



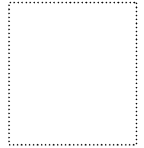
**Friends of
the Earth**

Bromley

Newsletter

April 2008
No. 244

Bromley FoE: inquiries to Birch House, Grays Road, Westerham TN16 2JB
email: raywatson@iclway.co.uk;



April Meeting

Friends Meeting House,
Ravensbourne Road, Bromley

Credit Unions
Community Savings and Loan Schemes
with Andrea Allen

Tuesday 1st April
7.30pm.

Everyone welcome – bring a friend

Copy for the next Newsletter must be with the Editor by
WEDNESDAY 16TH APRIL. Contact details inside front cover.

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May meeting - Tues 6th May – Tony Juniper, FoE's outgoing Chief Exec

Diary dates:**April 1st (Tues)**

Bromley FoE's April meeting: Credit Unions – finance schemes on a local scale. ***Credit Unions are mutual organisations which can provide affordable loans for those excluded from mainstream banking and keep them out of the jaws of loan sharks.***

April 5th (Sat)

Bromley FoE Stall; 12noon to 2pm re the Planning Bill now going through Parliament, also Climate Change Day of action, Bromley High Street outside Caffe Nero

April 20th (Sun)

Bluebell walk; see below for details

May 6th (Tues)

Bromley FoE's May meeting; with FoE's Chief Executive Tony Juniper. ***Hear Tony Juniper sharing his thoughts with us as he looks back over his years as CEO and his analysis of the state of the planet.***

May 13th (Tues)

Ron Huzzard Memorial Lecture: Crofton Halls, Orpington, 7,30pm. Guest speaker is Michael Meacher, former Labour environment minister

Bluebell walk – Sunday 20th April, 11am

Meet at Lullingstone Visitor Centre. The walk takes us through Lullingstone Park and hopefully some bluebells, early spring permitting. It may be muddy underfoot. Lunch stop can either be your own picnic (there are picnic tables) or at the Club House which has a bar and hot drinks. People may wish to divert to Lullingstone Castle and its World Garden (as seen on TV) or return to the Visitor Centre which serves tea. Phone Sheila on 01689-851605 if you need a lift.

Bromley FoE Photo Album

We are building up a pictorial, record of Bromley Friends of the Earth. If you have any photographs of past events, do bring them along to the next monthly meeting, if possible with details and approximate date. If you can't make the meeting, please give Sheila a ring on 01689-851605.

Next Newsletter - copy details:

Any news, articles, poems, questions, views etc for the next Newsletter must be with the editor **by WEDNESDAY 16TH 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.

Reminder – FoE Stall April 5th

Climate Change and Planning Reform Bill stall from 12.00 - 2.00 on Saturday April 5th outside Caffe Nero in Bromley High Street precinct area. Grateful thanks to those people who have already offered to help. See press release on the next page.

Climate and Energy

Eskimos Sue Oil Companies

An Eskimo village being washed into the sea is suing BP and 23 other energy giants accusing them of causing global warming. Kivalina, home to 400 people, claims the companies emit millions of tons of greenhouse gases which contribute to rising sea levels.

The villagers are worried that they now have water right up till December, instead of ice which should begin in October. A spokesman from Exxon Mobile, one of the companies being sued, says it takes the issue of climate change very seriously.

China Closes Plastic Bags Factories, but its CO2 Rises

China is producing as much CO2 as was previously thought. The world's most populous country will see its emissions grow by at least 11% every year. The new figures mean that, according to researchers, by 2010 there will be an increase of 600 million tonnes of carbon dioxide. However according to FoE spokesman Tom Picken, the average CO2 of each Briton is much higher than that of Chinese people!

China seems to be making an effort at the moment in the plastic bags area though. The Huaqiang Plastic Company, its biggest manufacturer of plastic bags, has closed its factories in response to a decision by the government to ban its products. The plastic bag ban takes place on June 1st and will eliminate the flimsiest bags and force stores to change to more durable ones.

Rising World Food Prices

Although there are bumper crops at the moment, food prices are rising drastically and there are impending signs of shortages throughout the world in future - all part of the predicted climate warfare scenario.

Wheat prices have doubled in a year, and in just one day they shot up by 25%. This is happening while harvests are good, so it is worrying to think what will happen when global warming makes production more erratic.

