

# FRIENDS OF THE EARTH: THE NEXT GENERATION

Our 2016-20 strategy towards our 2030 goal  
England, Wales and Northern Ireland



# Protecting our future

Every generation thinks they are special, and they are. But we face a unique challenge. People's quality of life, and increasingly their existence, across the world is under threat in a way never seen before, as a result of extreme environmental degradation. Turning this situation around is our generation's primary responsibility, for what we do will irrevocably shape the life chances not only of people now, but of generations to come.

In 1971 when Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland began, 'the environment' was a marginal concern for a minority. Now it is mainstream. People overwhelmingly back action on climate change, support renewable energy, and want to protect wildlife – not only for its intrinsic value, but because our fate is inextricably bound up with that of the rest of nature.

Our job is to help people turn their concerns into action for transformational change, connecting people, whoever they are and whatever their background, across our three nations with each other and with their counterparts across the globe. We are part of the millions-strong Friends of the Earth International, the world's biggest grassroots environmental network.

We believe that history is on our side. The most far-sighted politicians and businesses are already with us, and our role in growing people power will help to influence many more.

A world where the next generation can enjoy a healthy environment that gives them the chance of a flourishing life is within our grasp, because while people might have caused our problems, people can fix them too.



*Craig Bennett, Chief Executive Officer. July 2016*



# Summary



# Our Vision and Goal

**Our vision is a healthy environment that provides a flourishing life for current and future generations.**

We're optimistic and ambitious about how fast we can reach our vision, but we can't fix everything instantly. So we've set a medium term goal to provide focus for everything we do:

**By 2030, the next generation will enjoy an environment that's getting better: a safer climate, flourishing nature, and healthy air, water and food.**

If we're to have any hope of protecting the people hardest hit by environmental degradation now, and of turning things around for the next generation we need to act with extreme urgency: justice demands it. It's a massive job, and not one that can be put off for another day. The babies and toddlers who will be young adults by 2030 are already with us, and they, their families and communities are already bearing the burden of a degraded environment. It's a burden that's not shared evenly: for those most affected, it is literally a matter of life and death.

Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland has most power to make change in the UK. This is a role with global implications, given the UK's disproportionate current and historical responsibilities for causing global environmental damage. Notwithstanding the uncertain implications of 'Brexit' and the rapid shift of geopolitical power to China, India and elsewhere, the UK's actions are still influential on a global stage. By 'getting our own house in order', we'll make a significant contribution to turning things around for the next generation not just here, but around the world. We'll further address the UK's global impact through collaboration with others around the world, as part of the millions-strong Friends of the Earth International federation.

This is an organisational strategy for Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland (and does not represent the totality of our views about the wider world). It is shared by Friends of the Earth Trust and Friends of the Earth Limited and covers the period 2016-2020. In that time we need to make rapid progress towards our 2030 goal – and to invest in the changes that will set us up for even greater success from 2021 onwards.

## Our Values

- **Fair:** we work to achieve socially just solutions to environmental problems, in an inclusive and accessible way, and in a spirit of friendship with colleagues and partners, at home and globally.
- **Visionary:** we don't have all the answers, but we set out a positive vision of the world the next generation should enjoy. We constantly show how our successes are making an impact.
- **Insightful:** we base everything we do on rigorous evidence, and we also know which levers to pull to bring about change.
- **Determined:** we're relentless in working for change; we don't give up on our goal, or on the people we work with, and we take a brave approach to difficult or unpopular challenges.
- **Change-making:** working with local groups and frontline communities, we have a track record of influence and practical solutions that bring about change.

# Challenges and Opportunities

Across the world – and in the UK – millions of people’s lives are blighted by pollution, the daily destruction of our natural environment, poor health resulting from ecologically-damaging diets and the impacts of climate change. Within and between countries, it is the most disadvantaged people who are worst affected. Communities across the world are already dealing with the consequences of this environmental and social crisis. The burden is overwhelmingly borne by people living in the Global South, while the richest countries have been most responsible for the causes.

The facts are shocking and many of the trends are heading in the wrong direction.

