



**friends of  
the earth  
Bromley**



*April 2014*  
*No. 316*

# ewsletter

Bromley FoE: enquiries:

email: [bromleyfoe@gmail.com](mailto:bromleyfoe@gmail.com), website: [www.bromleyfoe.co.uk](http://www.bromleyfoe.co.uk)

## April Meeting

*Friends Meeting House, Ravensbourne Road, Bromley*

### London's Living Landscapes

#### Alister Hayes

Policy and Planning Manager of London Wildlife Trust

*London's Living Landscapes seeks to conserve and protect the Capital's wildlife, to connect fragmented natural green or open spaces to form landscapes and to work in partnership with London's diverse communities to enjoy and help their natural environment.*

**Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> April - 7.30pm**

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Copy for the next Newsletter must be with the Editor by

**\*\*\* SUNDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> APRIL \*\*\***

Contact details inside front cover.

**Contact Ray (01959-571566) or Sheila (01689-851605) if  
you need a lift to Bromley FoE meetings**

### Diary dates:

<b>Apr 1<sup>st</sup> (Tues)</b>	<b>Bromley FoE's April meeting:</b> Alister Hayes from London Wildlife Trust
<b>Apr 26<sup>th</sup> (Sat)</b>	<b>FoE Regional Gathering – see page 9</b>
<b>May 3<sup>rd</sup> (Sat)</b>	<b>Bill's Open Garden and Plant Sale (see pages 6 and 12)</b>
<b>May 6<sup>th</sup> (Tues)</b>	<b>Bromley FoE's May meeting</b>
<b>May 11<sup>th</sup> (Sun)</b>	<b>St Christopher's Bluebell walk at Cudham (see below)</b>
<b>May 22<sup>nd</sup> (Thurs)</b>	<b>LOCAL AND EUROPEAN ELECTIONS</b>
<b>Jun 3<sup>rd</sup> (Tues)</b>	<b>Bromley FoE's June meeting</b>
<b>Jun 13-15</b>	<b>BASECAMP, Hope Valley, Castleton, Derbyshire (see p 9)</b>

### Cudham Bluebell walk

**Sunday 11 May is Cudham Bluebell Walk.** It starts at 9am and ends at 2pm. We suggest though that Bromley FoE members meet up at the refreshment area Cudham at 11am for the 5mile walk (last time we only did the 3mile walk).

If participants each pay £5 to register, we should be able to hand over at least £50 for a very worthwhile organisation. Please note that St. Christopher's Bromley was formally known as Harris HospisCare. More info from John and Sue Bocock, 020-8464-5990.

### Walking for Health

Would you like to enjoy local open spaces and increase your fitness too? 'Walking for Health' has a guided walk on every day of the week in the Bromley area.

Every Friday there is a walk in Jubilee Country Park starting in Tent Peg Lane. It starts at 2pm and the walk lasts approximately 1-1/2 hours. Refreshments afterwards in Petts Wood. There is no need to book, just come along. To see the other walks in the borough, see [www.walkingforhealth.org.uk](http://www.walkingforhealth.org.uk).

**Disclaimer:** *Please note that any opinions expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of Bromley Friends of the Earth or of Friends of the Earth*

### Next Newsletter - copy details:

Any news, articles, poems, questions, views etc for the next Newsletter must be with the editor by **\*\*\* SUNDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> APRIL \*\*\*:**

**by post** to John Street, 82 Babbacombe Road, Bromley, BR1 3LS

**by phone** to: 020-8460-1078, **by email** to: [johnstreet@gn.apc.org](mailto:johnstreet@gn.apc.org).

The editor reserves the right to shorten contributions for space, or other, reasons

## Transport comment – Ray Watson

### Drive to improve London's buses

This is the Year of the Bus – or, at least, that is what has been decreed by the mayor of London. And that will be all to the good if it puts the spotlight on what is becoming a Cinderella service, to quote the mayor's own description. So what is happening to a very important part of the capital's transport structure?

The trouble with buses in the capital is that they have been too successful, showing a growth in passenger traffic of no less than 64 per cent from the year 2000 to 2012, with journeys shooting up from 1.4 billion to 2.3 billion. The result is that many more routes are overcrowded – route 25 for instance now handles 64,000 passengers a day, a jump of 64 per cent – while moving more passengers affects reliability.

