



*December 2017*  
*No. 360*

# ewsletter

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## December Meeting

*Friends Meeting House, Ravensbourne Road, Bromley*

**Paul Spear**

**Using Images to teach Thinking, Geography and  
Environmental Issues to Primary School Children**

*followed by*

**Seasonal Social – Food, Drink and lots of  
time to socialise**

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December – 7.30pm**

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Copy for the next Newsletter must be with the Editor by

**\*\*\* SUNDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER \*\*\***

Contact details inside front cover.

**Diary dates:**

- Dec 5<sup>th</sup> (Tue) Bromley FoE's December meeting: Winter social, quiz and all the usual seasonal fare
- Dec 14<sup>th</sup> (Thu ) Bromley RSPB walk. Meet at Jubilee Country Park, Blackbrook Lane car park, BR2 8AY at 9.30am. Bring binoculars if you have them.
- Jan 2<sup>nd</sup> (Tue) Bromley FoE's January meeting: plus AGM

**December Meeting: Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December****Paul Spear, a Primary School Teacher**

will give a brief, informal talk on

**Using Images to teach Thinking, Geography and Environmental Issues to Primary School Children**

We will then have our traditional

**Seasonal Social**

featuring our time-honoured and well loved non-alcoholic punch

**Disclaimer:** *Please note that any opinions expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of Bromley Friends of the Earth or of Friends of the Earth*

**Next Newsletter - copy details**

Any news, articles, poems, questions, views etc for the next Newsletter must be with the editor by \*\*\* **SUNDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> 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](mailto:johnstreet@gn.apc.org)

The editor reserves the right to shorten contributions for space, or other, reasons.

## **It's gone! Clearance of Waste4Fuel rubbish mountain ends today!**

**So reported the Bromley Times on November 17<sup>th</sup>.**

*Here's what their report had to say about it.*

A mountain of rubbish has been moved from an Orpington dumping ground, with the final clearance works ending today.

Work began to clear the 27,000 tonne tip on Cornwall Drive a year ago, and with the site now clear, the council has thanked residents for their patience.

Clearance work faced a temporary blip earlier this year when contaminated waste was discovered near the bottom of the pile.

The discovery in March meant the council's original 20-week target clearance was put back, with the discovery meaning the council would need an extra £1.88million from government to complete the tidy-up.

Altogether, the clearance of the waste mountain, which became a regular spot for fires during its controversial history, came to around £4.5million, with most of the funds coming from government and the Environment Agency.

Colin Smith, leader of Bromley council, which contributed £572,608 toward the project, said: "This day clearly belongs to our long suffering local residents who have been so incredibly patient, trustful and supportive of the council throughout this difficult and complex process.

"To have delivered on our promise to get the site cleared for everyone has been a tremendous team effort all round and we share their delight.

"Although there is still work to do on site, we can now look forward with optimism and work through the various ideas that have been raised for the site's future, listening very carefully to what residents say, recognising the importance and status of its Green Belt status."

Julie Foley, area manager for the Environment Agency, said "We understand how frustrating the situation has been for residents and thank them for their patience.

"We have worked hard with London Borough of Bromley and Veolia to get the site cleared, whilst helping to ensure there is no impact on the environment and local people.

"It had taken a long time to get to this point, but we and London Borough of Bromley have had to overcome a number of difficult funding, legal and technical problems. We had to make sure that the site was cleared but most importantly that we had to make sure it could never become a waste site again".

## November meeting report – Anne Clark

### **The European Movement after the Brexit vote - what next?**

Michael Young came out of retirement to become Chief Executive (unwaged), as he felt so strongly about European integration after so many millions gave their lives in the war (WW2) for peace and unity and for the common good of 'man'.

He had a background in politics going back 40 years had been involved in behind the scenes negotiation with the ANC and more recently worked with Nick Clegg and Stephen Dorrell in the 2010 Coalition Government.

The Movement was founded in 1948/9 as a cross-party organisation cutting across party traditions, committed to European integration (in spite of our slight differences); it campaigned to remain in the EU in the Referendum and continues to strongly oppose Brexit.

It has a London office with five staff, is chaired by Stephen Dorrell, and has key people lobbying for unity including Paddy Ashdown, Douglas Hurd, Ken Clarke, Caroline Lucas and Richard Corbett.

Mr Young was formerly a Conservative at the time when we joined the then Common Market but changed to the Social Democrats when Mrs Thatcher was in power.

