

Annual Report

2022 - 2023

**CONSERVATIVE
ENVIRONMENT
NETWORK**



Chair's note

It has been another successful and productive year for the Conservative Environment Network (CEN), which I am delighted to chair.

At the end of this year, we celebrated our tenth birthday. Back in 2013, we established CEN to harness the growing appetite within the conservative movement for bolder action on climate change and biodiversity loss, and direct it towards positive policy change. Our milestone anniversary has provided the opportunity to reflect how, since then, we have grown into one of the largest and most influential pressure groups in the UK conservative movement today.

We have achieved a strong track record of successful policy campaigns including reinvesting water company fines into environmental improvements, scrapping VAT on insulation, reforming environmental payments for farmers, and enshrining the net zero target in law in 2019. As you will read in this report, 2022/23 was no different, as we have continued to grow our network, amplify positive conservative arguments for environmental action, and achieve policy change.

The success that CEN has enjoyed comes because we have managed to build a network encompassing multiple strands of conservatism and at different levels of government. With over 140 parliamentarians, over 1,000 grassroots supporters and councillors, and a growing number of international legislators in our network, we have built and grown a consensus that action to protect and enhance the environment is the right thing to do by our economy,

and our food and energy security, as well as morally for future generations.

The next year will be critical for conservative environmentalism. There has been significant progress on environmental policy since CEN was founded in June 2013. But while CEN has broadened the coalition of conservatives in government, parliament, and councils who support ambitious action, opposition to the environmental policies has intensified in recent months.

Recent changes to government policies on net zero show that we need to redouble our efforts to defend existing gains and maintain broad support for environmental action on the centre-right. Before the election, the team will be hard at work building our grassroots network and securing further policy wins. And for the next parliament, we need to develop a compelling prospectus for enhancing the environment that is rooted in conservative principles.

Ben Goldsmith, Chair
March 2024



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1. About CEN

CEN is the independent forum for conservatives in the UK and around the world who support net zero, nature restoration, and resource security. Our network comprises parliamentarians, councillors, grassroots supporters, and international legislators.

Together we aim to: promote and champion conservative environmentalism in the UK and overseas; find consensus within the conservative movement on environmental issues, and direct it towards positive environmental policy change; and provide a platform for different parts of the conservative movement to express and debate views on how to achieve better environmental outcomes.

- **We are a broad network**, bringing people together and giving a shared identity around conservative environmentalism.
- **We convene conservatives** to debate environmental issues in a trusted setting, and find common ground.
- **We coordinate environmental action** within the conservative movement and mobilise conservatives to achieve positive environmental policy change.
- **We promote conservative voices** within the environmental policy debate.
- **We support conservative environmentalists** to become the next generation of political leaders.
- **We do not undertake policy research ourselves**, rather we rely on peer-reviewed research to inform our work.

2. The Board

Ben Goldsmith, Chair

Ben is the CEO of Menhaden Resource Efficiency. He also founded and chairs Conservation Collective and is a Trustee of the climate foundation the Children's Investment Fund Foundation. Prior to this Ben co-founded sustainability-themed WHEB Asset Management and was a non-executive director at the Department for Environment, Food, & Rural Affairs from 2018 to 2022.



Benet Northcote, Deputy Chair

Benet is a Senior Adviser to businesses and NGOs, and founding partner of advisory firm Four Thirty Two. He was previously the Director of Corporate Responsibility at the John Lewis Partnership, Deputy Private Secretary to The Prince of Wales, and Chief Policy Adviser to Greenpeace UK. He started his career as a BBC News trainee.



Sam Hall, Executive Director

Sam joined CEN as Executive Director after having been Policy Adviser to Michael Gove when he was Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. He was also the Head of Research at the conservative think tank Bright Blue, leading their work on energy and the environment and authoring several policy reports.



Luke Graham, Treasurer

Luke was the MP for Ochil & S. Perthshire from 2017-19 and was a CEN MP. He sat on the Public Accounts Committee and was PPS for two departments. Luke served as a Senior Special Advisor to the Prime Minister between 2020-21. His 15-year finance and sustainability career has seen him work at start-ups and corporates in the UK, Asia and the USA as well as qualifying as a Chartered Management Accountant.



