

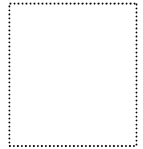


Friends of the Earth

Bromley

August 2011 No. 284 Newsletter

Bromley FoE: inquiries to Birch House, Grays Road, Westerham TN16 2JB
email: r.watson865@btinternet.com; website: www.bromleyfoe.co.uk



August Meeting

Friends Meeting House,
Ravensbourne Road, Bromley

Dragonflies (Dragons and Damsels)

*Jewels of stream and pond, yet fierce predators with a
fascinating love life*

Howard Cox from Orpington Field Club

Tuesday 2nd August - 7.30pm.

Everyone welcome – bring a friend

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Copy for the next Newsletter must be with the Editor by
SUNDAY 21ST AUGUST. Contact details inside front cover.

Apologies – Tea on the Lawn event CANCELLED

Diary dates:

Aug 2nd (Tues)	Bromley FoE's August meeting: Howard Fox from Orpington Field Club
Aug 6th (Sat)	Hiroshima Day: ceremony in Tavistock Square, London, WC1, 12noon
Aug 29th (Mon)	Cudham Fete, Cudham Recreation Ground: from 11am
Sept 4th (Sun)	Urban Green Fair, Brockwell Park: from 11am. "An independent green fair for London powered by solar and wind energy. www.urbangreenfair.org
Sept 6th (Tues)	Bromley FoE's September meeting: Wendy Ahl from Care for the World International
Sept 9-11	FoE local groups conference, Nottingham University
Oct 4th (Tues)	Bromley FoE's October meeting
Oct 15 (Sat)	Bromley FoE campaign stall, Bromley High Street

Tea on the Lawn event CANCELLED

Regrettably, the Tea on the Lawn event planned for July 30 at Birch House has had to be cancelled. Ray and Marina's daughter was seriously injured in a road crash a month ago and, though now out of hospital and with her various injuries beginning to mend, caring for her is taking up a great deal of their time.

We were all very much looking forward to a relaxing and fun afternoon, but the tea and cakes will have to wait until a new date can be arranged.

OUR BIG 40 !!

It is not just the Olympics that is a big event in 2012 – Bromley FoE celebrates its 40th birthday. FoE came to England from the USA in 1961 and is preparing 40th birthday events of its own for later this year. We were one of the first local groups to be formed, although, so far, we cannot put a date on the inaugural meeting. Perhaps you know better!

We are planning an event to celebrate our 40th and would appreciate ideas from members of the group. Maybe a social event, a campaign initiative, a visit by a household name or leading environmentalist? Please pass your views to Sheila, Ann or Ray so we know what you would like to see happen.

Next Newsletter - copy details:

Any news, articles, poems, questions, views etc for the next Newsletter must be with the editor **by SUNDAY 21ST AUGUST:**

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

Biggin Hill consultation – Your view is important

If you have not already sent your objection to expansion at Biggin Hill Airport, then please act now. The deadline is 5pm on Friday July 29 and you can send a letter or an email (*details below*). Every protest counts.

The airport wants longer operating hours – early morning to late at night – and is calling for these extended hours to apply to weekends and public holidays during the Olympics period. Plus, the danger is that these hours will become permanent once they have been established – something the airport has never denied.

A decision on the application will be made by the executive of Bromley Council as head leaseholder. In the Spring a similar application was voted down by the full council by 44 votes to 8. As the new application is very similar to the first, it is difficult to see how councillors can change their minds second time round.

Orpington MP Jo Johnson has already announced that he opposes the second application just as he did the first because residents would suffer noise and pollution.

Indeed, if you objected in the Spring, you may find it a useful 'shorthand' to say in your new objection message that your grounds for objecting first time round still apply. You will also find detailed arguments in last month's Newsletter.

Why are objections important? Bromley Council will release totals for those individuals who voted for or against and anything less than the

2008 objectors last time would allow the airport, and possibly the council, to claim that only a minority opposed their plans. (Regrettably, the council plays down the fact that 30 organisations – residents associations, BFoE and other groups – with thousands of members, also came out against the airport).