- The world is currently on a path for 4-5°C warming, which is already having dramatic effects on people’s lives through extreme weather: flooding, drought and heatwaves. Even if countries make the cuts in greenhouse gas emissions that they have pledged we would still be on track for well over 2° of warming.<sup>i</sup>
- Globally we are undergoing a loss of nature unprecedented in human experience. We have lost half the Earth’s animal population in 40 years, with over-exploitation and habitat loss or damage by humans the main causes.<sup>ii</sup> In the UK, 60% of species have declined in the last 50 years.<sup>iii</sup>
- 40,000 people die prematurely each year in the UK due to air pollution, with low-income and Black and Minority Ethnic communities disproportionately affected.<sup>iv</sup>
- In relation to sustainable diets, high levels of meat consumption - particularly of red and processed meat – have been identified as detrimental to public health. Livestock production is responsible for around 14.5 per cent of the world’s human-induced global greenhouse gas emissions and 30 per cent of biodiversity loss.<sup>v</sup>

These problems aren’t just about a few bad individuals, companies or governments. The ‘rules of the game’ – the institutions, narratives, and ideologies that dominate economic, political and cultural life – don’t recognise that our lives depend on the health of the single planet we call home. And they don’t provide a level playing field for everyone. That’s why we work with people to tackle systemic causes, as well as helping to alleviate symptoms. Some institutions will fight hard to protect the status quo.

Despite the challenges we are fundamentally optimistic. Because while people might have caused our problems, people can fix them too. The last century has seen some spectacular advances for humanity, particularly around rights for women, against racism, against homophobia. There have been setbacks, but the overall trend is progress. The same is happening on the environment now.

## Climate

On climate change, for example, while we’re not on the right road yet, we have seen global emissions flatlining, unprecedented levels of investment in renewable energy, and – under extreme pressure from civil society – political leaders starting to acknowledge the necessity of holding global temperature rises to 1.5°C in the Paris Agreement. Some businesses are ahead of the politicians. While coal companies issue profit warnings and file for bankruptcy<sup>vi</sup> and the Governor of the Bank of England warns of stranded carbon-intensive assets,<sup>vii</sup> home furnishing stores expand their solar panel ranges.<sup>viii</sup>

Following the Paris Climate Agreement, with accelerating global investment in renewable energy and building on success in keeping the UK frack-free, there is huge civil society momentum around keeping fossil fuels in the ground. For the country that started the Industrial Revolution to kick the fossil fuel habit would send a powerful signal, and indicate a preparedness to take responsibility for the UK’s disproportionate historic contribution to climate change.

## **Nature**

There is evidence that people are increasingly distant from the wild world, especially in urban areas; 75% of young Londoners are ‘disconnected from nature’.<sup>ix</sup> Many are only too aware that they are missing out and there is a strong appetite to experience, understand and protect the beauty and joy of wild things, as the extraordinary popularity of our Bee Cause campaign makes clear.

The evidence is now mounting up about the direct benefits of nature to people’s physical and mental health and children’s learning and development. Turning around this disconnect – and re-establishing the value of wildlife in our culture – is key to overcoming the false dichotomy between nature and economic success and thus to tackling the ultimate drivers of damage to biodiversity.

## **Health**

With the scientific evidence clear and the VW scandal having brought air quality squarely into the public debate, there is a new political appetite in major cities for tackling air pollution. The issue was central to the most recent London Mayoral contest and the infrastructure to support electric vehicles is now growing rapidly.

With 40 per cent of people reporting that they are eating less meat than they used to,<sup>x</sup> the idea of ‘flexitarianism’ is now entering the mainstream. Adhering to health guidelines on meat consumption could cut global food-related emissions by nearly a third by 2050.<sup>xi</sup>

## **International**

Across the world, the environment is intimately and unavoidably associated with dramatic social, economic and political tension, from climate refugees to the realities of climate-driven damage. The UK has a particular responsibility to take its fair share of action, given our disproportionate historical responsibility for climate change, and the continuing role of UK-headquartered companies and financial institutions in driving environmental damage around the world.

### **People’s freedom to campaign**

Protecting the environment and the quality of life it provides can be a difficult – and in some cases dangerous – business. Across Friends of the Earth’s international network, courageous people are defending their environment and the human rights which it supports. Facing persecution, kidnapping and even death, we support them as they continue to challenge powerful interests.

Even in the UK, the right of people to campaign is under threat. Groups defending the public interest are coming under increased and sustained pressure from the Government and corporations who want to silence the views of people who stand in their way.