Rosa Rotko

Rosa is an energy transformation specialist at Mott McDonald, a global management and engineering consultancy. She is also a non-executive Director at the Retail Energy Code Company. Prior to this Rosa worked in the Department for Energy and Climate Change, for the energy company SSE, and the law firm Clifford Chance.



Jane Macbean

Jane is a councillor in Buckinghamshire and currently chairs its Health & Adult Social Care Select Committee. She is also a member of Bucks' Natural Environment Partnership Board and its Leisure Board, and a member of the Strategic Flood Management Team. She co-created Communi-Tree, an urban re-planting initiative.



Guy Thompson

Guy is Managing Director of EnTrade, a Wessex Water business. Prior to this Guy was a founding Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer of Natural England, Executive Director of Green Alliance, and a Board Member of the European Environment Bureau. Guy is currently a Board Member of the Broadway Initiative and Vice Chair of PHA Home.

Ben Caldecott and Dorothee Irving stood down from the Board during 2023 and we thank both for their guidance and support.

3. Our principles

We know CEN MPs, peers, councillors, and supporters have differing views on specific environmental issues, but ask them to pledge a commitment to some broad principles which we think underpin conservative environmentalism.

- **Action to enhance the natural environment**

We support the establishment of a new legal framework to halt and reverse the decline in our ecosystems, so that future generations can enjoy and be protected by the UK's natural inheritance.

- **Action to secure the future of rural areas**

We support a new system of rural payments that is based on the principle that public money should be used to secure ecological gains for the benefit of the public, and promotes a vibrant rural economy including high-quality, sustainable agriculture.

- **Action on climate change**

We believe that climate change creates severe risks for global stability and prosperity, and that the UK must therefore continue to lead the way not only in promoting adaptation but also in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

- **Action to promote clean growth**

We believe that the best future for UK manufacturing industry lies in clean growth, and that government policy should therefore support R&D and investment in clean technologies.

- **Action to build properly designed housing**

We believe that the nation has a responsibility to ensure the provision of high-quality, affordable homes for all our people — and that house building, if properly conducted, is fully compatible with preserving and enhancing the quality of the environment.

- **Action to preserve species and oceans**

We believe that the UK has — and must seize — the opportunity to lead the world in ending the illegal wildlife trade, halting the annihilation of species, and restoring the health of our oceans.

- **Action to tackle air pollution**

We support the promotion of electric vehicles, alongside active transport and increased planting of trees to tackle air pollution on our roads and streets.

We have five main programmes - climate, clean air, nature, international, and outreach - through which we seek to advance our mission. We have cross-cutting communications and operations teams that support the work of CEN's main programmes.

Our strategy for 2021-2024 prioritises the following:

- Establishing the nature programme
- Getting ready for the next election
- Improving our engagement with the media
- Engaging grassroots conservatives
- Making our convening more effective
- Building our international network
- Creating a pipeline of talented people

4. Our highlights

Key metrics:

- **Parliamentary caucus:** 120 MPs and 20 peers
- **Councillor network:** 379 councillors
- **Supporter network:** from 514 supporters to a network of over 700
- **International declaration signatories:** 349 legislators from 53 political parties in 46 countries
- **Media mentions:** 415 media mentions and 23 op-eds in the first six months of 2022. From 1st July - 31st December 2022, we had 263 media mentions and 35 op-eds

Policy wins:

- Ring-fencing of water company fines to be reinvested in environmental schemes
- Mandating sustainable urban drainage systems in new developments
- Continuing the rollout of nature-friendly farming payments
- Temporary shifting of green levies from energy bills to general taxes
- Giving Ofgem a net zero remit
- Creating a price stability mechanism for sustainable aviation fuel



Events and convening:

At Conservative Party Conference 2022 we hosted 22 fringe events in three days.

We hosted a major conference on a conservative approach to net zero, with a keynote speech from Energy Minister Graham Stuart and two panels of leading conservative thought-leaders on climate change.

CEN MPs at Number 10 to meet the Prime Minister, January 2023



The CEN team at Conservative Party Conference, October 2022



We hosted our annual Sam Barker Memorial Lecture, in memory of our former director, with keynote speaker the Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP.

