



**friends of
the earth
Bromley**



April 2016

No. 340

newsletter

Bromley FoE: enquiries:

email: bromleyfoe@gmail.com, website: www.bromleyfoe.co.uk

April Meeting

Friends Meeting House, Ravensbourne Road, Bromley

The Natural History of South Hill Woods / Kingswood Glen

Ishpi Blatchley - *Naturalist and*
Jan Wilson – *Bromley Countryside Volunteers &*
Friends of Crofton Woods

An evening on the wild side as we encounter some of the area's
natural woodlands

Tuesday 5th April – 7.30pm

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Copy for the next Newsletter must be with the Editor by

***** SUNDAY 17TH APRIL*****

Contact details inside front cover.

Don't miss Bill's Open Garden & Plant Sale – see p9

Diary dates:

Apr 5 (Tue)	Bromley FoE's April meeting: Ishpi Blatchley (Naturalist) and Jan Wilson (Friends of Crofton Woods)
Apr 30 (Sat)	Bill Priestley's Open Garden – see pages 8 and 9
May 3 (Tue)	Bromley FoE's May meeting: Asad Rehman – FoE's Senior International Campaigner on Climate Change
May 8 th (Sun)	Climate Change march , London
Jun 3/5	FoE's BASECAMP at Castleton, Derbyshire
Jun 7 (Tue)	Bromley FoE's June meeting
Jun 18 (Sat)	Bromley FoE stall at Coolings

Climate Change – Backward March, Sunday May 8th

On Sunday May 8th the Campaign against Climate Change is organising a Backwards March down Whitehall exactly one year after the government came to power to say "No More Going Backwards on Climate". The backwards march will be a visible symbol of the government's backtracking on climate.

The idea is to highlight some of the most dangerous backward steps that have been taken with visual stunts showing, for example, the dismantling of the solar and onshore wind industries, and reminding David Cameron of his broken promise on Aviation Expansion.

It will end on a positive note – It's Time to go Forwards on Climate Change.
More details from claire@campaigncc.org

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 17TH 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.

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

Seven-year blight – March meeting report – Ray Watson

For seven years Davina Misroch has been fighting what is virtually a lone battle to save a small close of homes in central Bromley. Why? She explained in a detailed argument at our March meeting, covering fears of what Bromley Council will propose in its plans for the town centre.

Forty houses in Ethelbert Close lie close to the High St and first came under attack when the council proposed a major retail development there. That did not get very far because the council could not find a developer to take on the project – but it was enough to blight the homes in Ethelbert Close. And the situation still has not been resolved although new plans for the area may soon be revealed.

A major difficulty in trying to persuade the council to abandon its plans, said Davina, has been the silence from the council when asked to consult residents. This feeds fears that a 300-unit tower block may be proposed for the Ethelbert Close site. 'The council prefers to operate behind closed doors' she said. 'They are not transparent, they do not consult, they do not address any issues we raise'.

Davina said that the council was told by a planning inspector at a public inquiry dealing with a planning application in the High St, that any development must be part of a Master Plan and not piecemeal. She claims that developing a small area like Ethelbert Close would infringe that policy instruction.

Further, Davina also maintains that the council's original intention that the High St area development would be retail-led, has been changed to development by via new housing. This important shift in policy has not been approved by the full council.

She asked: 'Why demolish housing and replace it with housing?' The situation had not been helped by Boris Johnson, mayor of London, who had nominated the area as a special housing zone which probably entailed grants being available to the council.

There was a cost, she said, on humanitarian grounds. Many of the residents have lived there for 30-plus years, including a lady of 95, and others who are disabled and thus need to be close to shops and other facilities provided by the nearness of the High St. Were families and others lose their homes they would probably find that any compensation would be insufficient to find a property of similar quality.

Davina also pointed out that, despite the lack of information about the council's intentions, people are still selling and buying in the close. Searches revealed no information about the possibility of development because no planning application had yet been submitted. She also warned that it was possible that other properties in the immediate area might be affected should the Ethelbert anxieties come to pass.

/continued on page 7

Transport info – Ray Watson

The management of Biggin Hill Airport are probably keeping a watch on developments at City Airport, its rival across the Thames. A Canadian group of businessmen have bought it for the high price of £2bn in the face of several bids, including one from the Chinese.

