

ELF NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2023

Riding the Tides of Change: Navigating the Storm in our Pursuit of Environmental Justice

Under the umbrella of this erratic summer, where relentless rainfall in the UK starkly contrasts with the searing heat domes of Europe, the urgency of our mission at the Environmental Law Foundation (ELF) becomes ever clearer. With every fluctuating extreme, our commitment to the pursuit of environmental justice deepens. As the weather wages its silent protest, our resolve, far from waning, strengthens - to advocate, educate, and protect the natural world that holds us all.

As we navigate through these challenges, we remember with deep respect and gratitude our founder, [Martin Polden OBE](#), who sadly passed away in April. His spirit of pioneering and resilience continues to be our beacon as we face the environmental trials of our times.

Despite the stormy backdrop, this season also brings reasons for celebration. We've seen progress in the [Woodcock Village Green Case](#), which has now advanced to the Court of Appeal, marking a crucial milestone in the local community's relentless fight for environmental justice.

Our endeavours have been recognised and supported with a three-year grant of £150,000 from the [Ecological Restoration Fund \(ERF\)](#). This, along with a [heartening donation of £3,000](#), empowers our Rights of Nature work and enables us to expand our team with a [new paralegal role](#) (find more about this exciting opportunity below).

With this momentum, we eagerly look forward to our Big Give Christmas Challenge appeal, details of which we will share in the coming months, and warmly invite you to join us in our journey of environmental stewardship.

In addition to these developments, we have updates to share on intriguing cases concerning Biodiversity Net Gain, Betteshanger Park, and our communications with Offwat & Defra. Moreover, we are proud to announce the success of our [Aarhus Convention event](#), an accomplishment of our policy clinic work with UCL. The event, held to launch our detailed report, caught the attention of several news outlets, including The Guardian, the ENDS Report, and others, and was followed by an enlightening webinar.

In the midst of this summer's storm, we steadfastly anchor our work in the power of collective strength and resilience. As we navigate these torrential rains and searing heats, let's use this season's vigour to fuel our shared endeavour of being good ancestors, continually striving to safeguard our environment and all its inhabitants.

Our Recent Updates

Betteshanger Park Triumph: Hotel Development Proposal Denied

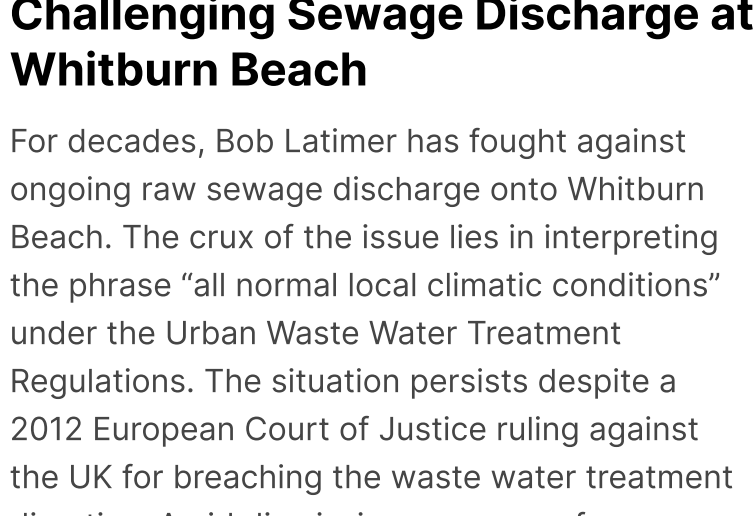
In a remarkable win for local communities and environmental advocates, the Dover Planning Committee has unanimously rejected a proposal to build a 120-bed hotel at Betteshanger Country Park. ELF assisted local residents to oppose this hotel proposal and a related surfing lagoon development, citing the park's environmental importance. The park hosts the UK's second-largest Lizard Orchids colony and the critically endangered turtle dove and water voles. ELF reminded the council of its earlier commitment to consider designating the park as a Local Nature Reserve and its duty to conserve biodiversity under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. The decision to deny the hotel application underlines the importance of local communities and environmental legal bodies in preserving nature and holding decision-makers accountable. Read the full blog post here.

[Learn More](#)

Questioning Biodiversity Net Gain: The Wenny Road Meadow Scenario

The 2021 Environment Act's Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) policy aims to create a balance between urban development and nature conservation. But its effectiveness is being challenged, as exemplified by Wenny Road Meadow in Chatteris, Cambridgeshire. Despite being the last significant green space and home to several priority species, the meadow is under threat from housing development. Conflicting assessments between the Wildlife Trust and the developer's ecologist reveal potential biodiversity loss, raising concerns about the accuracy of the BNG metric. Despite acknowledging these issues, the council's Wildlife Officer refrained from passing judgement, leading to discrepancies in interpreting expert opinions and showing an urgent need for a dispute resolution mechanism. This situation underlines the risk of the BNG policy failing to protect the habitats it's designed to enhance without a robust system for assessing conditions and resolving disputes. Read the full blog post here.