What is equally concerning is that Britons throw away half of all the food produced on farms each year. About 20m tonnes is wasted - equivalent to half of the food import needs for the whole of Africa.

Some 16m tonnes of this is wasted in homes, shops, restaurants, hotels and food manufacturing. Much of the rest of it is thought to be destroyed between the farm field and the shop shelf. A spokesman for the British Retail Consortium has said that retailers are working closely with suppliers to minimise waste through analysing the supply chain.

March Meeting Report – *Graham Hemington*

Talk on Helping and re-homing wounded hedgehogs, by Mavis Rughini

Being asked to look after five baby hedgehogs was the start of Mavis's love affair with these creatures. How to feed five prickly balls was her first challenge; initially reluctant to eat anything except blackberry juice but eventually baby food.

"Prickles", the youngest, developed an eye infection necessitating a visit to the vet. Straightforward treatment? In Mavis's arms or in her box Prickles was relaxed revealing her face, but placed on the vet's table she just curled up – not for her the intended eye-drops. But success was achieved later with a different vet.

People finding injured or ill hedgehogs contact Mavis for help, subsequently the hedgehogs are collected by her husband and allocated their own box and bedding. Typically Mavis looks after about 50 hedgehogs at a time. Nursed by Mavis means getting rid of ticks and fleas (the latter have largely died out except in the Sidcup area), daily cleaning of boxes, visits to the vet, feeding them with their natural food, e.g. slugs and insects or meaty cat or dog food.

Hedgehogs become very ill after eating slugs which have digested slug pellets; some suffer, especially the young, due to the variability in weather, e.g. very hot days, sudden drop in temperature, etc. Chronic rhinitis in Charlotte (the hedgehog Mavis brought to show us) means a runny nose attracting flies and

constant medication. After treatment and TLC, the hedgehogs are returned to where they were found.

Hedgehog numbers are going down, probably due to the increase in badgers (the only animals that can kill and eat hedgehogs), gardeners wanting tidier gardens, strimmers and other garden tools cutting into nests, more cars and loss of hedgerows.

Finally, a plea from Mavis for us to leave a small part of our own gardens covered with leaves etc. for a hedgehog to build somewhere to hibernate.

Bromley FoE's Press Release for the Climate Day of Action

Bromley FoE will be urging the Prime Minister Gordon Brown to stop ignoring aviation. They will have a stall with postcards for the public to sign on Saturday April 5th outside Caffe Nero in Bromley High Street from 12.00 noon till 2.00pm.

The group wants the government's new Climate Change law to cover all sources of carbon emissions, including the UK's share of emissions from international aviation and shipping. MPs will have the opportunity to vote on the law when it is debated in Parliament towards the end of April.

If we are really going to tackle climate change then it is vital that MPs take responsibility for this amendment.

Cudham walk, report from Anne Clark

With the sky greyer than the previous days, eight of us found the Cudham Environmental Activities Centre, just down the road from Cudham's Blacksmith's Arms and snuggled in the North Downs valley, within sight of Blackbush Shaw and adjoining field that we had fought so hard for, along with English Heritage and the Woodland Trust.

Warmly welcomed by the Centre managers, we were taken on a very enthusiastic tour of the cosy accommodation with sleeping quarters for 40 in eight rooms, shower and toilets, kitchen for self-catering, or full board, a large inglenook fireplace centred on a common room and the three acre grounds just asking to be explored.

Owned by the Woodcraft Folk, a national voluntary organisation, we were taken on an educational walk with two very well behaved goats in tow – they were being cared for with a rescued pot-bellied pig! Many children and adults, when coming from nature starved areas, needed educating as to what to “see”. Under the trees we found many badger setts with great mounds of chalk where their strong claws had dug out their holes; footprints, unusual mosses, emerging bluebell and anemone leaves.

We emerged to newly fenced meadows where sheep had been grazed to clear the area which was covered in cowslips and primroses, but we were too early to see them in flower. New information signs were being erected for the various footpaths and as we returned to the centre, past

Old Man's Beard, ash saplings and the white blossom of wild cherry and blackthorn, we realised how correct was Darwin's theory of rejuvenation in a piece of land if left or managed correctly, with its banks of wild marjoram for the butterflies to breed.

Our circulation was glowing and we did not need our picnic round the fire in doors, so we sat round an unlit log fire area outside on log benches.

