



# **friends of the earth Bromley**

An informal meeting during which candidates will speak and then be questioned on issues and policies related to Climate Change and the environment

## **April 2021** **No 399** **Our Next Meeting** **GLA Assembly** **Candidates** *Climate Change*

The next monthly meeting is on Tuesday 6th April at **7.30pm**. It will be a virtual meeting once again and the Zoom link for this meeting is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81286465097?pwd=eFBZ1Q3WkQ2YzFsQINTWEJ4R2p1dz09>

Meeting ID: 812 8646 5097 Passcode: 260249 Or dial 020 3481 5240

*Our usual meetings are at 7.30pm The Friends Meeting House, Ravensbourne Road, Bromley-*  
Everyone always welcome

### **In this issue:**

April Meeting Participation	2	Miller's Mutterings	8
March Meeting Report	3	Air Source Heat Pumps	9
About the April Meeting	6	Green Jobs Research	12
More from the Big Garden Birdwatch	7	No Radioactive Olympics	12
Can You Help!	7	Swanscombe Marshes Latest	13
Zoom Meeting Views Please	7	Nuclear Power & Poem	14
Bluebell Walks	8	Campaigns	14

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# **NEWSLETTER**

## **April Meeting Participation**

If you would like to be involved in the next Monthly Meeting, then it will be a virtual Zoom meeting once more. Please let us know if you'd like to attend by either emailing [bromleyfoe@gmail.com](mailto:bromleyfoe@gmail.com) or leaving a message on 020 8289 1503, and we will then send you details of how to join in, nearer the time.

You can either join using your computer (with video or without) or on a smart phone. There is usually a phone number to dial in for any other phone available.

Specific meeting content details are below. The first half will be our speaker and the second half will be for BFoE business.

*If you can't attend this meeting, or just find yourself with some spare time, perhaps we can encourage you to become 'Armchair Activists'. Do your own bit of campaigning, perhaps inspired by something in our newsletters, and let us know what response you get.*

### **Diary Dates**

***Please note that due to the Coronavirus, many events have had to be cancelled***

**6<sup>th</sup> Apr (Tues)** BFoE Monthly Meeting **7.30pm**. Informal meeting on Climate Change. We have invited GLA candidates from the four main parties to an informal online discussion and Q & A session. All questions to be submitted via Zoom Chat box during the event.

**1<sup>st</sup> May (Sat)** 7.30-10.30 'Play for the Planet.' Please join us for a fun music and poetry night when we will be raising funds for BFoE all from the comfort of our own homes. The Zoom link will appear in the May newsletter and will be sent out nearer the date. All welcome to join us! Please email [bromleyfoe@gmail.com](mailto:bromleyfoe@gmail.com) if you'd like to join the mailing list.

**4<sup>th</sup> May (Tues)** BFoE Monthly Meeting **7.30pm**. Craig Bennett, CEO of the Wildlife Trust and former CEO of Friends of the Earth.

**1<sup>st</sup> Jun (Tues)** BFoE Monthly Meeting **7.30pm**. William Huntington-Thresher Executive Member for the Environment for Bromley Council. All questions to be submitted in advance. If you have you'd like to ask then please send it to [bromleyfoe@gmail.com](mailto:bromleyfoe@gmail.com) or post it to the address of the Editor on the next page.

This diary is correct at the time of going to press but may be updated in the next monthly newsletter. If you need any further information on any events in the meantime, you can email us on [bromleyfoe@gmail.com](mailto:bromleyfoe@gmail.com)

**If any of the items in this newsletter make you angry, delight you, enthuse you or cause you any emotion other than apathy, then please jot down a line or two and send it into the newsletter.**

**Note that there are several internet links in this newsletter which may be impractical to type into a browser. If you would like access to any of them, then please let us know and we will send you an electronic copy of the newsletter where you can just click on the links.**

## **Next Newsletter Copy**

Any news, articles, poems, questions, views, articles for sale will all be considered for publication. Please send them to the editor via one of the methods below to arrive not later than **midnight Friday 16th April**

**Post:** 17 Everard Avenue, Hayes, Kent BR2 7LR

**Email:** Robert.clark9@btinternet.com (please write 'Newsletter' in the subject line)

**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.

## **March Monthly Meeting Report**

Sue & John Bocock

Nature: from Conservation to Recovery

It was a pleasure to welcome Tony Juniper to our March meeting. He was previously the long-serving CEO of Friends of the Earth from 2003 to 2008 and since 2019 has been CEO of Natural England.

Tony described the move from Friends of the Earth as being a seamless journey with similar challenges and questions. Natural England is the Government's official conservation agency and aims to deliver government policy. Its origins go back to 1949 and its remit includes 400 official duties. He described it as an "arm's length" agency. The new Environmental Act going through Parliament will give it even more power. Tony commented, "we are a complicated beast." He said his aim was to give the organisation a more up-to-date focus. The Government has declared the climate change and nature crisis to be more profound and urgent than this had been perceived previously. We heard about the loss of critical resources such as fish, wood, fresh water and a decline in pollinators. Globally, too, there have been fires burning in the Amazon

Rainforest, pollution and sewage. Tony explained how we have known all about this for 100 years from various organisations such as the RSPB, The Wildlife Trust, Flora and Fauna International, the National Trust and Natural Engand.

He then posed the question, "So, what has gone wrong? And is it still getting worse?" His explanation was that there is a disconnect between ecology and economy. Additionally, there is now so much public support for change. Historically, it was following the financial crisis of 2009 that there was the greatest divergence between the two: it was considered too expensive to look after both, and this was also the perception – it was an 'either/or' situation.

However, Tony reported it wasn't all doom and gloom. Since then there have been various reviews, Acts, reports and bills testifying to this change in thinking. Firstly, there was the **Dasgupta review** of 2006, which was a Treasury Report financed by the Government, saying basically, What is the value of Biodiversity? If we remove the ecosystem the economy ceases to exist. Secondly, Tony mentioned **The**

**Millennium Report**, also from 2006. This did a stock-take of nature globally, showing how we needed to reverse the long-term decline of tropical rain forests and the loss of soils.

