



Friends of the Earth

Bromley

December 2009 **No. 264** **Newsletter**

Bromley FoE: inquiries to Birch House, Grays Road, Westerham TN16 2JB
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December Meeting

**Friends Meeting House,
Ravensbourne Road, Bromley**

***Copenhagen and beyond: addressing the
global climate crisis***

Andy Atkins, Chief Exec, Friends of the Earth
Followed by our pre-Christmas social evening

Tuesday 1st December
7.30pm.

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Copy for the next Newsletter must be with the Editor by
SUNDAY 13TH DECEMBER. Contact details inside front cover.

Climate Change march and rally, Saturday 5th December – see page 2

Diary dates:**December 1st (Tues)****Bromley FoE's December meeting** – Andy Atkins, Chief Exec of FoE. on the Copenhagen Climate Change talks, followed by our seasonal social**December 2nd (Wed)****St Mary Cray Country Market**, Vernon Hall, St Mary Cray High Street – and every Wednesday**December 5th (Sat)****Climate Change rally, march and The Wave** – see below for more info**January 5th (Tues)****Bromley FoE's January meeting and AGM****Climate March / The Wave – Saturday 5th December
Meet 12noon Grosvenor Square**

Our group will meet for The Wave Climate March on Dec 5th in Grosvenor Square by the 9/11 Memorial at 12.00noon. Please wear something blue if possible and bring any waves you have made out of paper or material. The march will culminate in encircling Parliament at around 3pm. Some people may find this easier if they cannot manage the walk itself. Contact Ann Garrett (020-8460-1295) for more details.

UN Climate Change talks in Copenhagen (COP15)

See <http://www.campaigncc.org/Copenhagen> for more info about this. The special train from Brussels to Copenhagen was fully booked well before mid-November. This train arrives in Copenhagen just before the demonstration on December 12th, declared a Global Day of Action.

Croft Tearoom now open

Wednesday to Saturday

9am to 4pm

Sundays 11am to 4pm

263 St Mary Cray High Street

Re-User Item

For sale.

Computer monitor (CRT). Logic LGX182, 17-inch screen. £20 ono – half to FoE.

Contact Graham Hemington
01689-822527.**Next Newsletter - copy details:**

Any news, articles, poems, questions, views etc for the next Newsletter must be with the editor **by SUNDAY 13TH DECEMBER**

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

Campaigns info, by Ann Garrett

Climate March – Dec 5th

See info on page 2.

Bromley stall

The next Bromley High Street stall has been organised for March 20th from 2.00 - 4.00 pm. This may well focus on the 'Get Serious ' campaign, asking local authorities to adopt a target to reduce carbon emissions, as we have been sent a box of campaigning materials unexpectedly. I have emailed Colin Smith our local environment portfolio holder re this issue to start the ball rolling. There are plenty of cards to be signed.

New Nuclear Power Stations

Ed Miliband has announced plans for a new generation of nuclear power stations which are to be fast-tracked with planning laws sidelined. He has produced a series of policy statements which include a list of 11 sites.

This news has produced strong reactions from energy unions and green groups. The union of scientists and engineers, Prospect, have welcomed the decision as it will create thousands of skilled jobs and in their view help tackle climate change.

On the other hand Greenpeace and the Green Party have attacked the proposals stating that nuclear is a dangerous and expensive irrelevance to tackling climate change and providing real energy security. They have called for more investment in green energy and accused the government of undermining local democracy by changing planning rules.

The government still has no solution for the massive amount of yearly high-level waste that 10 new nuclear power stations will produce. An independent commission will research local feelings and reactions to the proposed sites.

UK's nuclear future and the Kalahari

The hidden cost of Britain's new nuclear power stations could be the destruction of the Kalahari Desert in Namibia and the production of millions of tons of extra carbon emissions a year.

The desert is at the centre of an international uranium rush led by Rössing Uranium, and the consequences will be detrimental to the Kalahari environment, with waste heaps, acid plants and giant slurry ponds extending over hundreds of square kilometres.