During the Referendum campaign there were five separate groups campaigning to 'remain': Britain for Europe, Scientists for Europe, Better

In, Open Britain and Best for Britain. The European Movement currently has 50 local groups, but very much wants to increase this and have more people active at grassroots level.

He stated that the Government is currently paralysed due to having no outright majority and a somewhat flawed relationship with the DUP which is anti-Europe. However unfortunately there is little cohesion among 'remainers'.

Mr Young realised that when people speak past each other instead of just discussing WITH each other, nothing gets solved.

The epicentre was formed by Winston Churchill to prolong peace and needed a collective agreement in Europe and organisations for better understanding between countries.

Mr Cameron should not have made such a definite referendum without laying out all the facts more seriously instead of leaving it to the media hype. There were less final ways to find out what niggles the public really had.

The various Groups arguing for a 'hard' Brexit or a 'soft' Brexit have come together and will be making an announcement soon.

The European Movement grows its branch structure and re-activates groups not to become complacent and stresses that there is a different direction to the one that the

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## November meeting report – *cont'd* +++ **Climate, Energy and Transport**

Government is leading us – we need some real 'heat from the streets' to indicate if people are not in agreement with the present Government and making sure that all politicians are aware of what the 'Movement' is after.

As the subject is coming to the House in a few weeks time, there must be a sensible 'free' vote, deal and eventual agreement; the whole exercise is far more complex than was demonstrated, the economy included, and there MUST be a cross party group to make a final decision.

All issues were not properly explained before the Referendum and we need a strong European family to work together, giving and taking – not nationalism. He referenced how the ANC worked 'cross-party' in South Africa, for a more just society. There MUST be a vote!

There were various questions put to Michael Young including Mrs Thatcher's attitude, Mr Davis's "in due time" seeming to be dragging his feet, but we have legal obligations, British tax havens, Article 50, the fact that we always have to have "scapegoats" (at the moment, "immigrants") and forgetting the advantages we have when going abroad; unless they get equal opportunities, people get angry.

We don't want to all end up fighting again! This was exactly what the project was set up to guard against.

All in all, an interesting evening.

**Ann Garrett writes:**

### **Mall Campaign Stall**

An enormous thank you to those who helped with the stall and leafleting on Oct 28<sup>th</sup>. This was to further publicise our Clean Air campaign and introduce the Protect Our Futures campaign with Bromley Against Fracking members.

We asked members of the public to sign the Clean Air cards to be sent to FOE and Don't Frack Our Futures cards to be sent to Greg Clarke MP via FoE for monitoring. These requested him to support 'a safe, healthy environment for our children and people around the world.'

We also had our Nature campaign cards on the stall. John Catlin's wind turbine model attracted a lot of attention.

### **Climate, Energy and Transport**

#### **The Paris Agreement**

On Nov 7<sup>th</sup> Syria signed up to the agreement to cutting greenhouse gas emissions at the COP23 conference in Bonn. They and Nicaragua along with the USA were the only countries not to sign up two years ago.

Nicaragua did so in September with their Vice President calling the Paris deal 'the only instrument we have in the world that allows the unity of intentions and efforts to face up to climate change and natural disasters.'

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## Climate, Energy and Transport – *continued*

This leaves the USA who withdrew from the agreement - though US diplomats insist they will take part in climate discussions. Corporations based there are also involved in actions to reduce emissions.

However the Paris Agreement itself falls well short of the action needed to reduce climate change. It depends on voluntary emissions cuts by signatory states and its unmet pledges put the world on track for 2.8C of warming by 2100, while existing policies would lift the temperatures by 3.6C.

The world is already at 1C of warming above pre-industrial levels, and the Paris deal has a dual target of 1.5C and 2C. The latter would produce significantly more extreme weather.

### Fracking

Surrey County Council gave the green light for further fracking tests on Oct 18<sup>th</sup>, ignoring the concerns of campaigners that drilling has already caused nosebleeds in horses and people.

Residents joined campaigners outside County Hall in Kingston, and some were saying that they were moving out of areas near Dorking and Horley for the sake of their health.

Whilst a decision of further activity on Leith Hill was deferred, drilling consortium Horse Hill Developments was granted permission to dig a second well and carry out 3 more years of drilling on Horse Hill, near Horley.