Send your letter to Airport Consultation, London Borough of Bromley, Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, Bromley, BR1 3UH, or email to airport.consultation@bromley.gov.uk. Do it now!

FoE's Change Your World; Resource Use - We're still talking half as much rubbish

With the help of many local groups, our campaign calling for the Government to commit to reduce England's black bag waste has been picking up pace.

To spread the word and up the pressure, we put adverts in national newspapers and launched a viral video online. The local group Day of Action got lots of great press coverage and over 4,000 people emailed David Cameron supporting the campaign.

Eric Pickles MP won our Talking Rubbish Awards for spreading myths about recycling. We held a spoof award ceremony outside Parliament, and handed in more than 5,000 postcards asking the Government to work with councils and business to reduce waste and boost recycling and reuse.

July meeting report, from Sue and John Boccock

Jacqueline Leach, our speaker, is Director of Commonwork at Bore Place. She gave us a fascinating history into the background of the organization.

She explained how Jenifer and Neil Wates had bought a farm of 500 acres in 1976 at Bore Place. Jenifer had been a South London magistrate, a mother of five children. Her husband, Neil had previously been Chairman of Wates the building firm. Both were widely travelled and had experienced a variety of differing lifestyles, especially when they were in China.

Jacqueline drew our attention to Neil's innovative and radical ideas; for instance, he was the only businessman at the time to make a stand against trading with South Africa. Jenifer, while working in the youth courts and with young, disadvantaged teenagers from Brixton and Peckham had seen a disconnect they had, not only with each other but also with the natural world; they felt life was much too compartmentalized.

They asked themselves what they could do. Neil was wealthy and they had wanted to show it was possible to live and work in a sustainable fashion, albeit that sometimes there would be failures. An example of this was the expensive purchase of an anaerobic digester at £150,000.

When they took on the farm in 1976 there had already been a dairy herd and arable land, but after Neil's sudden early death in 1985, the money was now in a charitable trust and risk-taking needed to be minimized.

Commonwork was changing into a different organization. It was becoming a real life example of how life operated with successes and failures.

It was at this time, Jacqueline explained, that the education programme began to develop. Every year 10,000 visitors come to Bore Place: half of these are children and half are adults. This enables many to stay in residential accommodation and to absorb the ethos of connection and sustainability.

Now the dairy herd is reared organically and numbers 200, (a reduction from the original 300). The quality of life of the cows has improved; they now have more space, less stress, likewise the people - less time spent in milking. The cost has been in a fall of profit, hence the importance of developing the educational activities and the centre. But it was agreed this was a price well worth paying.

Finally, Jacqueline emphasized just how important it was, and still is, for Jenifer and Neil's ideals and philosophy to be demonstrated in their daily lives and in the community who live and work there now.

"Our vision is of a fairer world, in which people collaborate with each other and with nature everywhere recognizing that all are interconnected", Jenifer and Neil Wates.

We would like to thank Jacqueline for a most interesting and inspirational talk.

Transport information – from Ray Watson

With the summer holiday season quieter this year, it is worth noting that the airline industry has been making much of the fact that air passenger duty levied in the UK is higher than in European countries. This is more than cheeky when you recall that tax breaks for the industry save it £11 billion annually.

What it means is that the 50 per cent of the population that does not fly – the poorest – are paying the equivalent of a £600 subsidy for those who do fly, the wealthy.

Add to that the cost of emissions and noise pollution created by the industry which are making more difficult for national CO2 targets to be met.

No, instead of lowering air passenger duty, surely we should be campaigning for other European countries to increase theirs. And while we are at it, why not kill off a sizeable part of the country's deficit by scrapping the subsidies that the aviation industry is enjoying. Let them pay tax on fuel etc as we all have to.

Take-heart note: the pro-aviation pressure group Flying Matters has collapsed. Its members – BA, EasyJet, Virgin, and BAA among others – could not agree a policy to put to the government on air passenger duty.

Heard it before?

It has been accepted for many years that building a new road does not relieve congestion, it merely attracts more traffic. Yet the Federation of Small Businesses told the Commons select committee on transport that

there was a cry from its members for more and more new roads.

