progress, from the perspective of actions taken by participants and also wider progress attached to the statements identified in the People's Plan.

“ On the topic of ‘Evidence based,’ could we find out about projects that work during the next year? Also links to NGO’s legislation which is being debated - what gets passed - to support Nature.”



## 6.3 The impact on Assembly members

The purpose of the People's Assembly for Nature was not to ask Assembly members to change anything about what they think or do in their own lives. However, previous research has shown that taking part in a citizens' assembly like the People's Assembly for Nature can lead people to make these sorts of changes. This gave rise to curiosity about whether or not taking part in the People's Assembly for Nature would have any effect on the attitudes and behaviours of those who took part.

To assess this, Assembly members were asked to complete short, almost identical research surveys at the start of the first weekend and the end of the final weekend.

A total of 105 Assembly members completed the Weekend 1 survey (NB only 103 participants remained throughout the whole Assembly), while 95 completed the Weekend 4 survey.

At the same time, YouGov also ran polling on some of the survey questions. The purpose of the polling was to compare Assembly members' answers with those of the general public, to control for any changes that might have happened anyway in the public mood, and thus discover how much participating in the People's Assembly for Nature may have changed Assembly members' views.

The survey results show that participating in the People's Assembly for Nature led to changes in Assembly members' knowledge about nature and their views on who can make a difference to, and has responsibility for, protecting and restoring nature in the UK.

Results also suggest that participating in the Assembly has changed how much Assembly members engage in some nature-related activities. Where there is comparable YouGov polling data, it can be concluded with confidence that these changes occurred because of Assembly members' participation in the People's Assembly for Nature, as none of these changes were reflected in the wider population.

Taking part in the People's Assembly for Nature has not had an impact on Assembly members' more general political behaviours to date.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://involve.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachemnt/CAUK%20Eval%20AM%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> The two YouGov surveys ran from 11-14 November 2022 and 3-6 February 2023, respectively.

<sup>5</sup> The first YouGov survey had a sample size of 1733 UK adults. The second had a sample size of 2115 UK adults.



## INTERESTED IN ONGOING PRACTICAL ACTION

We asked Assembly members to self-report on their knowledge about nature in the surveys. We also asked them factual questions to see if their knowledge had changed.

Overall, Assembly members self-reported an increase in their knowledge of nature during the Assembly. At the start of the Assembly, 34% of participants said they knew 'a lot' or 'quite a lot' about nature in the UK. By the end of the Assembly, this had increased to 67%. At the same time, the number of Assembly members who said they knew 'very little' about nature in the UK fell from 18% to 3%.

**Table 1: How much, if anything, would you say you know about nature in the UK?**

Answer options	Weekend 1	Weekend 4
I know a lot about nature in the UK	5%	13%
I know quite a lot about nature in the UK	29%	54%
I know quite little about nature in the UK	39%	24%
I know very little about nature in the UK	18%	3%
Don't know	6%	1%
Did not answer	3%	5%

Taken as a group, the three factual questions we asked Assembly members also support their belief that their knowledge about nature increased.

The total percentage of Assembly members who 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' (the correct answer) with the statement "My country has lost a higher percentage of its nature and wildlife than almost any other country in the world" rose from 30% in Weekend 1 to 67% in Weekend 4. At the same time, the percentage who 'strongly disagreed' or 'disagreed' fell from 20% to 8%, and the percentage who said they did not know dropped from 23% to 1%.





**Table 2: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:  
“My country has lost a higher percentage of its nature and wildlife than almost any other country in the world.”**

Answer options	Weekend 1	Weekend 4
Strongly agree	11%	34%
Agree	19%	33%
Neither disagree nor agree	23%	20%
Disagree	14%	7%
Strongly disagree	6%	1%
Don’t know	23%	1%
Did not answer	4%	4%

The two other factual questions provide less useful data, because most Assembly members had already provided accurate answers to these questions at Weekend 1. There was no significant difference in the percentage of Assembly members who ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that “we need and rely on nature” between Weekend 1 and Weekend 4 (84-87%). There was only a small difference in the percentage of Assembly members who ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that “we are part of nature”: this rose slightly from 80% at Weekend 1 to 89% at Weekend 4.



### **VIEWS ON WHO COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO RESTORING AND PROTECTING NATURE CHANGED**

Assembly members’ views on how much difference various actors could make to efforts to restore and protect nature in the UK changed during the Assembly. They were asked about seven different actors: the UK government, devolved governments, local government, businesses, charities and other organisations (e.g., National Trust, RSPB, WWF), individual members of the public and local communities.

**By the end of the Assembly:**

- Assembly members overall felt that all of these actors could make more of a difference to efforts to restore and protect nature than they had done at the start of the Assembly. All seven actors saw an increase of between 14% (charities) and 34% (business) in the number of Assembly members who felt they could make ‘a large difference’.

- Assembly members were most convinced that the UK government (86%) and devolved governments (78%) could make ‘a large difference’. This compared to between 43% and 66% for the other actors. While these two actors had always been the ones that Assembly members felt could make most difference, the difference between these actors and the others had been much less in Weekend 1.
- Only 5% or fewer of Assembly members thought that the UK government, devolved governments, local government, businesses and charities could make ‘only a little difference’ or ‘no difference at all’. The only actor for which this was true in Weekend 1 was charities. For the others, the comparable Weekend 1 figures ranged from 9% (devolved governments) to 20% (local government and businesses).

The YouGov polling shows that the views of the wider population on these questions did not change during the Assembly. This means that we can be confident that the changes reported above result from Assembly members’ participation in the People’s Assembly for Nature.

One aspect that did not change during the Assembly was that Assembly members overall remained slightly less confident about the ability of individuals or local communities to effect change as compared to other actors.

16% of Assembly members who responded to the Weekend 4 survey said that they felt individuals could make 'only a little' or 'no' difference to efforts to restore and protect

nature in the UK, while the figure for local communities was 13%. However, this compares to figures of 34% and 25% in Weekend 1, representing a significant positive shift. It is also much smaller than the percentages of Assembly members who, by Weekend 4, felt that individuals and local communities could make a large difference (43% and 44%) or a significant difference (38% and 40%).

