



**Friends of
the Earth
Bromley**



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April 2018
No. 364

ewsletter

April Meeting

Friends Meeting House, Ravensbourne Road, Bromley

FILM: Demain / Tomorrow

A showing of the French documentary film

Tuesday 6th April – 7.30pm

Please be on time as we will be making a prompt start

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Copy for the next Newsletter must be with the Editor by

***** SUNDAY 15TH APRIL *****

Contact details inside front cover.

Diary dates:Apr 3rd (Tue)**Bromley FoE's April meeting:** Environmental film Demain / TomorrowMay 1st (Tue)**Bromley FoE's May meeting:** How London can be the world's first National Park City – Paul de Zylva, chair of National Park City FoundationMay 5th (Sat)

Bill's Open Garden Event

May 17 – Jun 30

Great British Bee Count

April Meeting – Tuesday 3rd April 2018**Film “Demain” (Tomorrow)**

The film offers an optimistic and positive approach, showing solutions to the environmental problems facing mankind.

It identifies initiatives that have proven themselves in ten countries around the world: concrete examples of solutions to environmental and social challenges of the 21st century, in agriculture, energy, economy, democracy and education.

(NB: It is a long film and we shall not be able to see all of it tonight.)

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 15TH 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.

March Meeting report – Paul Enock

Bromley Council's Executive Member for Environmental Services, Councillor William Huntington-Thresher, was our guest speaker for our March meeting.

Given the size of the environment portfolio, it was decided to present questions from group members in advance so that the councillor's comments could be structured around the areas we highlighted. It would have been impossible to give detailed answers all the 22 questions, but some were dealt with, as well as others that arose during the meeting.

In his preliminary remarks, Cllr. Huntington-Thresher noted that our care for the environment should not involve "passing on debts to future generations", and while we should not allow things to get too bad, a steady response within Bromley's very limited budget is better than a "knee-jerk".

Ultimately, the Council's performance is measured at the ballot box, in conjunction with more detailed feedback from the "Friends" groups across the diverse parts of the borough.

Below I have either quoted Cllr. Huntington-Thresher directly or summarised his responses.

How is our waste sorted and what gets recycled?

We are currently No. 2 in London for recycling; (Bexley is top). Around 50% of waste is recycled, a figure that has remained more or less constant over recent years. Of the residual waste, around 50% goes to landfill and the

other half gets incinerated to provide power, or heating for local homes. We are currently re-tendering waste services and looking at ways of increasing business recycling.

We will shortly be starting a "food for thought" campaign. We have found that 24% of residual waste is food waste that could be composted. There is still a cost to recycling food waste, although it is far cheaper than the alternatives. We would like to discourage people from buying too much food in the first place.

And this is a strategy we would like to apply to things like coffee cups. If people take a cup and refill it, it would be better than trying to recycle the single-use cups. Similarly, for water bottles - we haven't insisted on the installation of drinking fountains.

There are only four types of plastic that get recycled. The rest goes into incinerators, as it is quite fuel-rich. A lot of the green box material probably isn't recyclable, but it is at least segregated out from other waste and it is ideal for the incinerator.

Unfortunately, incineration is at the moment only slightly cheaper than landfill (plus landfill tax). We have been working with Veolia, who have a mechanical-biological-thermal separator. If we can introduce further segregation into burnable household waste and non-burnable household waste, I think we will do that.

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March Meeting report – continued

Is it easier for you to recycle metal and glass than plastic?

We can recycle metal. Indeed, income from aluminium helps subsidise the sorting process. We no longer collect glass separately because this involved more transport costs. Glass is fairly easily recycled, although mixed coloured glass generally ends up as aggregate for construction. Only clear glass will be recycled as glass.

(So, the take-home message is: Don't put clear glass bottles / jars in the green box but take them to a Bottle Bank – a message that surprised many present.)

What more can be done to encourage all residents to recycle?

Perhaps an underlying problem is that the financial onus for recycling is put on councils. Councils then pressurise residents through taxes and consumers are expected to pass the message on to manufacturers.

In my view, this is not a very effective way of encouraging recycling. If there any ways we can persuade manufacturers to use easily recyclable materials in the first place, this would be a good thing.