Not that this has helped the bus network's financial position. It loses £400 million a year, with Transport for London (TfL) desperately trying to reduce that deficit because Government subsidies (i.e. taxpayer money) are being cut.

That financial pressure is increasing through the need to cater for growing demand which is being driven by two main reasons: Londoners are switching from expensive car use, and the capital's population is growing by 50,000 or more annually.

The odd thing is that the mayor and TfL have no strategic plan to meet this challenge – a fact revealed in a detailed investigation by the Greater

London Assembly's transport committee. They came up with a list of nine demands which have recently been presented to the mayor as a programme to address current concerns and longer-term problems.

Some of the recommendations deal with communications with the public, or lack of it, and the need for closer co-operation with local councils to co-ordinate their expansion plans. Others call for more adventurous fares, such as reductions for off-peak travellers, and for the establishment of express routes.

However, there is a limit on what the committee can do to influence fares because they are set by the mayor. Some committee members have already recalled that since the mayor came into office, fares have risen by 50 per cent.

Green Party GLA member Darren Johnson, who serves on the committee, had included in the report a demand for TfL to purchase environmentally friendly electric buses to reduce air pollution. Four such vehicles are now being trialled in the capital. Meanwhile, TfL claims that its actions already in train will result in a 20 per cent drop in emissions next year.

TfL and the mayor are due to respond in detail to the report's ideas; let us hope that action will follow.

## March meeting report – Annette Rose

### Make Bananas Fair

We were delighted to welcome Alexis Martinez Palacios, a banana plantation worker from Columbia who came to speak to us about how Fairtrade has had a positive effect on his community. He was accompanied by his interpreter and Charlotte from The Fairtrade Foundation.

Our meeting was a joint one with Sevenoaks FoE and we also welcomed visitors from other local organisations.

Alexis began by telling us how in the past, there were many years of violence and many families were displaced. Farmers were forced to start unions for those searching for better employment conditions. Guerrillas used to kill union leaders, but now times are better and more peaceful.

Climate change is taking its toll though, with periods of not enough or too much rain which threatens crops.

Fairtrade began 10 years ago in the region and Alexis described this as a blessing. Since Fairtrade arrived, the mentality of the people has changed and it has helped development. Whole communities have come out of poverty.

Alexis worked in the development of that organisation. Alexis expressed his deep gratitude to all the people who buy Fairtrade bananas and he wanted us to know that it really does make a difference. The premiums paid are put to good use in the communities.

Alexis then showed us some interesting slides. We saw members of his family and photos taken on the plantation. He explained that being Fairtrade also means caring for the environment and the animals that live there too.

The bananas that are chosen for export have Fairtrade stickers put on them. Some of the benefits that Alexis told us about were better conditions for employment, health, housing, industrial security and support for the whole community.

Farmers meet regularly to make decisions on how the Fairtrade premiums will be used. The money is shared between the farmers and the employees. The employers pay for health facilities, education and housing. The money is also used in infrastructure and to guarantee continuous production on the plantation.

Alexis told us how some people were able to buy their own piece of land to farm. We were shown pictures of a new school, built with money from the premiums. Children in the region now have access to primary, secondary and university education. The benefits not only apply to the workers themselves, but also their families. Alexis finished by stressing that working on a banana plantation is hard work and that the benefits of Fairtrade have been considerable.

*/continued on next page*

## March meeting report, *continued*

The audience then asked a number of questions. The questions were answered by Alexis and by Charlotte from the Fairtrade organisation.

### ***Q Are women included in these bodies that make the decisions?***

A The unions have a considerable percentage of women, depending how large it is. Typically, a joint body has at least 4 or 5 women out of a group of 20.

### ***Q How can I persuade more people to eat Fairtrade bananas?***

A Tell them you have heard me speak and let them know that it is really true, that buying Fairtrade makes a real difference.

### ***Q Are there plans for further Fairtrade products?***

A Yes, this is an ongoing process and always on the agenda. There are plans for grapes and melons.