**Table 3: How much difference, if any, do you think the following people or groups can make to efforts to restore and protect nature in the UK?**

	A large difference	A significant difference	Only a little difference	No difference at all	Don't know	Did not answer
<b>UK government</b>						
Weekend 1	68%	17%	10%	1%	0%	5%
Weekend 4	86%	8%	2%	0%	0%	3%
Difference	18%	-9%	-8%	-1%	0%	-2%
<b>Devolved governments in Scotland, Wales, NI</b>						
Weekend 1	49%	34%	9%	0%	4%	5%
Weekend 4	78%	19%	0%	0%	0%	3%
Difference	29%	-15%	-9%	0%	-4%	-2%
<b>Local government</b>						
Weekend 1	43%	30%	20%	0%	2%	6%
Weekend 4	59%	35%	3%	0%	0%	3%
Difference	16%	5%	-17%	0%	-2%	-3%
<b>Businesses</b>						
Weekend 1	32%	43%	17%	3%	-2%	3%
Weekend 4	66%	25%	5%	0%	0%	3%
Difference	34%	-18%	-12%	-3%	-2%	0%
<b>Charities and other organisations (e.g., National Trust, RSPB, WWF)</b>						
Weekend 1	46%	46%	3%	0%	1%	5%
Weekend 4	60%	36%	2%	0%	0%	2%
Difference	14%	-10%	-1%	0%	-1%	-3%
<b>Individual members of the public</b>						
Weekend 1	24%	36%	30%	4%	2%	5%
Weekend 4	43%	38%	15%	1%	0%	3%
Difference	19%	2%	-15%	-3%	-2%	-2%
<b>Local communities</b>						
Weekend 1	28%	43%	24%	1%	1%	4%
Weekend 4	44%	40%	13%	0%	0%	3%
Difference	16%	-3%	-11%	-1%	-1%	-1%

## VIEWS ON WHERE RESPONSIBILITY LIES FOR PROTECTING AND RESTORING NATURE CHANGED

- Assembly members' views on how much responsibility various actors have for restoring and protecting nature in the UK changed during the Assembly. Again, they were asked about seven different actors: the UK government, devolved governments, local government, businesses, charities and other organisations (e.g. National Trust, RSPB, WWF), individual members of the public and local communities.
- Assembly members overall finished the Assembly believing that all these actors have more responsibility for restoring and protecting nature in the UK than they thought they had at the start. By the end of the Assembly, the percentage of Assembly members who felt the actors had a 'large responsibility' had increased by 24% (businesses), 16% (local government), 12% (local communities), 11% (devolved governments), 10% (individuals), 9% (charities) and 5% (UK government).
- The biggest change in views centred around the responsibility of business. The percentage of Assembly members who believe that business has a 'large responsibility' for restoring and protecting nature increased by 24% as just described, while the percentage who felt it had 'little' or 'no' responsibility fell from 16% to 0%.
- The YouGov polling shows that the views of the wider population on these questions did not change during the Assembly. This suggests that the changes reported above result from Assembly members' participation in the People's Assembly for Nature.
- What did not change during the Assembly were the actors that Assembly members felt had most responsibility for restoring and protecting nature. This remained the UK government, followed by devolved governments and then local government.
- The vast majority of Assembly members also felt that all actors had at least a 'significant responsibility' to restore and protect nature from the outset of the Assembly. In Weekend 1, between 80% and 94% of Assembly members felt that each actor had a 'significant' or 'large' responsibility to restore and protect nature. The comparable figures for Weekend 4 were 85% and 98%.



**Table 4: How much responsibility, if any, do you think the following people or groups have for restoring and protecting nature in the UK?**

	A large responsibility	A significant responsibility	Only a little responsibility	No responsibility at all	Don't know	Did not answer
<b>UK government</b>						
Weekend 1	84%	10%	2%	1%	0%	3%
Weekend 4	89%	7%	0%	0%	0%	3%
Difference	5%	-3%	-2%	-1%	0%	0%
<b>Devolved governments in Scotland, Wales, NI</b>						
Weekend 1	73%	16%	2%	1%	4%	4%
Weekend 4	84%	14%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Difference	11%	-2%	-2%	-1%	-4%	-2%
<b>Local government</b>						
Weekend 1	57%	36%	3%	1%	0%	3%
Weekend 4	73%	22%	2%	0%	0%	3%
Difference	16%	14%	-1%	-1%	0%	0%
<b>Businesses</b>						
Weekend 1	42%	38%	15%	1%	1%	3%
Weekend 4	66%	29%	0%	1%	0%	3%
Difference	24%	-9%	-15%	0%	-1%	0%
<b>Charities and other organisations (e.g., National Trust, RSPB, WWF)</b>						
Weekend 1	50%	38%	8%	1%	0%	3%
Weekend 4	59%	31%	7%	1%	0%	2%
Difference	9%	-7%	-1%	0%	0%	-1%
<b>Individual members of the public</b>						
Weekend 1	37%	44%	15%	0%	1%	3%
Weekend 4	47%	38%	11%	1%	0%	3%
Difference	10%	-6%	-4%	1%	-1%	0%
<b>Local communities</b>						
Weekend 1	36%	52%	8%	0%	0%	4%
Weekend 4	48%	39%	7%	1%	0%	3%
Difference	12%	-13%	-1%	1%	0%	-1%

## A SMALL INCREASE IN NATURE-RELATED BEHAVIOURS

Assembly members were asked approximately how often they had taken part in various nature-related activities in the last 12 months. As the People's Assembly for Nature itself only lasted four months, we were unsure if we would see a significant change in these answers between the start and end of the Assembly. It is also important to treat these results with caution, because they may reflect differences in how Assembly members (want to) view their own actions, rather than changes in the actions themselves. Finally, where percentage changes are lower, and given the small number of Assembly members involved, we need to be cautious about the statistical reliability of the findings — particularly where there isn't comparable data from other assemblies.

**All that said, the surveys do suggest an increase in some of the nature-related behaviours we asked about during the Assembly. The percentage of Assembly members who reported 'often' doing the following activities increased by:**

- Read information about the natural world (e.g. online, in books, in newspapers) (12%)
- Talked about nature or wildlife with family or friends (11%)
- Watched or listened to nature programmes on the TV or radio (8%)
- Taken steps to help nature or wildlife in your garden, allotment, balcony or other personal outside space (7%)

This is in line with anecdotal feedback from other citizens' assemblies, particularly in terms of Assembly members starting to consume more information about the topic of the Assembly and talking about it more with family and friends during the Assembly process. It is also supported by "one year on" survey data from other citizens' assembly processes, which shows assembly members making changes in their own lives to support change<sup>6</sup>.

There was found to be no difference in the percentage of Assembly members who had "contacted a politician about restoring and protecting nature or wildlife" or who had "donated to an environmental or nature organisation." Data collected around "sign[ing] a petition about restoring or protecting nature and wildlife" and "do[ing] unpaid, voluntary work to support nature or wildlife in your local area" needs further analysis to test its reliability.

<sup>6</sup> <https://involve.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachemnt/CAUK%20Eval%20AM%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://involve.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachemnt/CAUK%20Eval%20AM%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>

## NO SHIFT (AS YET?) TO ASSEMBLY MEMBERS' GENERAL POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS

There is some suggestion in the literature that taking part in citizens' assemblies commissioned by formal democratic institutions, such as parliaments, may impact both Assembly members' views about the political system and their political behaviours<sup>7</sup>. The People's Assembly for Nature was not commissioned by these institutions and, perhaps predictably, the survey results therefore do not (yet) show any impact on Assembly members' general political behaviours. The percentage of Assembly members saying that they had done the following in the last twelve months was broadly the same at the end of the Assembly as it had been at its start:

- Signed a petition
- Attended a protest, rally or demonstration
- Contacted a politician (e.g., an MP, MS, MLA, MSP or Local Councillor)
- Deliberatively bought or boycotted certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons
- Voted in an election
- Held membership of a political party
- Volunteered or provided unpaid help

The impact that taking part in the People's Assembly for Nature may have had on Assembly members' views of the political system is unclear from the survey responses. There is some suggestion that the percentage of Assembly members who 'strongly agreed' with the statement "Politicians don't care what people like me think" fell during the Assembly. However, as this was not one of the questions asked in the YouGov polling, it is impossible to be sure whether this was caused by participation in the Assembly or whether it is a population-wide trend. Further tests of the results to confirm the reliability of these findings are also needed.