Thanks go to the two excellent managers who, we sadly gathered, were about to retire from the job, for the hard enthusiastic work that they had accomplished. For more information or bookings refer to www.cudhameac.org.uk.

New FoE director announced

The FoE board has appointed a new Executive Director. Andy Atkins will be joining FoE in mid June to replace Tony Juniper as Executive Director.

Simon Counsell of FoE said “As Policy and Campaigns Director at Tearfund since 2000, Andy has overseen many achievements including, the establishment of policy and campaigns work as core business for the organisation, initiating its work on climate change and poverty and championing climate change as a poverty issue among UK development NGOs. He was a member of the Make Poverty History Coordination Team, and was recently a Board member of the Stop Climate Chaos coalition, where he worked with Tony Juniper.”

Transport info – Ray Watson, transport campaigner

Expect to see more co-operation between Transport for London and local borough councils – a relationship which has not always been easy, with our own Bromley Council frequently criticising TfL as ‘interfering and unelected’.

But that co-operation is necessary if Bromley is to get more money from TfL for various road and transport initiatives. Take, for example, road safety. Previous road improvements and safety campaigns have reduced child road deaths and serious injuries by 58 per cent. This year there is £2million of TfL money available for Bromley to compete for. Worth having.

The boroughs and TfL also need to work together on creating further 20mph zones in residential areas, which, the Mayor says, have been a huge success in reducing road casualties.

TfL’s overall budget is a massive £6.8 billion, most of which comes from Government grants and fares (but not council tax). Of course, most of this will go on modernising tube, train, bus and tram networks, all of which are feeling the strain of success – the proof being that more people are using London public transport since 1965.

Free travel

Yes, you can travel in London free. For example, full-time students aged 18 and under and all under 16’s travel free on all buses and trams. From June 1 an Oyster photocard will be necessary to make these journeys and forms are available from post offices,

online at www.tfl.gov.uk or via the TfL helpline 0870-0170 330.

There are also some free journeys at certain times for children under 11 when accompanied by an adult, and also those on income support can get a discount card that allows half-price travel on buses and trams. Again, use the helpline for more details.

Unfair consultation?

So, the Government’s Heathrow third runway consultation is over, amid several claims that it was unfair in that it did not consult widely enough, especially among neighbouring local councils. Also worrying, was the nationalistic posturing of some of the media, waving the flag and chanting that Britain will be made great again by ‘improving’ the airport.

There were many business people saying that we had to make it easier for foreign businessmen to fly here – and rarely a mention of the fact that Britons spending abroad far outweighs the money from travellers coming in.

Even worse was to hear on BBC Radio 4 on the day the Queen opened the new terminal 5, a long interview with a BAA director extolling its virtues – and yet no one was given the chance of making an opposing argument.

It was galling to hear him answer a question about costs being passed on to customers by saying: ‘Well, all these things have to be paid for’. BAA is a profit-making company so why doesn’t it pay up?

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Transport info - *continued*

And while the Government ponders the consultation evidence, it is worth reflecting on the view of Justine Greening, Tory MP for Putney, quoted in The Observer:

'A further 40 million people a year will travel to Heathrow once the new runway is built, doubling the current number. Yet roads are already badly congested and the Tube is bursting at the seams. Yet there is no indication that that anyone seems to have thought about how people will get to Heathrow.

'A third runway will only be acceptable if it is compatible with our climate change policy, if it was accompanied by an increase in high-speed trains, and if noise and other pollution were controlled. There is no sign of that happening'.

And so say all of us! And just a thought: who will pay billions that will no doubt be

spent on building new roads, tube lines etc to the airport? For sure, it won't be BAA.

Green equals stop

Remember the Budget? Most commentators sensed a lack of resolve from the Government when it came to imposing green taxes. But even the harshest critics failed to mention the most inequitable situation of them all: the fact that airlines pay no VAT on aviation fuel and have other tax advantages.

FoE was the first to draw this to the attention of opinion-formers and the public. It is baffling to understand why there is not a popular uprising about this. Not only is it manifestly unfair to ordinary drivers, i. e. the rest of us, but it costs the Treasury vast sums which could, no doubt, be used for causes more worthwhile than subsidising the polluting-likes of British Airways and the rest.

Climate Change protest dates

April 15th

Downing Street is the location for a demonstration against biofuels - 6pm on April 15, the day on which the Government brings into force a measure that requires that all transport fuels contain a percentage of bio-fuels.