### ***Q Do you use chemicals on your farm?***

A Being Fairtrade means that we must guarantee that there is no use of chemicals on the plantation. Every year this is checked and we could be decertified if anything was found. 'Organic' is a different certification.

### ***Q Could you tell us how climate change has affected the plantation?***

A If the winter is too long with lots of rain, or the Summer is too long with little rain, these are bad for the plants and they don't grow to full size. The plants can also get diseases.

### ***Q Do you need to rotate crops?***

A No, it is a continuous process of the old plant dying and the new plant growing next to the old ones. The stalks of the plants are used as fertilizer.

### ***Q Are some supermarkets better than others at stocking Fairtrade products?***

A Yes. The Coop, Waitrose and Sainsburys are better. Waitrose only stocks Fairtrade bananas. At the moment, bananas are being sold too cheaply in supermarkets because of price wars between them. This is leaving many farmers and workers who grow them in poverty. The Fairtrade Foundation is calling on the Secretary of State for Business to urgently investigate the impact of unsustainable supermarket pricing.

In the interval, we were able to buy Fairtrade goods and sample delicious Fairtrade fruit juices.

### ***Are you on Facebook?***

Do you know anyone who is interested in our group and/or environmental issues and is on Facebook? Then please go to the Bromley Friends of the Earth Facebook page and click on 'like.' You will see our latest news, photos of our activities and a monthly message about our next meeting. At the moment we have 19 'friends' but we would love to have more! Any questions please ask Rob, Annette or Judy.

## Bee Cause Update - Judy Palmer

Well, the consultation period for the proposed new National Pollinator Strategy is now open, but it's only open until 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2014. The Government delayed the start of it so they could deal with the flooding crisis and then announced the dates very quickly.

Unfortunately as the consultation period is so short, FoE could not have postcards designed & printed in time for them to be distributed and then handed to the Bees Minister. So instead there is an on-line petition to sign which can be accessed either from our Facebook page, or the FoE website which is [www.foe.co.uk/beepetition](http://www.foe.co.uk/beepetition). If you wish to personally contribute to the consultation, you can also do that on the Defra consultation page, which is <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/plant-and-bee-health-policy/a-consultation-on-the-national-pollinator-strategy>.

We will have a paper petition to sign at our April meeting – but this will be the **only** opportunity to do so (though it will hopefully have been on our Bromley High St. stall on 22 March – it's all about the timing!). FoE will also provide us with postcards, one of which is to be given to everyone who signs the petition and who wishes to spread the word to a friend.

Of if you wish to use your mobile, you can text to sign the petition – text BUZZ followed by your name to 66777, it costs your standard network rate.

FoE believes the draft NPS falls short on a few points, so the petition is to urge the Government to:

- support farmers so that bee-friendly farming is normal, not optional
- a stronger pesticide plan that makes alternatives to toxic chemicals available to all farmers
- better land-use so bee habitat increases with development, not the reverse
- health checks to aid investing in proper monitoring to check how bees are doing.

**Please** take the time to sign, somehow. 2013 was a good year for bees; let's continue the momentum, and not turn back the clock!

### Bill's Open Garden and Plant Sale (p12) - We need your help!

1. Can you contribute some plants for the plant sale? You are welcome to bring the plants to Bill's house any time from 10am on the day if you wish. Contact Bill on 01689 820469
2. Can you bake a cake for the refreshments table? Contact Judy on 07958324910
3. Do you have something we can put in the raffle? Contact Sheila on 01689 851605
4. Can you help on the day even for a short time? This could be helping with refreshments, taking money on the door, selling raffle tickets or helping to clear up. Contact Annette on 0208 402 7586.

## Tell the bees minister – bees need help +++ Crystal Palace info

Dear Friend

### **Our bees are dying out fast.**

Last year your support was critical in convincing the Government to create a Bee Action Plan to save our bees. Now we need your help once again.

Can you be part of the generation that helps save British bees?

Bees Minister Lord de Mauley wants your thoughts on his draft Bee Action Plan. But we've only got a short time to make our voices heard. The consultation started yesterday and is only open for eight weeks.

The plan is a step in the right direction, but to be effective it needs to be much better. The Bee Action Plan must include steps to restore bee habitats, tackle pesticide use, and help farmers switch to bee-friendly farming.