### **New forms of people power**

Friends of the Earth’s history – from recycling to the Climate Change Act – demonstrates again and again the power of people coming together and taking action for change. In wanting to find socially-just solutions to environmental problems, the public are way ahead of some of our current political leaders. Despite the social and economic divisions laid bare by the EU referendum, and the uncertainty unleashed by the result, ‘Brexit’ has significantly increased political engagement and organising.

The last few years have seen a democratisation in how change is made with digital tools making it easier for more people to start campaigns and take practical action. As digital platforms accelerate the pace of change, new models of organising have enabled more people to share in leading and shaping campaigns. While very many people simply want to ‘do their bit’, giving money or taking quick and easy ‘expert-led’ actions which add up at scale, the rise of ‘organising’ alongside ‘mobilising’ has seen a desire for greater autonomy in finding creative ways to reach shared aims.

# Next generation priorities: climate, nature and health

We enable people to campaign on the issues that matter to them. We also show leadership by focusing particular effort on a small number of areas, identified in collaboration with the network. Our biggest priorities will be three issues where climate, nature and health intersect and touch people's lives directly, where environmental injustice is stark:

## **Aim 1: Secure a fossil fuel-free England, Wales and Northern Ireland.**

We will particularly focus on the significant opportunity to end all forms of fossil fuel extraction in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and particularly onshore.

We will make campaigning links with our sister organisations in FOE Scotland, Europe and International who are similarly campaigning for a fossil-free world. We will promote a positive, optimistic vision of how the UK and world can make the transition to a resilient, energy efficient, renewable energy-powered future.

*This will:*

- *Directly contribute to reduced greenhouse gas emissions from UK-sourced fossil fuels.*
- *Preserve the peace, beauty and habitat of places for people and nature across the country. Supporting alternatives to fracking could prevent the construction of 1000 wells over 10 years.*
- *Send a powerful message to people, governments and companies around the world that the country that started the Industrial Revolution now embraces a post-carbon future. It will inspire further global action and give people confidence that dramatic change is possible.*

## **Aim 2: Bring thriving diverse nature into people's daily lives in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.**

We will build on our successful Bee Cause campaign, by broadening our work to helping communities enjoy a wide range of nature where they are. We'll place a particular focus on expanding access to nature in large urban areas in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, especially within low-income communities. We'll also help people in towns and cities to enjoy, defend and improve nature in their wider surrounding and countryside.

To make this possible, we will act to defend nature laws potentially at risk from 'Brexit' and press for their proper implementation.

*This will:*

- *Help millions of people experience and enjoy nature every day with benefits for physical and mental health and wellbeing, and for flourishing nature itself.*
- *Inspire a new social norm that we should expect and demand nature in our daily lives, as an essential not a 'nice-to-have', just as much as the bins being emptied.*

## **Aim 3: Ensure everywhere in the UK is within safe air quality limits.**

We will provide practical steps that people can take locally to reduce their exposure to unhealthy air and press for policy change that helps people ditch the dirtiest vehicles for clean new technology.

*This will:*

- *Slash the number of people dying prematurely each year in the UK due to air pollution, currently 40,000.*

Within and across the priority issues we will explore the economic drivers and dependencies. With members of the international network we will consider the global dimensions and expect:

- at least one campaign at any given time to have a strong international element (such as shared campaigning, connecting local issues with global beneficiaries, or challenging UK-based institutions causing problems elsewhere in the world);
- to take part in at least two campaigns jointly organised by several members of Friends of the Earth Europe and/or International during the period of this strategy.

In a highly complex and uncertain world, what look like the biggest opportunities for rapid progress may be overtaken by events. We will regularly review these priorities to ensure that they reflect: the most significant threats to achieving our goal; the most significant opportunities for rapid progress towards our goal; the best routes to build a bigger, more powerful movement of people for change.

We will also maintain flexible ‘rapid response’ protocols to allow us to swiftly scale up resource on an emerging issue.

These won’t be the only things we do as a national organisation, but they will get the most resource. We will join up these issues in our communications to tell our overall story around how Friends of the Earth support people in coming together to create a better environment for the next generation, expressly linking together our issues, our values and our political and economic analysis.

We will also:

**Aim 4: Respond to strong grassroots demand by supporting a limited number of additional strategically important campaigns in Wales, Northern Ireland and across England, particularly in the emerging ‘city-regions’.**

Through dialogue with our networks, we will identify a small number of campaigns in the nations and localities with bigger implications and provide additional capacity to support successful delivery.