We organised our second Global Conservative Climate Summit on the fringes of COP27 and brought together parliamentarians from our network in the UK, USA, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Germany and South Africa to discuss energy security and climate action.

We launched our Scottish Parliamentary group in April 2023 at the Scottish Conservatives' conference with a speech from the Net Zero and Energy Security Minister Andrew Bowie.

5. Climate

In our climate programme we work to debate, build consensus, and champion market-based solutions to climate change.

Through our network of parliamentarians, councillors, and supporters we are working to promote the UK as a leader in the global race to decarbonise so as to attract investment, cut the cost of living, build new industries, and create skilled jobs. Our climate team is working to demonstrate there is strong political will on the centre-right to improve home energy efficiency, build more cheap, clean renewables, decarbonise our transport system, and support nascent green industries.

Energy efficiency:

We have highlighted the critical role of home insulation in cutting bills and improving energy security. Last autumn, we published a three-point plan to cut bills which recommended an expanded industry-led insulation scheme for the fuel poor, an energy saving campaign (both of which were adopted by the government), and an expansion of the boiler upgrade grant for heat pumps. We worked with a group of CEN caucus members to submit a Spring Budget letter, which included ideas to improve energy efficiency such as a stamp duty cut for energy efficient properties and an employee benefit scheme for home energy improvements.

Onshore wind:

We have been campaigning to lift the de facto block on onshore wind, one of the cheapest sources of new homegrown electricity generation. We supported an amendment to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill tabled by Simon Clarke, which gained the support of over 30 Conservative MPs. At the start of 2023, we submitted a letter from CEN MPs to the Levelling Up Secretary setting out proposals for unlocking onshore wind with the consent of local communities. We held events for CEN supporters and councillors to learn more about onshore wind, and organised a visit to a community wind farm in Oxfordshire for local CEN MPs and councillors.

The launch of the CEN Scottish Parliamentary Group, April 2022





CEN climate panel at Conservative Party Conference, October 2022

Oil and gas transition:

We have been campaigning in support of the transition away from oil and gas production in favour of clean energy, for climate and energy security reasons. We conducted polling of Scottish voters on the oil and gas transition, launched a Scottish CEN MSP group (now numbering over half the Conservative MSPs), and produced a briefing on a unionist approach to the energy transition to feed into the Scottish Conservatives' alternative energy strategy. We hosted two events at Scottish Conservative Conference, including a reception and a panel on the topic of the energy transition across Westminster and Holyrood. We commissioned an international essay collection looking at the transition from oil and gas across the world, authored by centre-right legislators from nine countries.

Aviation:

We have been championing policies to decarbonise flying through the development of sustainable aviation fuel and hydrogen aircraft. In January, we launched a manifesto on sustainable aviation, containing four main policy asks and signed by 32 Conservative MPs, Peers, and MSPs. We landed a story in the Telegraph and two op-eds from CEN MPs. We backed Chris Grayling's amendment to the Energy Bill for a sustainable aviation fuel support scheme, the main recommendation from our manifesto, which the government accepted.

Green levies:

We argued in favour of moving levies from electricity bills on to general taxes, to encourage more electrification and ease consumer bills. Through a roundtable, briefing, and articles, we succeeded in getting levies temporarily moved off bills for the duration of the Energy Price Guarantee. We organised a CEN MP letter, led by Jo Gideon, urging ministers to keep hydrogen funding off electricity bills and preferably off bills altogether, signed by 12 MPs. The government amended the Energy Bill to place the costs of a hydrogen levy on industry rather than consumers.

Electricity grid:

We met CEN MPs to raise awareness of and advocate for the importance of giving Ofgem a net zero remit, to unlock more anticipatory investment in the grid. We organised a CEN caucus meeting, so MPs could hear from Peers about their Ofgem remit amendment to the Energy Bill. This campaign was successful, with the government tabling their own amendment to the Energy Bill to give Ofgem a net zero remit.