April 22nd

On Tuesday April 22 The Big Climate Meeting will be staged at Friends Meeting House, Euston, (7.30pm) with a star cast -- Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for the Environment, his shadow Peter Ainsworth, Lib Dem environment spokesman Steve Webb, and Tony Juniper, of FoE.

June 14/15

Further ahead, the London International Climate Forum will take place on June 14 and 15 at South Camden Community School, Charrington St, Kings Cross, with speakers from around the world, stalls, discussions, exhibitions and performances. The speakers will include leading politicians, scientists and authors.

More details on these events from Ray Watson.

Marine Reserves Campaign – after last month's "fish list"

Help make sure that the Marine Bill gives the UK marine environment the protection that it needs.

A recent report revealed that the seas around the UK are amongst the most degraded in the world and most fish stocks are in a parlous state, with many species on the brink of commercial, or even actual extinction. A recent Royal Commission report recommended a total ban on all commercial fishing and other environmentally damaging activities, covering a minimum of 30% of UK waters, as the only way to ensure the long-term survival of both many fish stocks and of a fishing industry.

The Government have announced their intention to publish a draft Marine Bill, around the end of March, with a view to then putting it before parliament in the autumn. This bill provides a golden opportunity to do something before it is too late and the draft Bill is likely to include some measures to protect the marine environment, unfortunately all the indications are that the proposed measures are likely to be far more limited than most experts believe are necessary.

To try to ensure that this opportunity is not missed MARINET, the Friends of the Earth marine network, have launched the UK Marine Reserves Campaign, to work with other organizations such as Greenpeace, WWF, The Wildlife Trusts, and the Marine Conservation Society, to try to get a requirement to set up an extensive network of highly protected marine reserves included in the Bill.

This is only likely to happen if we can mobilize a lot of pressure on MPs and the Government.

As a first step towards trying to mobilize this pressure we are contacting as many organizations and individuals as we can, to ask you to support the campaign in any way that you feel able.

To provide more background on why we need this campaign a briefing written for MPs is attached. I also attach a Word version of this e-mail.

What you can do

Contact your local MP and ask others to do the same

An early day motion (EDM 1141) has been tabled in Parliament, calling for the Government to: "...amend the current Marine Bill to include a duty on the Secretary of State to establish an ecologically coherent network of Highly Protected Marine Reserves covering at least 30% of UK seas out to 200 nautical miles."

To put pressure on the Government we need to get as many MPs as possible to back this motion. If people can do nothing else we are asking them to at least contact their MP to urge them to sign EDM 1141. This can be done using WriteToThem (www.writetothem.com), although if people feel able to then also arranging to see an MP in person can have even more impact and organizations in particular might like to arrange for them to meet with a delegation.

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Marine Reserves Campaign – *continued*

If you find that your MP has already signed the EDM then still write to them to thank them, as this will help to keep them onside. If you are receiving this e-mail as a representative of an organization we would ask you to pass this request on to your members.

Get involved in the campaign

Getting MPs to sign the EDM is only a first step, to get the kind of bill that is needed we will need to keep the pressure up for the next year, as it goes through Parliament. We need to get as many organizations as possible to contribute to the consultation process, between when the draft bill is published and the end of June. We will also need to generate as much media coverage of the campaign as we can and get as many people as possible involved in continuing to lobby the Government and individual MPs at every stage of the process.

Get your organization to add its name to the list of campaign supporters

Even if your organization doesn't feel able to get more actively involved, but would still like to express its support then let us know and we will still add your organization to the list of campaign sponsors. The more organizations that the Government can see are supporting the campaign the more pressure it will create.

Donations

Running a big campaign costs money and if you would like to make a donation then cheques, made payable to the MARINET, can be sent to: Malcolm Scott, 42 Percy Road, Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear, NE26 2AY.

Please indicate that the donation is for the Marine Reserves Campaign

“They are stripping our seas bare” – “30%, the naked truth”

Particularly outside of coastal areas we need to work hard to raise the profile of this issue. Given the way that over fishing is “stripping” our seas of fish and the way that bottom trawling “strips” the seabed “bare” of all life some of us are looking at organizing a series of naked actions and photo shoots around the above slogans, as a way of drawing attention to the need for action.