**Aim 5: Innovate, test and scale-up work on 2-3 issues ‘emerging into the mainstream’, for example on effective ways to tackle meat-reduction in people’s diets.**

We will employ limited resources to act as a catalyst on a small number of issues that are not yet in the public debate or are emerging into the mainstream

We expect that addressing sustainable diets, and eating better but less meat, will be the first such issue - a long term game, involving changing culture and norms. In partnership with the Eating Better coalition, we’ll trial tactics and expand if/when we’ve learned what works.

When we review this strategy we will also look at whether new work in relation to healthy water is required.

**Aim 6: Support collaboration between changemakers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and their counterparts in the Friends of the Earth International network to jointly:**

- **challenge UK-based companies and financial institutions with significant responsibility for environmental damage in other countries;**
- **protect people threatened for defending environment-related human rights.**

We recognise our position as one of the best resourced members of Friends of the Earth International, based in a country with significant current and historical responsibilities for global environmental and social injustices. We can’t tackle the massive scale of global inequality on our own, but we can support groups on the frontline elsewhere and help to tackle some of the biggest UK drivers of global problems.

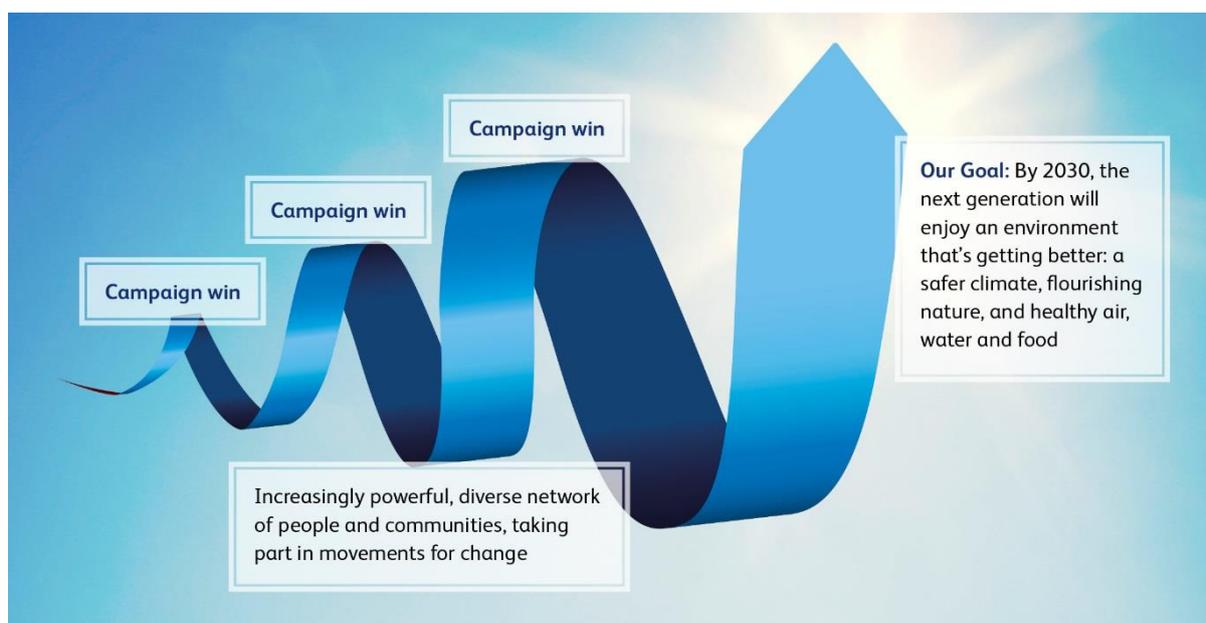
# Growing the power of people to make change

**Aim 7: Grow the strength of the people-powered movement(s) that Friends of the Earth is part of, from the local to the global.**

**Aim 8: Reflect the diversity of the UK, starting with gender and ethnicity in all areas of our network – including our Board, staff and volunteers, community activists and national supporters.**

Friends of the Earth exists to make transformational change that lasts. If the next generation are to enjoy an environment that's getting better, we need deep social and cultural change across law, economics, technology, business and culture. Incremental and reversible changes in legislation are, by themselves, insufficient. In the current context, even securing legislative progress at the UK level requires us to be more powerful than we currently are.