Net zero narratives:

In February, we held a half-day climate conference, aiming to build conservative narratives for net zero by answering the questions ‘why should conservatives care about net zero’ and ‘what does a conservative route to net zero look like’. We had Energy Minister Graham Stuart giving the keynote speech and leading conservative voices on the panels, including Simon Clarke, Sebastian Payne, Peter Franklin, and Anouka Dhadda. There was strong agreement on the importance of a pro-growth narrative on net zero that emphasised private over public investment in clean technologies. There was coverage in several outlets, including Politico, BusinessGreen, and the Guardian.



Grant Shapps MP at CEN's 10th anniversary, June 2023

Electric vehicles:

We have authored articles and placed quotes to support the confirmation of the zero-emission vehicle mandate and the phase-out of new petrol and diesel car sales, critical policies to give consumers and industry confidence to invest in going electric. We held a dinner in Parliament for the caucus to discuss how to build an EV manufacturing industry in the UK, followed up by MPs asking ministers about critical mineral supply chain security.

The
Telegraph



conservativehome

DAILY
EXPRESS

Embracing onshore wind is an economic no-brainer

CEN MP, Sir Simon Clarke, 25th November 2022

The Prime Minister missed an early chance to show commitment to the environment. He can't afford to leave it to the left.

CEN Director, Sam Hall, 18th January 2023

'Beat Putin at his own game' Tory MPs back call to put energy crisis on war footing

21st August 2022

Future plans:

The UK set itself out as a climate leader when it became the first major global economy to enshrine net zero into law back in 2019. Four years later, 90% of global GDP is covered by a net zero target and the race is on to reap the industrial and economic opportunities from decarbonisation.

However, despite this progress, the government relaxed some of its targets, particularly the deadlines for phasing out new petrol and diesel car sales and replacement gas boilers. These announcements demonstrate the need for CEN to redouble its efforts to show net zero is the right thing to do economically, environmentally, and politically.

In the run-up to the General Election, we will focus on delivering ambitious outcomes of existing climate commitments, such as the Future Homes Standard and the rebalancing of green levies. We will also publish a CEN manifesto, featuring narratives and policy ideas for a positive pro-climate action agenda for the centre-right in the next parliament.

We will work with our network of parliamentarians, councillors, and supporters to demonstrate the appetite on the centre-right for market-based climate policies. This includes supporting more households to adopt energy efficiency measures through tax incentives, speeding up deployment of EV charging infrastructure, and ensuring the UK remains an attractive international destination for green investment.

Panel at the CEN Climate Conference, January 2023



6. Clean air

Engaging councillor brief holders:

We've set up a WhatsApp group for CEN councillors who have environment and transport briefs in unitary and county councils. We've worked with this group to ask the Transport Secretary to preserve active travel investment and participated in the net zero review directly through a meeting with Chris Skidmore. We hosted a roundtable with the Environment Secretary for the group to discuss air pollution policy and how councils can work more constructively with the government to meet our targets.

Sharing best practice:

We've used regular newsletters, briefings, and webinars to make the case that, done correctly and with consultation, clean air measures can make communities more attractive and desirable places to live, work, and shop. We have also launched our councillor case study map, which highlights best practice policies by Conservative councils from across England.





CEN clean air panel, Conservative Party Conference, October 2022

Recruiting councillors:

The CEN team attended the Conservative Councillors Association development weekend where we presented to councillors and candidates on clean air policies and politics. We also hosted a drinks reception, with a speech from Andy Street, in Birmingham, and organised a trip for councillors in the West Midlands to see an e-bike hire scheme in practice.

The Guardian

Former Tory ministers push for “bold and positive” green agenda at election

21 June 2023

BusinessGreen

Greener home heating can help clean up our air

CEN Peer, John Randall, 23 December 2022



conservativehome

How we are tackling congestion and air pollution in Canterbury

CEN Cllr, Dan Watkins, March 16th 2023

Future plans:

While the conservative case for clean air is strong, opposition to specific policies designed to improve our air quality has intensified recently. Conservatives have been particularly critical of the expansion of London’s Ultra Low Emission Zone and the proposed Manchester Clean Air Zone.