The Campaign for Better Transport kicked that into the long grass, countering that there were many examples to prove the point, not least the controversial Newbury by-pass where traffic levels in the town are back where they were before.

Getting closer

One of motorists' fears of electric cars is that the batteries will run out. However, there are now 400 charging points on the capital's roads, with the aim of increasing that to 1,300 in three years. Called London Source, this is a London-wide scheme, thus avoiding boroughs charging at different prices. It will cost the motorist £100 a year.

That's progress?

Pity the people around London City airport. They were defeated when the airport asked for a doubling in the number of flights. Now they are suffering from more noise because there are more jets as opposed to jet-props taking off.

Even worse is that fact that areas like Wanstead and Dagenham, previously outside the noise zone, are now in it because jet take-off noise expands over a wider area.

And it is not all that far from South East London...

Campaigns information – from Ann Garrett

Raglan Road school

Took our campaigning into Raglan Road School on July 5th. Annette Rose had organised an eco day based on the theme of 'Reduce, Reuse and Recycle'. When I arrived at the School there were many exciting 'Green' happenings in progress and much bustling around and creativity!

I ended up with about 60 year five children. Wearing a Friends of the Earth tabard I talked about our group, campaigns and the international aspects of our work, stressing the importance of being part of a world-wide movement.

Being a drama teacher I decided to involve the children in a warm-up of making images and still photos based on the theme, followed by chanting - 'Reduce, Reuse and Recycle' in syncopated rhythm, and interview/role-plays involving debates about different attitudes to packaging and recycling.

Six different groups then planned and presented short TV adverts/programmes. There were some imaginative ideas and a generally spontaneous and thoughtful response from both pupils and staff.

South East Regional Gathering

I attended the afternoon sessions on June 25th and went to workshops on the Localism Bill and the Big Energy Conversation.

Paul de Zylva led the first workshop and gave a useful update on the progress of the Localism Bill which is at present in House of Lords before returning to the Commons in the

Autumn. He spoke about the National Planning Framework which states that the delivery of homes, infrastructure and work places needs to be sustainable. The planning system should operate to encourage growth and not act as an impediment.

During the second workshop we completed the Big Energy Conversation questionnaires then discussed ideas for stalls, which included obtaining a pedal sound system and renewable energy education kits. After this we were involved in producing ideas for creating stories for local papers and media, and participated in role -plays revolving around the idea that if 80% of local people wanted investments in renewables, then what was FoE doing about this. One person played a journalist and the other a FoE member. I spoke about working with local councils in obtaining support for insulation and solar panels, and gaining information about grants.

Climate and Energy - High numbers killed by air pollution each year

Pollution in the air is leading to an invisible public health crisis that kills tens of thousands of Britons each year and shortens the lives of nearly 200,000 others, according to researchers.

It is now 55 years since the 1956 Clean Air Act and campaigners say that action on a similar scale is needed once more. A coalition including Asthma UK, Campaign for Better Transport and

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Soapbox – The Amazon Peril – from Sheila Brown – Comments welcome

The Amazon Rainforest has been a cause of concern to environmentalists for a quarter of a century or more, as we have watched its destruction with ensuing loss of habitat and species destruction and the social impact on indigenous peoples.

However I would argue that another Amazon is very quietly and stealthily having an equally destructive impact on life as we know it. This may sound very dramatic, but how many people do you know who order their books from Amazon? This very obviously reduces the footfall in High Street bookshops and, then, very sadly, the bookshops close down. In Orpington we lost our Sussex Stationers about three years ago, and now the one in Bromley has gone as well. I understand the whole company went into administration a few months ago.

I am a great proponent of using local shops, but what to do when the local shops are no longer there?

However, much more worryingly, Amazon has not restricted its offering solely to books and music. They have expanded in all directions and now offer toys and games, stationery, clothing, sports and leisure goods, computing, kitchen equipment, white goods, photographic, computing and home entertainment.

We hear that Comet is struggling – presumably because its erstwhile customers are no longer driving to a store but ordering online from the comfort of their own home. The supermarkets, like Sainsbury and

Tesco, who have branched out into electronics etc, will also be feeling the draught.