## 6.4 Conclusion

The survey results show that Assembly members had an overall positive experience of taking part in the Assembly, and that it has changed their own views and knowledge. While the delivery partners should be assured that they have created an enjoyable and energising process for those involved, the impact of a citizens' assembly needs to go beyond positive experiences on the day. That said, the positive experience of Assembly members can also be seen as a proxy for a positive, inclusive Assembly. Evidently, many different voices were heard and Assembly members felt that their contributions were valued, which indicates that the Assembly genuinely accounted for a diversity of views and lived experiences, making its recommendations truly reflective of the breadth of views about nature in the UK today.

Compared to a control sample of the general public, taking part in the People's Assembly for Nature had an impact on Assembly members' knowledge of nature, and their views about who can and should be involved in protecting and restoring it in the UK. It also had an impact on their participation in some nature-related activities.

These results necessarily only cover the impact on Assembly members during the Assembly itself. A "one year on" survey would allow us to see whether or not these changes are maintained over a longer period, and what other changes occur now that Assembly members have finished the initial Assembly process.

The results also highlight the potential to support Assembly members to become further involved in nature-related actions and activities, including advocacy and campaigning on the subject of the Assembly. They suggest that the People's Assembly for Nature has changed aspects of how Assembly members think about nature and efforts to restore and protect it: they are optimistic, but cautious about how these changes can be put into effect. This sets the stage for broader campaigning work, and the role of the Assembly members in this can be evaluated in the coming months.



# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Who took part in the Assembly?

### RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Recruitment of participants was undertaken by the Sortition Foundation, a not-for-profit social enterprise dedicated to promoting fair, transparent, inclusive and effective deliberative processes by ensuring accurate representative and random sampling during recruitment. The method used was based on the principle that every resident in an area should have an equal probability of receiving an invitation to take part. Key elements of the method were as follows:

- In late September 2022, 33,000 invitations to participate were sent to households across the UK, randomly selected from the Royal Mail Postcode Address File (PAF), the most complete and up-to-date address database in the UK. The invitations were issued in a specially designed, attractive and informative envelope (with People's Plan for Nature Partnership branding) to draw attention to the contents and included a FAQ sheet and an individual registration code to use to express their interest in joining the Assembly.
- The Index of Multiple Deprivation was used to identify postcode areas with higher levels of deprivation. Proportionately more addresses were selected in these areas. This meant in practice that 80% of the addresses selected were from the entire Postcode Address File (including areas of deprivation) and the remaining 20% from postcodes with an Index of Multiple Deprivation decile rating of 1-3 (the most deprived areas). The aim of delivering proportionately more invitations to the most deprived areas was to reduce the effects of skewing of responses towards more professional or more highly educated participants.
- A small number of invitations were also sent to care homes and residential centres to enable anyone in these facilities to choose to apply to participate.
- Anyone aged 16 or over who was living (or staying) at an address that received an invitation could register their interest in becoming part of the Assembly.

- Potential participants were given two easy ways to register their interest: online or over the phone. As part of the registration process demographic and attitudinal data was gathered to enable stratification and relevant exclusions (e.g. people holding elected office or directly employed by a political party).
- From the pool of interested respondents a second, stratified random selection was performed, matching the latest available data on six dimensions: age, gender, ethnicity, geography, urban/rural socio-economic status, and level of agreement with the statement "I feel part of nature".
- Once the selection of Assembly members was completed, further information was sent out to the selected group and responsibility for supporting their participation was handed over to Involve.

A total of 277 members of the public applied to be part of the Assembly, confirming they were available for all of the dates and times required. This was a proportionally lower response rate than is typically achieved by this method, being just under 1%.

The invitation letter also included the offer of a £800 cash honorarium for participation. This was designed to give those who might not be already interested in the issue, or traditionally less likely to volunteer for this type of initiative, a motivation to apply, increasing the likely diversity of views brought to the discussions.

While we recognise that not all assemblies provide a financial honorarium to participants, we consider it good practice to do so. As well as demonstrating that their participation and engagement is valued, the honorarium helps to ensure that a diverse range of participants (e.g. including those on low or erratic incomes, unemployed or with caring responsibilities) can offset the 'opportunity costs' of participation.

## SUPPORTING PARTICIPANTS TO TAKE PART: THE ONBOARDING PROCESS IN MORE DETAIL

In order to ensure that all recruited Assembly members were able and likely to participate in the meetings, Involvement undertook a process of 'onboarding'. This included:

- Initial email contact to introduce the team, ensure Assembly members had the practical and process information they needed to feel prepared and ask about any additional support they might need to be able to participate.
- If Assembly members indicated that they had support needs and individual assessment was undertaken arrangements to support these were put in place, including childcare, hotel or dietary requirements, assistance with travel or provision of a suitable computer or internet connection to be able to take part in the online sessions
- Digital skills were also discussed, and at the first weekend in Birmingham, people who were less confident about the online meetings had the opportunity to bring their devices, test out Zoom and go through any questions about accessing and participating in the online meetings.
- There was a small team of dedicated Assembly member support staff available between and during Assembly meetings to assist Assembly members as required with technical and non-technical issues.
- There was also an online shared resource area available to Assembly members where they could access resources relating to the Assembly, including slides and videos of speaker presentations, useful teleconferencing tips, wider information about climate change and answers to specific requests for information on particular areas not available during Assembly sessions.





## DEMOGRAPHIC TARGETS

The following table, 'Demographic Profile of Members and National Population Targets', shows how well the make-up of the Assembly aligned with the national population proportions for the criteria established by the delivery partners.