Nothing is planned before the weather gets warmer, but we are looking for volunteers to take part when it does and it would help with forward planning to have some indication of how many people might be prepared to participate. More information on what we have in mind and on precedents for such actions can be found on the marine reserves page of the Leicester Friends of the Earth website.

Forward this e-mail to other groups, organizations and individuals

We cannot possibly reach everyone who might support the campaign directly, so please forward this e-mail as widely as you can, to other groups, organizations and individuals who you think might be willing to support the campaign.

Malcolm Hunter, UK Marine Reserves Campaign Activism Lead and Leicester Friends of the Earth.

Friends of the Earth on Climate Change

Big Ask – The Big Climate Meeting!

Some of you may remember the meeting with Joan Ruddock (Defra minister) that some of you got into to, and some of you couldn't. Joan Ruddock certainly remembers!

At that event we promised to arrange a much bigger and bolder public meeting to allow you all to let Ministers know exactly what you think about the Climate Bill. Here's what we've managed to sort out. This might be our last chance to give the government a final nudge to make the Bill be everything it needs to be. So please make a date in your diary to be there and celebrate everything we have achieved together over the last two years.

The Big Climate Meeting - Friends Meeting House, Euston, London, Tuesday 22 April 2008, 7.30pm.

With Hilary Benn (Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs), Peter Ainsworth (Shadow secretary of state for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs), Steve Webb (Liberal Democrat Spokesman for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs), Tony Juniper (TBC)

We've hired a massive venue and we really need to fill it to bursting to have the impact we need, so anything you can do to help with this would be really appreciated! We are printing leaflets to help us publicise it, and it would be great if you could take some for distribution, or do anything else to spread the word.

Climate Change bill Update

All your letters and emails to MPs over the last month have paid off! Over 200 MPs have now signed EDM 736 calling for a strengthening of the Climate Change Bill. This is putting huge pressure on the Government to toughen up its targets and count all emissions fairly and squarely from the outset. There have also been amendments in the House of Lords to include annual milestones in the law, or 'indicative annual ranges' as the Government calls them. We're nearly there!

Over half the groups in our region have now signed up to take part in the Big Ask day of action on Saturday 5th April. If your group is planning on taking part this year, please make sure you sign up today so we can get the fantastic props and resources to you as soon as possible. This aviation-focussed day of action should be a simple, fun and effective way to draw media attention to current flaws in the climate change bill and put some much-needed final pressure on MPs to vote the right way in April. It will take some careful planning and preparation in your group meeting but we can provide all the support you need. You'll receive a comprehensive action guide by the end of February to help plan your eye-catching Gordon Brown photo stunt as a group.

The day of action telephone helpline is also open every Monday evening from now until 5th April from 6pm – 7.30pm. Just call 0207 5661677 for help in planning your local day of action and answers to all your media queries.

Two articles from the FoE website

Competition Commission backs down

The Commission has backed down over the worst of its supermarket planning recommendations. They had previously recommended removing key planning rules in order to make more land available for supermarkets on the edge of town centres and out of town. This unexpected decision follows months of lobbying by Friends of the Earth and our supporters.

The Commission has been investigating problems in the grocery industry since May 2006. This latest decision is part of their provisional remedies paper. Their remedies also include further measures that we have been campaigning for. They have recommended a much tighter Code of Practice to stop unfair costs and risks being passed on to farmers.

They have also recommended that an ombudsman be appointed to oversee the code. It is now essential that the proposed ombudsman is given sufficient powers to ensure that supermarkets stick to the new code.

Supermarkets will be working hard to weaken the proposals - but we will continue our campaign to ensure strict rules are imposed following the Commission's final report in May. In addition the Government will be consulting on new planning guidance very soon.

The Commission's decision means we can focus our efforts on getting a set of strong and positive planning policies in place when the consultation starts.

New wind farms to power 70,000 homes

Two new wind farms have been approved by the Government which together will bring clean, renewable energy to 70,000 homes. Over 50 turbines at Keadby, North Lincolnshire and Tween Bridge, South Yorkshire will be installed with a capacity of over 150 MW. A public inquiry in 2007 examined the projects and recommended that permission be granted for the developments.

Local group victory

The success follows North Lincolnshire Friends of the Earth's lobbying and submission to the public inquiry.