Thirdly, Tony made us aware of the American, Robert Costanza who in 2010 had described the benefits from nature and changes to agricultural policy: if a developer damages an area, he will have to reimburse the owner and provide recompense. This is another trans-disciplinary approach, linking ecology and economics.

Lastly, Tony informed us of the Climate Change Act of 2018. This set legally binding targets to improve the environment and slow down the rate of loss. The aim was to leave the environment in a better state than it was initially. This marked a distinct change of direction and a more holistic response to some of the challenges.

Putting all these strands together, Tony described the idea of a Nature Recovery Network, which was to be developed at national level; subsidies which were for managing land were now to be paying for catching carbon and providing public access, all for public good. 500,000 hectares are to be created and 1,000,000 hectares designated SSSIs. Tony acknowledged this isn't enough, and it needs to go further. This new process will be about places rather than reports or policies with Local Nature Recovery Strategies at county level. He suggested this was something we could become involved in. Finally, Tony said that in a post-Covid world, this strategy should be

aligned closely to the planning system and the natural world.

After thanking Tony on our behalf and some virtual clapping, Sheila introduced some questions by first asking about "The vanity project" – HS2 and commenting on its "environmental vandalism". Tony explained that he had no personal views on HS2. When he was still at FoE they thought it was a good idea because it would take planes out of the sky: 80% of planes are short-haul. The North of England view was, would it leave a positive legacy? Tony did say he understood and had sympathy with people who were directly affected. The next question was about carbon tax. What should the Government do? Tony felt that such a tax could be put to good use by investing in the green economy and he also said to remove tax on good things such as employment. A global tax with America, the EU and China: how well would that work? Tony was then asked what three things we could do locally. He replied by saying, do more for nature, get involved locally with the nature recovery network and keep on inspiring people, keep up the energy and ensure the environment remains on the agenda. Tony explained that it was no longer only environmentalists who were pushing the agenda forward but also the chief executives of car companies and also ministers.

The influence of certain authors also played its part in this changed thinking. Tony quoted Rachel Carson and her book "The Silent Spring" in which she had written of the devastation cause by pesticides, particularly DDT. Tony

described the effect pesticides had on birds of prey – they stopped breeding and laying eggs, their shells were too thin. In the 1970s, sparrow hawks were effectively wiped out, but now they are beginning to come back. If we make the right choices, such as stopping shooting wildlife and limiting pollutants and chemicals, then many species will bounce back, such as salmon, the bald eagle and the peregrine falcon.

Another question concerned Natural England's view on culling. Tony explained some of the limitations which operate: you need a licence for public health and safety and for conservation reasons ie for curlews and to control predators such as crows where they would peck the eyes out of sheep and lambs. The final questions concerned badger culling and farming. Natural England is an advisor and delivery body. It doesn't have a direct role; that would be government policy. We were told by Tony that farmers are embracing the new ideas, rewilding their land and asking how they can help. Not only do they want to be food producers but also to look after Nature.

The National Farmers Union is also part of this mix; they are going for net -zero carbon by 2040. Supermarkets are also encouraging by buying from better farmers.

## **Second Half**

Sheila Brown

The GLA candidates from the four main parties had been contacted about the Friends of the Earth Climate Action Plan and 10 points to prioritise and invited to

an informal Zoom meeting, with each having a 3-5 minute opportunity to speak on this and their policies, followed by questions.

It is hoped that Swanscombe Marshes will be given SSSI status (\*\*\*\* Yippee! It's actually happened!! See page 13).

Anne Clark had attended a Sevenoaks FoE Zoom meeting re Sevenoaks Wildlife Centre. There had been initial concerns re commercial development including a large car park and social facilities. Kent Wildlife Trust want to get rid of the anglers but have extended their licence; the presence of the anglers is felt to be a deterrent to vandalism.

Annette reported that the Environment Bill had been paused due to Covid 19. A lot to do with plastics seems now to have been dropped. We will be urged to write to our MPs in September about this. He mentioned a petition re pesticides reduction. Friends of the Earth is calling on DEFRA to reduce.

Nature - Diana drew our attention to a FoE petition "Is your Council funding the Climate Crisis?" <https://act.friendsoftheearth.uk/petition/climate> This now has around 250,000 signatures.

The Tree Strategy is still being developed. It is recognised that trees help stop flooding and tree cover needs to be doubled. Caerphilly FoE group had been successful in saving a green space.

Outings – Sue and John mentioned the Energy Garden, which uses dilapidated railway land for growing vegetables and flowers at Brondesbury Park Station

(North West London). This will be one for once restrictions are lifted. Ann Garrett spoke of re-purposing railway tracks into cycle tracks. Sheila suggested inviting ideas for individual local Bluebell Walks (see page 8).

John Edwards is very keen to reinstate the Musical Evening which had to be postponed last year. This will quite possibly still have to be via Zoom, with a probable date in May.

## April Meeting

Sheila Brown

Ahead of the London Mayoral and GLA Assembly Election on 6<sup>th</sup> May, we have invited candidates from the four main parties. Attendance has been confirmed by Mary Ion of the Green Party and Labour Councillor Stefano Borella. The Liberal Democrat candidate Allan Tweddle is unable to attend but Julie Ireland, Campaigns Officer of Bromley Borough LibDems, will attend in his place. We have invited Councillor Peter Fortune, who is the Conservative candidate.

All candidates have been approached to gain their view on environmental aspects and asked that, if elected, they will put pressure on the new Mayor to be guided by environmental principles along the lines of a list of 10 Priorities, as shown.

Questions for the candidates can be submitted during the meeting using the Zoom 'Chat' box. No questions will be taken from the floor.