Winning each of the campaigns we support takes us closer to our goal of turning around environmental decline for the next generation. But as well as being ends in their own right, each campaign is a way of building the power of individuals, communities and the wider movements in which we are involved, in order to achieve even greater changes in economic and political systems, and in values and attitudes. Only growing people power can achieve the scale of change we need.



Friends of the Earth's power lies in the networks of people coming together to take action at every scale, with the smallest local community group playing a role in the world's largest grassroots environmental network, Friends of the Earth International. In many cases, the people we work with will not identify themselves as Friends of the Earth per se, but are, for example, independent community groups or branches of other organisations. Building people power is our priority even at the expense of short-term parliamentary wins.

It is rare that we will be able to make change happen as Friends of the Earth alone. We will work in a range of principled alliances with other people and organised sections of society, from ad-hoc agreements around a particular tactic to long term formal partnerships. We work with other environmental groups, but we equally work with businesses, charities, trade unions, human rights and development groups, community organisations and consumer groups that share our hopes for the next generation. Our alliances are frequently international.

While we might ‘lead from the back’ in supporting any particular group, ensuring space for communities to take the credit for their own victories and lead on innovation, our strength comes from the way we link groups together and focus their cumulative power on system change.

While we will spend the majority of our time working with people and communities, staff have a key leadership role to play in developing the analysis of the issues, the policy evidence base, campaign aims and strategy, in providing thought leadership and commentary, and in focusing pressure on political and business decision-makers at key moments. The emphasis will be on doing so to help our networks to growth in strength and to win campaigns.

To be more effective and relevant – and because it’s the right thing to do – we will become more representative of the communities we serve at every level. We will invest in best recruitment practice and training to ensure our staff and Board at every grade accurately reflect the demographic diversity of the UK, starting with gender and ethnicity.

In addition and given our ‘next generation’ focus, we will test new work to support young people (starting with higher and further-education students) taking action, and to bridge generational divides. Particularly post-EU referendum, young people are trying to reclaim control of their futures. Students and young people’s innovation will be key to powering new skills and ideas to protect people and the planet. This is also a long term investment in securing our future base of changemakers – including future donors.

### **Practical action and the changemaking journey**

We will combine our policy research expertise and experience in making powerful, targeted interventions with politicians, with a new emphasis on practical action. Practical projects can help to make a positive future an attractive, attainable mainstream proposition that people want to be part of: it isn’t a fad, a protest or fringe activity, it’s simply working. Often practical action will be led by parts of the network and supported and amplified by us – as where local groups have founded recycling, food or transport social enterprises.

We see five key roles for practical action in making systemic change:

- Action such as planting wildflower seeds at home or in your neighbourhood is an easy, satisfying entry point for people wanting to start taking action with a tangible pay-off. We will ensure that people who want to go further have a clear journey towards more collective ‘political’ action that can change the big picture.
- Action such as citizen science can involve people in an eye-opening and empowering way to create the evidence base for wider change.
- Action such as creating new wild habitats or investing in community energy schemes showcases how many of the solutions we need already exist and provides a powerful demonstration of public support for change. Taking decision-makers to see the results can make the benefits tangible and encourage MPs or business leaders to go further.
- At sufficient scale, practical action – from supporting new, disruptive businesses to the behaviour-change of reducing meat in your diet – adds up to system change all by itself.
- In some cases, the support we can provide for practical action to resist change around particular site battles can stop or transform negative systemic change.

# Preserving our independence and ability to speak out

**Aim 9: Safeguard our independence and stability by maintaining gifts from individuals as our core source of income, while diversifying other sources of income.**

We will safeguard our independence and stability by maintaining gifts from individuals as the source of a significant majority of our income, recognising that the economic instability – and political responses to it – accompanying ‘Brexit’ may constrain people’s ability to give. We will give individual donors a stronger connection with others in the network and a more active sense of being changemakers. We’ll show donors how our grassroots people-power approach multiplies the power of their donation many times, and contributes to impacts for real people. As an organisation that supports, enables and connects people making change on the ground, we’ll also explore new ways in which individuals and groups can give or raise money for their work with Friends of the Earth.

We will increase our flexibility by diversifying our income streams, including through multi-year funding and new innovative approaches.