	Recruitment targets (% of population)	Number needed to meet targets (110 Members)	Number beginning the Assembly (107 Members)	Number completing the Assembly (103 Members)
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	50.6%	56	55 (51%)	52 (50.5%)
Male	49.4%	54	52 (49%)	51 (49.5%)
Non-binary or Other	-			
<b>Age<sup>8</sup></b>				
16-19	5.4%	6	7 (6.5%)	7 (6.8%)
20-24	7.6%	9	8 (7.5%)	7 (6.8%)
25-44	32.2%	35	35 (32.7%)	34 (33.0%)
45-64	31.8%	35	32 (29.9%)	31 (30.1%)
65+	23%	25	25 (23.4%)	24 (23.3%)
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
Asian or Asian British	7.2%	9	8 (7.5%)	8 (7.8%)
Black or African or Caribbean or Black British	3.2%	5	7 (6.5%)	7 (6.8%)
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	1.6%	3	3 (2.8%)	3 (2.9%)
White British	80%	82	77 (72%)	76 (73.8%)
White other	6.4%	8	8 (7.5%)	6 (5.8%)
Other ethnic group	1.7%	3	4 (3.7%)	3 (2.9%)
<b>Geography</b>				
North East	4%	5	3 (2.8%)	3 (2.9%)
North West	11%	12	12 (11.2%)	12 (11.7%)
Yorkshire and The Humber	8.2%	9	9 (8.4%)	9 (8.7%)
East Midlands	7.2%	8	8 (7.5%)	8 (7.8%)
West Midlands	8.9%	10	9 (8.4%)	9 (8.7%)
East of England	9.3%	10	10 (9.3%)	10 (9.7%)
London	13.4%	12	13 (12.1%)	11 (10.7%)
South East	13.7%	13	12 (11.2%)	12 (11.7%)
South West	8.4%	9	9 (8.4%)	9 (8.7%)
Wales	4.7%	7	7 (6.5%)	6 (5.8%)
Scotland	8.2%	10	10 (9.3%)	9 (8.7%)
Northern Ireland	2.8%	5	5 (4.7%)	5 (4.9%)

<sup>8</sup> Source for recruitment targets: [ONS](#)

	Recruitment targets (% of population)	Number needed to meet targets (110 Members)	Number beginning the Assembly (107 Members)	Number completing the Assembly (103 Members)
<b>Urban/Rural<sup>9</sup></b>				
Urban	84%	85	83 (77.6%)	79 (76.7%)
Rural	16%	25	24 (22.4%)	24 (23.3%)
<b>Level of education</b>				
No qualification & Level 1	36.3%	40	29 (27.1%)	27 (26.2%)
Level 2 and Level 3	36.5%	40	35 (32.7%)	34 (33.0%)
Level 4 and above	27.2%	30	43 (40.2%)	42 (40.8%)
<b>Engagement with Nature: 'I feel part of nature'</b>				
Completely agree	12.3%	14	19 (17.8%)	18 (17.5%)
Strongly agree	15.9%	17	24 (22.4%)	24 (23.3%)
Agree	32.3%	35	44 (41.1%)	42 (40.8%)
Neither agree nor disagree / Don't Know	28.4%	32	14 (13.1%)	13 (12.6%)
Disagree	11.3%	12	6 (5.6%)	6 (5.8%)

<sup>9</sup>Source: [World Bank](#)

## KEY NOTES AND DEFINITIONS FOR THE POPULATION DATA

### Overall numbers for the Assembly

- Percentages are used throughout this report for illustrative and comparative purposes only. In a group this small, percentages carry little statistical significance, and it is remembering that a single person accounts for a variation of just under 1%.
- Although the People's Assembly for Nature is described as comprising 100 members, 110 people were initially recruited to allow for withdrawals during the process due to illness, changing circumstances and/or people deciding to no longer participate.
- 107 of the recruited 110 members attended the first Assembly meeting. Three people had to drop out in the week preceding this meeting and it was too late to identify replacement members. We would anticipate some attrition over a period of months when working with the general public and consider this to be a high retention rate.

### Gender

Gender targets for recruitment were binary, drawing from existing census data which does not record alternative options, but prospective members were able to self-identify as non-binary in their Expression of Interest and had an equal chance of being selected despite no target having been set. (Source for recruitment targets: ONS)

### Ethnicity

A deliberate choice was made in the recruitment phase to slightly over-recruit historically under-represented ethnicity groups in the initial selection (operationalised through a process of rounding up the percentages and adding 1). This resulted in the recruited sample being proportionally lower in members who identified as 'White British'. (Source for recruitment targets: ONS estimates)

### Geography

A deliberate choice was made in the recruitment phase to slightly over-recruit people living in the devolved administrations to ensure that these perspectives were able to be 'heard' across the Assembly as a whole. As a result, representation from London and the South East, the UK's largest population hub, was proportionally lower. (Source for recruitment targets: ONS estimates)

### Urban/Rural

Despite only 16% of the UK population living in rural areas, a choice was made to over-recruit members from these areas to ensure that a rural voice was able to be heard throughout the deliberations, resulting in a target of 23% of the Assembly members being from rural areas.

### Level of education

The highest level of qualification attained is used as a proxy for socio-economic status. (Source for recruitment targets: ONS UK 2011 Census)

- Level 1:** (approx. 16-year-old school leaving certificate) O Grade, Standard Grade, Access 3 Cluster, Intermediate 1 or 2, GCSE, CSE, Senior Certificate or equivalent; GSVQ Foundation or Intermediate, SVQ level 1 or 2, SCOTVEC Module, City and Guilds Craft or equivalent; Other school qualifications not already mentioned (including foreign qualifications)
- Level 2:** (approx. 18-year-old school leaving certificate) SCE Higher Grade, Higher, Advanced Higher, CSYS, A Level, AS Level, Advanced Senior Certificate or equivalent; GSVQ Advanced, SVQ level 3, ONC, OND, SCOTVEC National Diploma, City and Guilds Advanced Craft or equivalent
- Level 3:** (approx. non-University post-school qualification) HNC, HND, SVQ level 4 or equivalent; Other post-school but pre-Higher Education qualifications not already mentioned (including foreign qualifications)
- Level 4 and above:** (Tertiary/University degree or higher) Degree, Postgraduate qualifications, Masters, PhD, SVQ level 5 or equivalent; Professional qualifications (for example, teaching, nursing, accountancy); Other Higher Education qualifications not already mentioned (including foreign qualifications)

### Engagement question

Engagement with Nature: 'How much do you agree or disagree with the statement 'I feel part of nature?'' This was asked to help get a balance of people's views and knowledge on nature, so that a range of perspectives could be brought to the starting point of the Assembly.

## Appendix 2: The Assembly Process

This section gives an overview of the process and methodology, with an overview of what was done each weekend and the contributing speakers and their topics, and a brief description of how Assembly members constructed their Calls to Action and vision statements.

The People's Assembly for Nature took place over four weekends between November 2022 and February 2023.



### WEEKEND 1

#### What is Nature and Why Protect it?

11-13 November 2022, Birmingham

During this first weekend, participants were introduced to the concept of a citizens' assembly: how it works, what to expect from the four weekends and what will happen to the People's Plan for Nature as a result of their time and commitment to the project.

Assembly members arrived on Friday to a welcome, introductions and a chance to explore the Exhibition Space, before dinner together in the evening. On Saturday, Assembly participants heard an overview of what nature is and why it matters. They discovered the drivers behind biodiversity loss and how these have impacted nature in the UK. They were also introduced to the main 'actors' (e.g. Government, industry, NGOs) that the People's Plan for Nature will create recommendations for, to understand who is responsible for addressing nature loss.

On Sunday, Assembly members heard about how long-term thinking can help introduce the concept of environmental stewardship for generations to come and listened to an overview of existing solutions we have for the nature crisis. Finally, fairness, equity and a just transition were discussed to ensure that Assembly members consider the impacts and consequences of their choices on people and livelihoods in the coming weeks.