Whereas my concern is the socio-economic impact, if shops and stores are undermined and find it no longer viable to continue trading so that our high streets become wastelands, it amazes me that no alarm is being expressed at government level at this vast outflow of consumers' money into the hands of a foreign based company. The economic effect will be felt too in the loss of jobs in this country. It seems to me that well-meaning individuals simply do not stop and think through the unintended consequences of their seemingly innocent actions and transactions.

Shops? Yes, please. Amazon? No thank you.

Campaigns info *(continued)*

Friends of the Earth have launched ' a healthy air ' campaign calling on the Government to act.

A Defra spokesperson has stated that they know more needs to be done to improve air quality and that they are working towards full compliance with European air quality standards.

Climate and Energy - Fears for marine life due to global warming

Climate Change will turn the Baltic Sea into an increasingly freshwater sea and devastate its marine life according to scientists.

/concluded on page 9

Japanese Knot Weed, - Rob Clark

I wrote the following article intended for BFoE newsletter around 8 or 9 years ago. Having rediscovered it, knowing it never reached the newsletter editor, I wonder how relevant it is today - in theory it should be more so. Let me know what you think - and the prize still stands although the year will change to 2011.

Japanese Curse

I don't know how many of you have noticed the ever ensuing onslaught of the dreaded Japanese Knot Weed. Becoming familiar with its red stems and regular, symmetrical leaves some 10 years ago or so I can't help but notice examples of this pervasive plant forcing its way through tarmac or fencing, or dominating neglected pieces of land.

The largest areas of the Weed I have seen are on railway embankments and it's spread has been a puzzle to me for some time now. I thought that there were just a few patches beside my regular railway line going through Lewisham to London Bridge and beyond, but in recent years I have begun to realise how far this plant seems to have spread. Travelling on different lines into and out of London has highlighted just how many clumps of the Weed exist. The question is how does it replant itself 100 yards, half a mile or more further down the track?

Travelling from London to Bracknell a few years ago I was surprised to see clumps of the weed along the Bracknell line at least half way to my destination – I had thought this was a South Eastern line problem.

The plant itself gets its bad reputation from the ability to spread its dominance over the land it occupies and the difficulty in clearing it. The only method of eradication I have heard of is laying the area of land infested to lawn for 8 years and making sure it gets cut every week. Not very practical in most situations.

But should we become paranoid about its apparent bid to take over the whole country? This question has worried me slightly before but I have, more recently, leant towards the more liberal side of the argument.

This 'weed' was apparently brought into the country over a century ago as an ornamental plant. So its existence in this country is our fault; 'our' meaning the British population. Therefore should we not take responsibility for what our ancestors have done? Perhaps two methods of tackling this problem might be: putting a great deal of effort and worry into finding a way of culling and clearing the weed; or we could decide to let nature take its course.

The plant dominates its space by growing large, lush leaves blocking light from the ground underneath thus preventing other plants from germinating. It spreads itself by sending suckers out underground in every direction. But I have observed that it does not grow under trees or where it cannot get enough light to survive leaving an area, though shady, free for other species to flourish.

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Colin Smith says NO to changes in the Energy Bill

Bromley Council has rejected our request to push for changes in the Energy Bill now before parliament. Cllr Colin Smith, executive committee member for the environment, refused to send a letter to the borough's three MPs urging them to support amendments that would give local authorities powers to work on reducing CO2 emissions in their area.

Boroughs would also be given access to advice from the independent Commission on Climate Change on how to achieve this.

Following a national campaign by Friends of the Earth, 40 local authorities of all political persuasions have so far declared their support for the amendments.

Cllr Smith heard arguments put forward by a Bromley FoE deputation but rejected them in a letter, saying he 'did not feel it appropriate' to lobby the MPs. He added: 'I do not in any way support or wish to encourage arbitrary top-down targets being imposed on local government by Westminster in any field or walk of life'.

He also expressed concern that 'excessive pursuit of emission targets will potentially damage and delay the country's fragile economic condition' to the benefit of others 'in faraway lands who are not impeding themselves with similar liabilities at direct financial cost and no direct environmental benefit to our own national self interests'.