### Driverless mini-Routemaster

This bus has been designed to help ease congestion and pollution - with the help of recycled Evening Standards. Transport designer Jonny Culkin has created a battery-powered pod with room for about 30 people, which he wants to be a hybrid Tube/Bus option for 'Uber-length journeys'. The design is about half the size of the new Routemaster, and would make more efficient use of road space.



*Campaign stall in the Mall, October 28<sup>th</sup>*

## **A Passive House in Bromley –** *visit by Paul Enock, Richard Comaish and Annette Rose*

**Paul Enock writes:**

### **What is a passive house?**

It is a house that meets a specific standard (Passiv Haus Technical Certification) of very low space-heating requirement. It is, in other words, a 'low-energy' building in terms of the energy required to keep its interior living areas warm in winter (and cool in summer).

As such, it is a building designed and constructed to standards way beyond current British building standards, making it much more compatible with 'one-planet living' than your typical British home.

### **How is this low energy requirement achieved?**

The principle is simple: by ensuring that the building's outer shell is a good insulator, and by paying particular attention to avoiding 'thermal bridges' i.e. construction details such as the transition between floor and wall, around door and window frames, and between wall and roof-space.

These details need to be constructed in such a way that they maintain a high specification of airtightness.

### **So how does air get in and out of the building?**

Well, in summer you can simply open the triple-glazed windows. But in cold weather all air exchange is through a carefully controlled and silent venting system, which draws incoming air through a pipe and passes it through a filter and heat-exchanger before

introducing it into the house via vents in each room's ceiling. No radiators or other sources of warm are needed.

### **Does a Passive House look different to other houses?**

Not necessarily. You could walk past it and not know the difference. The house in a residential street in central Bromley that Annette, Richard and Paul visited one Sunday morning in November blends in perfectly with its neighbours. Only when you enter do you notice how silent it is inside, and how pleasant the 'feel' of the place is.

### **Is it expensive to build?**

Not particularly. This 5-bed family home, constructed of sealed timber panels filled with wood-fibre insulation, took only 10 months to build within a tight budget. It was a self-build project, which kept costs down, but the owner and architect assured us that building costs are comparable with standard construction.

### **Do you need specialist contractors?**

Well, door and window fitters need to be capable of working to millimetre specifications. Other trades have to understand the ethos – the importance of maintaining an air-tight shell – so, for example, electricians introducing a cable into the building have to ensure it is surrounded by an air-tight grommet as it passes through the wall or insulated floor slab.

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## Miller's Mutterings for November – Chris Miller

The planted fields are starting to have a green tinge to them after a good germination of the wheat. The warm nights and gentle rain have been just what the seeds wanted. As you can see from the photos, the wheat is growing through the old stubble and the boys are very pleased with this new way of planting.

The cost of drilling this way is greatly reduced as we mentioned before but Steve still prefers to see a ploughed field but then he is old school. The soil is already crumblier than last year and the number of worm casts has increased greatly. The fields that look unkempt and just being over wintered and will be planted with spring barley early next year.

We have also noticed that there seem to be more sky larks and pheasants but don't know if this is due to direct drilling or not, whatever it is, it is good to see. On the subject of birds, we were sorry to see the swallows and house martins leave the farm but have noticed five buzzards gliding together in a circle above the farmhouse on several occasions. Quite a sight.

Electrical work and roofing is still on-going together with hedge cutting. Steve had to return to the farm last week as someone had thrown a car tyre into the hedge and it had got stuck in the rotor blades of the hedge cutter. Needed the loader to pull it out, quite a job. Hay, straw and haylage deliveries are picking up as the days are getting shorter and the owners are bringing their horses in at night.

Steve and I had an interesting afternoon recently visiting a school in Halling. A member of the family works in the reception class and we were asked to go and talk about harvest to the children. 45 eager and excited children listened very well to us talk about how we grow and harvest the wheat. We had the children acting out a seed growing, which was fun and they enjoyed a short video of a combine harvester at work. Here is this month's weather offering:-

*If on All Saints' Day (1<sup>st</sup> November) the  
beechnut be found dry,  
we shall have a hard winter;  
But if the nut be wet not light,  
we may expect a wet winter.*

### Passive House in Bromley – cont'd

#### How do you check if the building is up to Passiv-Haus standard?

One important test is the number of air changes per hour when the building is under a given amount of pressure (50 Pascals – imagine a windy night in winter with a stiff cold breeze draining your house of its heat).