Having played a price many consider to be excessive, the consortium will want to get its money back and will thus be pushing for its development plans, once rejected by mayor Boris Johnson on planning grounds, to be approved on appeal. BHAL may then find it up against more competition from the Docklands airport for business traffic. City carries about four million passengers a year – a relatively low figure – with an aim to increase flights by 50 per cent by 2030.

If the airport is allowed to increase its flights there will be more protests from residents about noise, increased traffic and more pollution. And BHAL may attempt to strike back by forcing Bromley Council to change its new lease to permit schedule flights, claiming (as it has before) that it need the extra business to survive.

Biggin Hill delay

Bromley FoE wrote to a councillor seeking an update on negotiations between the council and the airport about the new lease for the airport that, months, ago councillors narrowly voted in favour of, even though there were 18 contentious clauses still not agreed. The letter drew a response from a senior officer saying that meetings had continued and it was

hoped to put a proposal before councillors 'in the next few months'.

This is a surprise because the airport wants to be free of current restrictions operating hours (which were vehemently opposed by residents). Bromley people may see it as a reprieve from the extra noise and pollution that will follow the completion of the new lease. However, what is intriguing is whether the airport is already working the new extended operating hours still not agreed. Also, could it be that the reason the talks are still going on is that the airport is holding out for better terms?

Bakerloo line pushes on

Transport for London (TfL) is pushing on with its plan to route the Bakerloo line through south-east London through Old Kent Road to Lewisham following overwhelming support in a consultation exercise in which 15,000 submissions were received, nearly all in favour of the project.

Technical work to survey the route has already started. What is not clear is who will finance the project. It has the support of mayor Boris Johnson and it will be his successor's task to convince the Government that it should go ahead. The cost: £2.57bn.

But there is plenty of time to raise the cash: construction is not expected to start until 2024 with completion in 2030. Perhaps TfL will then begin working on an extension to Bromley town centre.

/continued on page 7

Mutterings from the Millers Farm – *Chris Miller*

Well, did you spot the tractor? It was great to be out at last in the tractor to do a bit of work on the stubble for a couple of hours but it is still too wet to plough. We have had 54mls rain to date, 18.2.16 since I last wrote and the frost also draws the water to the surface making the top very sticky.

In the meantime the boys, Steve and Pete, have attended some courses to keep up to date on current legislation and practices. Did you know that one pair of rats becomes 1,000,000 in 18 months due to the babies having babies etc. There are as many rats in this country as human beings. They also up dated their knowledge on fungicides, tilling/ploughing and what state the Rural Payment Agency is in. I will say no more on that subject.

On the tilling/ploughing front, the latest thinking is that we should be ploughing less as this wastes diesel and by direct drilling we can build up organic matter and worm numbers in the soil to give us a much improved soil structure.

We are going to meet a farmer in Edenbridge who has pioneered this practice in this corner of England. It will be very interesting to hear what he has to say. The principle is to not plough the ground at all but to plant the seed directly into the stubble. It will not look nice and neat as it does when ploughed but the soil structure and fuel saved will more than make up for the aesthetic look. Will keep you posted.

Great news today, we passed our yearly inspection enabling us to sell our grain. We have to produce lots of documents showing when and how we

farm. i.e. dates, amounts, wind speeds, temperature, wind direction etc. when fertilising and spraying. When different machines were serviced, cleaned and calibrated. Seed labels, rodent control spread sheets, storage of grain are amongst the list of documents to be inspected.

Still delivering hay and straw to local stables and carrying out maintenance on buildings. Our spring barley seed has arrived and just waiting for the pea seed to come now which is good news. I said last month that we would be busy ploughing by now, well let's hope for a drier March!

May meeting – Invitation

Speaker is Asad Rehman

We thought it would be a nice idea to include a paper invitation with this newsletter for you to use to invite a friend along to our May meeting.

Climate change is one of the most important environmental campaigns this year and we are lucky to have the Friends of the Earth international climate campaigner, Asad Rehman, come to speak to us on May 3rd, and are taking the opportunity to reach a wider audience than normal.

Fracking Campaign Stall

A big thank you to all those who supported our stall with Bromley Against Fracking on March 19th – see photo on opposite page. There was a lot of interest and more people seemed to take leaflets than previously. Due to the cold though, people were more reluctant to stop to sign the Bromley Against Fracking petition and our FoE cards.