The UK has justified its planned expansion of nuclear power on the basis of reducing CO₂, but the energy used in drilling, blasting, excavating and transporting uranium to Britain, has clearly not been taken into account.

Since more than 450 new nuclear reactors are planned around the world, the outlook for uranium demand will be strong, and with it comes increased destruction of the environment. The uranium mining companies will profit greatly however. Although new jobs will be created in the Kalahari region, the health of the uranium miners is also a serious consideration.

A Mayor for Bromley? – Council consultation and decision

At the moment the Council makes its decisions using what is commonly called an “old-style” leader and cabinet system; this means that the leader is appointed by Council each year. The Council cannot continue with its current arrangements; under The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, we have to choose between two different approaches for the future. We need to choose by 31 December, so that the new system can be introduced in May 2010 after the next local elections.

The choice is between:

- * directly elected mayor and cabinet**
- * leader and cabinet**

What would these arrangements mean? – (1) Leader and cabinet

The ‘new’ leader and cabinet arrangements are sometimes known as a ‘strong leader’ model.

* The Council appoints a leader for a four year term (although there is an option to include a provision for the full Council to remove the leader during that time). A leader can of course choose to resign at any time as he or she could not be compelled to hold office against their will.

* The leader appoints the cabinet (or executive), and decides portfolio-holder arrangements and responsibilities and any delegation of executive functions. (Bromley currently requires those arrangements to be made by full Council, so the new model would constitute a real change).

* A leader would still be appointed to represent their ward, and so would need to balance this with their wider leadership role.

What would these arrangements mean? – (2) Mayor and cabinet

If Bromley opts for a directly elected mayor and cabinet, a separate election will be held alongside the usual local elections in May 2010 to appoint the mayor.

* A directly elected mayor would be elected by the voters of Bromley as a whole and would not represent a particular ward – they would work full time as mayor.

* The mayor need not necessarily be a member of any political party.

* Once elected, the mayor could not be removed by the Council during their 4 year term, although they could choose to resign or could be disqualified if they breached the national code of conduct.

What are the implications of these different approaches?

Some things would be quite similar under either approach:

In both cases, the person who leads the Council, whether a directly elected mayor or a council appointed leader, will personally control all decisions about the Council’s executive functions. They can then choose whether to make all decisions personally, or to make arrangements for others to do so (for example, by the cabinet, an area committee, an individual member of the cabinet, or by certain officers).

Both the mayor or leader must appoint a deputy who will hold office until the end of the mayor/leader’s term (but a deputy can be removed and replaced

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A Mayor for Bromley? – Council consultation and decision - continued

mid-term by the leader or mayor). This deputy would take up the role of the leader/mayor if the latter is unable to act or the office becomes vacant.

If we had a strong leader and cabinet model, Members of the cabinet must be elected councillors (as now), but the council leader can choose just how big the cabinet would be (between two and nine). As members of the cabinet would no longer need to be elected annually they could be appointed or dismissed at any time in “cabinet reshuffles” in response to need or events.

A directly elected mayor would arguably have a stronger mandate from residents and more autonomy to deliver any election promises. However, they would still be reliant upon the Council to pass any budget and would therefore need to work with other councillors to agree ways forward on key issues. So what happens next?

Before the Council decision

The Council has undertaken public consultation about the new arrangements and is drawing up formal proposals. These must be advertised in the press, in a notice describing the proposals and where information about them is available. The proposals must include details of which functions are (and which are not) to be the responsibility of the cabinet.

A special meeting of the Council will be held on 15 December to make a formal decision on which system to implement.

After the Council decision

Once this decision is made, it will again be advertised in the local press with the relevant details. We no longer have to hold a referendum should the Council want to shift to having an elected mayor (although this is still left as an option).

Implementation of the changes must take place on the third day following the next council elections (these take place on Thursday 6 May 2010).