Normal practice in current British standards for dwellings allows for 2 air changes per hour at this pressure. Passiv Haus standard will not tolerate more than 0.6 changes (in fact the house we visited achieved a value of 0.3). That's cosy!

Anyone interested in visiting the house, do get in touch.

## The British Wildlife Centre – Sheila Brown

Situated in Lingfield, on the A22, the British Wildlife Centre, which opened in 1998, provides a wonderful day out for all ages.

They have only native British animals and run important breeding programmes. The Scottish Wildcat, for example, is a species which has become extremely rare as in the wild the cats can breed with domestic cats, losing the purity of the species. Here at Lingfield they produce kittens which they then provide to other centres, but there is a long-term plan to release wildcats back into the Highlands to restore the dwindling population and prevent extinction.

At the Centre you can come face to face with a Red Squirrel! There is a marvellous walk-through Squirrel Enclosure which includes trees and wire runs where you can see the squirrels darting around. They've had a most successful breeding programme too, releasing red squirrels on Tresco, on Caldey Island off the Pembrokeshire Coast and Mersea Island in Essex.

Among the many native British animals you can see at the Centre are Polecats, Pine Martens, Roe Deer, Fallow Deer, Red Deer, four types of Owl, Weasel, Stoat, Otter, Hedgehog, Harvest Mouse and Water Vole. The Keepers give talks about the different animals at intervals throughout the day.

The Centre is open at weekends, bank holidays, during school holidays and half-term weeks. During term-time they

welcome visiting school groups; their philosophy is 'Conservation through Education' and educating children about Britain's native wildlife is an important part of what they do. Pre-booked guided tours and photography days are also offered.

*www.britishwildlifecentre.co.uk*;  
tel: 01342 834658; email:  
*info@britishwildlifecentre.co.uk*

### **Neonicotinoids found in honey from every continent**

*Peter Gandolfi found this in the New Statesman:*

Alex Aebi and his team from Neuchatel Switzerland, asked people they knew to bring back honey samples when they travelled. They tested nearly 200 samples from every continent except Antarctica for pesticides. Three quarters of the samples contained at least one of the five neonicotinoids, and in nearly 50% of the samples the pesticide levels were above the minimum dose known to cause "marked detrimental effects" in pollinators.

Bees eat honey to survive the winter, so the results imply chronic pesticide exposure. "Recent scientific evidence shows an increased sensitivity to neonicotinoids after frequent or long term exposure" says Aebi. So it seems that the problem is not just limited to Europe and North America where the alarm was first sounded, it is everywhere.

**Double good news for bees!** In case you missed the news a little while back – Michael Gove, the Environment Secretary, announced that he supports further restrictions on the use of neonic pesticides – *see also pages 12 and 13*. The Bee Team at Friends of the Earth sent out a massive thank you to all their supporters for the campaigning which has been undertaken in the last 5 years, it couldn't have been achieved without that.

Needless to say we were being urged to sign a petition which was urging Mr Gove to stick to his word and vote for a full and permanent ban in the upcoming EU vote. Due to the timing of our newsletter deadline, I have not included a link to this, but it was sent out via email and posted on our Facebook page.

This decision reverses the government's previous position and is backed up by lots of new scientific evidence showing how the use of these pesticides has contaminated landscapes and caused damage to bee colonies. Craig Bennett (FoE's Chief Executive) is delighted with the news and said ".....we now need to move away from chemical-intensive farming and instead boost support for less damaging ways of tackling persistent weeds and pests."

Mr Gove has stated that there is still uncertainty in some of the science but also that more money needs to be put into environmentally sustainable ways of farming. And on another announcement from Mr Gove – there are plans for a new environmental watchdog to be put in place after Brexit,

to protect UK wildlife, land, water and air.

The Environmental Audit Committee has been calling for the creation of an environmental protection act and the government will be debating the EU Withdrawal Bill (or has been debating, depending on when our newsletter is published!) which will hopefully incorporate many of these regulations.

And in the latest good news for the bees – Homebase has announced they will go neonic-free, so this makes the 10 top UK nurseries have all agreed on this. Brilliant.

### **Marine Pollution / plastic waste issues**

More and more stories are emerging of how people/companies are thinking about their use of plastic items, how to dispose of them and how to re-use items made of plastic. In, another, announcement from Michael Gove, he said that the government is working with the drinks industry to see how a 'reward and return' scheme could work. We should hear more on this in the New Year.