10 priorities the next Mayor of London

should commit to:

- 1 Ensuring all infrastructure plans, programmes, and investment decisions – including plans to “build back better” from COVID-19 – are in line with what’s needed to address the climate and ecological emergency, including London’s carbon budget and the carbon reduction pathway.
- 2 Ensuring those most impacted by climate breakdown and nature loss are heard and put centre stage in decision-making.
- 3 Protecting workers and communities through a just transition from a fossil fuel-dependent economy to a low-carbon, nature-rich, circular economy, including delivering the 79,616 jobs that a Local Government Association analysis says could be created in the region by 2030.
- 4 Introducing policies and measures that ensure new development is net zero carbon, and existing homes are brought up to high energy standards, thereby relegating fuel poverty to the history books.
- 5 Increasing public transport use, cycling and walking to at least 80% of journeys within the next 10 years, to cut climate emissions and ensure everyone can breathe clean air.
- 6 Powering the region with clean, renewable energy and reaping the economic and job opportunities it will bring, while ensuring fossil fuels are kept in the ground.
- 7 Greening the city region by

- increasing tree cover, protecting nature, and eliminating greenspace deprivation.
- 8 Becoming a zero-waste city region by 2030 without reliance on landfill or incineration to reduce pressures on nature from resource extraction and pollution.
  - 9 Calling on the local government pension scheme to divest from fossil fuels, to stop profiting from environmental harm.
  - 10 Opposing climate-wrecking and traffic-generating developments, including airport expansion at Heathrow and London City, and instead focus on cutting traffic levels.

## **More Big Garden Birdwatch Results**

Ruth Fabricant

Here are some more results from another member (sounds a little like an election result!) They said, a little disappointing.

3 robins and a wood pigeon. Seen on the Sunday in our back garden on 31st January. Our postcode is BR2 9JZ

## **Can You Help?**

Friends of the Earth Bromley has had a web site for many years, showing who we are and giving access to our newsletter archive. A lot of work has gone into updating this site over the past two years or so but we could do with some help from someone with web skills. Our current administrators

are available to advise and help.

Recently, we have been asked by national FoE to appoint a Safeguarding Officer, a role to ensure we look out for and protect young and vulnerable people who may be attending our meeting and events. We have been supplied with full information regarding what is required for this not too onerous role. It is hoped that we will have two officers to cover each other, increasing the likelihood of one being at each meeting or event.

If you are interested in either of these posts or would like to have a no commitment chat about them, please contact Sheila Brown in the first instance. Her contact number is on the inside back cover of this publication. Alternatively you could send us an email at: bromleyfoe@gmail.com

## **FoE Zoom meetings - views please.**

Peter Gandolfi

Personally, I find that virtual meetings such as Zoom (other brands of software are available) work well, and can avoid a lot of travelling even if much of it is local.

It also allows us to offer a wider selection of speakers from anywhere. I was therefore surprised to find that the numbers of us taking part in our regular monthly FoE meetings are generally lower than the numbers that have in the past attended our meetings in Bromley.

I wonder if this is down to a hesitancy towards using this technology?

Using Zoom now seems generally reliable, and you don't even need a computer.

You can join any of the meetings via a phone of any kind. The current invitations (see page 2 meeting participation), contain phone numbers that can be used to dial in and take part, as well as a computer link, which you can use with or without video.

There's also no reason to download an app. If you have a PC or smart phone, you can just join using the Zoom internet page. If you're joining by phone, then you can just dial the number.

If you are having problems, it may be possible for us to offer help, but this will have to be limited to telephone at present.

## **Bluebell Walk**

**We cannot have our usual group Bluebell Walk, so do please come up with any ideas you may have for good venues.** One of the very first walks we did was at Kemsing, including part of the Pilgrim's Way. We have also walked at Lullingstone and Cudham. Andrew's Wood near Badgers Mount usually has spectacular bluebells. Turn off at the roundabout just before Polhill Garden Centre.

*I spotted a very nice array of bluebells last year on an accidental run along the footpath that runs around the back of the perimeter fence of Biggin Hill Airport.*

*The path lays along the edge of woodland at the top of the valley facing Downe Village, and it eventually ends up at the Biggin Hill end of Jail Lane. It starts*

*from a hole in the hedge stile to a field accessible from the loop road almost opposite the Leaves Green car park. If you'd like more accurate directions then let me know. Ed.*

## **Miller's Mutterings**

Chris Miller Court Lodge Farm

Well at last it has stopped raining; we had 28ml last month and as of the start of March we will be trying to catch up with all the farm work that needs attention. The first job will be to apply a spray on the crops to kill off the weeds and then later in the month we'll apply the first dose of fertiliser as the crops are just starting to grow again.

Despite the road being open to traffic, Steve managed to trim back some of the overgrown hedge at the top of Warren Road, but the window for hedge cutting is now closed so the rest will have to be left until September. If our side of the road is closed, we will have an opportunity to cut back the large, over hanging boughs as this is not covered under hedge flailing. The boys have been doing a little bit of maintenance on the tractors and one of the plastic components on the main valve block of the sprayer has broken. Surprise, surprise - only £12.40 for the part. A little bit of "gentle persuasion" helped to put it back together. All the straw has been sold, so no deliveries until the next harvest.

The boys completed the online course with NRoSO successfully thankfully. I have to take back my words from last month as Steve found it easy to

complete, scoring 93% with 80% as the pass mark.

Although we have deer here from time to time, we have been surprised to see about 5 or 6 deer throughout the winter, grazing in the middle of the big field. You can see them, sometimes, from the footpath near the station. Spring starts on the 20th March but apparently it is not spring until you can put a foot down on twelve daisies. The garden bulbs have started to bloom and I have winter aconites along with snowdrops, tulips and tete a tete blooming in the garden; the wallflowers are just starting to bud and there will be daffodils for St. David's Day and shamrock for St Patrick's Day. The birds will start nesting soon and the skylarks have started to sing again, which is a great delight to hear.

Most people know the English proverb of March coming in like a lion and going out like a lamb but here is a different one.

When March blows its horn

your barn will be filled

with hay and corn

## Air Source Heat Pumps

Matthew Sawyer

Parisa Wright asked me for a piece about the costs of an air source heat pump (ASHP) vs gas boiler. These are our experiences so far from winter 2019 to 2020. Personally, if you want an ASHP to work well, get a proper installation by a reputable installer!