We need thousands of people to send the Government a clear message that we can't take bees for granted - they need our help to survive.

**Tell the Bees Minister you want a brilliant Bee Action Plan** – Go to the FoE website

[http://www.foe.co.uk/what\\_we\\_do/current\\_campaigns\\_index](http://www.foe.co.uk/what_we_do/current_campaigns_index) and click on The Bee Cause, then click on Act Now

Let's make Britain truly bloom for bees.

Best wishes,

Lucy & the Bee Cause team  
#BeeCause , #BeeActionPlan

### **Crystal Palace**

*Ann asked that this info be included in the newsletter:*

Darren Johnson, a Green Party Member of the London Assembly, has been working closely with local community groups on three major concerns.

First, the consultation process has been seriously flawed, so Darren has been feeding back concerns about the drop-in sessions to improve them.

Second, there has been very little information about the plans, which the Mayor and Bromley Council supported before they had even studied the impact on the local roads, natural habitats and economy! So he has been obtaining information from the Mayor and circulating it to the local community, and pressing for some proper studies to be conducted as soon as possible.

Finally, he is deeply concerned about the proposal to sell up to half the park to a property developer on a 125 year lease, and is pushing for the land to be put into a community trust as an alternative.

This would enable residents from neighbouring boroughs to have some control as well as Bromley, and to prevent changes of use in the park that are detrimental to the local area. We remain of the view that any large scale building on the park is totally inappropriate.

## **Climate and Energy**

### **Danger of Flooding to Nuclear Power Stations**

Nearly all the UK's nuclear power stations have been built on the coast to access sea water for cooling, leaving at least 11 vulnerable to rising sea levels.

Nuclear power stations at Berkley, Gloucestershire, and Bradwell Essex are virtually at sea level. Dungeness power plant in Kent is only 2-5 m (6-16ft) above sea level and is at high risk from beach erosion. The shoreline at Hinckley Point in Somerset also shows signs of erosion. Nirex research has concluded that over the next 100 years the area near Hinckley may well be flooded leaving the site surrounded by sea on three sides.

### **Green energy for the people by the people**

Now for some positive news! The small Lancashire village of Halton has had industrial power from the river Lune for over a 100 years, and now the local people have formed a non-profit charity with the aim of making their village self-sustainable. All being well the river Lune could be generating non-fossil fuel electricity by the end of this year.

The overall cost to install 2 turbines is £1.2 million, around half of which has already been raised through a government grant and share issue.

It is estimated that that Halton Lune Hydro will, on average generate 1,000 MWh of electricity every year. A feasibility study has estimated that over 300 homes could be powered from this - that's a third of the community.

This idea isn't new but it's good to see that Halton residents have taken the initiative and taken responsibility in developing alternative energy locally.

### **New gases found eating ozone layer**

Four new recent man-made gases contributing to the destruction of the ozone layer have been found in the atmosphere. It is thought that the emissions could be from chemicals for insecticide production or solvents for cleaning electronic equipment. Increases of this scale have not been seen for CFCs since controls were introduced in the 1990s.

There is great concern from the researchers as they don't know where the new gases are being emitted from, and state that the situation should be thoroughly investigated.

## **FoE - Meat Free May**

Could you give up meat and fish for just one month? Are you up for the Meat Free May challenge?

Meat Free May is all about giving up meat and fish for one month and raising money for Friends of the Earth at the same time.

We'll provide an information pack to help you, full of meat-free recipes and top tips for raising sponsorship money.

Sign up to take part in Meat Free May at [www.foe.co.uk/page/sign-up-meat-free-may](http://www.foe.co.uk/page/sign-up-meat-free-may)



## FoE's BASECAMP 2014

**BASECAMP 2014** Join others doing something positive for people and planet, 13-15 June 2014, Castleton, Derbyshire.

BASECAMP is the annual gathering for our fantastic network of local groups. In fact, it's for everyone - whether you're new to Friends of the Earth or not.

### Join us at Basecamp to:

- Skill up – share expertise and develop skills.
- Meet up – with loads of other like-minded people.
- Have your say – on how we can campaign.
- Rejuvenate – in some of the most beautiful scenery in Britain.