If we did shift to a mayoral model, the election would take place at the same time as the council elections in May 2010. An individual can stand as a candidate for mayor if they have nomination papers signed by thirty registered electors in the area and pay a deposit of £500. The rules which apply to voting in mayoral elections differ to those which apply to a councillor or Member of Parliament. Where there are two candidates a simple majority vote applies, but if there were three or more candidates a “supplementary vote” system is compulsory. This means that if no candidate obtains more than half of the first preference votes the second preference votes are added in to return one of the two front running candidates. The winner will have the greatest number of first and second preference votes.

Someone could stand for election as both mayor and as a councillor but they cannot hold both roles. If they were elected as mayor their seat as a councillor would immediately become vacant and a by-election would have to be held.

Transport info, from Ray Watson, transport campaigner

Hidden cost of flying

Supporters of airlines and airports frequently argue that the expansion of aviation brings jobs and investment – a claim that, at first appears difficult to refute. The response is simple – and not used often enough in combating aviation growth and its attendant CO2 output.

The point is that the more Britons travel overseas, the greater the tourism deficit – meaning that if we spend money overseas we are not spending it or investing it here, and that adds to the country's debt and also reduces job creation at home.

In every region of the UK, except London, airports take more money out of the country than they bring in. And this is mainly due to the increase in cheap holiday flights.

So, if Biggin Hill Airport argues that it should be allowed to add holiday flights to its existing business flights, then local councillors proclaiming that jobs are being created should look at the negatives and well as the positives.

It is also worth noting that a survey by the European Cities Monitor asked 200 UK countries if being located near an airport was important in their choice of location – and only 15 per cent said it was.

Government orders a halt

This column recently reported on plans to extend Gatwick Airport via a planning application to the local council. Now the Government has stepped in and ordered a freeze on the

application, which Crawley Council said it 'was minded' to approve.

The Government wants to decide if there should be a public inquiry into the plans, which would allow another 20,000 flights annually involving an extra five million passengers, primarily British people going abroad for their holidays. And that, says the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign, would mean the loss of 30,000 jobs in the UK as tourists spend their money overseas. See above!

Meanwhile, Gatwick has been sold to a consortium of businesses and financiers that already runs our other neighbouring airport, London City. The new owners take it on at a time when Gatwick is still handling fewer passengers than last year – a seven per cent drop in the third quarter, while Stansted was 12 per cent down.

That's a lot of CO2 emissions saved!

Anti-Boris opposition

Boris Johnson, mayor of London, insists on promoting his view that an airport – nicknamed Boris Island -- should be built in the Thames, despite strengthening opposition that points to the cost to the environment, let alone the £40 billion bill. The airport would be sited on two artificial islands off Sheerness.

The mayor's office has announced that funding sources, mostly from the Middle East, have expressed a positive interest in the project, as have the Chinese.

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Stop London Southend Airport expansion – sounds familiar?

(from the FoE website) London Southend Airport has applied for planning permission to extend its runway. If approved this will increase potential passengers from around 40,000 to 2 million passengers a year, by 2020.

That would mean:

- * More noise for local residents from increased flights
- * More carbon emissions - almost 60 times as much CO2
- * More road traffic - Without public transport new passengers will use the local road network.

Problems ignored

Airport expansion should only be considered after these problems have been tackled. But the airport is trying to overlook these issues in its dash for growth.

Take action

Please ask Southend Borough Council to refuse permission for the runway extension. Here's an example you can use.

I am writing to you to formally object to the application for the extension of the runway at London Southend Airport for the following reasons:

- More noise: The new "restrictions" negotiated between the Council and the airport do nothing to protect residents from frequent night flights keeping them awake and daytime flights, which would disrupt the education of the borough's children.

- More road traffic: Most of the extra passengers using the airport would

come by car, adding to Southend's increasing congestion. It should also be noted that the airport is only accessible from the A127 by using residential roads.