Nevertheless it was important to be a presence in Bromley and also warn people of the growing dangers now developing in the Horse Hill and East Grinstead areas where there are potential fracking sites.

Several people took our Run On Sun cards as we were also trying to be positive in emphasising the importance of alternative energies.

It was good to have a warm-up drink in Nick's Cafe in The Mall afterwards and support a small independent business!

Climate and Energy

Fracking and The Methane Surge

The booming fracking industry in the US is leading to a massive increase in the production of methane and contributing to global warming.

New Harvard University research drawing on satellite measurement, concludes that US emissions of methane have increased by more than 30% over the past decade. Many fracking operations are emitting more methane than has officially been recognised.

If the extraction process proves to be responsible, it will show that exploiting and burning shale gas has been more potent even than using coal, severely undermining energy and climate-change strategies.

Both the British and US governments have been banking on shale gas as a relatively clean fuel that would act as a 'bridge' to the low carbon economy.

Burning gas emits half as much CO₂ as coal, but if large amounts of methane - 86 times more powerful in causing global warming, is emitted via fracking, then this will be overturned.

Arctic Ice

Rapidly disappearing Arctic sea ice is about to set a new record after a warm winter in the region. For a second year running, it will have grown to cover less of the Arctic Ocean than ever before.

January has set a new record for the month, with ice cover averaging just 13.53 million sq km, over a million sq km below its average extent between 1981 and 2010. Any new ice that now forms will melt quickly as new ice begins to form in the Spring. It is now less than half as thick as it was in 1980. This research information has been provided by the US government's National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration.

Solar Power

Five terraced houses on an American street are taking part in the first version of new kind of energy market that could change the way electricity is generated and used in local areas.
/continued on next page

Bromley FoE stall (photo) + continuations

March meeting report – *continued*

Davina claimed that there was a cost to the environment. Tower blocks would block out light and be harmful to the adjoining Conservation Area which includes Library Gardens.

Then there was the potential problem of compulsory purchase orders. Davina said that the council was probably not keen to use this device because CPOs must be approved by a public inquiry; it was likely that the council would try to pick off owners one-by-one.

However, the long fight goes on – Davina continues to be a feisty fighter and defender of threatened residents.

Transport info - *continued*

It's an ill Atlantic wind...

...that costs airlines money. Climate change has been responsible for many unexpected problems and here is one that no one expected: the jet stream weather system that carves through the Atlantic in winter is this year much

stronger and much more southerly than the result that it slows aviation traffic with the result that planes are using much more fuel. Airline chiefs must be delighted that fuel prices have come down. Unless, of course, they bought fuel in advance as most of them do.

Climate and Energy – *continued*

As roof solar panels soak up the sun, computers connected to them crunch numbers. First they count how many electrons are being generated, and then they write that number to a block chain which is a computerised trading list.

The project in Brooklyn, New York, is run by a start-up called Transactive Grid which aims to enable people to trade renewable energy with neighbours. At the moment people have to go through a central company such as the UK's National Grid, whereas a blockchain can enable a cryptographically secure list of transactions. The computers monitor each other to stop fraud.



Bromley
Against
Fracking
members
supporting
FoE at the
Mall precinct
stall on March
19th

Bill's Open Garden and Plant Sale 30th April - We need your help!

This plea from Annette - We had a very successful day last year and we are hoping for the sunshine for this important fundraising day. But we couldn't have done it without all the fantastic helpers we had. Can you help this year please? We will be passing around a sheet for volunteers to sign up at the April meeting or you can contact the people below.

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 or just bring them when you come. Contact Bill on 01689 820469

2. *Can you bake a cake for the refreshments table?* Contact Judy on 07958-324910

3. *Do you have something we can put in the raffle?* Contact Sheila on 01689 851605

4. *Do you have something to go on the bric a brac stall?* Any items that might sell including books would be most welcome. Please bring along on the day

4. *Can you help on the day even for a short time?* This could be helping with refreshments, being on the bric a brac or BFoE stall, taking money on the door, selling raffle tickets or helping to clear up. Contact Annette on 0208 402 7586.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Bromley Biodiversity Partnership – update from Judy Palmer

I attended the recent partnership meeting when we listened to reports on owls and hedgehogs, as well as an update from The Landscape Group (TLG), and a rather heated discussion on the wording to be included in the criteria for the new policy Local Green Space.