### Energy use.

In 2019, we had a gas boiler and 2 petrol cars. Total home energy for Oct-Jan use was 9,000 kWh with gas being 7,500 kWh of that total. We were also spending about £150-200/month on petrol between us.

In 2020, we had an ASHP installed and bought an EV car, new roof insulation (from 150mm to 250mm) and double glazed front and back doors and removed all the gas. We shifted to Octopus Agile so could charge the car overnight on cheaper electricity. Our total energy use from Oct-Jan has been 6,500 kWh (obvs all electric) and includes 7,500 miles in the car (although sometimes charged at work).

The car has used about 2,000 kWh of the total, the energy used by the house is 4,500 kWh. If the house electric is about the same as 2019 (ie 1,500 kWh), then space heating by the ASHP is 3,000 kWh. The CoP has been 2.5-2.7 so the ASHP generated that heat output for each kWh of electricity used

### Costs.

For total fuel (ie gas, electric and vehicle fuel) for Oct-Jan only, 2019 was £1187 and 2020 is £785. (The 6,500 kWh in 2020 effectively included energy used for space heating, electricity and vehicle fuel from 2019)

For just the heating ie gas in 2019 vs electricity used by the ASHP in 2020, the costs are £361 vs £298 respectively i.e less to heat with the ASHP

Octopus Agile is a variable rate (varies every 30 mins!) which is 100%

renewable. Over a 24hr period, my lowest costs were 2.78p/kwh, highest was 19p/kwh. Across October 2020, my average was 9.5p/kWh, in Jan closer to 14.5p/kWh. The ASHP mainly uses the cheaper electricity in the early hours. If anyone wanted to swap supplier to Octopus and earn £50 for themselves (and £50 for me!), please use this code share.octopus.energy/navy-burn-510 Thank you.

### Installation costs

The ASHP was about £10,000 but all of this is reclaimed back over 7 years through the RHI grant from the government.

*This item was taken from a facebook posting and these are some of the questions from people who viewed it. I've made the comments anonymous because I couldn't ask their permission to publish. Ed.*



Do ASHPs do the hot water system too? If not, what do you do for that?

Like · Reply · 1 w

1



Matthew Sawyer Author

yes - all heating and hot water

Like · Reply · 1 w

1



Matthew Sawyer And how hot does it get the water? I understand the radiators have to be bigger because it doesn't get the water so hot. I'll need to replace my boiler soon, but my wife likes really hot showers.

Like · Reply · 1 w

2



Matthew Sawyer Author

first year my wife hasn't complained about the heating, I've not complained about the expense and we have a harmonious house when it comes to heating and showers. Don't even fight over a thermostat...

Like · Reply · 1 w

2

You can also potentially claims costs back for this under the Green Homes Grant.

Like · Reply · 1 w



Matthew Sawyer Author

either up front with the green homes grant or retrospectively with the RHI payments. Either way, there is a grant to pay for the installation

We have one in our summerhouse in Denmark and love it however it's only for heating ie it blows out hot air. Is it only the radiators you need replacing or do you have to replace the piping too?

Like · Reply · 1 w



Matthew Sawyer Author

we only needed radiators replacing but it depends what you've already got in. Definitely need heat loss calculations from a proper installer doing to check

Like · Reply · 1 w



Very very interesting! And has it worked efficiently in these sub zero temperatures?

Like · Reply · 1 w



Matthew Sawyer Author

we've been down to -9C and it heats the house well. The CoP is about 2.4 so far this month.

Like · Reply · 1 w



Thank you for sharing Matthew! Would you say the pump is noisy?

Like · Reply · 6 d



Matthew Sawyer Author

very quiet. We can't hear it but have double glazing. I'll try and take a video for you when it's running but amazingly quiet

Like · Reply · 6 d



Matthew Sawyer Cheers! We don't have a big garden so we would basically sit next to it when outside.

Like · Reply · 6 d



## **Green Jobs Research**

As part of our work on Council Climate Action Plans and a Green and Fair Recovery, Friends of the Earth, alongside, NUS, Teach the Future and with the support of the TUC have released (2<sup>nd</sup> March) a piece of research about how green jobs and apprenticeships could address the crisis in youth unemployment that is emerging as we move out of lockdown and COVID.

*Released ahead of the Chancellor's spring Budget, the report "An emergency plan on green jobs for young people – why and how?" (by Transition Economics for Friends of the Earth) lays bare the scarring economic impact of youth unemployment from Covid-19 on individuals, local authorities, and the overall country. But the research also shows the huge potential for fighting the climate crisis with green jobs country-wide if apprenticeships are given proper government support.*

As a group mentioned in the report as being in an area that could benefit the most from green jobs investment, we wanted to make sure you were aware of the report.

To find out more about the report, you can see the [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VzDFzPvdHhAT\\_-DmNYyYBHWqYYMPnD0ChVWD1XBkW0I/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VzDFzPvdHhAT_-DmNYyYBHWqYYMPnD0ChVWD1XBkW0I/edit)

For those that have elections this year, your candidates and councillors might also be interested in the report so feel free to share it with them. For those that are working on Metro Mayor

campaigns, this report further supports the 3<sup>rd</sup> priority in the Climate Action Plans of "Protecting workers and communities through a just transition from a fossil fuel-dependent economy to a low-carbon, nature-rich, circular economy, including delivering [a large amount of] new jobs."

## **No Radioactive Olympic Games**

Some German anti-nuke organisations are going to submit their petition against Tokyo Olympics to the Japanese embassy in Berlin on 24 March.

The English version of the petition is here. Many of you might have already signed, but if not, would you please do so now and/or spread the word!

<https://www.openpetition.eu/petition/online/no-olympic-games-in-radioactive-regions>

## **Climate Change and Energy Demands**

The recent freak freezing weather in Texas and several other South American states generated a serious state of emergency. This resulted in huge power failures, deaths from the severe cold, 120 road crashes in Houston, and frozen pipe lines disrupting the supply of gas.