- More climate change emissions: following the Climate Change Act 2008, all businesses and households in Southend will have to reduce their emissions by challenging amounts every year, while the airport greedily eats into the town's reducing carbon budget with more flights taking money out of the local economy to be spent elsewhere.

Transport info, *continued*

A statement said the airport's capacity would dwarf Heathrow and could be completed in 10 years.

But opposition is already gearing up. Kent County Council, local authorities in the area and green campaigners have formed an alliance to oppose the scheme.

Among their arguments are worries about the impact on bird life and wild life, the safety concerns caused by the airport being close to the nearby London Array wind turbine project which will feature 341 'windmills' each 175 meters high, plus the problem of noise from aircraft flying over our part of London and parts of Kent and Essex.

Another battle ahead for Bromley FoE.

November meeting report – from Graham Hemington

Not ours but ours to look after –
Tony Pearson of the Campaign for National Parks

Tony's opening photo of West Water (Lake District) showed the beauty, peace and tranquillity typical of a national park. Nevertheless, each park is different in its specific characteristics, e.g. upland moorland, as in the Lake District, is maintained by sheep farming. Yet the farmers struggle on an average income of less than the national minimum wage, resulting in farmers selling their sheep and leaving their rented farms; without sheep, scrub develops.

The Peak District National Park is the second most visited; about 22 million people per year. The highest parts are formed of millstone grit; limestone pavement occurs in the Yorkshire Dales, igneous rocks in Snowdonia, sea-cliffs in Pembrokeshire, granite rocks such as Haytor on Dartmoor, ancient woodland in the New Forest and the Broads wetland, created when man dug for peat.

Tony explained the principal duties of the National Parks authorities:

- (1) the conservation of natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage
- (2) the promotion of the understanding and enjoyment of their special qualities by the public,

and if the authorities carry out their duties responsibly, that will ensure the social and economic well-being of the people who live and work in the parks (Note that Duty 1 has priority over Duty 2, where appropriate.)

Difficulties naturally occur when carrying out these duties - examples are

- Quarrying limestone at Threshfield (Yorkshire Dales) but no new quarrying unless the rocks are unavailable outside the parks
- Military exercises – training grounds for soldiers
- Erosion of paths – building all-weather paths is one solution
- Car traffic. Too many cars may destroy what we have come to see. Park and Ride is one scheme, successful if drivers are prepared to leave their cars behind. A photo of a bus with only two passengers demonstrated this dilemma.
- Water ski-ing on Lake Windermere. A very enjoyable sport for a minority but too much noise for the majority. So speed restrictions have been imposed.
- 4 by 4 vehicles going off permitted tracks. Solution – new regulations allowing park authorities to close unofficial tracks.

Also of interest: the Mosaic Project which is a scheme designed to encourage ethnic groups to visit the parks.

The proposed South Downs National park – would cover the area between Eastbourne and Winchester, i.e. it includes the chalk downlands but not exclusively so. Coastal towns, e.g. Brighton, are not to be included.

MARINET news – from Sheila Brown

As reported at the November meeting, the Marine Bill reached its report stage on 26th October and there was a vote on Amendment 3, tabled by Katy Clark, Labour MP for North Ayrshire and Arran. Amendment 3 stated that an additional reason for designation a marine conservation area (MCZ) would be in order to protect the marine ecosystem as a whole within a MCZ's boundaries, thus effectively creating a highly protected area. Marinet had been campaigning and lobbying about this for several months.

There was a protracted debate from 3.30pm to 10.00pm with a lot of time wasting dealing with totally irrelevant and unrelated matters, and things were not looking good. However at 9.00pm the Chamber began to fill and it became clear that a strong body of opinion was building amongst certain MPs that this filibuster had gone on long enough and that the important matters encapsulated in Amendment 3 needed to be heard and debated. Katy Clark was finally able to table amendment 3 at 9.30pm with just 30 minutes remaining until a guillotine was imposed.