We will continue to work with councillors, metro mayors, MPs, and the grassroots of the conservative movement to tackle myths about air pollution and end the perception that clean air policies have to entail a ‘war on motorists’. We want to demonstrate that there is a strong conservative case and policy agenda for cleaner air that also achieves the priorities of local residents for their communities.

7. Nature

In our nature programme we work with MPs and councillors to develop and champion policies to preserve and enhance our natural inheritance.

There has been a lot of progress on nature policy during this parliament. Following our departure from the European Union, the UK has seized the opportunity to reform agricultural payments to create a more resilient food system and incentivise the restoration of nature. The government has also created a new environmental governance framework through the 2021 Environment Act.

Since we launched our nature programme in 2021, we have built momentum on campaigns in parliament and across our councillor network.

CEN MP and councillor delegation to Tideway Tunnel, June 2022



CEN MPs Fay Jones and Chris Grayling at Overbury Farm, June 2022

Environmental Land Management schemes (ELMs):

We've been active in defending the government's critical reforms to farm subsidies to reward more sustainable methods of food production and land management. In October 2022, we organised a letter to The Times signed by former ministers, think tanks, and farming groups urging the government to retain ELMs. While support for the policy intention has remained, there have rightly been efforts to strengthen delivery in line with feedback from farmers, so we organised a trip to visit the Allerton Project, a net zero test farm run by the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust, where we learned about research into the role agriculture can play in nature restoration. We have also been carrying out extensive engagement with CEN MPs as we develop a pamphlet on how to boost environmentally friendly farming.

Water quality:

In November we published our water manifesto, signed by 44 Conservative parliamentarians, with policies to restore our rivers, waterways and seas and respond to public concerns about water pollution. We drafted the manifesto in consultation with our caucus. The government has since adopted the headline policy to ring-fence water company fines for investment in river restoration, with a total of 11 out of 18 policies becoming government policy. Other policy wins included: lifting the cap on civil fines for water companies, rewarding farmers to reduce nutrient pollution into rivers through the Sustainable Farming Incentive, making water companies statutory consultees in the planning system, and mandating sustainable urban drainage systems in new developments.

Planning:

We have championed policies to boost biodiversity while supporting increased housing development. To that end, we have worked with CEN MPs and Peers to table amendments to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, including giving duties to national parks and AONBs to recover nature, creating a new Wildbelt planning designation for land where nature is being recovered, requiring swift bricks in new homes, and allowing local authorities to rescind peat extraction licences. We have gathered support for the amendments and supported the MP sponsors with their campaigning in the media. We supported a letter to the Prime Minister outlining the need for ambitious Biodiversity Net Gain requirements.

CEN nature panel at Conservative Party Conference, October 2022





Forests:

CEN has been working with caucus members to improve the sustainability standards of bioenergy, including co-organising a cross-party question and answer session for parliamentarians to hear about the recent BBC Panorama investigation. We organised a private dinner for caucus members to discuss with experts the various threats to global deforestation, including the risks from biomass.

International nature:

We convened a virtual roundtable ahead of the UN biodiversity summit in Montreal, COP15, with UK Environment Minister Lord Goldsmith and conservatives from Canada, New Zealand, the USA, and Australia.

Waste and resources:

We have worked to move the waste policy debate among conservatives beyond recycling and plastics, and to focus on reuse. We have published a series of councillor briefings about waste and resources, hosted a councillor webinar on fly-tipping, and organised a trip to a reuse start-up for MPs and wider stakeholders to discuss the need for reuse policy. We supported a debate on global ocean plastic and an op-ed about the UN Global Plastics Treaty from Selaine Saxby.



Don't ditch "green Brexit" farm subsidies, Michael Gove warns

27 September 2022



"Wildbelt" push to bring back our green and pleasant land

10 December 2022



Tory MPs call for target on designated inland bathing water sites

20 May 2023

CEN nature panel at Conservative Party Conference, October 2022



Future plans:

While the government has set strong targets to improve the natural environment and passed landmark legislation, there remains a need for further action to halt the decline in biodiversity. We want to work with our network to champion more nature-friendly ways of building new homes, to push for further action on the varied sources of pollution into our rivers, to unlock more private funding for farmers to improve biodiversity on their land, to encourage greater reuse of resources, and to further strengthen marine protected areas around the UK Overseas Territories. In the remainder of this parliament, and in the run-up to the general election, we want to articulate a positive vision for nature restoration in Britain and overseas that strengthens food security, improves public health, and boosts the economy. We hope to demonstrate the political will within the conservative movement for the ambitious policies needed to put nature into recovery.