#### Presentations and speakers

Introduction to what is nature and why should we protect it/ why does it matter?

Presentation followed by Assembly discussions from:

- Professor Nathalie Seddon, University of Oxford (Academic Lead)
- Tony Juniper, Chair, Natural England
- Dr Radhika Borde, Leeds University

How did we get where we are? Presentation followed by Assembly discussions from:

- Sir John Lawton, President of Yorkshire Wildlife Trust & RSPB Vice President

Who's responsible for addressing the changes? Presentation followed by Assembly discussions from:

- Ruchir Shah, Scottish Wildlife Trust

Setting the scene for visioning: the art of the possible. Presentations followed by Assembly discussions from:

- Ella Saltmarshe, The Long Time Project
- Professor William Sutherland, University of Cambridge
- Dr Radhika Borde, Leeds University

### WEEKEND 2

#### Protecting and Restoring Nature

3-4 December 2022, online

During the second weekend, Assembly members were able to build a picture of the historical, current and potential future extent of the UK's habitats and species, and how these interface with human activity. They deepened their understanding of what's driving nature loss, which protection frameworks are in place, and how effective they are.

Assembly members considered the impact of growing urbanisation and associated disconnection from nature, and how we can solve this through policy and planning schemes. In addition to hearing about such challenges, participants explored the "art of the possible" through successful protection and restoration projects and considered how such efforts might be scaled up in a fair and just way, with explicit consideration of the trade-offs at hand.

After each evidence session, Assembly members deliberated in smaller breakout groups to arrive at two insights or conclusions on what they felt to be the most significant issues to address within each topic.

### Presentations and speakers

Introduction to Protections - how land is used currently, what protections are in place and why they are not working. Presentation followed by Assembly discussions from:

- Professor Nathalie Seddon, University of Oxford (Academic Lead)
- Richard Benwell, Wildlife and Countryside Link
- Nadia Shaikh, Freelance Nature Consultant

Who's responsible for addressing the changes?

Presentation from:

- Sara McGuckin, Head of Natural Science, NI Environment Agency
- Tom Tew, Nature Space
- COAST - Arran
- Sam and Claire Beaumont, Gowbarrow Hall Farm, Ullswater

Examining the causes and solutions of disconnection from nature. Presentation followed by Assembly discussions from:

- Professor Miles Richardson, University of Derby
- Maxwell Ayamba, Sheffield Environment Movement
- Gillian Dick, Glasgow City Council
- Nigel Symes, RSPB, Barratt Homes Kingsbrook
- Kat Deeney, Plymouth City Council

Examples of how nature can be restored. Presentation followed by Assembly discussions from:

- Professor Rosemary Hails, Nature and Science Director, National Trust
- Philip Price, Seawilding (Scotland)
- James Rainey, Senior Ecologist, Trees for Life
- Tim Ferrero, Wilder Solent, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

## WEEKEND 3

### Sustaining People and Nature

14-15 January 2023, online

Building on the previous weekend, these discussions examined how we use the land, fresh water and sea to meet our basic needs, with a particular focus on food production. Assembly members looked at how our diets impact nature both in the UK and beyond, and examined the trade-offs

between maximising food production, protecting and restoring nature, ensuring affordable food and sustaining livelihoods. They heard about work that is seeking to address these challenges by developing actions that could drive improvements at a much wider scale.

Assembly members also heard about another pressure we place on nature: namely, our need for water, the impact this has on the environment and how we could better protect freshwater habitats and species.

To end the session, and to set the scene ahead of the deliberations of the final weekend, the Assembly focused on the economics underpinning all these issues. Assembly members learned how we currently make financial decisions and the impact this has on nature, along with alternative models that might better account for what nature provides, and how potential recommendations and actions could in principle be paid for.

As in the previous weekend, Assembly members deliberated in smaller breakout groups after each evidence session to determine their main insights and conclusions. Around 200 conclusions from the deliberative sessions were then clustered into 28 themes, which were used as a basis to create Calls to Action in the final weekend.

### Presentations and speakers

- Professor Pete Smith, University of Aberdeen (Academic Lead)
- Sue Pritchard, Chief Executive, the Food, Farming and Countryside Commission
- Aled Jones, President NFU Cymru
- Martin Lines, Cambridgeshire Arable Farmer and UK Chair of the Nature-Friendly Farming Network
- Helen O'Keefe, Young Crofter of the Year

An overview of the main 'nature' challenges faced in fisheries and aquaculture: competition space (ref to crowded marine environment), overexploitation of target stocks and impacts on species/habitats. Highlight current regulatory and subsidy regime.

- Professor Paul Kemp, University of Southampton

Who's responsible for addressing the changes? Presentation followed by Assembly discussions from:

- Hannah Fennell, Orkney Fisheries Association
- Helen McLachlan, RSPB Scotland
- Rhianna Rees (Scottish Association for Marine Science-Seaweed Academy)

Intro to wider structural challenges affecting food and its production. Presentation followed by Assembly discussions from:

- Professor Pete Smith, University of Aberdeen (Academic Lead)

Wider issues on food production and food distribution.

Presentation followed by Assembly discussions from:

- Mark Lea, Green Acres Farm
- Anna Turrell, Sustainability Director, Tesco
- Hannah Norman, Food Sense Wales (delivery partner for SFP Wales)

Water: a needs perspective, a water management perspective and a bottom-up perspective. Presentation followed by Assembly discussions from:

- Professor Steve Ormerod, School of Biosciences, Cardiff University
- Yvette de Garis, Head of Environmental Engagement, Thames Water
- Mark Lloyd, CEO, the Rivers Trust

## WEEKEND 4

### Sustaining People and Nature

3-5 February, Birmingham

The final weekend focused on deliberation and discussion, with no further input from experts. After arriving at the venue on Friday evening, Assembly members were given a warm welcome, had an initial look at the weekend's tasks, reviewed a selection of inspiring examples from the National Conversation. As the weekend went on, Assembly members were reacquainted with all of the conclusions they had generated in Weekends 2 and 3, which had been clustered into 28 broad areas for action.

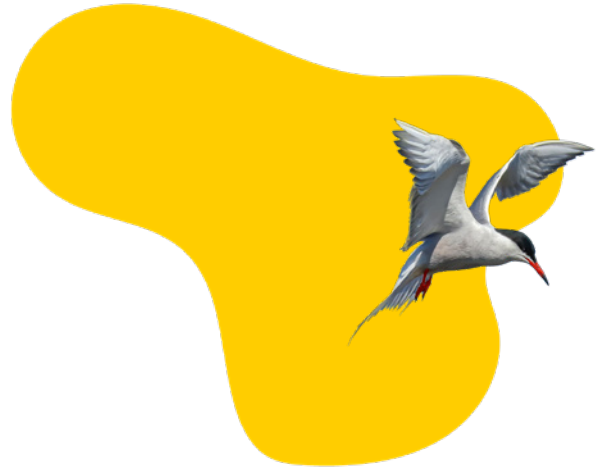
#### The Assembly's Vision for a future UK

To set the context for the specific Calls to Action, Assembly members worked together to set out a vision for what life in the UK would be like if nature was effectively protected, renewed and restored. This process began in Weekend 1, where aspirations for what the People's Plan for Nature could achieve were established and was concluded in Weekend 4 with the creation of the vision statements.