The Orpington Field club will once again host reports of sightings of hedgehogs and owls. As previously mentioned the outer areas of the borough have sparse sightings of owls, so if you, or a friend, see or hear an owl, please go to their website (www.orpingtonfieldclub.org.uk) and follow the link in the 'News' section to report it.

The hedgehog and small mammals survey will be led by TLG, with the sightings report on the OFC website. If you spot any, dead, alive or sick, please do report it.

For any more information please visit the Hedgehog Preservation website. Remember, hedgehogs appear to be in decline at the moment, but are one of the most important species to rid your garden of pests!

Aldi supermarkets – the German parent company of Aldi UK recently announced that it has asked its fruit and vegetable suppliers to stop using 8 pesticides, including 3 bee-harming neonicotinoids currently subject to a partial ban across Europe. Wouldn't it be great if the UK arm followed suit – a strong commitment to keep neonics out of their fruit and veg, and cereals including wheat and oilseed rape, would be a welcome move.

Bill's Open Garden and Plant Sale

OPEN GARDEN AND PLANT SALE

Come and join in a lovely garden event on
Saturday April 30th

Bill Priestley is opening his garden in Petts Wood again for us this year. There will be some plants for sale, together with home made refreshments and a raffle.

If you have any plants you wish to donate, please bring them along!

Here are the details:



Place: 22 Greencourt Road, BR5 1QW
Date: April 30th 2016
Time: 2.30 – 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*

Greater South East Regional Gathering – four pages of reports

Judy Palmer writes: Saturday March 19th was a busy day for members of Bromley FoE! We had a stall in the Mall Bromley in the afternoon, but four of our members were absent – we went up to the Friends of the Earth Greater South East Regional Gathering at the Printworks, their office in London.

We enjoyed a day of networking and participation in various workshops, so there will be reports from Sheila, Judy, Annette and Paul on the ones they attended. The morning began with an introduction from Anna Watson a lead campaigner on climate and Chris Church, a board member, just updating us all on where all the major campaigns are at.

We then heard various successes and a few failures, from other local groups. Sheila reported on our two Fracking Forums and our open dialogue with the Council on this subject. (And apparently someone expressed surprise later on that we were having to campaign on fracking in Bromley.)

We broke for lunch, and a big general chit-chat which is always interesting, meeting people from other groups, and catching up with some met before.

For the first workshop sessions, Judy and Annette went and listened to Dave Timms update us on the bee campaign.

GSERG: Bee campaign workshop – Judy Palmer

Dave gave us some background information on the Bee Cause, going back to 2012, and apparently there are

now over 400 bee worlds across the country! And one of the suggestions on how to take this forward could be an update on how the worlds are progressing.

Pesticide use was discussed and whether some brands are better than others. Plus pesticide restrictions don't cover all crops and all pesticides, and we need to remember that there is always a water 'run-off' factor to be considered which has a knock-on effect on plants alongside.

World-wide studies on varying statistics were also mentioned, plus the roles of bee species pollinating specific crops. 75% of the world's essential crops need to be pollinated – who says we don't need bees and pollinators? They must be daft! We all felt that this workshop needed to be longer – we ran out of time.

Bee Count and Bee Breakfast

Judy Palmer writes: The 3rd annual national FoE Bee Count will take place in May and June this year, so more info next month on how you can participate. Our group though will be celebrating bees at a Bee Breakfast on Saturday May 28th up at the meadow on Tugmutton Common.

We will demonstrate how important bees are in the pollination of foods you eat for breakfast, and will be providing a sample breakfast to the hard-working litter pickers of Tugmutton that morning!

PS – This item is nothing to do with the Gathering

GSERG: Light pollution from blue-rich LED light - *Paul Enock*

The quality of the light around us affects our health and well-being in more ways than we may be aware of.

Increasingly, local councils are taking up incentives to convert their current sodium street-lighting to lower energy LED. Apart from the lower-carbon footprint through energy savings, and (disputed) claims about longer life-spans for LED lights, councils can also point to arguments that LED lamps, as they point downwards, create less dark-sky pollution.

Workshop leader **Tanya Rebel** warned that appearances are deceptive, and, if they decide to convert, local authorities should be aware of the advantages of opting for (slightly more expensive) 2,700 K LED lamps over lamps with a higher CCT (Correlated Colour Temperature) rating.