Japanese Knot Weed, *continued*

And, although no obvious plants grow under its canopy there must be some indigenous British plants that would grow in these conditions. - not to mention the insects etc. that couldn't care which plants they live under.

So a biodiversity does still exist where no one species can dominate completely despite appearances. It may overrun our railway embankments and gardens but there will still be areas where it prefers not to grow. And, if left long enough, a natural antidote to this problem will avail itself – a Japanese Weed Disease perhaps.

So don't panic, just look and observe. I'll give a prize at the end of 2003 for the furthest sighting from London in the UK of the weed especially if it's on a railway embankment. Reports back to the newsletter Editor.

Campaigns info, *concluded*

A multinational study has found that an increase in precipitation in the region would lead to water to becoming less salty. The Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research has expressed serious worries and has said that we can expect damaging upheaval as we overturn the workings of a system that's so complex and important. Situations like this support the case for more urgent investment in renewable industries.

Green groups warn Government over aviation CO2 emissions

This item is from an AirportWatch Press Release

The government must retain current UK aviation CO2 target and adopt Committee on Climate Change recommended flight limits in full. “Back door” airport expansion via planning system needs to be stopped right away until new UK-wide aviation policy in place

A major new report from AirportWatch, the UK umbrella alliance of green and community groups campaigning for sustainable aviation policies, entitled “Aviation and Climate Change Policy in the UK” is published today, setting out a sophisticated policy mix of tough measures to control and reduce UK aviation’s growing carbon footprint that endorses the seminal December 2009 Committee on Climate Change report “Meeting the UK Aviation Target”.

AirportWatch would like to see the following actions implemented immediately:

- * Clear confirmation that absolute UK aviation CO2 emissions to be no higher than 2005 levels in 2050, a total of 37.5 MtCO2 (as a minimum requirement)
- * Strengthen this target by setting interim goals: average UK aviation emissions not to exceed 37.5 MtCO2 in any 5 year period through to 2050
- * Mandatory 5 yearly assessments of aircraft fuel efficiency and CO2 performance improvements to check new aviation technology is delivering the industry’s promises

- * Set tough mandatory sustainability criteria for all aviation biofuels at Government level: today’s voluntary standards are unacceptable and open to abuse.

- * All future airport development must obviously now fit within the CCC 37.5 MtCO2 limit

- * There must be mandatory regular updates on the non-CO2 impacts of aviation – NOx, condensation trails and cloud formation – which are known to be at least double the climate impact of CO2 alone.

- * The 2050 target must be adjusted in the light of evolving atmospheric/climate change scientific knowledge

- * A review of the impact of aviation’s inclusion in the EU’s ETS scheme and of Air Passenger Duty, in order to better understand the role taxes and charges play and at what level they might need to be to help achieve the 2050 aviation target

Tim Johnson, Director of the Aviation Environment Federation (AEF), part of the AirportWatch network said: “Today’s report reminds the coalition Government that the CCC is their climate watchdog with a legal obligation to ensure our national climate targets are on track. The Government has already set a tough CO2 emissions target for UK air transport which must be retained and strengthened. The Government needs, however, to

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FoE's Big Green Bike Ride

Registration for The Big Green Bike Ride is now open. Join Friends of the Earth on a 500 mile journey from London to Edinburgh in 2012 and help raise vital money for our campaigns.

The ride will take us through some of the most breathtaking scenery the UK has to offer. And the good news is you don't have to be super-fit to take part — if you're not up for six days in the saddle you can join for a day as we ride from London to Cambridge. Or as we make our way further north.

"We'd love local groups to get involved" says Tracey Pritchard, Head of Fundraising (pictured). "It would be great if you want to take part in the ride. But we also need help promoting the event and support in the stopover villages en route. We want to share the benefits of this event, so groups that help sign-up riders will receive 20 per cent of the net sponsorship raised by those riders."

To find out more visit www.biggreenbikeride.co.uk or to help out during the event email beth.dawson@foe.co.uk.