Jan Clark, Campaigner, North Lincolnshire Friends of the Earth, said: "Burning fossil fuels to generate power damages our fragile world beyond repair. Our area has a great opportunity to embrace low-carbon technology to benefit the local economy and the global environment. These wind farms represent a major contribution to tackling climate change."

Find out more

More information about Keadby and Tween Bridge wind farms can be found on the developers' sites, <http://www.eon-uk.com/403.aspx>, and <http://www.res-ltd.com/wind-farms/wf-keadby.htm>:

FoE's comment on the Budget – A long way short of green action

The Chancellor has fallen a long way short of his promise to put sustainability at the heart of today's Budget, Friends of the Earth said today. Alistair Darling should have used his speech to announce a wide range of positive measures that would have helped develop a low carbon economy by making it cheaper and easier for people to go green. But despite a few welcome green initiatives, it fell a long way short of what is required.

Friends of the Earth director Tony Juniper said:

"The Chancellor promised to put sustainability at the heart of today's announcement, but he has merely tinkered in the margins. Mr Darling should have used this Budget to tackle climate change - the biggest challenge the world faces - by making it cheaper and easier for people to go green, including tax breaks for greening the home, and grants for renewable energy. He did announce a number of welcome green initiatives, such as a car purchase tax and an increase in aviation duty, but the overall package falls a long way short of what is required. We urgently need real political leadership on this issue."

"Another freeze in fuel duty will further undermine the Government's already weak green credentials. The cost of motoring has fallen over the past 10 years, and carbon emissions from road transport have risen. Raising fuel duty would encourage people to choose greener transport options. And the money raised could have been used to cut taxes on people and jobs, and

"helped to fund a range of green initiatives, including better sustainable transport options."

Detailed assessment

Overall

Today's announcement fell a long way short of the green budget Mr Darling promised. He backtracked on fuel duty, and huge areas of the economy were not touched at all. There was nothing to insulate the homes of the fuel poor, or make it cheaper and easier for people to go green. The Budget did contain some good measures on car tax, carbon budgets and aviation, and these are very welcome. There were other green measures, but these were minor. Overall though this is not "putting sustainability at the heart of the budget." The net effect of the Budget on carbon emissions is certainly not up to the scale of action required, as set out in the Stern Review.

Road fuel duty

Mr Darling deferred this for 6 months, and announced an above inflation rise in 2010. This backtrack is a bad signal. Gordon Brown announced fuel duty rates for three years in Budget 2007 to give businesses certainty. Less than a year later, he has changed his policy despite saying "continuing stability and certainty to business" is essential. A survey by PriceWaterHouseCoopers found that 51% of businesses are not confident in making long-term investment decisions in the context of the current environmental tax and /continued on next page

FoE's comment on the Budget - *continued*

regulatory framework, and that current environmental incentives in the tax system are seen as unclear, too complex and fail to motivate any behavioural change.

Green homes

The Chancellor failed to take any action to tackle the 27% of carbon emissions which come from the UK's homes. There were no tax breaks to encourage people to install energy efficiency measures, no new money for grants to help households install renewable energy on their homes and nothing to insulate the homes of the millions suffering from fuel poverty.

The Chancellor did nothing about the scandal of energy companies making an estimated £9bn in unearned profits from the free allocation of carbon emissions permits under the European Emissions Trading Scheme. Having threatened the energy companies with a windfall tax he backed down in return of a feeble promise of increasing the number of people receiving a social tariff. A Windfall Tax could have raised £5bn to insulate the homes of the fuel poor. The £26m on green homes service is not new money.

There were no increases to the Warm Front programme of grants for energy efficiency measures for those on benefits (the Government having cut it by £250m over next three years in the October Comprehensive Spending Review : they are estimated to be treating 50,000 less homes a year as a result of cuts).

He announced "voluntary and statutory" action on pre-payment meters, phased £100m extra from energy companies for social tariffs, and increases in Winter Fuel Payments. All these are necessary measures to help people in dire need pay their bills but this is a short term solution, and much of this cash will simply be heating our skies - insulating the homes of the fuel poor and investing in energy efficiency is the crucial permanent solution to fuel poverty, and will tackle climate change at the same time.

Green cars

The moves on greener cars are welcome. The number of VED bands will increase from 2009-10 and the top rate (for cars emitting over 255g/km CO₂) will be 10% higher than for 2008-09. Rates for cars with emissions around the average of UK new car sales (approximately 165g/km) will rise and rates for more fuel-efficient cars will fall slightly.