We will grow our income to enable us to support more people-powered action and hence have more impact. However, if there is a trade-off between income growth and other priorities we will place a greater emphasis, particularly in 2016-18, on increasing:

- The quality of the experience that people have with us, so that more people stay active with us for longer and act as champions for Friends of the Earth (which should ultimately grow the total value of our supporter base);
- The diversity of the people involved with us (including on our Board and our staff).

We will align our staff and spending with our strategic priorities, with roughly 70 per cent of our campaigning effort going on building people power and 30 per cent on focusing that power onto decision-makers at key moments. Over time we will rebalance resourcing and staffing away from a ‘main’ London office towards the communities where people are. Where we maintain significant offices, they will act as a welcoming hub and resource for people wanting to take action towards our goal in line with our values. Over time we will also grow the proportion of our expenditure going to operational campaign spending, relative to fixed and permanent staff costs.

**Aim 10: Defend our freedom to campaign and speak out.**

We will defend the freedom for people and civil society organisations to speak out and influence civic life and public policy, championing the role of campaigning in building a good society. This is an existential necessity for us to keep doing our work, but it goes beyond Friends of the Earth or environmental issues, so we will act together with others. It is part of a wider need for post-referendum democratic renewal with high levels of public participation – giving all people freedom to participate in, and freely access information about the decisions that affect them and access justice if decisions are unjust.

Alongside our allies and partners we will participate within wider movements for social justice, such as anti-racism, women’s rights, fuel poverty and opposition to austerity, where they demonstrably intersect with environmental concerns and solutions. Our concerns can only be addressed as part of a tolerant society and an open politics that acknowledges our interdependence.

We remain party political independent and party politically impartial. We will continue to build allies and champions across the mainstream parties to advocate – and vote – in favour of our positions in the UK and devolved Parliaments and in local councils.

# Five key step changes in how we work to reach our Goal

## 1. Campaigning Impact: an unwavering focus on making positive change

We will run and win a diverse package of inspirational and transformational campaigns that: engage high volumes of people from priority audiences; and deliver long lasting impact in support of our organisational goal. The victories along the way will rarely be ours alone; in many, perhaps even most, cases they will primarily be those of communities and individuals on the frontline, and of the work we do in partnership with others.

We will innovate and experiment with the type of campaigns we run, learning and adjusting quickly where the data shows we've failed. We will co-create priority campaigns with our changemakers and with the people most directly-affected by the issue. We'll use a balanced set of indicators and narrative interpretation to judge our impact, not just our outputs.

## 2. Great supporter experience: amplifying the 'friends' in Friends of the Earth

Everyone who works with us or contributes to achieving our goal is a true Friend of the Earth, whether they donate, sign a petition, run a local group or sit on our Board. Our supporter experience will leave each and every person feeling like the valued changemaker that they are.

We ensure that *everyone* can benefit from the sense of friendship that comes from making change together. People will have a warm, friendly, enjoyable time with us, and meet other like-minded people. We will express our values openly and consistently and show our personality, to engage people on an emotional as well as rational level. We will create new ways for people to connect with others who want to take action on similar issues, investing more in tailored and personalised communications. We'll listen as part of a genuine conversation.

We will understand and meet the needs of the people who get involved with us, focusing on priority audiences, and so increase the long term loyalty, value and impact of our supporter base.

## 3. Disruptive innovation: a bold, creative approach to change

Changing the world means shaking up the ways things are done. That goes for us as an organisation, as well as for the political, economic, cultural and technological systems we influence, to stay relevant in a crowded sector of fast, (digitally) smart changemakers.

To create 'space' for grassroots action, we will be brave in leading debate around controversial issues that others fear to touch. We will be unafraid to take unpopular positions or to make life difficult for powerful organisations. We will commission and publish rigorous research to underpin our analysis of problems and our proposed solutions. We will expose wrongdoing through investigations and use of legal expertise.