To secure a place you'll have to pay a registration fee and raise a minimum sponsorship amount. Register now and you'll be entered into our early bird prize draw for cycling goodies.

The event starts on 6th May and the daily legs are: 65 miles London to Cambridge (65 miles); Cambridge to Grantham (85); Grantham to Beverley (90); Beverley to Great Stainton (90); Great Stainton to Alnwick (75); Alnwick to Edinburgh (85).

Green Groups Warn Government, *continued*

endorse the findings of the CCC and challenge industry to deliver its' "aspirational" technology and efficiency goals as a major contribution towards meeting the 2050 target.

"We would like to see the Government's response to the CCC, due next week, (w/c11th July 2011) go further. Two of our key recommendations are:

- a). A mandatory 5 year assessment of whether or not improved technology and new aircraft purchases are actually happening, and at what rates, as we strive to implement the 37.5 MtCO₂ emissions limit, and
- b). Interim goal-setting to ensure average UK aviation emissions do not exceed 37.5 MtCO₂ in any 5 year period through to 2050."

Jeff Gazzard (AEF) added:

"We will see next week if the coalition Government is prepared to accept binding limits on UK aviation emissions that reinforce their welcome decision to say a resounding "NO" to damaging runway construction at Heathrow and elsewhere.

"UK aviation can still grow from approximately 220 million passengers today to around 370 over time, with flights to and from the UK rising to 2.4 million, all within the CCC's 2050 37.5 million tonnes CO₂ target."

FoE's CYW: Rights & Justice - Planning for sustainable development and FoE's Conference 2011

The Government's Localism Bill and proposed changes to the planning system prioritise growth over sustainable development and developers over local people. We're acting to change this.

Planning is all about ensuring that we get the right type of development in the right place. The current system has safeguards to make sure this happens — like the need for developers to submit planning applications. But the Government is proposing drastic reforms which will remove these safeguards in England (see opposite for the situation in Northern Ireland).

Growth at any cost?

The Government's Plan For Growth states that there will be "a powerful new presumption in favour of sustainable development, but the default answer to development will be yes." Local authorities are told to prioritise economic growth and jobs when granting planning consents. We believe this makes a mockery of sustainable development and are campaigning to get a legal definition of it included in the Localism Bill.

We're also concerned that the Government says its new National Planning Policy Framework, which guides local authorities on planning, will be "pro-growth." The guidance will be put out for consultation this summer and we'll be calling for the Government to set out how the planning system can deliver a low carbon future, rather than growth at any cost.

Give local communities a voice

Under the Government's proposals, businesses will be allowed to write the neighbourhood plans for a local area, meaning that they could grant themselves planning permission. We are lobbying the Government to introduce a requirement for all plans to deliver on climate change and take into account the needs of the community. We also believe local people should be given the right to be heard.

FoE's Conference 2011 - Journey to 2050: The next 40 years

We're deep in party-planning mode for Friends of the Earth's 40th anniversary Conference. Here's a sneak preview of what's on offer.

To celebrate the last 40 years, ex-Directors Jonathon Porritt, Tony Juniper, Charles Secrett and Tom Burke will share some favourite stories from their time at Friends of the Earth. We're also hosting the premiere of a specially commissioned photo exhibition and a 40th birthday party on the Saturday night.

But it's not all about looking back. We'll focus on how we can steer the world along a more sustainable course over the next 40 years. We'll hear from present-day Friends of the Earth Director, Andy Atkins, who will share a first taste of our next big campaign, and Nnimmo Bassey, Chair of Friends of the Earth International.

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FoE's Conference 2011, *cont'd*, and Green energy revolution needed

Getting intimate

Many Conference-goers tell us how much they enjoy the smaller seminars with leading experts on environmental issues. This year's seminars will include an insider's guide to the international climate negotiations, a look at the realities of renewable energy and an examination of strategies of social change.

The programme will also feature some of the best training workshops available, including the psychology of effective communication, choosing the right tactics for your campaign, making activist videos and using social media effectively.