A good example of this is the building industry: in our road and pavement-replacement programme, 98% of that material is recycled. If Friends of the Earth would like to campaign to encourage local retailers to use less non-biodegradable packaging, we will support you.

Is the Council preparing to install (more) car-charging points?

I see the Mayor's new Ultra-Low Emission Zones as a big incentive for people to change to e-cars. Charging is a fast-moving area and we're not sure which way the technology will go. We have put in a number of charging points around the borough, not a huge number, and their use is slowly increasing.

We are the second borough (I think after Westminster) to install e-charging points for taxis, as any fare under 30 miles should now be non-polluting. I expect the North of the borough, which is closest to the ULEZ, and which is the most heavily parked, will move to e-cars first. We have launched a consultation with people looking to switch, but who have no off-road parking.

As Bromley Friends of the Earth is monitoring air quality in the borough, would it not be a good idea to coordinate findings with the Council under the heading of "Air-Quality Friends"?

I am not yet up to speed on matters relating to air quality and it's an area we do need to work on. We do have some of the best air quality in London. In terms of air-quality Friends, I think we need to work out what that concept might be. We are not looking for people just to hold us to account more regularly; we are looking to see how we can improve things.

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March Meeting report – continued

It's not that we are worried about being held to account, but we think that Friends groups should help residents and the borough move forward. But there certainly is a conversation to be had – perhaps for alerting asthmatics, for example, about which locations are worse than others.

Looking at our air quality management plan, I agree it needs to be updated, but apart from some main roads such as the A21, most of the NO₂ is actually background. When you move away from the busiest roads, the vast majority of NO₂ is from heating emissions. In terms of particles, most is from diesel and brake dust.

(The councillor also spoke about initiatives with funding from Transport for London to improve cycling and walking facilities under their 'liveable streets' initiative.)

Grass verges: has any consideration been given to either reinstating grass verges to reduce the risk of flash flooding and traffic pollution?

I must admit this is not an area we have looked at, but we have traditionally encouraged the planting of trees for their visual impact, rather than pollution-filtering benefit. We have begun to change our selection of trees as the climate changes.

Can anything be done about the huge loss of front gardens?

Current legislation is that you require planning permission to pave over a garden with a non-porous surface. The trouble is I don't know how you police it. Unless we can prove that person put

in a non-porous surface since the legislation changed, there is very little we can do.

Between 2011 and 2017 Bromley Council commissioned the felling of 4,218 trees but planted only 3,061. What plans does the Council have to make up this 'deficit' of 1,157 trees?

We have almost 100,000 trees in the borough and over the last two years we've been planting far more trees than we've had to remove. The reason for the deficit could be that it just reflects when those trees were planted, and these may just have reached the point when they became unsafe. Obviously, we'd hope to catch up, but it may not be that quick. Although the deficit is small compared to the overall number of trees, we'd like to see it shrink.

We hope that this meeting marks the start of closer dialogue between Bromley Friends of the Earth and Bromley Council's Environment Department.

Re-User column [2] – Wanted

Original squat 1lb honey jars for using with next year's honey crop. With or without lids. I will donate 10p to Bromley FoE for each example.

To see the type of jar required ask Peter at the FoE meeting, or view at: www.bromleyfoe.co.uk/honeyjar.htm

Peter Gandolfi 01689 831826

Friends of the Earth South East regional gathering – Sheila Brown

The South East region covers a large geographical area with people having come from as far afield as Oxford and The New Forest.

After welcome and introductions, Alasdair Roxburgh, Director of Communities & Networks gave a short presentation and responded to questions. He's been with Friends of the Earth for five months. He stated that FoE's number one priority over coming months will be Climate Change.

In the next session delegates gave news of what their group had been doing.

Islington have a Fossil Free Islington group which led to getting a pledge from the Labour council that it will increase divestment from fossil fuels, and this is forming part of its manifest.

Ealing are involved in *The Challenge*, an organisation promoting activities for 15-17-year-olds.

Oxford are running a successful Clean Air campaign. They organise a petition with 1400 signatures and, in partnership with the City Council, are running an "anti-idling" campaign.

Shoreham have been very vocal about Air Quality on the A27; this has scared the local council and created awareness among local people.