Bookings for BASECAMP 2014 are now open. More announcements will be made over the coming months. We're working with our entire network – activists and local groups – to make BASECAMP work for everyone.

There'll be a range of festival-inspired activities throughout the weekend. You're very welcome to send us your suggestions. We'll also be running our prize ceremony for local campaigning – the Earthmovers Awards.

### About the venue

The event will take place in Castleton - a village in the High Peak district of Derbyshire. The village lies within the Peak District at the western end of the Hope Valley. You'll be inspired by this spectacular setting. The weekend will have an outdoor feel: A lot of the sessions will be in the marquee and

yurts, or rooms in the Youth Hostel with views of the nearby hills.

We have booked every bed in the area for the event, so there will be a range of accommodation for you to choose from - including camping, dorm beds at the YHA, nearby B&Bs and a hotel.

**Cost of Basecamp:** Camping Ticket £35; Hostel ticket £65; Bed and Breakfast £110. Early booking on FoE's website is advisable. Booking closes 30 May 2014.

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### FoE Regional Gathering, London, April 26<sup>th</sup>

FoE's next Regional Gathering for the South East, East of England and London, is on Saturday 26 April 10.30am – 4.30pm, at NCVO, near Kings Cross. Every session will be focused both on the issues we care about and the skills we'll need to tackle them.

Every local group in London and the South East and the East of England can send as many people as you like for free, but you do need to book in advance before it books up, at <http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/greater-south-east-regional-gathering-2014-tickets-10614116107?aff=eorg>.

Do fill this in even if you have emailed to reserve places for your group so we can make a door list.

## Thank you letter to all volunteers from the Mayor of Bromley

At the start of this New Year, I would like to pay tribute and thank you for all the work you have done as a volunteer. I have met so many residents from across our Borough who volunteer in so many ways and this in turn makes a real difference to so many people. Increasingly, the Council looks to volunteers to help support its work and we in turn are looking to help facilitate and enable volunteering.

At times, it may seem that you are working on your own but the reality is that there are many, many, like-minded residents living in streets near you! The Council is working with literally thousands of 'Friends' who support work in our parks and our streets as either Friends of Parks or Street Friends. Particularly through the winter months, we are pleased to work with Snow Friends too who are prepared to help clear snow or ice from their residential street.

But there are also people to who give up their time to support older neighbours for instance or work as a school governor or simply help hear our children read in a school. The examples described are all important and all help shape our local community.

As a sign of the importance the Council attaches to volunteering generally and to our network of Friends, this Council recently passed a motion which received unanimous support and you can read the wording of the full motion below.

"This Council would like to pay tribute to all our residents who volunteer as 'Friends'. The efforts of the borough's Friends of Parks, Street Friends and Snow Friends all improve our environment and the lives of all who work and live in the borough. The 'Friends' network is a key component in the maintenance of the clean and green image of our borough. They, together with the staff who support them and our environment contractors provide us with a borough of which we are proud.

"Further, this Council acknowledges and honours all residents who volunteer to the benefit of the borough and its residents. Those residents who volunteer for positions of responsibility such as school governors are greatly appreciated. The volunteering ethos which is important at all times, is particularly valued and appreciated in these times of austerity. This is a model that should be commended to all councils. This Council requests that the Mayor provides a copy of this motion to each 'Friends' group."

If this letter has inspired you to look afresh at volunteering opportunities, you may be interested to know that there is a section on the Council's website

[www.bromley.gov.uk/volunteering](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/volunteering) or alternatively, if you come across a street problem, we would be grateful if you could report the problem which is easily done on our website [www.bromley.gov.uk/report](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/report)

## Thank you letter from FoE's Make It Better campaign

In 2012 Friends of the Earth revealed that tin mining on Bangka Island in Indonesia is destroying tropical forests, coral reefs and livelihoods. Thousands of us joined in the call for phone companies to come clean about where their tin comes from.

I've got great news. After more than a year and a half of saying 'no comment' Apple has finally owned up about using Bangka tin in its products. It's great that Apple has taken this step towards being more transparent about how its operations affect communities and the environment.