Members were taken on a guided visualisation of a future UK where the People's Plan has been successfully implemented, in order to embed themselves into future-oriented thinking and resolve their individual aspirations for nature and people's relationships with nature. They then undertook a collective drafting process to establish common ground.

The Economics of Biodiversity - how nature is accounted for (or not) within the current economic model, the results of that and the key recommendations of the Dasgupta review and an overview of who pays and how:

- Dr. Matthew Agarwala, Economist, Bennett Institute for Public Policy, University of Cambridge
- Professor Ian Bateman, Professor of Environmental Economics, University of Exeter



In developing their vision for a nature-positive future UK, Assembly members concentrated on seven key themes identified from earlier discussions:

1. Education and awareness about nature
2. Access to nature
3. Growing food with nature
4. Living in harmony with nature
5. Nature as well-being and health
6. Thriving wildlife / species biodiversity
7. Prioritising nature in decisions

#### Creating Calls to Action

Assembly members were invited to choose which topic they preferred to discuss and transform into a detailed Call to Action. This work was done in two rounds, with 14 issues being worked on in each round.

Each group had access to the detail of previous discussions, a range of expertise in the room and a table facilitator to help host the discussion. Having created draft proposals, Assembly members toured the room to hear about propositions from other tables, adding insights and suggestions as they went. Each group returned to their tables to integrate the new insights and refine their final Call to Action by the evening. Assembly members then read out the final Call to Action.

## Appendix 3: The Advisory Group

**The academic leads for nature, climate and food systems were chosen as expert, highly qualified, well-respected and independent scientific researchers with deep knowledge and understanding of each of the topic areas, along with the ability to make science accessible to the public.**

Additional Advisory Group members were chosen for their knowledge and experience on a range of topics relevant to the People's Assembly for Nature, including the food industry, farming, nature conservation, health, participation, diversity and equity, community engagement and national governments across the four nations.

**There were 18 members of the Advisory Group. The role of the People's Assembly for Nature Advisory Group was to:**

- Provide advice and scrutiny to inform the evidence presented to the People's Assembly for Nature, so as to help create a robust and accountable citizens' assembly process;
- Review the resources and materials presented to the People's Assembly for Nature and provide support to make sure this is a truly UK-wide process with perspectives from across all four nations;
- Help situate the work of the People's Assembly for Nature within the context of wider debates, developments and narratives about public attitudes to the triple challenge of food and farming reform, the path to net zero and reversing biodiversity loss;
- Connect the wider People's Plan for Nature programme to relevant past, on-going and future initiatives, such as enabling the sharing of learnings and network building to support the impact of the programme;
- Advise and support the delivery team in ensuring the process is accessible and equitable for all attendees;
- Champion the People's Assembly for Nature and its outputs.

## ACADEMIC LEADS



**Professor Nathalie Seddon**

**ACADEMIC LEAD** Professor of Biodiversity, Nature and University of Oxford Climate

Nathalie Seddon is Professor of Biodiversity and Founding Director of the Nature-based Solutions Initiative in the Department of Biology at the University of Oxford. She is also Director of the Agile Initiative and co-lead of the Leverhulme Centre for Nature Recovery.



**Professor Pete Smith**

**ACADEMIC LEAD** Professor of Soils Climate, Soil and Agriculture and Global Change, University of Aberdeen

Pete Smith is Professor of Soils and Global Change at the Institute of Biological and Environmental Sciences at the University of Aberdeen (Scotland, UK) and Science Director of the Scottish Climate Change Centre of Expertise (ClimateXChange). His interests include climate change mitigation, soils, agriculture, food systems, ecosystem services modelling and nature-based solutions.

## ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERS



**Dr Meriwether Wilson**

Co-Director, Ocean Leaders, University of Edinburgh

Dr Meriwether Wilson is a Senior Lecturer (Associate Professor) in Marine Science and Policy at the University of Edinburgh. Her research, teaching and leadership focus on the science-policy-society intersections of marine ecosystems. Her particular focus is on biodiversity, ocean governance, blue economy and climate adaptation for island nations spanning local to global scales, and communities.



**Tom Chigbo**

Community Engagement and Participation Manager, TPXimpact (formerly FutureGov)

Tom is an experienced community organiser and campaigner who is passionate about the potential of citizens to shape their communities and public services. For over a decade, he has worked with local authorities, NHS bodies, police forces, faith, education and community groups around the UK to bring ordinary people into decision-making and delivery of change.





**Dr Becca Lovell**

Senior Lecturer,  
University of Exeter Medical School

Dr Becca Lovell is based at the European Centre for Environment and Human Health, WHO Collaborating Centre on Natural Environments and Health at the University of Exeter Medical School. Becca focuses on evaluating, synthesising and translating evidence of the links between nature and health for policy and practice.



**John Watkins**

CEO, National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)

John joined the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty as their Chief Executive in July 2021 from the Welsh Government where he was Head of Policy for Future Economy. Here he led the production of the Wales Economic Reconstruction Mission, the plan to recover from the economic damage of the coronavirus pandemic.



**Nadeem Perera**

Co-Founder, Flock Together

Nadeem Perera is co-founder of Flock Together, a wildlife TV presenter and researcher. Nadeem advocates for diversity of perspectives in the conversations surrounding wildlife and social/ climate activism in his work which includes inspiring future generations.



**Nick Halfhide**

Director of Nature and Climate Change,  
Nature Scot

Nick leads NatureScot's drive to reverse the current decline in nature and work with nature to tackle climate change. He is working to protect 30% of Scotland's land and sea by 2030, restore habitats and species across Scotland and increase the way society values nature and all the benefits it supplies.



**Thomasina Miers**

Co-Founder, Wahaca

Cook, writer and winner of MasterChef, Tommi co-founded Wahaca restaurants, winner of numerous awards for its food and sustainability credentials. Tommi's passion lies in food, soil and the environment. She is a trustee of Chefs in Schools, a charity transforming how kids eat and feel about food.



**Chloe Saltmarsh**

FLAME - Landworkers Alliance youth branch



**Hedd Pugh**

**Rural Affairs Board Chairman,  
National Farmers' Union (NFU) Cymru**

Hedd farms 800ha with his two sons. This includes approximately 610ha of mountains in the Snowdonia National Park including Aran Fawddwy which rises above 2,900ft. Hedd runs a flock of 1,600 ewes which are predominantly Welsh Mountain together with a herd of 40 suckler cows. He has participated in agri-environment schemes for 25 years.



**Dr Miranda Geelhoed**

**Scottish Crofting Federation, and PhD researcher,  
Strathclyde Law School**

Her PhD research explores synergies between international, EU and national environmental laws, particularly in the field of agriculture, food, land and biodiversity. Building upon previous research and her practical experiences from her day-to-day life on an arable farm on the Scottish east coast, Miranda investigates how an 'ecosystem approach' to EU legislation could help support agroecological transitions.