Eastbourne Council have agreed to work towards Plastic Free Eastbourne status; plastics on the beach has been a huge issue. The aim is to get rid of Single Use Plastics (SUPs) by 2020.

Major campaigns in 2018

There will be 3 major campaigns:

Clean Air: This has become a public health emergency. Many people are breathing polluted air, and this particularly affects those with asthma and heart conditions, can adversely affect the brain and may contribute to dementia. Children growing up in polluted areas can have 10% reduced lung capacity. It is therefore a social justice issue. Fossil fuels are seen as the biggest culprit, particularly diesel vehicles, contributing to climate change. The ultimate goal would be to see the end of the internal combustion engine. Progress could be seen with diesel sales 20% down..

Fossil Free / Fracking: there had been no fracking in the UK for seven years. At Ryedale there's been partial success with 3rd Energy's plans delayed until October due to pressure from FoE. National campaign to prevent fracking in the iconic Sherwood Forest.

Brenda Pollack, South East Regional Campaigner, told us what was going on in her area. Balcombe is again under threat, and The Weald. There had been successes at Fernhurst and Wisborough Green. The UK Government re-defined fracking so that 90% of the fracked oil wells in the USA would not be classified as fracking in the UK. This is of great concern. The site at Leith Hill was also mentioned, and the Weald Action Group.

Plastics: See page 10 for info on FoE Plastics campaign.

Brexit Protections

A coalition of environmental groups says there is a 'significant risk' that British environmental protections will be reduced after Brexit, despite governmental positive rhetoric.

Greener UK, which represents 12 campaign groups including WWF, National Trust, RSPB, FoE, Green Alliance, and the Wildlife Trust, says there are serious concerns that the government will not co-operate with the European Union after Brexit on environmental issues, which need international agreement.

Beating Climate Change with a New Technology

About 18 miles outside Zurich, engineers have erected a stack of metal fans on top of a factory roof. These fans suck in air which is then passed through filters that remove the carbon dioxide. Decarbonised air is then returned to the atmosphere, while the carbon dioxide is then shipped to greenhouses to help grow vegetables. The project, set up by the company Climeworks, is ingenious but small scale, but has potential to be developed.

Several schemes using 'negative emissions' have been developed and were highlighted in a report published in late January by the European Academies Advisory Council.

Glass Chimneys to Clean Pollution

Scientists have designed futuristic glass chimneys to clean up London's dirty air. A fan inside the 13ft transparent tubes would suck in the air

and use a water filter to remove toxic particles.

The lava lamp style designs were created by students at Imperial College and the Royal College of Art. The toughened glass pipes are meant to be a less conspicuous way of cleaning up pollution.

Advertisers would fund their operation by promoting brands on holograms floating inside which would be highlighted against the mist. The air which is released would be 60% cleaner than that which went in.

Nuclear Reactor Chaos

A catalogue of appalling mismanagement costing hundreds of millions of pounds in taxpayer's money (£122 million) has been revealed by an investigation into the government's Nuclear Decommissioning Authority. Contracts have been handed out to private companies for the decommissioning of 11 ageing Magnox nuclear reactors in British power stations. This is mainly due to the wrong bidder being selected in what is a very challenging process.

Transport

The future of diesel transport is under threat, and manufacturers are seriously rethinking the future of production. Growing evidence of the bad effects on health from diesel pollution is becoming more significant. Judges in German cities have the right to ban diesel on their streets, and is an example of how legislation can make a big impact.

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Bromley's Biodiversity

As I mentioned last month we are promoting the posters of our declining species in the borough, and we started the year by asking for toad sightings, then in March it was the bullfinch and this month it is the house sparrow. Here are the two posters as there was no space for the bullfinch poster last month.

Bullfinches in Bromley?

Breeding bullfinch numbers fell by more than 50% 1970- 2000. UK numbers have been slowly improving, but there are few records for Bromley. They nest in thick scrub, woodland edge and hedgerows, feeding on berries, buds and seeds. Adults feed their young on insects. Look for the white rump as they fly away. Please let us know if you see one!



Male



Female

E-mail the date, place (postcode or grid reference) and number seen to Bromley Biodiversity Partnership: bromleybiodiversity@gmail.com Your information will enable habitat improvements to be put in place to try and increase bullfinch numbers.