The reasons for this are that higher Kelvin ratings (anything over 3,000 K) provide a cooler light with a greater concentration at the blue part of the spectrum, which creates a light much more similar to daylight than the warmer 2,700 K. High blue-rich light disrupts the circadian (sleep-wake) rhythms of humans and wildlife.

In areas where blue-rich street lighting has been installed (e.g. the Isle of Wight and Reading), there are reports of e.g. pheasants remaining active throughout the night. In addition, high K lighting has a greater scatter effect, which undermines the dark sky protection of the downward-facing lamps.

Famously, when the city of Milan converted to (high-K) LED, it suddenly became clearly visible from the International Space Station, standing out from the surrounding areas.

Other negatives are that high-K light can blind drivers as they head into the contrastingly much darker space between streetlights and, as Ms Rebel was keen to point out, cold light is aesthetically unpleasant, ruining the traditional warm feel of city night-life environments.

GSERG: Jess Gold workshop – *Annette Rose*

In this short, Open Space workshop, we were able to have a quick catch up with Jess Gold. Jess is a musician who works with children creating songs about caring for the environment. She visited Bromley FOE back in September 2013 when we heard some of her environmental songs.

'Project Earth Rock' is her latest collection of songs for children with an environmental theme. There are songs on sustainable travel, climate change and recycling. A CD is included so even non musician teachers can lead these sessions successfully.

Jess is keen that Friends of the Earth should have a creative side and we discussed the idea of having some kind of forum in FOE for musicians, drama teachers, artists etc. We could even have an environmental green arts festival!

GSERG: Workshop on 'Clean Air' – Annette Rose

Ollie, Charlie and Jenny from FoE led this lively workshop on 'Clean Air'. We learnt that air pollution is the second largest killer in the UK. The combustion of fossil fuels is the main cause. The EU has consistently pressed on the UK that we need to reduce our air pollution levels.

Many areas, particularly London, far exceed EU and WHO levels. This is an issue that affects every-one but in particular children as they are more susceptible to the effects. The UK has failed to provide strong plans to bring down levels. It has not considered the effect of its aviation plans of adding runways or in road planning.

We had a brief discussion about what would happen if we left the EU. It was explained that air pollution controls would be weakened by leaving. It wouldn't happen immediately but the UK government could vote in to have laxer controls.

After the introductory talk, we were split into four groups to brainstorm ideas about how we felt the Clean Air campaign should progress.

In our group, we discussed focusing on bus emissions particularly around bus stops, promoting changing to electric buses, having Car free Sundays, street closing to have regular car free areas, showing the public the effects of air pollution by graphic pictures of damaged lungs as in the anti smoking campaigns and getting sample groups of people to wear small air pollution monitors on their clothing. Apparently these are available on Amazon!

A couple of links I intend to follow up are a report into the effects of air pollution entitled 'The Air We Breathe' by The Royal College of Physicians and also a website called 'Thingful' which apparently enables you to look up any air monitoring equipment near you.

The campaigners would love to hear from you if you have any ideas on making this campaign more visual and interactive. For example the Bee Cause has its Bee costumes which we can loan. What could we have for the Clean Air Campaign? All in all it was a useful session on this important campaign which will be developing over the coming months.

GSERG What does the European Referendum mean for the environment? – Sheila Brown

Friends of the Earth is campaigning for us to remain in the European Union. Basically the EU has been good for the environment, particularly with regard to cleaning up beaches, legislating on air pollution and protecting species and habitats.

Friends of the Earth is not party-political but this issue crosses party lines so we are able to campaign on this. Once again, the most important thing is being registered to vote.

Climate change deniers are campaigning to come out, and 'all the red' tape is another reason given. But it is feared that outside of Europe we would not be strong enough on our own and would be pulled into TTIP; /continued on next page

GSERG: Mayoral elections – Sheila Brown

I attended a workshop on the London Mayoral Elections. Friends of the Earth have compiled a list of the Top 10 Asks for the next London Mayor (below). FoE has to be non-party-political but these are the questions that we should ask the candidates.