One company who is tackling this issue now, is Ecover. They have produced a bottle for one of their washing-up liquids which is made from 50% recycled plastic and 50% made from plastic collected from Brazil's Rio de Janeiro bay. Apparently 8 tonnes of plastic were collected from the bay as part of the clean-up before the 2016 Olympics – and put to good use!

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## Nature News - continued

Ecover has also announced that their main washing-up liquid bottles will be made from 100% recycled plastic by next year, and for all of their products by 2020. And repeating a couple of stats here – remember a drinks bottle can take 450 years to disintegrate, a plastic fishing line 600 years, and that more plastic was made in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century than the whole of the 20<sup>th</sup>.

### Freshwater Habitats Trust

As I mentioned in the October newsletter, the Freshwater Habitats Trust have awarded us with a certificate and prize of a book voucher, for being Clean Water Champions for undertaking all the water pollution testing we did this year. This citizen science project has finished now, and the project has been rated as a great success. So, a big thank you to all the volunteers from our group who took part, it was well worth wading in water for! Here is a photo of some of the volunteers holding the certificate which has been sent to the Trust for their use in their promotions.



### Plastic roads and plastic boats

More reuse of plastic waste! Some councils in the UK are testing a new process which creates plastic pellets from bottles and bags and melts them into asphalt. Apparently, the pellets are melted into the asphalt mix which acts as a binding agent.

According to the plastic road company producing it, this binding is stronger and longer lasting, but of course, only time will tell on its durability.

A traditional boat builder and a British-Ethiopian safari organiser have come together to try and combat marine pollution in an area of Kenya and save their trees at the same time.

They are trying to build a traditional dhow (sailing boat) from recycled plastic by using plastic planks from the local recycling industry, thus saving trees from being cut down.

Timber is getting scarce there, but if they manage to build the dhow and sail it successfully to Cape Town in S Africa as they hope, it will boost the recycling industry, help preserve their forests and keep alive the traditional skills of boat building.

A real win-win-win! Kenya has one of the world's toughest bans on plastic bag use – a fine of roughly £30,000 or four years in prison.

## Success for Friends of the Earth bee campaign ...

### ... as Michael Gove listens to the experts

UK Environment Secretary Michael Gove has announced that tougher restrictions are needed on bee-harming neonicotinoid pesticides, recognising that the science is stacking up against them and that farmers are farming successfully without them.

His landmark decision is down to millions of people keeping up the pressure for a full ban on bee-harming neonics – and it demonstrates just how powerful we can be when we act together.

Welcoming Michael Gove's decision, **Friends of the Earth's chief executive Craig Bennett said:**

"Michael Gove is to be congratulated for listening to the experts. The scientific evidence for a complete ban on bee-harming pesticides is now overwhelming.

"Tougher restrictions on neonicotinoids are essential for our precious bees and the wider environment – and a significant victory for the public and supporters of organisations like Friends of the Earth who have called for tougher action on these chemicals.

"To their credit farmers across the UK are already finding innovative ways to successfully grow crops without neonicotinoids, even ahead of the ban being extended.

"But lessons also need to be learned – we now need to move away from chemical-intensive farming and instead

boost support for less damaging ways of tackling persistent weeds and pests. The UK must follow through on today's announcement by backing current European Commission proposals to get these pesticides completely out of our fields."

### Why the ban is needed

In 2013 three neonicotinoid pesticides were restricted from being used on flowering crops attractive to bees across the EU when it was revealed they posed a threat to bees.

But neonic-treated seeds are still widely used in other crops - such as wheat - so are still entering the soil and water. Evidence shows they can still spread to wild flowers or flowering crops too.

That's why the European Commission wants to extend the ban to all crops. Member States are expected to vote on this soon.

### Your support is vital now

A YouGov poll, commissioned by Friends of the Earth and published in August 2017, found that over three quarters of the UK public (76%) thought the UK government should support EU proposals to extend the current neonic restrictions to other crops.

Please add your voice again now - and make sure Michael Gove knows your view - by signing our petition. Thanks.

Support the ban on bee-harming pesticides – visit  
<https://act.foe.co.uk/act/support-tougher-restrictions-bee-harming-pesticides>

## FoE - Homebase finally says no to bee-harming pesticides

Garden centre and retail giant Homebase has announced it will stop using bee-harming pesticides called neonicotinoids. It's a great win for Friends of the Earth's Bee Cause campaign which has been urging the firm to act.