And the good news doesn't end there. Last week the Make It Better Law was all but finalised by European politicians.

For the first time thousands of companies across Europe will now have to come clean about the impacts that making their products have on people and the planet. It's a huge step towards companies being accountable for what happens in their supply chains.

The new reporting rules will also help companies measure their carbon emissions and use of key resources such as land, water and materials.

Your support for the campaign has been crucial. Although the UK Government managed to block plans to include private companies in the new law, it's still a significant step in the right direction. Thank you for helping ensure the rules weren't watered down completely.

Governments across Europe now need to decide how the new law will be implemented at home. So we'll be pushing political parties to commit to supporting strong reporting rules in their manifestos ahead of the next General Election.

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### **Letter on fracking sent to Leader of Bromley Council on behalf of Bromley FoE**

Dear Cllr Carr,

A package with 43 cards from local residents and Bromley Friends of the Earth members was handed in to you on February 24th, expressing their concerns about the fracking for shale gas process.

They are extremely worried that at the end of 2013 the Government opened vast swathes of the country to fracking with a new round of licensing, bringing the threat of fracking to thousands of doorsteps, with dangers of chemical pollution to waterbeds and the atmosphere, and adding to more dirty fossil fuels.

Bromley Council, as the local planning authority, has the power to join a growing movement of councils who are standing up and saying 'No' to fracking and instead supporting renewables and saving energy.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. We should be most grateful for a response to our concerns as soon as possible.

## OPEN GARDEN AND PLANT SALE

### OPEN GARDEN AND PLANT SALE

Come and join in a lovely garden event on

**Saturday May 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Bill Priestley is opening his garden in Petts Wood for us, where some plants will be for sale, together with homemade refreshments and a raffle

Here is the info:



Place: 22 Greencourt Road, BR5 1QW  
Date: May 3<sup>rd</sup> 2014  
Time: 3.00 – 5.00 p.m.  
Entry fee: £3.00 (*including tea & cake*)

*Call Bill on 01689 820469 if you need any more info*

See you there!



*A fundraising event on behalf of  
Bromley Friends of the Earth*

## **Flooding – this is not t-shirt weather, Mr Paterson (from FoE website)**

**Editor's note** – with apologies to Annette; this item was submitted in plenty of time for the last newsletter but was somehow completely ignored.

It's ridiculous out there. From my house in Somerset, near whole villages that have been abandoned to the rising waters, all the way into London: lakes where there were fields; canals where there were roads.

And it's still raining. Rivulets stream down the train window, each adding to the floods. There is no end in sight.

Due to the grit of our railway engineers, my train into the big city is so far on time. But I'm genuinely impressed that it can run at all. Poor, beleaguered, permanently apologetic First Great Western is starting to earn my sympathy.

Eric Pickles (Communities Secretary) and Owen Paterson (Environment Secretary) are finger-pointing and buck-passing to others, primarily the budget-riddled Environment Agency and its boss, Lord Chris Smith. But there are three more important things going on.

### **1. Budget cuts**

Funding for local councils and vital functions like the Environment Agency has been slashed – but still these bodies are lambasted when they, inevitably, fail to cope with unexpected events.

### **2. Short-termism**

Investments that save money in the long term, like flood defences, have

been given the chop. Ministers swore blind they hadn't reduced flood prevention spending, until Friends of the Earth proved them wrong with actual facts and data.

### **3. Inaction on climate change**

Our Chancellor doles out lavish tax breaks to oil barons; our noble Prime Minister is gung-ho for shale gas. And most terrifyingly of all, we have a bumbling Environment Secretary who thinks climate change would be jolly good news for Britain (good luck pitching that one in the villages of Berkshire and Somerset).

Is this climate change? The Met Office thinks it could be, linking the soddenness of the UK with more energy in the global weather system. Record high temperatures in Australia last year; record lows in the USA: our incessant storms are yet one more of those 'one in XX years' events that actually seem to be happening rather often.

The stropky little voices won't buy it, of course, and they continue to vent in their fury: "it's not climate change though is it, there's snow still somewhere up a mountain".