1. Make London's Air safe to breathe: start by cleaning up our buses.
2. Make cycling safer: ban lorries in rush-hour and only allow direct-vision lorries in the city.
3. No new runways: Oppose all new airport capacity in the London area.
4. Protect Londoners' green spaces: starting with the Green Belt.
5. End cold homes in London: set minimum standards in the private rented sector.
6. Ensure all new homes are built to Zero Carbon Homes standard: fit for people and planet.
7. Put London on the path to 100% renewable energy by 2050.
8. Divest the London Pension Fund authority from fossil fuels.
9. Keep fossil fuels in the ground: no fracking in London, ever.
10. Strengthen the London Plan to make London a world leader in tackling climate change.

The most important thing is that everyone is registered to vote. We each have a first and second choice for Mayor. If a candidate receives more than half of all the first choice votes they are elected immediately. If this does not happen, the two candidates with the most first choice votes go through to a second round and the other candidates are eliminated.

The second choice votes of everyone whose first choice has been eliminated are then counted and those for the two candidates still in are added to their first round totals. The candidate with the highest combined total of first and second choice votes is elected as Mayor of London.

The London Assembly is made up of 14 Constituency members elected using the first-past-the-post system and 11 London-wide members elected using a form of proportional representation with votes from across London added together.

Air quality could be one of the main issues. FoE is campaigning for cleaner, greener buses and for the ending of diesel, and for no more motorway capacity at all in London, to protect cyclists by banning lorries in the rush hour, strengthening the London Plan to make London a world leader in tackling climate change.

DO go to any local hustings and ask questions about these issues

GSERG: Euro Referendum, cont'd
Brexit has already been described as more extreme than TTIP.

FoE has joined a grouping called Environmentalists for Europe (E4E) which believes that if we left the EU we would once again become the 'dirty man of Europe'. They believe that European funding and legislation has led to cleaner air, cleaner seas and greater protection for wildlife. We are stronger with EU backing and leaving would present a clear threat to the environment.

Call for action on transport crime

With London promoting itself as a 24-hour city and the coming introduction of the Night Tube, the Greater London Authority set up an inquiry to investigate problems caused by crime on public transport. The committee came up with some solutions as outlined here by the inquiry's chairperson Joanne McCartney (AM).

Police and Crime Committee - Crime on Public Transport report

In September 2015, the Police and Crime Committee decided to consider how to reduce crime and improve safety on public transport, and to examine how the Mayor is working with key partners to achieve these goals.

The investigation sought:

- to examine crime trends on public transport;
- to determine which Londoners are most at risk;
- to assess how the key agencies are responding;
- to identify opportunities to further reduce crime on public transport; and
- to identify the crime and safety risks associated with the introduction of the Night Tube.

The Committee held two public meetings, hearing from a range of experts, and undertook a site visit to observe how partners work together to prevent crime on public transport in London. We also sought written views and information from key stakeholders.

The Committee heard about the good multi-agency work helping to prevent

crime on public transport and innovative new projects such as Project Guardian, tackling sexual offending on the network. Although the current risk of becoming a victim of crime on public transport is relatively low, we heard that there is an issue around under-reporting of crime and anti-social behaviour, making it difficult to establish the true extent of crime. We also heard that fear of crime and anti-social behaviour on public transport can prevent some people from using it.

Our investigation looked at the rise in reports of violence and sexual offences on public transport, and concludes with some reflections on the challenges a new Mayor will face as London moves towards becoming a truly 24 hour city: effectively policing the taxi and private hire trades, and the soon to be introduced Night Tube will require new approaches and appropriate resourcing.

We therefore make the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1

Robust monitoring of the increase in reports of sexual offences is essential to understand the nature and true extent of unwanted sexual behaviour on London's public transport network.

The level of under-reporting should come down if the increase is due to confidence to report rather than an actual increase in crime. TfL must establish a clear baseline to ensure transparency in progress made.

/continued on next page

Action on transport crime, *cont'd* ++ Fukushima – Deep Trouble

Recommendation 2

The new Mayor should review the outcomes from Project Guardian. The new Mayor should also explore how to further increase public awareness and confidence to report sexual offences on public transport, maximising on the communication techniques that are available.

Recommendation 3

There are lessons to be learned from Project Guardian that could be applied to other crimes across the network. The new Mayor should bring TfL, the Met, BTP and City of London Police together to develop a new strategy for enabling travellers to report all crimes and anti-social behaviour more easily on public transport in London.