Homebase has agreed to stop using these chemicals on garden plants. And it will clear its shelves of garden products containing neonicotinoids by the end of 2018.

Earlier this year research by leading bee scientist Professor Dave Goulson revealed that 70% of the plants tested from a number of stores contained neonicotinoid pesticides – including 3 pesticides restricted across Europe that have been found to pose a 'high acute risk' to honeybees. Plants bought at Homebase were among those that tested positive for the restricted pesticides.

The announcement by Homebase now means that all the top 10 leading garden centres in the UK have rejected neonicotinoid pesticides. We revealed in August that Homebase was the only major flower and plant retailer not to end the use of these chemicals.

**Friends of the Earth bee campaigner Nick Rau** said "This is great news for our bees, and for the many thousands of people across the UK who urged Homebase to act."

18,000 people signed our petition urging the firm not to sell flowering plants grown with 3 neonicotinoid pesticides. Earlier this week we sent

our giant bees down to a store in Wandsworth to hand it in.

Over three quarters of the British public (78%) agree that garden centres and retailers should not sell plants grown with pesticides that are harmful to bees – according to a Friends of the Earth YouGov poll.

### **Bee campaign making a difference**

The change of policy by Homebase is the second great piece of news for our Bee Cause in a week. It comes right on the back of the government's announcement that it will support tougher restrictions on these bee-harming chemicals.

### **Friends of the Earth's chief executive Craig Bennett said**

"Tougher restrictions on neonicotinoids are essential for our precious bees and the wider environment – and a significant victory for the public and supporters of organisations like Friends of the Earth who have called for tougher action on these chemicals."

### **Help save bees – have you signed our petition?**

It's been a great week for bees, but we can't let up. Our pollinators are still being exposed to these harmful chemicals.

Soon the UK will be taking part in an EU vote on banning bee-harming neonicotinoids. Tell Environment Secretary Michael Gove that you support a full and permanent ban.

*The petition address is at the bottom of page 12.*

## Article from Bromley FoE member Stephen Crowley

I rarely write much these days: more often, if I see or read of something that I think is significant, I merely mull it over until it fades from my immediate consciousness. I might get angry, boil over inside perhaps, but then my age-related feelings of impotence and insignificance kick in. I rarely watch TV, but tonight, I saw a TV programme about inequality of income distribution, and it has awakened again these emotions. Before they too fade away, I turn on my computer.....

I think we humans are on the road to hell: rather dramatic an assertion, but it is, to me, a fair bet - if there is such a thing.

I spent nearly three decades teaching Economics: that doesn't mean much apart from colouring how I see the world. What follows is a series of thoughts as they occur to me, unplanned as I write, but which together I think explain why I think we are tumbling towards catastrophe.

The elephants in the room are human population increase and unrestricted economic growth. Nothing clever or insightful in this: I am perhaps just repeating, with different words, what others far more expert than me, climatologists, demographers, ecologists and so on, have concluded.

The vast majority of people, whoever they are, wherever they live, are I believe decent, honest individuals who strive to make their quality of life better. Most people try to improve their lot in life, and that of our families. We in the west have, on the whole, done very well out of this (with the top 1% doing

spectacularly well, a thought for another day.)

The problem is, ever-increasing human population across the globe means that the 'innocent' efforts of each of us combine to create a very non-benign impact on the planet.

I find it useful to take a local, parochial, view, and build on that. I don't live in 'The Crays' any more, but still work close by, and travel around the area weekly, being someone who maintains a strong interest in what was (and in my heart still is) 'my manor.' I now live 'out in the sticks' overlooking another stream, the River Rother: small population in the village, so changes are easy to observe. Local environment: more negatives than positives.

Start with me: I like to think I am quite environmentally aware, but consider the damage I cause - am I the pot calling the kettle black? Yes, of course: my 'innocent' actions have done significant harm to the planet. And I am just one of over 7,000,000,000 of us, all 'doing our thing' to get by, and generally unaware, day to day, of the harm we do. Lemmings.

I drive to work in Bexley each day, there is no local rail station out here. I burn fifty litres of diesel a week. So, I generate 50 x 2.68 Kg of CO<sub>2</sub>. 134Kg of CO<sub>2</sub>. About 75m<sup>3</sup>. Every week. From a so-called 'environmentalist.' And that does not even include the particulates. And the other poisonous gases, the filth my ten-year old car spews out.