**Aekus Kamboj (She/Her)**

**Environmental Officer, Ethnic-Minority  
Environmental Network (EMEN)**

Aekus is the Environmental Officer at CEMVO Scotland (national intermediary anti-racism organisation) where she facilitates the Ethnic-Minority Environmental Network (EMEN). She provides capacity building support to the network members undertaking climate action, supports the Scottish Government in their endeavour to make the green sector an inclusive space for ethnic-minority individuals.



**Ali Morse**

**Water Policy Manager, The Wildlife Trusts**

Ali has worked in the conservation sector throughout her career, with a focus on freshwater. As Water Policy Manager at The Wildlife Trusts, she works at a national level on all aspects of water policy, from pollution to flooding to species conservation (with some input from Ruchir Shah, Scottish Wildlife Trusts).



**Sarah Hendry**

**Director General, Country Land  
and Business Association (CLA)**

Sarah Hendry is responsible for the strategic direction, organisation and smooth running of the CLA. Before joining the CLA in 2018, she spent nearly 30 years as a UK government official working across national, EU and international policy.



**Russell De'ath**

**Senior Specialist Advisor,  
Natural Resources Wales**

Originally a graduate of Town Planning with a thesis on public participation, Russell has worked in the environment sector for 20 years, more recently supporting the implementation of the new legislation on the Well-being of Future Generations in Wales.

**Anurag Deb**

PhD researcher,  
Queen's University Belfast

Anurag is a paralegal and PhD student researching constitutional law at Queen's University Belfast. Between August 2020 and March 2022, he worked on the drafting of the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. What began as an ambitious civic society initiative resulted in one of the most wide-ranging laws ever passed by the Northern Ireland Assembly.

**Tony Juniper**

Chair, Natural England

Tony Juniper CBE is a campaigner, writer, sustainability adviser and a well-known British environmentalist. For more than 35 years he has worked for change toward a more sustainable society at local, national and international levels.



## Appendix 4: Principles of deliberation

This section provides more detail on some of the principles of deliberation which inform the design of a citizens' assembly.

- **Structure and flexibility.** Being clear to participants from the outset about the parameters of the process, the decisions which are up for grabs, and mechanisms through which they can shape its course. Regular opportunities for participants to provide feedback (both formally and via the dedicated participant support team) about what is working, or not working, for them throughout the process; then adapting plans on the ground, within a clear direction for the project.
- **A dedicated learning phase.** A central feature of a deliberative approach is the learning component. Participants are able to develop an understanding of the issue based on unbiased information and/or the clear presentation of arguments from different perspectives. Throughout this phase information can be presented in a variety of ways including bite-sized presentations from experts and advocates, written information, case studies and examples, and through facilitated discussions.
- **Discussion focused on developing dialogue.** To enable this, participants in a deliberative process tend to spend most of the time in small groups, supported by skilled facilitators to engage in discussion about the topic. This allows time for people to develop and test opinions on issues that are new to them (and on which they do not have a pre-existing opinion) and explore their pre-existing opinions in light of what they have heard, encouraging a wider understanding of the opinions of others. Dialogue is a specific discursive form that asks participants to become part of a collaborative process of shared inquiry, exchange, listening and reflecting and requires skilful facilitation to support assembly members to move beyond the presentation of surface-level views. Where possible, subject matter experts should also be available to be called on by the assembly members to answer questions and provide clarification, but it is important that the members are able to drive the conversation as a process of collective 'meaning making'.

- **The deliberation phase.** This stage of a deliberative engagement process involves participants coming to some conclusions based on what they have learnt through a process of public reasoning, which involves participants weighing options and making choices together. While consensus-based decision-making processes are the ideal, at this stage voting systems will often be used, as was the case in the People's Assembly for Nature, to ensure clear outputs are attained at each stage.

**In terms of the way these principles are applied, there are other important considerations of which the design and facilitation team will always be mindful.**

- **Accounting for different learning and communication styles.** A citizens' assembly should include a range of different exercises and approaches throughout the meetings. This includes mixing the groups and the facilitators that participants are with, alternating between working as individuals, small groups and in plenary; and using different approaches and tools to allow people to contribute their views in different ways - verbally, in written form, and upon reflection without time constraints. To enable people to explore their own lived experience, as well as surface feelings and thoughts, facilitation techniques including storytelling and visioning can be used.



## Appendix 5: Calls to Action in summary tables

### ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERS

Members were given 10 'votes' to express which of the 26 Calls of Action they felt are the most urgent and potentially impactful. Table 1 below lists the Calls to Action according to which received the most votes.

We call for...	
Ranking	(Number of Assembly members placing this Call to Action in their top 10)
1	Inclusion, in all commercial and policy decisions, of a way to assess the impacts on nature <b>(54)</b>
2	An overhaul of current farming subsidy systems to prioritise sustainable and nature-friendly farming <b>(53)</b>
3	Greater government accountability through a permanent Assembly for Nature made up of NGOs, industry, public expertise <b>(51)</b>
4	A national conversation on how and why we should change our diets to support nature <b>(46)</b>
5	Information about the state of nature in the UK to be more readily available and positively promoted to the public <b>(45)</b>
6	Leadership to assess the trade-offs between social and economic interests and nature protection, so that negative impacts of transition to nature protection can be mitigated <b>(42)</b>
7	Transparency about the sources of the food we buy, and its impact on nature <b>(41)</b>
8	The establishment of a UK-wide water management framework that protects and restores the health of our waterways <b>(39)</b>
8	Companies involved in food production and retail to stop their negative impact on the natural environment <b>(39)</b>
10	Stronger regulatory protections and enforcement <b>(38)</b>
11	A validated, transparent, and accessible evidence base to inform decisions and policies impacting on nature <b>(37)</b>

<b>We call for...</b>	
<b>Ranking</b>	<b>(Number of Assembly members placing this Call to Action in their top 10)</b>
<b>12</b>	Locally managed green spaces that support nature to thrive <b>(36)</b>
<b>=13</b>	A minimum of 12% of all space in new built infrastructure and retrofits is given to supporting biodiversity and linking people with nature for their health and wellbeing <b>(32)</b>
<b>=13</b>	Food retailers to stop driving food waste <b>(32)</b>
<b>=15</b>	Nature-protection-based farming subsidies <b>(31)</b>
<b>=15</b>	Collaboration across river catchment areas to deliver ecological improvements that embrace nature-based solutions <b>(31)</b>
<b>=17</b>	More partnership working between campaign organisations working for nature <b>(29)</b>
<b>=17</b>	Inspiring more farmers to take a nature-friendly approach to their business <b>(29)</b>
<b>=19</b>	Greater focus on renewal when talking to the public about the future of nature <b>(28)</b>
<b>=19</b>	Increased access to sustainable, locally produced food <b>(28)</b>
<b>21</b>	Businesses not to be disadvantaged by taking action to support the restoration of nature <b>(27)</b>
<b>=22</b>	Urgent investment in the UK's wastewater infrastructure to put a stop to sewage entering our natural environment <b>(25)</b>
<b>=22</b>	Ensuring sustainable fish stocks through reduction and reallocation of fishing quotas, regulating distribution, and remote monitoring to enforce standards <b>(25)</b>
<b>=24</b>	Establishment of Marine National Parks <b>(22)</b>
<b>=24</b>	A fundamental change to habits and attitudes around domestic water use <b>(22)</b>
<b>26</b>	Recognition of access to nature as a human right <b>(19)</b>

## SPREAD OF CALLS TO ACTION ACROSS TOPIC AREAS

Table 2 below maps the Calls to Action across the different topic areas, including the primary actor(s) allocated to each.

