

‘A real pioneer’: King Charles seeks to embody green values in royal estate

News that King Charles is converting his chauffeur-driven luxury vehicles to run on biofuels was this week billed as a small step in a bigger plan to reduce emissions.

The announcement was swiftly followed by news of a deal between the crown estate, the monarchy’s property arm, and Great British Energy, Labour’s new publicly owned energy company, to build offshore windfarms to power 20m homes. The crown estate, which will receive a healthy share of any profits, owns most of the seabed up to 12 nautical miles from the coastline.

Both measures reinforced the image of Charles as the “green king”. Tony Juniper, who has co-authored two books with Charles, said: “There is no doubt that our monarch, our head of state, is a very committed and very effective environmentalist.”

Among other changes detailed in this week’s **sovereign grant annual report** were the first solar panels to be fitted at Windsor Castle, with heat pumps to follow; and gas lanterns at Buckingham Palace being given new electrical fittings to “improve their energy efficiency while preserving their historic look and glow”. (...)

Last year, Charles appointed a new head of sustainability to accelerate his net zero ambitions. “It is ever clearer that urgent action is needed for a zero-carbon, nature-positive future,” the report said. “The royal household recognises the twin global challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss and its role in taking action, demonstrating leadership, and encouraging and inspiring others.”

Harriet Sherwood, *The Guardian*, 2024