How You Can Help Bullfinches:

Promote wild areas in your local park or garden- plant hedgerows of native species and maintain some areas of

bramble scrub. Feed birds in your garden and if you have a cat keep it indoors between dusk and dawn and use a collar with a bell or ultrasonic device.

Bromley Biodiversity Partnership is a partnership of local groups, organisations and individuals with specific expertise committed to protecting, enhancing and celebrating biodiversity within the London Borough of Bromley.

House Sparrows Need Help!

According to the RSPB, UK house sparrow numbers fell 71% 1977-2008. In many parts of Bromley they are no longer present. Studies suggest their decline is due to lack of invertebrates to feed their young, loss of seeds for adults and loss of nesting sites (hedgerows, scrub, thick ivy, house eaves). They live in groups. Listen for their noisy cheeping and please let us know if you see any, how many you saw together and if you think they are nesting.



Female



Male

Nature News – *continued*

E-mail the date, place (postcode or grid reference) and number seen to Bromley Biodiversity Partnership:

bromleybiodiversity@gmail.com

Your information will enable habitat improvements to be put in place to try and increase house sparrow numbers.

How to Help House Sparrows:

maintain thick hedgerows & plant hedgerows of native species, promote wild areas in your local park or garden, feed birds in your garden, put up a sparrow terrace -see www.beautifulbritain.co.uk/hm/wildlife_gardening/sparrow_terrace If you have a cat keep it indoors between dusk and dawn and use a collar with a bell or ultrasonic device.

Hedgehog Studies

The British Hedgehog Preservation Society and the People's Trust for Endangered Species recently published a new report raising awareness of the plight of the hedgehog as population numbers have halved since 2000. Our Bromley Biodiversity Partnership is working on this issue within the Borough and we will have more information on this during the year.

If you wish to help our prickly friends you can leave out cat food for them to feed on and check any overgrown areas of your garden before you clear them in case they are hibernating there. Hedgehog populations are actually slightly on the rise in urban areas, which is a positive sign.

Bees and diesel emissions

A recent study featured in the New Scientist magazine has shown that

bees and other pollinators can't smell the perfumed flowers as well as in the past because of the rise of diesel fumes. Apparently, the nitrogen oxide emitted harms the compounds that create flower scent, so the unique bouquet of chemicals released is impaired or lost. This may be another factor in the decline of some bee species.

And on the subject of urban pollution, I read that Newcastle council have recently installed a moss tree to tackle city centre pollution; that's different!

Climate, Energy and Transport – *continued*

Bromley is following Westminster council by providing electric charging points for taxis in the town centre. Two taxis will be able to charge at the same time at the rank in Elmfield Road.

Cllr William Huntington - Thresher said "we are seeing a revolution in motoring with electric and hybrid vehicles becoming a common sight on our roads."

The trends are that this will accelerate and that more people will be taking advantage of the new technology. Orpington station is shortly likely to install charging points.

FoE Plastics campaign – Sheila Brown

This is FoE's newest campaign and is about to be launched. David Attenborough's programme had led to widespread awareness amongst the general public and a strong will to rectify matters. FoE is pressing for a robust strategy both in the UK and internationally and sees this as a major priority with regard to the effect on oceans and animals.

Plastic packaging is the major culprit and FoE will press to phase out all but the most essential and reducing the use of single use plastics (SUPs) by changing mindsets/social norm and pressing for less to be produced. Ocean plastic pollution is of major concern. Coffee cup recycling needs targeting but people are now very much aware of this.

The Plastic Free Friday idea has generated 20 million people on social media and the Queen has decreed no more single use plastic in the royal establishments.

I then attended the more detailed workshop on Plastics. A huge number of organisations have got behind the idea, e.g. Surfers Against Sewage, Marine Conservation Society, Greenpeace, all with slightly different slants but the same basic thrust and a will to work together. Friends of the Earth is working with a research company to look at alternatives to plastics.

The Isle of Wight has launched an initiative to work to gain national status as a Plastic Free Community. Plastics on the beaches there is obviously a huge problem.

Refilling original containers is an idea which is gaining momentum, zero waste shops are starting to appear (one in Totnes), and 'plastic free aisles' in supermarkets. Encouraging the use of refillable (preferable non-plastic) bottles and of installing drinking fountains in schools and public places.