Recommendation 4

We believe that increased enforcement powers should be given to TfL and the police to ensure stronger sanctions for touting, including seizure of vehicles. The new Mayor needs to lobby the Ministry of Justice on this.

Recommendation 5

The new Mayor must ensure strong partnership structures to constantly monitor, review and learn from the Night Tube, and to enable a swift response to any emerging police and crime concerns, including fear of crime. TfL should publish a crime assessment report in three, six and 12 months following the commencement of the Night Tube.

The Committee would welcome any comments you might like to make in response to the report. If you do have

The whole of the Fukushima item is at

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2016/02/22/fukushima-deep-trouble/>

The Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant disaster may go down as one of history's boundless tragedies and not just because of a nuclear meltdown, but rather the tragic loss of a nation's soul.

Imagine the following scenario: 207 million cardboard book boxes, end-to-end, circumnavigating Earth, like railroad tracks, going all the way around the planet. That's a lot of book boxes. Now, fill the boxes with radioactive waste. Forthwith, that's the amount of radioactive waste stored unsheltered in one-tonne black bags throughout Fukushima Prefecture, amounting to 9,000,000 cubic metres

But wait, there's more to come, another 13,000,000 cubic metres of radioactive soil is yet to be collected. (Source: Voice of America News, Problems Keep Piling Up in Fukushima, Feb. 17, 2016).

And, there's still more, the cleanup operations only go 50-100 feet beyond roadways. Plus, a 100-mile mountain range along the coast and hillsides around Fukushima are contaminated but not cleansed at all. As a consequence, the decontaminated land will likely be re-contaminated by radioactive runoff from the hills and mountains.

any comments, please send these to Janette Roker, Scrutiny Manager, via janette.roker@london.gov.uk.

The “Strongest Protection”? – Paul Enock

Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land in Greater London should enjoy “the strongest protection” from development, yet these living green spaces are disappearing at an accelerating rate. Ahead of the Mayoral election, CPRE London invited representatives of competing parties, including Conservative mayoral candidate Zac Goldsmith, Green Party peer Jenny Jones, Labour MP Wes Streeting and LibDem councillor Steve Knight to a campaign launch on 9th March to extract their policy pledges for London’s green spaces.

What’s happening to London’s green spaces?

The total amount of protected space lost under concrete stood at 14 hectares in 2013-14. This doubled in 2014-15 to 29 hectares (the equivalent of over 40 football pitches). A total of 26 protected sites were given planning permission for building in 2014-15, of which 18 had the highest level of protection (13 Green Belt, 5 Metropolitan Open Land). In the 8 years from 2005/6 to 2012/13, an average of 4 applications per year were given planning permission to build on Green Belt or Metropolitan Open Land. This leapt to 15 in 2013-14 and rose again in 2014-15 to 18. So far this year (2015-16) there have been 35 such applications, with swathes of green-belt land under review.

Local authorities are typically deciding that protected land is ‘no longer fulfilling its function’ and Boris Johnson waves applications through. In general, liberalisation of the planning system has created a conflict of interests in council decision-making, sending out

the wrong signal – that it is open season to “develop” protected land.

Why is this a problem?

Green spaces have traditional sporting and leisure functions, making the city a more human place to live and work. But further vital roles have emerged in recent years. With London’s air pollution continuously at illegal levels, vegetation helps fix pollutants, and with extreme weather events due to increase, plants help protect flood plains: trees offer a 50-fold increase in the land’s ability to absorb water discharge. Meanwhile, with a crisis of obesity in our child population, councils are granting away parks and school playing fields.

But don’t we need the land for housing?

All speakers were clear that there is enough brown-field land within London to meet foreseeable housing needs. The government holds brown-field portfolios in London totalling the size of the Borough of Camden.

CPRE Chair John Croxen sees an urgent need to combat the myth – propagated initially by the Adam Smith Institute and taken up by Shelter – that releasing 5% of Green Belt land to development would solve London’s housing shortage. The problems London faces in providing enough housing for its growing population are complex, but characterising the problem as too many people on too little land is the result of lazy thinking.

Rather than brute population pressure, there are threats to green spaces from:
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Electric Cars - Rob Clark

Following on from Ray's piece on electric cars in last month's newsletter I'd like to add my thoughts.

I think the idea of electric vehicles is fantastic and I'd love to buy one to replace my own family car when the time comes. Having kept a close eye on these cars over the past few years though has left me wondering if I'll ever be able to.