Some of the coldest temperatures in more than 30 years were recorded leaving 43 million people without electricity. What is interesting, though, is that the 'Polar Plunge' crisis was worsened when nearly half the state's wind power generation was knocked out. Wind power is Texas' largest

source of electricity. Climate change effects have no respect, what ever the energy source. The fact remains, however, as environmentalists know, freak weather will be alleviated by an eventual universal ban on fossil fuels.

## **Swanscombe Marshes – Latest !**

Just before this newsletter went to press, we heard the welcome news Swanscombe Peninsula has been awarded Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) status for its grassland, scrub, wetlands, grazing marsh and saltmarsh habitat and local nature reserves.

This is good news for the Save Swanscombe Marshes campaign, involving Buglife, the RSPB and the Kent Wildlife Trust and deals a blow to plans for the multi-billion pound London Resort theme park which had been given the go-ahead by the government. Our group had been backing the campaign opposing a Disneyland style theme park and covering a 535 acre site.

It is home to more than 1,700 species of invertebrates including 250 of conservation concern - more than any other site in the country - and includes the critically endangered distinguished jumping spider, a minuscule, critically endangered arachnid, only found in one other location in Britain. Other species include the brown-banded carder bee, the sea-aster mining bee, endangered water voles and more breeding birds (82 species) than the better known Rainham Marshes. Breeding birds include the nightingale, marsh harrier

and peregrine falcon, reed warblers and bearded tits. It is also home to nationally rare plants.

The riverside has a Marine Conservation Zone designation to protect the tentacled lagoon worm, less than 5mm long, which is nationally scarce and is supported by the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

However, the scheme for the development of 'The London Resort' theme park had been designated a "Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project" by the Government, exempting it from much of the normal planning process and with the final decision made by the Government. If Boris couldn't have his airport in the Thames Estuary, maybe this is the consolation prize he seeks.

Major backers of The London Resort are BBC Studios, ITV Studios and Paramount Pictures. Those opposing the development have suggested that the BBC should take advice from Sir David Attenborough and withdraw from the project. Plans for the 465 hectare site include a warehouse district, theme park with "exhilarating thrills", "enchanted woodland", ruins of a "mysterious long-lost Mesoamerican civilisation" and a 23rd century Starport landing zone.

The Chief Executive of London Resort Company Holdings is one PY Gerbeau – remember him from Millennium Dome days? He is quoted as saying: "The project will of course continue and this is just another issue to address in the long history of the project." As it's been a long-running project, there will

have been a huge investment, so obviously they are not going to take it lying down.

Many local people want to conserve the area's peaceful green space and real-life wildlife, a view shared by environmentalists. It's even been dubbed "Kent's best-kept secret". Bromley Friends of the Earth totally supports the opposition to this development.

**"Once it's gone we're never going to get it back"**

## Nuclear Power

March 11th marked the 10th anniversary of the

Fukushima nuclear disaster.

Much of Fukushima prefecture is still contaminated and radiation has increased over eastern Japan including the Tokyo area where many of the Olympic events are due to take place. Japan is naturally anxious for the economy and is therefore still covering up the seriousness of the situation.

The government has given approval to reopen Tokyo Electric Power's Onagawa nuclear power plant. The plant is of the same boiling water type as the Fukushima Daiichi reactors that melted down in 2011. It is also on the same northeast coast of Japan and was itself damaged by

the tsunami that caused the disaster.

Japan is set to open 10 reactors by 2023, although the pace is very slow.

There is also some disturbing news regarding the planned release of a million tons of radioactive water into the Pacific Ocean. The operation is due to begin in 2022 and will take 30 years to complete.

Investment in green energies in Japan is very limited in comparison to what is really needed to dispense with nuclear power.

(see 'Fukushima Wastelands' poem in relation to this article. Although written in 2017 the situation is still relevant.)

### Fukushima Wastelands (March 2017 - 6 years on)

[ With thanks and acknowledgements to Lis Fields '20 millisieverts per Year' exhibition and the film 'Nuclear Japan' ]

Fields of black plastic bags filled with radioactive waste

stretch across Fukushima Prefecture

Deserted streets

Deserted houses

Deserted schools

A child's pink bicycle abandoned in a garage

Geiger counters buzz as white-clad officials monitor here and there

Deserted shops

Deserted libraries

Deserted allotments

A tsunami marker stone stands firm on a hill in Tomiaka

Bottom Line

## Campaigns

New FoE campaign areas!

Recently Friends of the Earth have re-organised their campaign areas into the following:

### Climate -

Heathrow

Green & fair recovery

Climate friendly communities

Renewable energy

### Nature -

Trees & bees

### System Change -

Trade

Planning & environmental law

Anti-racism

### Consumption -

Food & the environment

Plastics

## *Climate*

### Cars

Ann Garrett

General Motors have just announced that it plans to phase out petrol and diesel powered vehicles globally by 2035 - a dramatic shift by the largest US carmaker away from fossil fuels. GM which also said it planned to become carbon neutral by 2040, made its

announcement just a week after Joe Biden took office, pledging to boost the sales of electric vehicles.

Ford has also just announced that all cars on sale in Europe will be electric by 2030. The US carmaker said it would invest \$1bn [£720 million] converting a plant in Cologne, Germany into the first such facility in Europe. All electric cars are due to roll off the production line by 2023.

There is, however, a big problem in terms of the mining of lithium and cobalt for the batteries that power electric cars and the impact on child labour and exploitation. Children

A reminder overseeing this devastating destruction

The sun shines, but there's no one about

The wind blows the luscious vegetation, but it's inedible

Flowers bloom, but are not seen, smelt or picked

164,865 people have left this polluted paradise

8% of the urban and rural land mass is uninhabitable

20 millisieverts per year

is now the Government's safe radiation threshold

Japan's 54 nuclear power plants lie close to tsunami-prone seas

Their white temple-like domes and austere structures

gleam and glisten in seemingly pristine condition

They hide the deadly plutonium within

They are part of the world's dangerous annihilative sin

Ann Garrett Ashley

working in the mines, some as young as seven, breathe in cobalt-laden dust that can cause fatal lung ailments while working in tunnels that are often likely to collapse.