Giving a very different perspective, a delegate had recently returned from Ethiopia where there is a total ban on plastics!!!!

Other ideas from the floor: establishing a national standard for plastic free, along the lines of the Fair Trade criterion; could Friends of the Earth have date on their website? main focus should be on eliminating SUPs; 'raise the bar'/our ambition; day of action; find some celebrities to 'champion'; get young people involved (via social media); targeting manufacturers; lobbying local shops; re-using plastic bottle tops for craft.

On a positive note, a delegate from Oxford said their group was targeting a new shopping mall to encourage shops there to cut down on plastics. Lush cosmetics have very low plastic usage and very high levels of recycling – they recycle plastic bottle tops and sell shampoo in solid bar form and keep all packaging to a minimum or zero. And Primark use only paper bags.

Single use plastics news – Judy Palmer

Did you see that Malibu in California has banned single use plastic cutlery and straws? And that the Devon town of Ashburton has signed up to reduce its single use plastic?

Down in the SW of England the Cornish charity Surfers Against Sewage is urging communities to go plastic free by signing up to a Plastic Free Coastline which is supported by more than 200 communities now. In fact, Cornwall Council recently passed the motion to phase out single use plastic in the next two years across the county.

This week has seen various reports published on the war on plastic – scientists from the University of Manchester tested river sediments from 40 sites in Greater Manchester over the last 3 years and found high levels of microplastic. Some areas naturally had higher levels than others, but all rivers get flushed by rain and flooding levels. And where does the rain and river water end up; yep the sea. The researchers are therefore, rightly, concerned that we may well be underestimating the amount of microplastic to be found on the sea beds.

And I wonder how the bottled water industry is going to react in the long-term to the latest investigation results which showed how many branded bottles contained tiny particles of plastic? The tests were done by the State University of New York, involving 250 bottles in nine countries and eleven different global and national brands and showed that most contained tiny particles of plastic. Developing countries rely heavily on bottled water

and the manufacturers have high standards of quality and safety to maintain.

Unfortunately, at the present time there is no regulation on microplastics and the science of microplastics is in its infancy.

And to end this particular section of news, the Parliamentary group the Green Alliance, is urging everyone to tone down on the 'war' on plastics and to see the wider implications of going plastic-free. As many of us realise, banishing plastic 100% from our lives is futile, but banishing plastic litter is doable and an absolute must.

The group raised the point that rejecting all plastic food packaging could be counter-productive - we need to reduce food waste not increase it with shoddy packaging. We need to re-think how food is packaged.

And substituting plastics with plant-based material could lead to more deforestation. Forests are still disappearing at an alarming rate to meet the demand for meat production and grow crops to produce bio-fuels for cars and electricity generation.

Obviously a lot of thought needs to be given to how the world can adapt to this plastic waste problem. Do we need so many types of plastic? Can we have plastic which is easily recyclable? And a market out there for the products produced? But for the here and now – we can stop using single use plastic items – say no to them!

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Plastic-free tea bags – Annette Rose

This Guardian article tells us about some good progress in the campaign to get plastics removed from tea bags.

PG tips announces switch to plastic-free fully biodegradable teabags

The UK's biggest tea brand is switching to fully biodegradable tea bags free from synthetic materials to cut down on plastic pollution caused by the nation's favourite hot drink.

The first of the new eco-friendly pyramid teabags from PG tips – made from a plant-based material that is 100% renewable and biodegradable – will go on sale in UK supermarkets next week, it was announced on Wednesday.

In the first major move by a mainstream tea brand, the Unilever-owned company says it is working to make all its teabags from 100% plant-based material by the end of the year. Unlike conventional teabags, they will be free of polypropylene, a sealant used across the industry to ensure bags hold their shape.

Unilever's scientists have been exploring plant-based alternatives for PG tips for some time and have already converted ranges in Canada, Poland and Indonesia.

According to the trade body the UK Tea and Infusions Association, teabags account for 96% of the 165m cups of tea drunk every day in the UK.

"Tea is the most consumed beverage in the UK, with nine billion PG tips

teabags sold every year," said Noel Clarke, vice president of refreshment at Unilever. "Our latest move maintains the same great taste of our tea whilst minimising our environmental impact."