Time to celebrate

Conference 2011 will also be an opportunity to celebrate the brilliant work that Friends of the Earth activists are doing today. The Earthmover awards are always uplifting and we have no doubt that they will be just as special this year. We're adding an extra twist too. For the first time, Conference delegates will be able to vote for the 'Friend of the Earth' Earthmover award. We'll also give a prize to the person who brings the most unusual piece of Friends of the Earth memorabilia.

How you can help

While Friends of the Earth staff prepare for Conference months in advance, it's the people that attend who make it successful. If your group wants to run a session, bring a creative stall for our green fair, or propose a seminar, please mention it on the booking form. Please make sure you book before 15 August.

Green energy revolution needed to stabilise power bills -

Green policies offer the only hope of stabilizing power bills by weaning the country off oil and gas, new analysis by Friends of the Earth shows ahead of the Government Electricity Market Reform announcement.

The new figures show that if oil prices rise to \$150 in 2020 - likely considering oil currently trades at \$120 a barrel - even the low level of green ambition the Government is currently proposing will leave the average consumer better off overall. Large-scale action to encourage investment in clean energy and energy saving could save consumers hundreds of pounds a year.

Friends of the Earth is calling for the Government's Electricity Market Reform White Paper to deliver proper investment in clean power and energy saving to tackle the rocketing power bills already putting a huge strain on household budgets.

Paul Steedman, Friends of the Earth's energy campaigner, said:

"Our energy system is broken - ...

"This is the opportunity to put power back in the hands of the people - not just the six big energy companies - and to unleash the power of the UK's wind, waves, tides and sun. The Government's plans must help insulate homes, get new companies to invest in renewable energy and support communities to generate their own power."

FoE say: Government must insulate homes to wipe out fuel poverty / Must do more to adapt to climate change

Commenting on Government figures released today showing the number of households living in fuel poverty in the UK rose by one million to 5.5 million in 2009, Friends of the Earth's Energy Campaigner Dave Timms said:

"It's a national disgrace that millions of people are suffering in cold homes they can't afford to heat - insulating them properly would help vulnerable households save money on fuel bills and stay warm and healthy.

"Energy-efficient homes would also protect people from soaring energy prices by reducing our dependence on dirty and increasingly expensive fossil fuels.

"The Government needs to do much more to wipe out fuel poverty - that means a plan in its new Energy Bill for a nationwide refurb so no one has to live in a cold home.

"And it must bring forward from 2018 a proposed minimum energy efficiency standard for rented homes, which would lift 150,000 households out of fuel poverty.

"The Government has just announced a carbon tax - it should use this money to pay for better insulation to help people shivering in cold homes cut their bills."

The cost of fuel poverty

Poor insulation means at least £1 of every £4 spent on heating UK homes is wasted. Homes rented from a landlord or letting agency are the most likely to be the worst insulated, and

over 40 per cent of households in the worst insulated rented homes are in fuel poverty.

The NHS spends £859 million each year treating cold-related illnesses due to poorly insulated homes, according to the Chief Medical Officer's 2009 report.

The UK's homes account for 27 per cent of our carbon emissions - stopping them leaking heat is one of the quickest and cheapest ways to fight dangerous climate change.

Government must do more to adapt to climate change

Commenting on today's report by the Government's official climate advisor warning the UK 'could be pushed over the edge' unless it does more to adapt to the impacts of climate change, Friends of the Earth's Executive Director Andy Atkins said:

"Climate change is already starting to bite, and unless we take urgent action to adapt to its consequences the financial costs to families and our economy will be enormous.

"This report also shows the urgent need to cut the gases polluting our atmosphere - we can't simply bail out the basement when there are massive holes in the roof.

"Councils have a vital role to play in both cutting emissions and tackling the threat of more storms, droughts and floods - Ministers must ensure that every local authority has a clear plan and proper funding to meet the challenge."

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Dan Sloan 01689-838819

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

Food and Ethical Farming:

Peter Gandolfi details below

Planning and development:

Tamara Galloway 01689-855352
tamaragalloway@yahoo.com

Waste and Recycling

Annette Rose
annette.rose1@ntlworld.com

Bromley FoE web site:

www.bromleyfoe.co.uk
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 Ray Watson or Sheila Brown 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 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 r.watson865@btinternet.com.

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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