Even if this isn't climate change, this is what it'll look like. We are ill-prepared. At the very least, the transformation of the Home Counties into the Somme might hammer the nail into the Patersonian notion that climate change will just mean lots of lovely t-shirt weather.

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## MPs agree with campaigners' calls for a bag charge with no exemptions

Annette Rose found this article in the 'Keep Britain Tidy' newsletter

Keep Britain Tidy today welcomed a report from an influential committee of MPs who have come out in full support of our call for a 5p charge on all carrier bags to help reduce litter and environmental harm.

The charge, for plastic bags only and with some exemptions for smaller businesses, is due to be introduced in England in the autumn of 2015 but MPs on the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee believe that the charge should be extended to every shop, regardless of its size and also apply to paper and biodegradable bags.

As part of the Break the Bag Habit coalition, Keep Britain Tidy has been campaigning for a charge on all single use bags to reduce the number of bags in circulation and the harm caused to the environment. An incredible 19 million carrier bags are given out every day in England but in Wales, where they have had a bag charge since 2011, bag usage has decreased by between 70-90%.

Keep Britain Tidy chief executive Phil Barton said: "When, in autumn last year, the government announced its plans to introduce a charge in England, they did so proposing to exclude paper and biodegradable bags and said that smaller retailers will also be excluded.

"Along with campaigners including Campaign for the Protection of Rural England, Surfers Against Sewage and the Marine Conservation Society, we

expressed our concerns that having these exclusions from the charge would mean that there was a real danger that it wouldn't reduce the numbers of single use bags.

"We are delighted today that the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee has agreed with us and are calling for the charge to be implemented with no exemptions. This is great news and now the ball is firmly in the government's court who now need to implement the charge as soon and as simply as possible so that communities in England can start benefiting from a positive measure that will improve the environment just like it has done in Wales.

"We would urge people to keep up the pressure on the government by writing to their local MP and contacting the local press and media to call for the bag charge to be implemented in full and with no exemptions. The government has to respond formally to the Environmental Audit Committee report within six weeks and the more we can make the politicians aware of the strength of feeling that there is on this issue the better."

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### **Flooding, cont'd from previous page**

In the here and now, there are more storms coming. After them, more. Eventually, even the orange-jacketed men and women of Network Rail will have to admit defeat.

It's time to act on flooding. Please sign our petition to David Cameron.

## Bromley Friends of the Earth - List of Contacts

### Co-ordinators:

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vacant

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Graham Hemington, Annette Rose and  
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Anne Clark / Ivy Smith

**Reuser Column**  
**Don't throw It away - Reuse It!**

If you have any items to sell, or anything that you require, please send details to the Editor. Items will be displayed for three months, the number in brackets after an item indicating for how long it has appeared. Could you please contact us if an item has been sold/obtained, so that it can be removed from the newsletter.

Any donations to Bromley FoE generated from this column gratefully received!

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**Non-members' Section**

If you are not a member of Bromley Friends of the Earth, BFoE, then hello. We are an active local group affiliated to national Friends of the Earth concerned with promoting the understanding of environmental issues. We also campaign on these issues at a local, national and international level.

If you would like to know more about who we are and what we do please contact either of our co-ordinators, Sheila Brown (01689-851605) or Ann Garrett (020-8460-1295); their email addresses are on the previous page. Alternatively, you can come along to one of our free monthly meetings held on the first Tuesday of every month at the Friends Meeting House, Ravensbourne Road, Bromley (that's towards the bottom of the High Street and on the right going south). If you would like to join us then please fill in and send us the form below.

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**Membership Application/Renewal\* Form** (\*please delete as appropriate.)

Please return this form to: **Bromley FoE, 2 Bucks Cross Cottages, Chelsfield Village, Orpington, Kent, BR6 7RN.** Other enquiries regarding the group: may be sent by email to *bromleyfoe@gmail.com*, or telephone our co-ordinators at the telephone numbers above.

I wish to support Bromley Friends of the Earth and enclose my £8 annual subscription. I also enclose a donation (optional) of ..... To help towards the cost of producing and distributing the monthly Newsletter.

Name.....

Address.....

..... Postcode.....

Email Address.....

Do you have any hobbies or interests that may be of use to the group?

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