The Co-op, which sells 367m teabags a year, announced recently that it is in the final stages of creating a fully biodegradable paper teabag for its own-brand Fairtrade 99 tea. The new bags are expected to go on sale by the end of the year.

Pyramid teabags made from a plant-based material will go on sale next week, other teabags set to follow suit by end of 2018.

Single-use plastics news - continued

If you visit the Friends of the Earth website (www.foe.co.uk) and find Plastic Free Friday, you will see some suggestions on how to join in, together with alternative suggestions for a product. Plus lots of posts from people showing what they have done to go plastic free.

I saw one post about using bread bags for freezing loaves which is a great alternative to plastic freezer bags. So I Googled it out of interest and you can buy bags, but you could also make them and linen seems to be the fabric of choice. Which is a good re-use choice if you have two linen tea towels or large linen napkins you no longer use. Plus if you make a drawstring top you don't need a plastic tie or clip, a win-win! I wonder if this works. I may just have to find out!

Some thoughts on plastics +++ / +++ Some thoughts on vegan / vegetarian diets

Anne Clark writes about plastics:

A great idea that there was a computed discussion on the 'plastics' issue on Friday 16th March, but so much comes down to human behaviour too.

What on earth is the plastic etc. doing on the beach, in the sea, countryside, pavements & cinema floor in the first place!

Haven't they got pockets or bags? Coming from a time when plastics weren't even invented and everything was paper and biodegradable, Cllr. Huntington-Thresher said that it would be too expensive to go back to paper, tho' with all that's recycled these days, I'm sure it could become cheaper the more people that used it.

He also mentioned how lovely it was that many schools taught the young children NOT to drop litter, however when they become teenagers to 20 somethings, they become defiant and careless, and it should then be drummed into them that it is their world that they will have to live in and be responsible for!

A while ago, FOE did a group 'litter pick' and perhaps we should all be responsible for our patch.

Our Residents' Society does do a bi-monthly voluntary clean-up, and I fill a bag of waste plastic / cans when walking a neighbour's dog - I even got it thrown from a car window yesterday! I feel strongly, but is it in other parts of the country too, I wonder?

Peter Gandolfi on vegan / vegetarian diets:

Vegan diets seem to be in the news a lot and rather trendy at the moment. It does seem to be an expensive way of buying vegetables, though.

Although we have been almost Vegan for decades (we have eggs), I am wary of a diet that seems to need supplements to ensure one gets all the necessary vitamins and nutrients.

Without dairy, vegans must rely on green vegetables such as broccoli and kale for calcium. Iodine, important for thyroid function can come from cranberries or seaweed. Iron is available in green vegetables, beans, nuts and seeds.

Studies show that if we all went vegetarian/vegan, two of the biggest environmental problems – greenhouse gas emissions and clearing land for agriculture, would be slashed.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) calculates that livestock farming is responsible for over 14% of global greenhouse gas emissions. This is similar to that produced by all cars, ships, trains and planes.

In fact the carbon footprint of a meat eater is around the order of a UK family car travelling 7000 miles a year.

So why not try going vegetarian for a day a week?

Miller's Mutterings – Chris Miller

As I write these notes at the end of February, the sun is shining but it is cold. The weather for the start of March looks decidedly grim with snow forecast and cold temperatures. When the wind is in the north, we really feel it in this north facing house but hopefully as the winds are promised from the east, it shouldn't be too bad. (She says with no confidence).

The sowing time is fast approaching and the spring barley seed has arrived in 500-kilo sacks. We haven't heard from the EU but will go ahead with spring barley and spring rape. You may have noticed that the field visible from Warren Road near the station is turning yellow. The reason for this is that Steve desiccated the cover crop a few weeks ago ready for the spring barley to be planted. As this cover crop breaks down, it will feed the new spring barley, as none of the nitrogen and base fertilisers are lost because they are trapped in the decaying matter. All being well, we will start drilling towards the end of the month.

The new weights for the guttler wheels have arrived. The weights are the black discs inside the yellowish fluted discs. We found last year that the drill slots were not being closed properly on our new drill, so occasionally seed was left uncovered. The new weights will give more pressure on the guttler wheels to make sure that the seed is covered. Apparently it was a piece of cake for Pete to fit them. (Thank goodness).