Summary Call to Action (Number of members placing this Call to Action in their top 10)	Primary Action allocated to
<b>Vision and Leadership</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inclusion, in all commercial and policy decisions, of a way to assess the impacts on nature (54)</li> </ul>	National Governments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More partnership working between campaign organisations working for nature (29)</li> </ul>	Charities and NGOs
<b>Regulation and Implementation</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greater government accountability through a permanent Assembly for Nature made up of NGOs, industry, and public expertise (51)</li> </ul>	National Governments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leadership to assess the trade-offs between social and economic interests and nature protection, so that negative impacts of transition to nature protection can be mitigated (42)</li> </ul>	National Governments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stronger regulatory protections and enforcement (38)</li> </ul>	National Governments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Businesses not to be disadvantaged by taking action to support the restoration of nature (27)</li> </ul>	National Governments
<b>Nature-friendly Farming</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An overhaul of current farming subsidy systems to prioritise sustainable and nature-friendly farming (53)</li> </ul>	National Governments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nature-protection-based farming subsidies (31)</li> </ul>	National Governments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inspiring more farmers to take a nature-friendly approach to their business (29)</li> </ul>	Food Businesses
<b>Food Production and Consumption</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A national conversation on how and why we should change our diets to support nature (46)</li> </ul>	National Governments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transparency about the sources of the food we buy, and its impact on nature (41)</li> </ul>	Food Businesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Companies involved in food production and retail to stop their negative impact on the natural environment (39)</li> </ul>	Food Businesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food retailers to stop driving food waste (32)</li> </ul>	Food Businesses / National Governments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased access to sustainable, locally produced food (28)</li> </ul>	Food Businesses

<b>Summary Call to Action</b> (Number of members placing this Call to Action in their top 10)	<b>Primary Action allocated to</b>
<b>Marine Protections for our Coastal Waters</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring sustainable fish stocks through reduction and reallocation of fishing quotas, regulating distribution, and remote monitoring to enforce standards (25)</li> </ul>	National Governments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishment of Marine National Parks (22)</li> </ul>	National Governments
<b>Water Catchment Management</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The establishment of a UK-wide water management framework that protects and restores the health of our waterways (39)</li> </ul>	Local Government / National Governments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaboration across river catchment areas to deliver ecological improvements that embrace nature-based solutions (31)</li> </ul>	Local Government / National Governments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Urgent investment in the UK's wastewater infrastructure to put a stop to sewage entering our natural environment (25)</li> </ul>	National Governments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A fundamental change to habits and attitudes around domestic water use (22)</li> </ul>	Local Governments
<b>Local Access to Nature</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Locally managed green spaces that support nature to thrive (36)</li> </ul>	Charities and NGOs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A minimum of 12% of all space in new built infrastructure and retrofits is given to supporting biodiversity and linking people with nature for their health and well-being (32)</li> </ul>	Local Governments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognition of access to nature as a human right (19)</li> </ul>	Food Businesses
<b>Using Evidence Effectively</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information about the state of nature in the UK to be more readily available and positively promoted to the public (45)</li> </ul>	National Governments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A validated, transparent, and accessible evidence base to inform decisions and policies impacting on nature (37)</li> </ul>	Food Businesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greater focus on renewal when talking to the public about the future of nature (28)</li> </ul>	Food Businesses



# Appendix 6: Analysing the National Conversation

Responses to the National Conversation were collected over a period of four weeks via an online platform.

For the first three weeks, a weekly random sample of 400 responses was generated for each question, with an appropriate balance sought from each nation of the UK.

Researchers derived emerging themes through qualitative thematic analysis of the sampled responses, refining the themes and rechecking their relative frequency each week as new samples were shared.

The themes were then turned into codes, and the sampled responses were coded by researchers according to the emerging themes.

Using machine learning, the coded sample was analysed according to keyword frequency and other variables, to build a predictive model for coding the full dataset of over 20,000 responses.

This model then analysed the full dataset and predicted the themes contained in each response based on its keywords (and other factors).

This allowed us to:

- Estimate the frequency of different themes with the overall dataset, giving a sense of how commonly they were expressed.
- Check for any “missed themes”, i.e. from responses that the model could not code (there were none, as the vast majority of responses matched at least one of the codes).
- Conduct further keyword and content analysis within the themes, to bring them to life and enhance our explanations of their meaning.



## BREAKDOWN OF NATIONAL CONVERSATION RESPONSES

The table below gives the total number of responses received for each question via the website and online channels in September and October 2022, as well as breakdown by nation.

Total number of responses received for each question via the website and online channels								
	Question 1		Question 2		Question 3		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>England</b>	6,530	82%	5,934	83%	4,724	83%	17,188	83%
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	210	3%	185	3%	143	3%	538	3%
<b>Scotland</b>	654	8%	589	8%	469	8%	1,712	8%
<b>Wales</b>	510	6%	444	6%	346	6%	1,300	6%
<b>Unknown</b>	25	<1%	0	0%	0	0%	25	<1%
<b>UK Total</b>	<b>7,929</b>		<b>7,152</b>		<b>5,682</b>		<b>20,763</b>	

# About the funders and delivery partners

The People's Plan for Nature is a UK-wide initiative powered by WWF, the National Trust and the RSPB. It is a unique, people-led collaboration to make our nature something we can all be proud of.

## FUNDERS

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## DESIGN AND DELIVERY PARTNERS

**New Citizenship Project** designed the overarching strategic framework for the project, based on a process called "RAPID Democracy" (the subject of a forthcoming publication).

**89up** was the lead delivery partner for the National Conversation's open call for ideas, with New Citizenship Project also analysing responses received.

**Future Arts Centres** hosted many of the tree activations across the UK

**Involve** was the lead delivery partner for the People's Assembly for Nature.

**Sortition Foundation** led on recruiting Assembly participants via a democratic lottery.

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## THANKS TO THE ASSEMBLY MEMBERS AND ALL WHO TOOK PART

The People's Plan for Nature could not have been developed without the input and active participation of thousands of people from across the four nations of the UK, and especially the 103 members of the People's Assembly for Nature. The work of the Assembly members demonstrates the passion and power that exist among the people of the UK to work towards protecting and restoring nature. Thanks to everyone who took the time to share their ideas and stories, to the Assembly members for their commitment and energy throughout, and to everyone involved in the incredible work already happening in communities around the country.



**Nature is in crisis,  
but together  
we can save it.**