The Chamber was filling up with Conservative and Liberal Democrat frontbench MPs who said they had now been persuaded to vote for the Amendment. This was due to backbench MPs telling the front bench that they had read and listened to our arguments in support of Amendment 3 and been persuaded by its correctness and wanted their front bench to do the same. The letters and emails which people had sent had turned the tide!

Sadly, though, this did not translate into a win. The Government, seeing the challenge it faced, exercised its whip and members of their front bench flooded in to vote.

Marinet remained upbeat in the face of a 158 votes for, 246 against (Government majority 88) result, feeling that it had secured a moral victory and that the Government had been given a clear message that highly protected marine reserves needed to be in the bill.

The campaign goes on to its next stage. Visit Marinet's website for further details.

French PM gives the thumbs up to the Marine Reserves Campaign

Mr Sarkozy has made a personal statement which commits France to setting up a network of Highly Protected Marine Reserves on the lines of the MARINET recommendations to our own government. In addition, he has also recognised his duty to act beyond the limits of European waters and include those parts of the sea in the control of French overseas territories.

If this same principle were to be adopted in the UK, over three million square kilometres would be included in the scope of protection, in addition to the 0.75m square kilometres of the UK Exclusive Economic Zone in the scope of the Marine Bill.

FoE London Action Update

Welcome to the November update, packed full of essential information on Friends of the Earth campaigns.

It's all change with your London team this month. Tom Wright is joining Katie as your Network Developer for London, replacing Howard who is moving into a new role at Friends of the Earth. Tom will be in touch shortly to introduce himself properly, and you can find his contact details at the bottom of the newsletter. You might already know Tom as the previous campaign assistant in the climate team, and we're delighted to have him on board. We're currently working out exactly how Tom and Katie will support London between them, but where your Network Developer has changed we'll be in touch soon to let you know. In the meantime either Katie or Tom will be happy to help.

Although you're busy with your campaigns at the minute don't forget that the next Greater South East Regional Gathering is just around the corner. It's on the Saturday 16 January 2010 at Bonhill House in London. There will be more info in the next mailing, and you can contact your Network Developer for more information.

Getting serious - funding and feed-in tariffs

Take action: In September we asked the Government to make sure councils acted on climate by setting a minimum standard of action. The Department of Communities was so overwhelmed with responses from you that they wrote to us and asked us to stop.

We're still waiting to see the impact, and we'll keep you posted.

Now there's another opportunity to make it easier for councils and communities to Get Serious About CO2. Last year we won a new law in the Energy Act that means you can get paid to produce green energy - known as a 'feed-in tariff'. But the Government's proposed scheme is poor. Ask your MP for a scheme that really works .

Resources: We have a new Local Media Pack and a new report on funding action on climate , as well as a list of all resources for Get Serious About CO2 and where to find them.

London plans and strategies out for consultation

3 key London documents - a complete revision of the overarching London Plan, the Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS) and the Economic Development Strategy (public consultation until 12 January) will influence what the London Boroughs Local Development Frameworks include, as these have to be in general conformity with the London Plan.

The London Plan chapter 5 is on climate change - see policy 5.1 which sets out how the boroughs should "develop detailed policies and proposals that are consistent with" the Mayor's 60% cut in CO2 by 2025 from 1990 levels, policy 5.4 on retrofitting of existing buildings, and paragraph 0.21 for relevance to boroughs.

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The ecological impact of keeping a pet, *from Peter Gandolfi*

Thoughts from a new book – Time to Eat the Dog: The real guide to sustainable living, by Robert and Brenda Vale.

Owning a Pet appears to come at a far higher price than you may have imagined, as well as guzzling resources, pets can devastate wildlife populations, spread disease and add to pollution.

A medium sized dog consumes over a year, 165 kilograms of meat and 95 kilograms of cereal. This equates to needing 0.84 hectares of land to keep a medium sized dog fed. In comparison running a large gas guzzling 'Chelsea Tractor' including the energy to construct it, and drive it 10,000 kilometres a year, requires 0.4 hectares, about half that of medium sized dog. Similarly the eco-footprint of a cat equals that of a Volkswagen Golf.