There are two main stumbling blocks for me. Firstly, the range of the current breed of electric cars is at most around 130 miles before a full charge is required. If I only use my car for commuting then this is fine but with family spread across the south of England further would become a bit more challenging.

It would be ok if I could be guaranteed a place to plug the car in when I got to the destination so it had enough juice for the return journey but these charging points are so few and far between that their existence at your destination cannot be guaranteed, let alone access to them. The day I can drive to Brighton and back again on one charge without the possibility of the battery dying in a queue on the M25 is the day I will consider electric to be a serious possibility.

The second point is the cost. Electric cars do have an extraordinary premium attached to their cost at the moment and this is after a Government subsidy. Having worked out the fuel savings over 5 years it comes nowhere near meeting the additional cost of an electric car. The cost remains prohibitive and beyond most ordinary customers.

It seems that technology has a way to go yet before we can realistically see electric cars on an equal par to petrol/diesel cars on these fronts. There is an alternative though that may do in the interim.

Hybrid cars are interesting because they combine an electric motor and petrol engine. Generally they use electric for any speeds under, say, 10mph and then the petrol engine kicks in. It also starts if you accelerate suddenly to give an extra boost. This ekes out the petrol and makes these vehicles go a great deal further per gallon than their petrol counterparts.

There is no need to plug these hybrids in to charge them as their electricity is generated internally. As the car brakes, the energy is captured and used to charge the batteries. A lot of manufacturers have a hybrid option now and Toyota have a full range of hybrids and petrol cars for each of their models.

Getting the 119 bus from Hayes to Bromley occasionally I have noted that these new Volvo double-deckers seem to have hybrid engines silently gliding away from bus stops before the diesel engine kicks in. For town and city driving this is an ideal technology and must save the bus companies a huge amount in saved fuel costs.

Hybrid car costs are also high so this is not the easy answer unfortunately. Things are however moving in the right direction and I look forward to these becoming a more affordable alternative to standard vehicles.

/continued on next page

The strongest protection (*cont'd*) ++ Electric Cars (*cont'd*)

The strongest protection, *cont'd*

- 1) Relaxation of the planning system, steering building away from brown-field;
- 2) Speculative acquisition of protected land by the Education Funding Agency, which pressurises authorities to release it for development (see CPRE's report *A Done Deal*);
- 3) 'Land-banking' or the speculative purchase by powerful developers of land with planning permission in the sure knowledge that its value will rise whether they build on it or not.

What are the solutions?

Broadly, all speakers agreed that housing needs can be met while protecting and even expanding green spaces through a combination of two basic strategies:

- making extensive brown-field sites available (releasing them from TfL etc.) and viable (providing the required infrastructure)
- combating the practice of land-banking

Brown-field land should be made available to meet housing needs, but transport connections are equally important: Zac Goldsmith estimated that Crossrail-2 will facilitate the building of 200,000 homes.

What could the future look like?

For Zac Goldsmith, making Greater London 'more liveable' means better protection of its green spaces. He suggested the introduction of 'pocket parks' and city farms: "With me, green space is protected".

Steve Knight criticised current house-building economics: "The reality is that private investors have no interest in providing enough homes. We've got to move back to the model of public-sector house-building." Wes Streeting agreed: London's zones 1, 2 and 3 are becoming no-go areas even for middle-income families, "With interest rates at a historic low, we have a real opportunity to invest in council-built housing".

Jenny Jones added that only Green Party policies can guarantee a balance between population growth and the environment: the radical idea of a land-value tax would ensure both efficient use of urban land and prevent speculative land acquisition.

Steve Knight rounded off the meeting with an interesting proposal. The present population of Greater London is about 8.5 million people and the area is home to approximately the same number of trees. By 2050, the population could rise to 11 million: London should plan to keep its person-to-tree ratio at one-to-one.

Electric cars, *continued*

One other point that is often raised and needs to be considered when thinking about electric vehicles, is that they are only as green as the electricity you put into them.

If you buy coal or gas generated electricity and charge your car with it, for example, then this isn't very green. It's important to consider the complete cycle of energy from creation to use.

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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!

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, and 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.

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

Please return this form to: **Bromley FoE, 2 Bucks Cross Cottages, Chelsfield Village, Orpington, and 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.

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