As over the past few months, general maintenance, tiding up, hay and straw

deliveries continue, but I am pleased to report that Pete has stopped doing electrical work for the time being. He is pleased too.

Some more notes from George's letters to his son in March 1916

"We have 700 – 800 sheep on the place now clearing the rough greenstuff up" The sheep were brought in for a limited time to clear all the stalks, leaves etc from the left over cabbages.

"On Wednesday last we started threshing at Fairtrough, but no sooner than we got well started than it commenced snowing heavily so of course had to stop.

"Today we started again, with the same result, which is most trying. In fact, with other things so bad it fairly gets on one's nerves. To give you some idea of the snow, on Saturday morning going to Orpington Station in the big car we were getting along very well until we ran into a drift over 3ft deep which came right over the bonnet and we had great difficulty in digging her out, eventually getting to the station alright, but one of the keys on the driving shaft slipped so Woods could not get her home, but I don't think it will be a serious matter to put it right."

Think I will finish with the March weather lore and keep our fingers crossed.

If March comes in like a lion, it will go out like a lamb

FoE Updates – Fossil Free; Bee Cause; Plastics

Fossil Free update

It's been a huge few months for the fossil free campaign. In the fight to stop fracking taking off in the UK we've seen win after win.

Not only have Third Energy not fracked in Ryedale, but they've also removed most of the equipment from the site and stated publicly that they won't be fracking until October. To see such a turnaround in the campaign is a huge win. While the more advanced sites in North Yorkshire and Lancashire have seen delay after delay, many more are being refused in the planning system.

INEOS have seen a number of setbacks after being refused test drill sites by local councils, notably at Harthill, Marsh Lane and most recently, at Woodsetts. IGAS were refused permission at Ellesmere Port and Cuadrilla's traffic management plans were refused for a second time at Roseacre. It feels like we're winning and it's down to all your tireless campaigning.

So far this year our focus has been on delaying fracking at the most advanced sites, continuing to apply political pressure and on creating a resistance to INEOS up and down the country. We've been assisting with a series of packed-out public meetings in North Yorkshire to expose INEOS' plans for seismic surveys.

And over the next month we're organising street parades and theatre around central and east England to spread the word about the threat to Sherwood Forest, and many other

iconic and beautiful areas. If they frack in Sherwood Forest is anywhere safe? Please do sign our petition to Save Sherwood - <https://act.friendsoftheearth.uk/act/save-sherwood-forest-fracking>

We've not forgotten about putting a nail in the coffin of coal, and are continuing to work on the campaign to save Druridge Bay and put a stop to any new opencast coal mines. Please drop us a line if you have any questions.

Bee Cause update

We're gearing up for this year's Great British Bee Count, which runs from 17 May to 30 June. We're putting together a pack of materials for you to use on stalls or at events, so it'd be great to know how many groups want one before we print things. Please take a moment to order your pack today.

Following the publication of a major new report on neonicotinoid pesticides we were fully expecting the EU vote on neonic use to take place later this month. Unfortunately it looks like the vote may now be delayed until later in the year. We'll keep you posted with developments as soon as we know more.

After great success in the South West we're working on a new online action and campaign postcard focused on persuading councils to put bees and other pollinators first. More on that next time but if you have any questions please contact Sophie or Tom (sophie.hamnett@foe.co.uk) / (tom.wright@foe.co.uk)
/continued on page 17

What FoE have been saying in their press releases

Joint Committee Air Quality Report: Friends of the Earth reaction

Friends of the Earth submitted evidence as part of an enquiry into air quality; showing the need for the UK to adhere to World Health Organisation standards for clean air, and for a new Clean Air Act fit for the 21st century

Friends of the Earth clean air campaigner, Jenny Bates, said:

“For years the UK government has failed to properly act on the public health emergency being caused by air pollution; FoE is therefore pleased see this hard-hitting report demanding more action. Air pollution affects the health of everyone in the UK with the most vulnerable groups in society - children, older people and those with conditions such as asthma – paying the highest price.

“FoE has long been calling for motor manufacturers, as key players in the current abysmal state of the nation’s air quality, to contribute to cleaning up our air. We welcome the report’s verdict that manufacturers should contribute to the costs of a new clean air fund.