Environment Minister, Rebecca Pow MP, at CEN's 10th anniversary, June 2023



8. International



The CEN team hosted a delegation from Korea, April 2023

In our international programme, we work to build international ambition and dialogue on climate policy among centre-right legislators and policymakers around the world. As well as sharing resources like policy case studies and advice to partners on conservative caucus building, we host delegations, webinars, summits, and roundtables with our international partners.

The UK has a unique global leadership role as the first major economy to legislate for net zero, with significant progress on emissions reduction taking place under Conservative governments since 2010. CEN has the experience and expertise to champion global efforts to promote conservative environmentalism and to support and learn from our partners abroad as we build a global network of conservatives furthering this cause.

Canada:

We organised a six-day delegation to Canada, taking MPs Rebecca Pow and Henry Smith to Calgary and then Ottawa to meet their conservative counterparts, representatives from the oil and gas industry, and UK diplomats to discuss action on climate change and nature. We forged several new relationships, and have been asked for advice on how we could set up a CEN-type organisation in Canada.

European Climate and Security Summit:

We hosted this in October 2022, bringing legislators from Germany, Norway, Sweden, Iceland, Austria and Moldova to the UK to engage with climate and security experts and members of the CEN caucus. Over a series of sessions, they discussed topics such as the impact of the invasion of Ukraine on climate action, how to accelerate renewables rollout, and how the centre-right can own the narrative on climate change.

COP27:

CEN attended this climate conference in Egypt, helped organise our second Global Conservative Climate Summit, and brought together parliamentarians from our network in the UK, USA, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Germany and South Africa to discuss energy security and climate action.

UPLA:

We attended the UPLA conference, the union of Latin American conservative parties, to promote environmental action and sign an agreement with UPLA to support its member parties in 21 countries on climate and environmental issues.

International Democrat Union:

We attended the International Democrat Union forum in Washington DC, hosting a reception with our German partners KlimaUnion and working with allies in Scandinavia to put climate on the IDU's formal agenda for the first time. We hosted a panel discussion on centre-right leadership on the environment with leading conservative legislators at the IDU summit in June. Speakers included the President of Sri Lanka, the former President of Mongolia, and MPs from Germany and the UK. We also gave a presentation at the IDU campaign managers meeting about the role of the environment in voters' behaviour and the case for centre-right parties to act.



How ministers can strengthen our hand at COP15 biodiversity conference

CEN MP Tracey Crouch, 5th December 2022



Stopping Moscow's oil and gas exports is the route to victory in Ukraine

Fifth President of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko, 25th February 2023



It's time to use our world-leading Environment Act to tackle deforestation

CEN MP, Steve Brine, 12th June 2023

CEN MP Greg Hands on climate panel at CPC, October 2022





Relationship building with international partners:

We organised virtual roundtables with conservatives in key countries like Netherlands, Japan and Mexico, and continued to engage with longer standing partners in the USA, Australia and Norway through video calls with UK MPs. We have continued to support the development of similar organisations internationally, partnering with French centre-right organisation Ecologie Responsable and Chilean think tank Fundacion Jaime Guzman, through which we helped to convene a conversation between CEN MPs and members of the committee which is drafting Chile's new constitution. We also hosted a meeting with a delegation from South Korea, led by Dr Kim Sang-Hyup, the adviser on energy and the environment to the South Korean president. Dr Kim is now very keen to replicate CEN in South Korea and we are supporting the establishment of a new organisation there, as well as in Canada following our delegation last year.

9. Outreach and communications

CEN supporters form a community of conservative environmentalists including grassroots activists, students, parliamentary researchers, think tankers, businesses, academics, and more from across the centre-right. CEN works to engage and inform our grassroots supporters, helping them to champion conservative environmentalism in their communities and providing a space for them to debate environmental topics.