[Learn More](#)



Challenging Sewage Discharge at Whitburn Beach

For decades, Bob Latimer has fought against ongoing raw sewage discharge onto Whitburn Beach. The crux of the issue lies in interpreting the phrase "all normal local climatic conditions" under the Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations. The situation persists despite a 2012 European Court of Justice ruling against the UK for breaching the waste water treatment directive. Amid dismissive responses from regulators, ELF continues to assist Bob in his mission to rectify this violation of environmental law. Read the full blog post here.

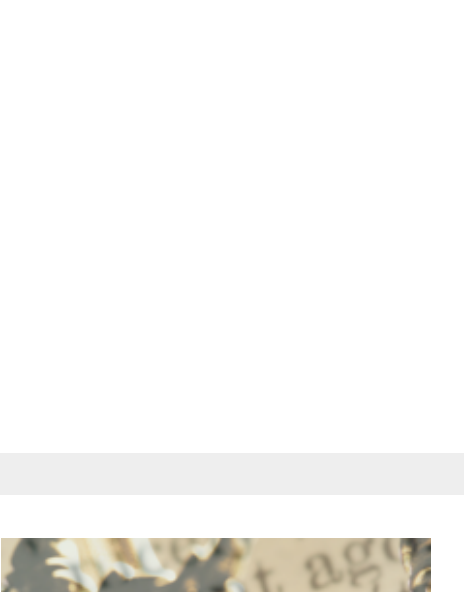
[Learn More](#)



A Generous Gift Propels ELF's Mission

Last month, ELF received a generous gift of £3,000 from an anonymous donor. The donation, rooted in a heartfelt desire to support more environmental justice, pays tribute to a cherished grandparent and the goal of securing a biodiverse world for future generations. This generous act has enabled ELF to support to communities under environmental threat. The power of such significant contributions to propel our work is undeniable, enhancing the impact of projects like the Rights of Rivers Charter for the River Ouse and our support to the Lake District Green Lanes Alliance. This act of philanthropy not only underscores the value of every contribution, large or small, but also encourages others to consider how they might further our cause.

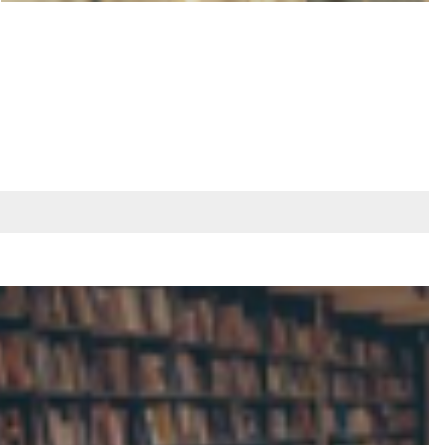
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Honouring the enduring legacy of Martin Polden OBE

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the loss of Martin Polden OBE, co-founder and first chair of the Environmental Law Foundation (ELF). A stalwart of environmental justice, Martin's unparalleled passion and commitment towards safeguarding our planet has left an indelible imprint on many lives. His extensive contributions to environmental law, including his pioneering work on the interconnectedness of law and nature, have greatly advanced our collective effort towards creating a sustainable future. As we mourn his passing, we also celebrate the remarkable legacy he leaves behind. His life's work inspires us to redouble our efforts to champion environmental justice and safeguard our world for generations to come. Martin's spirit will forever remain at the heart of ELF. To read more about Martin's extraordinary life and contributions, please visit our tribute page. Rest in peace, Martin, your tireless dedication will continue to light our path towards a greener, more just world.