“While the report rightly notes that to cut air pollution the need for private vehicle use must be reduced, we also need to see the scrapping of schemes which would only increase traffic levels such as the expansion of Heathrow airport, and major road-building projects.”

FoE is also inviting everyone across the UK to get involved in improving air

quality in their local area. By ordering your own Clean Air Kit you can test the air you breathe every day and join the movement to clean up air pollution.

Consultation: taxes & charges have important role to play in tackling plastic pollution scourge

Ministers must aim to phase-out all but the safest and most essential plastics

Responding to the Chancellor’s public consultation on how changes to the tax system or charges could be used to reduce the amount of single-use plastics we waste, plastics-free campaigner Julian Kirby said:

“Taxes and charges have an important role to play in tackling the scourge of plastic waste, but this must be part of a wider plan to phase-out all but the safest and most essential plastics.

“Single-use plastics like coffee-cup lids and drinks bottles should be amongst the easiest to deal with, so it makes sense to target these first.

“We can’t afford to dither. We are in the midst of an environmental crisis, with a huge range of products including clothes, sun cream, paints and tyres contributing to millions of tonnes of plastic that pollutes our oceans every year.

“Ministers must get tough on plastic pollution - and the companies who are responsible for creating this mess paying should be playing a much greater part in undoing the damage they’ve already caused.”

FoE Updates *cont'd* +++ Churches' Environmental Initiative

Plastics update

#PlasticFreeFriday is in full swing and a massive thank you to everyone who has pledged and taken part. We had a very successful live Q&A with Lucy Siegle (Guardian journalist and the One Show presenter) last week. If you missed it you can catch up here

<http://bit.ly/2EAM5xr>

Please do keep sharing your #PlasticFreeFriday successes and challenges online.

Friends of the Earth thinks the only solution to the plastics problem is to phase out all but the safest and most essential plastics starting with single-use and disposable plastics.

There are obviously many ways to go about this and the local work you are all doing is a vital element. I'm currently looking into ways for us to support the amazing work you're doing, whilst also amplifying the successes and sharing learning between groups.

As a start, we finally have some flyers for you and an offline petition to use at events. You can order flyers and download and print the petition. The flyer lays out the problem and offers some practical solutions.

Keep up the good work and I'll be in touch again soon. Email Rosie (rosie.cotgreave@foe.co.uk) if you have anything to share or questions to ask.

Churches in Orpington Environmental Initiative – Russell Brockett

Representatives of a number of Christian churches in Orpington have recently formed a network to raise awareness of environmental issues such as consumer culture and global warming, which have a disproportionate impact on the world's poorer communities.

A small team met Jo Johnson MP just before Christmas to lobby him on the need for the Government to go further in its climate change prevention policies and persuaded him to address a public meeting later this year to explore the links between Christian faith and protection of the environment, and what Governments should be doing to address people's concerns on these issues.

For further information about this please contact Russell Brockett, who has recently joined Bromley FoE. He can be contacted on brockett@btinternet.com

BILL'S OPEN GARDEN AND PLANT SALE

OPEN GARDEN & PLANT SALE

Come and join in a lovely garden event on
Saturday May 5th

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: May 5th
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*

Bromley Friends of the Earth - List of Contacts

Co-ordinators:

Sheila Brown 01689-851605
email – sheilabrown336@msn.com

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-

Secretary: vacant

Treasurer:

Sheila Brown *details as above*

Press Team:

Ann Garrett, Paul Enock, Annette
Rose

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Campaigns –

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Fossil Free (includes Climate, Energy, Fracking):

Ann Garrett *details as above*

Clean Air:

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Brexit:

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Anne Clark, Paul Enock, Peter
Gandolfi, Graham Hemington, Annette
Rose

Merchandising:

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Teas:

Mary Ingledew / Sylvia Chance

Technical Support:

Peter Gandolfi *details as above*

Fundraising Officer:

Bill Priestley 01689-820469

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 annual subscription (£8 single / £15 couple/family). I also enclose a donation (optional) of to help towards the cost of producing and distributing the monthly Newsletter.

Name..... Telephone Number

Address.....

..... Postcode.....

Email Address.....

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

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