Amnesty International has highlighted that men, women and children are working without even basic equipment such as gloves and masks. This is an issue the world as a whole will have to address as it seeks to eliminate the serious problems caused by global warming.

### ***Consumption***

#### **Dispatches: The Dirty Truth about Your Rubbish C4**

Annette Rose

This TV programme with environmental campaigner and journalist Lucy Siegle looked at the issues around incineration. Do watch it on catch up if you can as it covered some important points. These are just some of them.

Up until the mid 1990s, 90% of our waste went to landfill. This causes a range of environmental problems and creates large amounts of methane. The landfill tax made local authorities turn to other solutions for disposing of our waste.

Incineration looked like a cheap and easy way forward. There are now 48 incinerators in the UK and 18 on the way. We are now burning more waste than we recycle. It has become cheaper to burn than to recycle.

Recycling rates that local authorities give are not the true rates as it doesn't reflect how much is burnt and how

much is recycled. It is the collection rate only.

The programme mentioned some of the difficulties of getting recycling rates up. There is no consistency between authorities. For example different authorities can recycle different types of plastics. There are 50 recycling symbols the public could be faced with and there is much confusion about what should be in each bin. A family featured in the programme had accidentally contaminated their waste collection by not sorting correctly.

At least 50% of our waste could be properly recycled and reused but figures achieved are often much lower. Many local authorities are tied in to long term contracts with incinerator companies and as the expensive facilities have been built, there is a need to continue feeding them with waste.

Another main point of the programme is that it is not the green energy solution some may think. After coal burning, incinerators produce the most CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. In 2019 they even produced more than coal as these stations are being phased out.

So what can be done? The programme mentions that the government wants to introduce a tax on plastic burning which will aim to increase plastics recycling rates. The new Environment Bill should encompass the idea that incineration is a last resort and encourage more recycling.

It seems to me we need a joined up system so that the public are clear on what they can recycle and we need to

provide the correct recycling facilities. We also need to drastically reduce our overall use of plastics, particularly those that cannot be recycled.

## **Nature**

### **Bromley Biodiversity Plan (BAP)**

#### **Update**

*Judy Palmer*

We are one of the groups which makes up this vital partnership within the borough and generally meet up at the BEECHE centre at High Elms 3 times a year. Understandably, due to Covid, this has not taken place since January 2020. We had our first meeting of 2021 online in March and a few points of interest are reported below.

\* The Bromley Biodiversity Plan was due to be updated in 2020, and the draft BAP has been put together and went to the Council committee in draft form in March. This will eventually be published in full on the Council's website.

\* It is worth noting that each of the habitats sections in the BAP will have a paragraph emphasising the importance of biodiverse natural habitats and the soil beneath for carbon sequestration and storage; vital for reaching carbon-neutral status. Another vital message to be mentioned is how important natural vegetation and habitats are for urban cooling and removal of airborne pollutants.

\*The Council's draft Open Space Strategy, which was put out for public consultation, is now being re-drafted

and will again be put out to consultation later this year.

### **Citizen science projects**

*Judy Palmer*

Do you know of any roadside verges which may be of value to wildlife? If you do, then please get in touch with Judy John via [bromleybiodiversity@gmail.com](mailto:bromleybiodiversity@gmail.com) with the name of the road and your reason for nominating it.

### **Help Our Hedgehogs!**

*Judy Palmer*

Since 2000, hedgehog populations in England have fallen by more than 50% in rural areas, 33% in urban areas. In Bromley they are now rarely recorded. Hedgehogs live in scrubby areas, hedgerows, gardens and rough grassland. They often range 1-2 kms every night feeding on soil invertebrates and hibernate in deep leaf litter beneath hedgerows and scrub. Please let us know if you see one!

Email the date, place (postcode or grid reference) and number seen to Bromley Biodiversity Partnership at [bromleybiodiversity@gmail.com](mailto:bromleybiodiversity@gmail.com). Your



information will enable targeted habitat improvements.

**How You Can Help Hedgehogs:** have a wild area with some scrub in your garden or park, check for hedgehogs before

strimming, mowing or having bonfires. Make sure there are holes in fence lines so hedgehogs can pass through. Don't use pesticides, especially slug pellets, make sure ponds have one side sloping

## LET'S HOP TO IT!

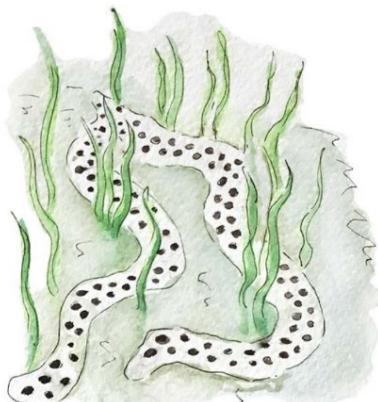


**Common Toad populations in the UK have fallen by 68%+ in the last 30 years... So how can we help Bromley's toads?**

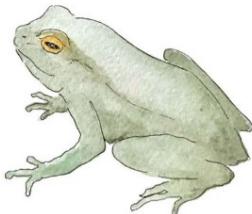


Create a wild area in your garden or local park with a log pile, compost heap and long grass. Even better; consider a pond! Toads breed in ponds which are 90cms deep, have one sloping side, contain plants and are edged with protective long grass or scrub.

**Keeping Track -** Keep a look out for them in woodlands, scrub, hedgerows and log piles, as well as near ponds! And log any Toad Sightings at [bromleybiodiversity@gmail.com](mailto:bromleybiodiversity@gmail.com) with the date, postcode, any evidence of breeding and ideally a photo.



Chat to neighbours about creating a 13cm hole at the base of your garden fence, so both toads and hedgehogs can roam freely, and stay off the roads.



Illustrations by Sophie Nightingale

so animals which fall in can climb out. Make sure wire or nylon netting is secure or 15cms above ground.