(The Vales are not alone in reaching these conclusions. When New Scientist asked the Stockholm Institute in York to calculate pet eco-pawprints, the figures agreed).

In comparison, using 2004 figures, the average Vietnam citizen had an ecological footprint of 0.76 hectares, an Ethiopian 0.67 hectares

The energy footprint of a cat is about 2% that of the average British person's energy footprint, and bigger for most dogs.

In a world of scarce resources, can we justify keeping pets that consume more than some people on this planet?

Many of us have come to accept the scale of our present ecological crisis, using low energy lightbulbs and grudgingly recycling etc. Giving up our pets in the name of sustainability may seem a sacrifice too far. If we continue to keep animals just for our enjoyment we may have to face uncomfortable choices.

There are more acceptable ways of reducing this impact such as feeding the pet leftovers, as well as helping the scandal of food waste.

Considering the large and growing demand for 'green' products, is there also a demand for a green eco friendly pet food?

Cats also kill 188 million wild animals each year in the UK alone. As cats are nocturnal, the single most important thing people can do to reduce the predation of wildlife is to keep cats in at night.

The authors suggest that if you must own a pet, consider one that serves a dual purpose, and recommends hens that compensate by also providing eggs.

A better alternative is to recycle our pets by eating them (rabbits are good!) but is surely a non starter and is unlikely to appeal.

(I find Bees are good! PG)

New life for old batteries

A new scheme has been launched encouraging residents to recycle their household batteries. Dedicated containers for battery collections will be available at all of the borough's libraries and council offices making disposal easy. Pupils and teachers can take their used batteries to school as every school in the borough will have a dedicated container. The scheme follows new legislation requiring companies and retail outlets to have 'take back' schemes to reduce amount of batteries going to landfill sites.

Councillor Colin Smith, Executive Councillor for the Environment said "I'm really pleased to be able to announce this development as I know that these measures will prove extremely popular and help to further consolidate Bromley's position at the pinnacle of recycling in the Capital. Shopping outlets across the Borough are going to have to step up to the mark and play their part too, and the Council will be looking to them to do so over coming months."

All batteries placed in the dedicated containers will be collected on a regular basis by the council's contractor Veolia. The collected batteries will be sorted into chemical type and sent to treatment facilities for recycling. Batteries contain various metals such as lead, mercury, cadmium, zinc, manganese and lithium. These base metals are recovered for re-use in industry which is a better environmental option than landfill or incineration.

The battery collection scheme supplements the Council's door to

door recycling services and the green garden waste disposal initiatives. It also complements the on-street recycling banks and the facilities at the reuse and recycling centres at Waldo Road and Churchfields Road.

"There really is no excuse not to recycle nowadays and I take my hat off to the Borough's residents for their splendid efforts in doing so to date. The Council is continuing to look at ways to improve the range of recycling services provided as it makes obvious financial and environmental sense to do so" added Councillor Smith.

FoE Update, *continued* **Transport issues in London plans**

The London Plan's transport section proposes relaxed criteria for new road building, facilitating new road river crossings - such as a 3rd road crossing at Blackwall, and a smaller version of the rejected Thames Gateway road bridge.

The Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS) consults removing the Western Extension to the Congestion Charge and delaying phase 3 of the Low Emission Zone - key measures for the Mayor's climate change and EU air pollution targets respectively.

The MTS admits current policies aren't sufficient to meet the climate target, and further road user charging is considered (section 5.20). Friends of the Earth have written to the EU as Air Quality Strategy measures are not adequate to meet key targets.

Reflections on the future Andy Atkins (*Change Your World* editorial)

Local Groups are at the heart of Friends of the Earth's mission to win vital environmental campaigns and build a lasting movement for sustainable development. Over the years, the network has consistently delivered big wins on both a local and national level.