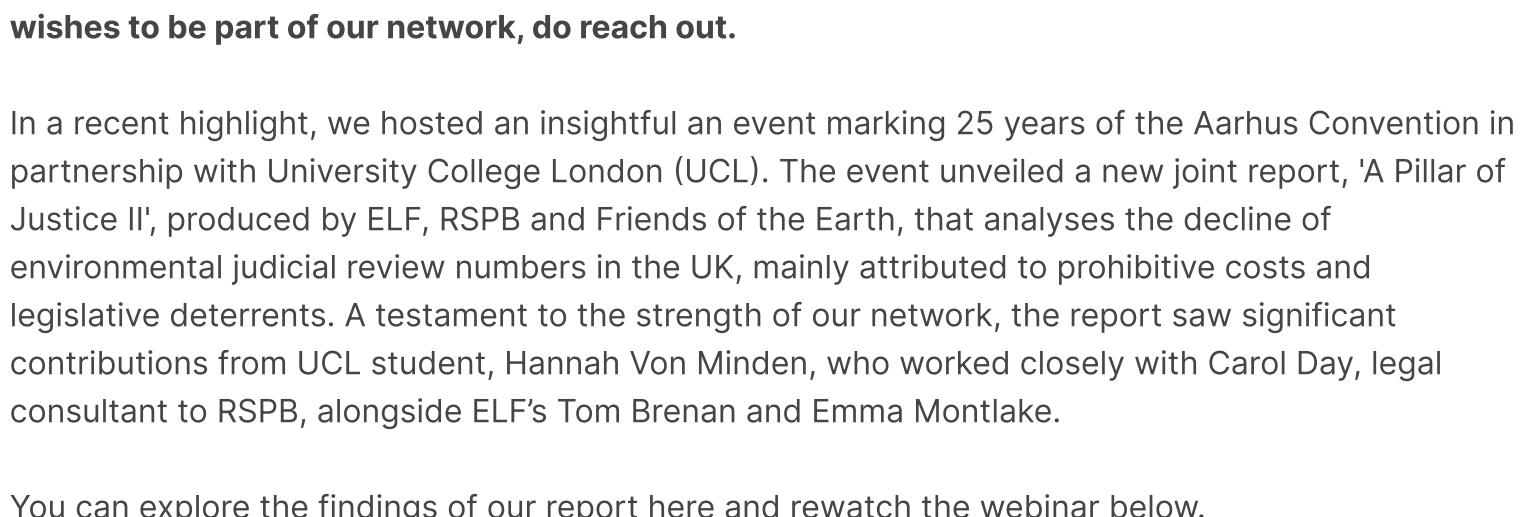
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Exciting Paralegal Role - Deadline 31st July

We are inviting applications for a new paralegal role. This opportunity promises substantial exposure to environmental law in a dynamic, high-impact charity setting. The chosen candidate will assist the Head of Casework in managing ELF's core service, addressing community concerns over environmental threats. With over 30 years of service, ELF continues its vital work in equipping communities to safeguard their local environment. Interested candidates can read the full details and apply on our website. Read the full blog post here.

[Learn More](#)



Aarhus Event & The University Network

ELF's university network, an alliance with universities across the UK, has recently grown stronger with new members joining our mission. **We are always open to collaborations, so if your university wishes to be part of our network, do reach out.**

In a recent highlight, we hosted an insightful event marking 25 years of the Aarhus Convention in partnership with University College London (UCL). The event unveiled a new joint report, 'A Pillar of Justice II', produced by ELF, RSPB and Friends of the Earth, that analyses the decline of environmental judicial review numbers in the UK, mainly attributed to prohibitive costs and legislative deterrents. A testament to the strength of our network, the report saw significant contributions from UCL student, Hannah Von Minden, who worked closely with Carol Day, legal consultant to RSPB, alongside ELF's Tom Brenan and Emma Montlake.

You can explore the findings of our report here and rewatch the webinar below.

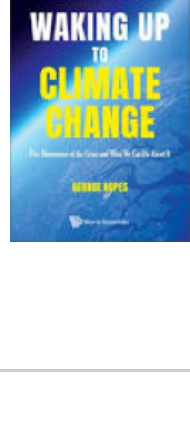
[Access Report Here](#)

Changing Landscape of Access to Environmental Justice - Webinar

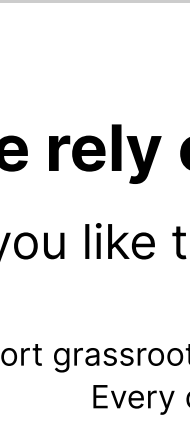
Watch on YouTube



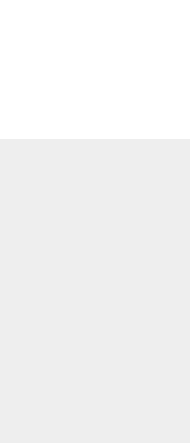
Latest book releases - use the code to get an exclusive ELF discount



Animal Rights Law
Raffael N Fasel & Sean C Butler
GLR AP3UK



Renewable Energy Law
Olivia Woolley
GLR BE1UK



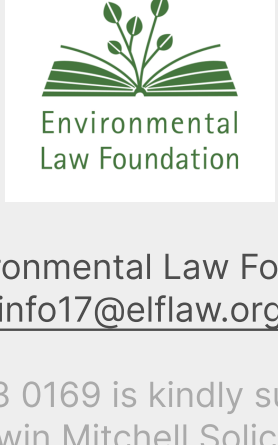
Waking Up to Climate Change
George Ropes
WSCLIMATE25

We rely on donations from people like you

If you like the work that we do, consider donating to ELF

We support grassroots activists and small communities in their fight for environmental justice. Every donation counts towards the success of our shared future.

[Donate Now](#)



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The ELF Telephone Helpline 0330 123 0169 is kindly supported by the Client Services Team at Irwin Mitchell Solicitors

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