### Toads are in Trouble!

Judy Palmer

Toad populations in SE England have fallen by more than 50% since 1985. Toads live most of their lives on land in scrubby areas, hibernating in log piles, deep leaf litter and burrows. Adults usually emerge in March and return to their ponds to breed. Please let us know if you see one! We are particularly interested in finding ponds where they breed so please look out for strings of eggs wound around plants stems underwater or male and females together in March-April. Email the date, place (postcode or grid reference), number seen and a photo to Bromley Biodiversity partnership at [bromleybiodiversity@gmail.com](mailto:bromleybiodiversity@gmail.com)

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



## TOAD LIFECYCLE



### EMERGING FROM THE WINTER



In the Bromley area, toads emerge in March to April to breed. Having been dormant through the winter, they return to the pond where they originally spawned, travelling up to 400meters (occasionally as much as 2kms). Moles often move first and wait for the females to arrive and then climb on their backs.

### LAYING TOADSPAWN

Toadspawn is laid in long ribbons wound around the underwater stems of pond plants. Vegetation around the ponds is important to provide protection for the eggs and tadpoles.



### HATCHING AND METAMORPHOSIS

After 2-3 weeks, tadpoles (toadpoles) hatch from the eggs. In a similar manner to frogs, the tadpoles undergo metamorphosis. After several months of development, tadpoles grow limbs and lose tail to become terrestrial.



### LEAVING HOME

Toadlets leave ponds in large numbers over a few days in summer. They live in woodland, beneath hedgerows or coarse grassland, feeding at night on insects, worms, slugs and other invertebrates.

Source: bromley biodiversity partnership habitats & species sub-group priority species factsheet, results and actions 2017-2020, froglife.org

Illustrations by Sophie Nightingale

**How You Can Help Toads:** have a wild area in your garden with some scrub, a log pile and maybe a pond 90cms deep, with at least one sloping side. For more information and to see how frogs look different from toads, see <https://www.arc-trust.org>

### Pesticides Update & Petition

2021 got off on the wrong foot as the government allowed the temporary "emergency" use of a banned bee-harming neonicotinoid pesticide on some farms. This is a direct threat to our wildlife and our environment. And it's part of a much wider problem – the rising use of pesticides instead of farmers being helped to farm with nature.

We've now got a valuable opportunity to turn things around. The government is consulting on its new pesticides action plan. And thanks to campaigning from many organisations, including local Friends of the Earth groups, the government has already been forced to commit to setting pesticide reduction targets.

But there's still a lot to be done to make the plan fit for purpose. And we expect the pesticides industry will be lobbying to weaken the plan.

We need to make sure this plan includes:

- pesticide reduction targets that are ambitious enough to reduce environmental harm
- a commitment to phase out the use of pesticides in our parks, schools and streets

- support to help farmers reduce their pesticide use
- a commitment to keep any existing EU bans on harmful pesticides and chemicals, including neonicotinoids

We have a valuable opportunity to make sure this plan is as strong as it needs to be – the government is running a consultation. But it finished at the end of February. However, you can still support our petition - here's a link:

[https://act.friendsoftheearth.uk/petition/shape-future-our-countryside?  
\\_ga=2.126082637.1375430928.1615834503-1116534426.1613480550](https://act.friendsoftheearth.uk/petition/shape-future-our-countryside?_ga=2.126082637.1375430928.1615834503-1116534426.1613480550)

Now's the time to keep up the pressure and secure an effective plan to stop pesticide use.

### Marinet

Marinet is a community marine campaigning organisation which works to protect and defend the seas and our fish stocks and also sea and river quality. Bromley Friends of the Earth has been a member for many years and Marinet has twice sent speakers to us. Although we are far from the sea, we realise that Britain is an island and very dependent upon the seas.

It is not a charity. It is an unaffiliated campaigning, information providing organisation whose first loyalty is always to the seas and oceans which it seeks to protect.

Campaigns include the Quality of Bathing Waters (Sand, Sea and Sewage, working with Surfers against Sewage), Conserving the Great Blue, Fisheries management,

Ecosystem management, Coastal Defences, Aggregate Dredging, Marine Reserves, Plastic Pollution and Renewable Energy.

Marinet has now announced that it will shortly start holding Zoom meetings for its members. If this is something that would interest you, please let us know [bromleyfoe@gmail.com](mailto:bromleyfoe@gmail.com).

Here are some recent items:

### **State of UK Fisheries**

Members may be interested to read a recently published Report by *Oceana* which audits the **State of UK Fisheries in 2021**, see <https://europe.oceana.org/en/uk-fisheries-audit-2021>. Essentially this report records that only a little over a third of the UK's 104 commercial fish stocks are known to actually have a stock level that is healthy and/or is not being overfished. In other words, around two-thirds have stock levels that are of concern and have or are being overfished. This knowledge is important as it sets the context for the development of fishing policy by the UK Government for our fish stocks following our departure from the EU. (Note: The EU Common Fisheries Policy will continue to affect fishing levels in UK seas until at least 2025 under the terms of the exit agreement negotiated in December 2020).

### **Seaweed Farming and Conservation**

One of Marinet's members, Max Wallis, wants to encourage and support a project within Marinet and wider afield to secure the regeneration of our seaweed and kelp resources in

the inshore seas of the British Isles. He is looking for one or more Marinet members to work with him in developing this project.

You can see an exceptional short video (9 minutes) <https://sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/helpourkelp> by David Attenborough and the Sussex Wildlife Trust which shows you the wonder of an inshore kelp forest. This video will show you the magnificence of this world and the immense value that it has.

There has also been a recent conference in West Pembrokeshire <https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/newsroom/an-ocean-of-opportunities-for-west-wales> which has considered the potential of the UK seaweed resource, and there is now a body called the Seaweed Alliance [www.theseaweedalliance.org.uk](http://www.theseaweedalliance.org.uk) which is promoting commercial and conservation initiatives.