But in the face of the enormous challenges facing the planet, two questions concerned me as I arrived at Conference. I know they concern many of you too. How can we engage more people with Friends of the Earth's agenda, both locally and nationally? And how can we co-ordinate the resources and expertise in the network to achieve maximum impact? By the end of the Conference I felt that local groups had provided a wealth of answers.

A brilliant source of inspiration, as always, was the Earthmovers awards. These showcased the achievements of local groups over the past year. I would hate to be a judge, because there are so many brilliant candidates and only one can win in each category.

I'm sure everyone was impressed by the astonishing scale and innovation of the Manchester group's Clean Air Now campaign, for instance.

Many other initiatives were equally impressive, such as the Caerphilly group's plastic bag campaign — a wonderful example of getting people involved at a practical local level.

Meanwhile, Leeds won Group of the Year after dramatically expanding their

membership through teamwork, hard campaigning and having fun. Happily the growth of the Leeds group was not unique — for instance the nearby Bradford group also doubled in size last year.

Conference was not just about celebrating achievements but finding new ways to improve what we do. I've never seen mass-creativity work as well as in the Open Space session, with local group members proposing around 50 questions that they wanted to explore, then working together to come up with answers. I know that the conclusions the session brought to light will be a valuable resource over the coming year.

I took so much from the Conference — knowledge from displays and seminars, a sense of the network's concerns and hopes from the motions, and pithy analysis on the changing nature of activism from the panel debate. Just as importantly, I got to know many of you better and gained fresh confidence that we will work effectively together in the future.

I'll be building on the good things that I took away from this year's Conference and will make sure that Friends of the Earth staff get maximum benefit from your ideas and take forward the best ones where we can.

Please do the same in your group so that we can win more campaigns together and strengthen our movement for sustainable development.

CAAT News - CAAT National Gathering 2009

Nearly a hundred CAAT supporters gathered on a cold, damp, Halloween morning for CAAT's National Gathering 2009. Inside they found a warmer feeling – uplifting speakers, interactive workshops and inspiring encounters with other committed CAAT activists.

The day kicked off with a keynote speech from Andrew Feinstein who highlighted the importance of tackling arms trade corruption for British and South African democracies. Elected to South African parliament for the ANC in the first elections following apartheid, Feinstein resigned in 2001, when his attempts to investigate and expose corruption surrounding a major arms deal were repeatedly blocked.

His speech was a powerful start to the day – emphasising the seriousness of the task ahead of us. One audience member commented: "I learnt a great deal from his talk." and another described the talk as "Outstanding, sober, passionate and so well delivered."

Workshops throughout the day covered topics as diverse as "UKTI, militarism and government liaisons with the arms trade" and "Making the most of the media". Those new to CAAT could crash course on a new theme or skill, while others brought many years of experience to share with other participants. See the full programme here for a flavour of what went on.

The day drew to a close with a panel discussion, which tackled the question "Ending Arms Production: Is the answer blowing in the wind?".

We heard from Paul Dunne, an applied economist at UWE whose main area of research is the economics of peace, security and military spending, and Louise Hutchins, the Energy Solutions Campaigner in the Climate Team at Greenpeace. A thoughtful discussion took place about how we can argue for the massive government subsidies the arms trade receives to be channelled into tackling arguably the biggest threat to global security this century: climate change.

People felt the day had a "good atmosphere: friendly and focused" and a "great buzz of like mindedness and openness." Andrew Feinstein's talk was a highlight for many, as well as the opportunity to meet other CAAT campaigners from around the country. As one participant commented: "[The best thing about the day] was meeting others in CAAT!"

We went away determined to put ending government support for the arms trade through UKTI DSO firmly on the agenda of our parliamentary candidates, and with the promise of two regional gatherings in the new year to keep up the buzz around our campaign!

Bromley FoE's AGM

Tuesday 5th January

7.30pm

Brave the snow to be there

Bromley Friends of the Earth - List of Contacts

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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 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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