Supporter network growth:

Our grassroots supporter network has now grown to over 700. We also had our first stand at the Conservative Party conference in Birmingham within the exhibition hall, helping to promote CEN's packed programme of events to attendees and sign up more grassroots supporters.

CEN Academy, August 2022



CEN Academy:

In August 2022, we held our inaugural CEN Academy with 20 students. CEN teams delivered short presentations about their work and facilitated group activities. Attendees heard talks from Victoria Prentis, then the Farming Minister, and Andrew Callendar, the Head of Global Policy at the RSPB. Delegates went on excursions to the Oxford Natural History Museum and RSPB Otmoor to see nature restoration in action. The Academy successfully equipped participants with new skills and knowledge to take the mission of CEN with them into their universities and future careers, with many considering a career in politics and/or environmentalism. By the end of the Academy, their presentations demonstrated an increased level of understanding about how to make the conservative case for environmentalism and of the current environmental policy debates. Since the Academy, we have had continued interest in CEN from the attendees, with some joining the team for work experience, enquiring about internships, and attending other events, and one joining the team as a Climate Programme Manager. Applications for this year's CEN Academy saw four applicants for every place.

Supporter webinars:

This year we have hosted a new series of webinars to discuss topical environmental issues and lean into debates happening with the conservative movement, including whether we should lift the de facto ban on onshore wind, whether we can fly to net zero, and how far climate change will exacerbate the migrant crisis. These events have been popular with our current supporters and councillors as well as encouraging more people to sign up to our networks.

Op-eds:

This year CEN has worked to promote more pro-environment conservative voices in the media and boost support for CEN campaigns beyond Westminster. In the first half of 2023, we drafted, pitched and landed 23 op-eds from CEN MPs, peers, councillors and the team this year, including a pro-net zero article from former Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko in the Daily Telegraph. We also landed our first op-eds from two Conservative MSPs on the deposit return scheme and CEN's new Scottish Parliamentary Group.



The CEN team and Sajid Javid MP, March 2023

News stories:

In addition, we also organised twelve media interventions, from defending ELMS to urging more action on energy efficiency. So far in 2023, we've secured seven proactive news stories promoting our work, including prominent coverage for our bathing water campaign in The Times and Daily Express, CEN MPs' call to avoid new biomass subsidies in Sky News, Daily Express and Guardian, and our aviation manifesto in the Daily Telegraph. We organised a letter to the editor of the Daily Telegraph urging ministers not to hand out new biomass subsidies signed by 10 CEN MPs and peers. We also secured coverage of our new Scottish Parliamentary Group in the Scottish Daily Mail.

Future plans:

Much of CEN's work since its establishment in 2013 has focused on building support for environmental policies among politicians and we have neglected to develop our grassroots network. With this in mind, CEN has been working to scale up its grassroots work significantly ahead of the next leadership race with the aim of fostering more support for the environment amongst the wider conservative movement and grassroots. This includes recruiting more ambassadors from across the centre-right to help us expand our outreach to councillors and supporters and feed into our campaigns. And we want to foster the next generation of conservative environmentalists, building on the success of our 'CEN Academy' which we have run over the past two years and where we gathered a select group of university students and recent graduates.

We want to go further still, building up our presence outside of London, by hosting regular events, attending more regional conferences and away days organised by local and regional associations, recruiting more ambassadors, and supporting them with resources like an annual away day.

CEN will also look to boost its outreach to elected officials,

potential supporters, environmentalists and others in the Westminster bubble through social media. We will look to develop and implement a new social media strategy to help take our outreach to new heights. In particular, we will be looking to support the CEN team build their presence online, in broadcast and in the media to help create more commentators within the team.

However, we will also be pairing this with three CEN magazines targeted at Councillors. This will help CEN target and engage with councillors who do not engage with social media or online content in a typical way. We will also be starting our "road trip" series, which will interview MPs and councillors in their constituencies and wards to highlight the amazing environmental work they are doing in their local area.

There will also be several publications coming in the next year. Most notably, we will be publishing our general election manifesto, our farming manifesto and tree manifesto. We will look to make a significant media impact with the support of CEN's caucus to help influence the manifesto for the upcoming election.

**CONSERVATIVE
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