### **Quality of water in rivers**

Marinet has also placed on its website the 3 documents they have submitted in February to the **House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee** in connection with their current inquiry into **Water Quality in Rivers**. These and other items are reported fully on Marinet's website [www.marinet.org.uk](http://www.marinet.org.uk).

### **System Change**

#### **Current Planning Issues**

There is a planning application for 9 houses at Dobbies Garden Centre, Keston Mark which, although concreted over for

car parking, is Green Belt, and does not have existing buildings, so is technically a greenfield site. Rob Clark

The application for houses at Broke Hill was turned down by Sevenoaks Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> February due to lack of local services. Bill Priestly.

There is also a planning application to build a new school on greenfield land in Slades Drive, Chislehurst. The plans show the demolition of existing buildings and being replaced with much larger buildings and associated car parking etc. Planning ref 21/00570. You can view this and other applications on the planning application simple search page at: <https://searchapplications.bromley.gov.uk/online-applications/>

## Supplies That Don't Cost the Earth

*This is a regular reference point for useful and practical resources, helping us to sustain the greenest lifestyles we can. These are not recommendations from Bromley or National FoE, but are just suggested by BFoE members. Any suggestions or reviews gratefully received. bromleyfoe@gmail.com*

**IT & Phone Repair** Orpington IT Centre, 92 High St, Orpington BR6 0JY  
(Opposite Aynscombe Angle)

[www.orpingtonitcentre.co.uk](http://www.orpingtonitcentre.co.uk)

### No/Low Waste Shops

*Alexander Stores*, 61 Beckenham Road.

*Green Room*, Station Approach, Hayes.  
**Current opening hours Tuesday - Saturday 10.30 - 3.30.**

*The Burlington Food Hall*, Chislehurst High Street (Next to the Post Office):  
[www.burlingtonfood.co.uk](http://www.burlingtonfood.co.uk)

### Internet

*Peep Eyewear* revitalise vintage frames or recycle those that can't be reused.  
<https://www.peepeyewear.co.uk/peep-donation-address>

*If You Care* products including recycled tin foil and sandwich bags: <https://buyifyoucare.com/>

*Peace With the Wild* - Household products: <https://www.peacewiththewild.co.uk/>

*My Green Pod* - Wide range of biodegradable and natural products:  
<https://www.mygreenpod.com/>

*Ethical Superstore* - 'Ethical' products news and advice: <https://www.ethicalsuperstore.com/>

*Green Finder* - a useful directory of environmental companies for all kinds of things. <http://www.greenfinder.co.uk/>

*Naturallythinking*, Unit 2 Mill Lane Trading Estate, Mill Lane, Croydon, CR0 4AA, 020 3856 3588: <https://naturallythinking.com/>

*Crowdfarming*, wide selection of directly supplied products from farmers around the world, many organic: <https://www.crowdfarming.com/en>

Bike recycling

Refurbished bikes sent to Africa  
<https://www.re-cycle.org/>

## Reuse

If you have any items that you no longer need and that could be of use to someone then please let us know and we will publish them in the Newsletter. Alternatively, you could bring them along to our monthly meeting and put them on the table in reception. Any donations to BFoE from sales will be greatly appreciated.

## List Of Roles

Everyone can be contacted via the groups  
email address: **bromleyfoe@gmail.com**

**Acting Co-ordinators/Mentors:**

Sheila Brown 01689 851605  
Ann Garrett 020 8460 1295

**Treasurer:**

Sheila Brown

**Press Team:**

Ann Garrett, Annette Rose

**Programme Organiser:**

Sheila Brown

**Outings Organisers:**

John & Sue Bocock 0208 290 0485

**Merchandising:**

Anne Clark

**Membership Secretary:**

Dan Sloan 07414 920920

**Instagram and Twitter Admin:**

Emmanuelle Coetzee

**Admin Team:**

Judy Palmer, Rob Clark, Annette Rose

**Bromley Environmental Network BEN Reps:**

John Pavitt, Judy Palmer

**Web Site & Technical Support:**

Peter Gandolfi

**Meeting Reporters:**

John & Sue Bocock, Anne Clark, Annette Rose,  
Peter Gandolfi, Sheila Brown, Tom Coling ,  
Ruth Fabricant, Michael Hall, Liam Redmond -  
further volunteers for this team always welcome.

**Refreshments**

Pending due to no live meetings

**Newsletter Production:** Dan Sloan

**Newsletter Editor:**

Rob Clark 020 8289 1503  
robert.clark9@btinternet.com

**Campaigns:** You can join one of these new campaign teams at any point if you are interested. Just contact us via our main email address or see one of us at a meeting.

*Campaign heads are in bold - specialities are bracketed*

**Campaigns Administrator:** Judy Palmer

**Climate:**

**Ann Garrett**

Sheila Brown

Ruth Fabricant

Paul Garratt

**Nature:**

**Diana Hurd** (trees)

Ruth Fabricant

Paul Garratt

Judy Palmer

**System Change:**

**Tamara Galloway** (Planning)

Ruth Fabricant (Anti racism)

Ann Garratt (Planning)

John Pavitt

**Consumption:**

**Annette Rose**

Ruth Fabricant

John Pavitt (Food)

Emmanuelle Coetzee (Food)



## Non-members Section

If you are not a member of Bromley Friends of the Earth (BFoE) then hello to you. 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 acting co-ordinators Sheila Brown or Ann Garrett (their details are inside the back page of this newsletter.) Alternatively you can come along to one of our 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, on the right going down. 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 (\*delete as appropriate)

I would like 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 work of our local group.

Name: .....

Address: .....

Post Code: ..... Phone No: .....

Email address: .....

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

.....

**Bank Details:** Name - Bromley Friends of the Earth A/C - 06342260 S/C - 77 91 48

Please return this form to: Bromley FoE, 2 Bucks Cross Cottages, Chelsfield Village, Orpington, Kent BR6 7RN. Other enquiries regarding the group should be sent to [bromleyfoe@gmail.com](mailto:bromleyfoe@gmail.com) or contact one of our co-ordinators via their details inside.