The Government has also slightly firmed up its position for a longer-term carbon dioxide target for new car emissions in current EU negotiations, from calling for 100g/km CO₂ by 2020-2025 to 100g/km by 2020. This is a step in the right direction but does not go far enough. Green groups have called for average emissions from new cars sold in 2020 to be no more than 80g/km CO₂ - representing a doubling of fuel efficiency from current levels.

More details of the FoE reaction to the budget can be found on FoE's website.

FoE on London Sustainability Weeks

London Sustainability Weeks is between 1st and 21st June, and Friends of the Earth will be holding an 'open day' event for Londoners and FoE Financial Supporters from around the South East answering the question: 'What does FoE do?' and 'How can I be part of it?'

Friends of the Earth, London and You

The aim of the day is to provide a stepping stone into membership for people who are curious about the work of Friends of the Earth but are not supporters and a stepping stone for Financial Supporters who don't currently know what local groups do, to engage with their local group. We will also choose a key FoE campaign and encourage people to take action on the day.

Friends of the Earth local groups will take over a public building with a café

in Central London where people can drop in and speak to staff and volunteers, see our films and end with a talk and book promotion by Tony Juniper.

This event will be run by local groups and therefore the more we can work together, the bigger success it will be. If you have any suggestions for this event, would like your group to be represented on the day or would like to help make it happen, please contact Suzy Edwards on edwards.suzy@gmail.com or 07939 266 969.

Any further events that local groups want to host can also go in the Love London listing brochure which is circulated with the Evening Standard, and website and benefit from all the publicity on tube trains, at tube stations and bus stops across the capital.

Query – An observation from Dave Davis

It is 2008 and according to TV maps there is sunshine and warm weather in some quarters. The North and South Poles are still melting but no news of them is regularly given. The polar bears are *not* happy but they only live there and have no dollars to spend!

This is a very difficult assessment of the world. There is so much false news yet also true reports of corruption and killings and awareness that those who cling to the levers of power are the roots causes of the problems.

On the verge of collapse - the world scene? So many contradictions yet so many technical and scientific advances. Yet how many are aware of and encouraged by the vast growth of potential if the human race can use the vast layers of skills. War and destructive policies are and will destroy what is a marvelous planet.

Bromley Friends of the Earth - List of Contacts

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email – raywatson@iclway.co.uk

Treasurer:

Ivy Smith 01689-872642

Press Officer:

vacant

Programme Organiser:

Sheila Brown 01689-851605

Outings organisers:

John & Sue Bocock 020-8464-5990

email – johnbocock@hotmail.com

Walks Arrangers:

temporarily vacant

Verifier:

Dave Davis 020-8650-5692

Membership Secretary:

Dan Sloan 01689-838819

Newsletter Editor:

John Street 020-8460-1078

email – johnstreet@gn.apc.org

Merchandising:

Anne Clark 020-8289-8483

Teas:

Anne Clark / Ivy Smith

Campaigns –

Transport:

Ray Watson 01959-571566

Climate and Energy:

Ann Garrett 020-8460-1295

Trade Justice / FairTrade

Liam Padwick

email – liam.padwick1@ntlworld.com

Real Food:

Diana Hurd 020-8402-7586

Waste (Recycling):

Debbie Witherick 01689-858748

email -

deborah.witherick@btinternet.com

Planning and development:

Tamara Galloway 01689-855352

tamaragalloway@yahoo.com

Bromley FoE web site:

Peter Gandolfi

famgando@hotmail.com

Letters to the Editor

Why not write us a letter if you have a strong opinion on something or just want to share your thoughts. Send them in and perhaps even start a discussion - who knows.

Need a lift to meetings?

If you require a lift to Bromley FoE meetings, please contact Sheila Brown or Ray Watson on the numbers shown above.

Disclaimer

Please note that any opinion expressed in this Newsletter is not necessarily that of Bromley Friends of the Earth or Friends of the Earth.

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 also 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, 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, Kent, BR6 7RN.** Other enquiries regarding the group should be sent to: Birch House, Grays Road, Westerham, Kent, TN16 2JB; phone 01959-571566, email raywatson@iclway.co.uk.

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

Name.....

Address.....

..... Postcode.....

Email Address.....

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

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