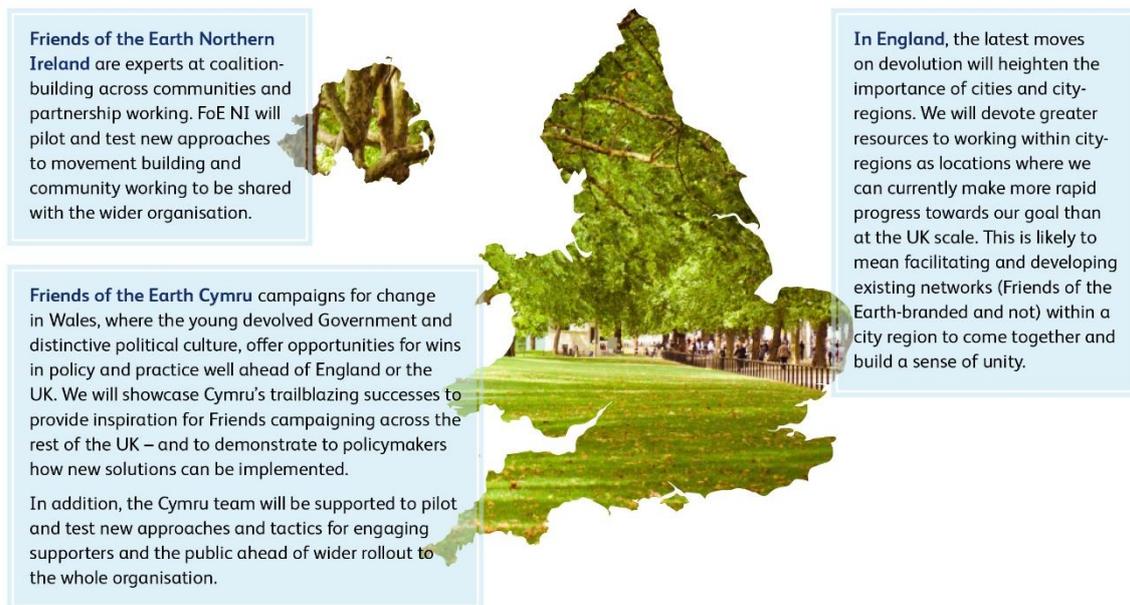
We will make our digital channels central to how we make change happen. We will create digital platforms to enable people and groups in our networks in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to: take targeted, creative, engaging actions on our national campaigns; start and run their own campaigns; organise real world action together; to connect and share (skills, expertise, solidarity) with each other in the UK and beyond.

We'll judiciously adopt ways of working, such as Agile cross-disciplinary teams, that learn from innovative start-up culture, and we'll actively experiment with new models of making change.

## 4. Communities and networks: local-to-global-to-local

One of Friends of the Earth's greatest strengths is that our grassroots approach, characterised by friendship and solidarity, operates at every level from local to global. We will empower many more people to be leaders for change and connect with more communities (through our local groups and through other partnerships). We will help people and communities taking action with us nationally and with our networks in each part of England, Wales and Northern Ireland to connect with millions of others in Friends of the Earth Europe and Friends of the Earth International to learn from and support each other. We enjoy a close relationship with Friends of the Earth Scotland and Ireland.

As Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland we act together as one organisation. But each nation brings something special to the whole.



## 5. People: building a more diverse, inclusive network and nurturing talent

As an organisation we actively seek to work with people currently under-represented in our campaigns, and we support, encourage and expect our network to do the same. Supported by an action-learning approach, all staff will be expected to take steps in their work to help us become more diverse and inclusive.

We will speak out on issues of discrimination and injustice, such as environmental racism. We will partner with Black and Minority Ethnic organisations on shared projects and we will work with existing BME supporters to understand what we can do to broaden our relevance and remove barriers. We will not assume that the task we face is to get people 'over there' to come and join 'our' campaigns; rather it is to identify areas of mutual interest to work on together, building trust and understanding.

We value our staff and volunteers. We will develop a culture that reflects and rewards our values, and where friendship and solidarity flourish, while behaviours that don't live up to our values are addressed swiftly and fairly. We will grow and develop talent, not just among our staff but across our whole 'family'. We will place a strong emphasis on the people skills of empathy, listening, inspiring, organising and leadership.

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  - ii [http://assets.worldwildlife.org/publications/723/files/original/WWF-LPR2014-low\\_res.pdf](http://assets.worldwildlife.org/publications/723/files/original/WWF-LPR2014-low_res.pdf)
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  - ix <http://www.rspb.org.uk/community/placestovisit/rainhammarshes/b/rainhammarshes-blog/archive/2013/10/16/75-of-young-londoners-are-disconnected-from-nature.aspx>
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