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## Largest solar park in UK may be in Kent - *John Bassendine*

Darenth Valley / Sevenoaks and Tonbridge FoE groups supported the small 50MW Good Energy solar park in Wrotham Heath, Kent, now constructed and operating.

Now there is news of a massive new scheme (c. 350MW) at Cleve Hill, Graveney, north-east of Faversham, and west of Whitstable in North Kent, proposed to be located on 890 acres of low-grade farmland next to / around the substation for the London Array sea windfarm.

This is east of Oare Marshes Nature Reserve, and south of Castle Coote Bird Sanctuary and South Swale Nature Reserve, all on the coast and all operated by Kent Wildlife Trust. The area's salt marshes and mudflats are used by migrating birds including marsh harriers and waders.

The site of the solar installation would be set back slightly from the coast on farmland and will not affect existing footpaths, such as the Saxon Shore Way, which runs 163 miles from Gravesend to Hastings.

Environmental mitigation for birds etc. will be included in the scheme, but no details are yet available. The impact on the North Kent marshes in this area and proposed environmental scheme will need investigating.

It might be great for bumblebees and other wild pollinators, if the area around the solar panels is managed as wild-flower meadows, and also for birds of prey, if small mammal populations increase.

Cleve Hill Solar Park says this solar project could power 110,000 homes a year and be capable of generating c. 350MW of energy - the largest such farm in the UK. It would bring in more than Â£1m a year in business rates to Swale Borough and Kent County Councils. The decision is made by the Planning Inspectorate as a National Infrastructure scheme.

Not sure yet how best we can comment on it and/or support it, but we should all keep an eye on how it progresses. Further information will be available at public consultation events in early December, and the project can be researched by searching the internet for Cleve Hill Solar Park, and looking especially for the PDF put online by "graveneywithgoodnestonepc"

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### **Stephen Crowley article – *continued***

All that follows are ball-park figures. I do about three times the average mileage, so the average vehicle, give or take, knocks out 25m<sup>3</sup> of CO<sub>2</sub> each week. Now, let's multiply it up, to consider London's roughly 2.5 million cars.

Maybe ten million cubic metres of CO<sub>2</sub> pumped out into the streets every day? 1500Km<sup>2</sup> - London's area. 6500m<sup>3</sup> CO<sub>2</sub> per Km<sup>2</sup> - I make that about 4% of the 'air' at ground level to be the filth from car engines through the week, if it sat there in the lowest 1m at ground level.

*/concluded on page 17*

## Brexit and the green transition in Europe – *Paul Enock*

Picking up on the European theme of last month's meeting, I would like to report on the above all-day conference held at Europe House in London on 11<sup>th</sup> November. The conference was part of a series taking in six countries, organised by Green House and the Green European Foundation, whose Chair, Lucile Schmid from France, was present.

Opening the conference, Ms Schmid made the point that often phenomena like Brexit are perceived locally as exclusively national projects, while they are in fact transnational in nature. She pointed out how Brexit is part of a trend of continuous disenchantment with Europe, which could be traced back to the French and Dutch rejection of a European constitution in 2005.

Other examples of this trend are the rise of the far Right in Germany and Austria, and the fact that the majority of candidates in the recent French presidential elections were standing on a 'Frexit' platform. Europe, she argued, continues to avoid confronting internal contradictions on the question of national and regional autonomy – contradictions that, for example, made it incapable of intervening effectively in the crisis in Catalonia. However, Ms Schmid continued, this broader anti-European trend includes a real threat to democracy in Europe.

This last point was elaborated (in the UK context) by Green Party MEP Molly Scott Cato. Brexit is not, she argued, a political process in the normal meaning of that term; it is something much more profound. We are living through

historical change whose magnitude we must not underestimate, and many actors inside government and the civil service are patently out of their depth, (as well as under-staffed).

However, Molly argued, although it contains many dangers, this kind of change in our system can present the environmental movement with opportunities to shape the future as it would like. Molly said she would try to present both the opportunities and the threats that Brexit entails for the environment, although she was not really convinced about the former.

Like every other speaker at the conference, Molly argued that, for anyone interested in promoting the interests of the environment in the UK and beyond, the first-choice strategy is to fight to reverse the Brexit process. Working for a 'Green Brexit' was unanimously agreed to be a secondary and less attractive option.

Having said this, freedom from the EU's CAP regulations could allow the UK to incentivise increased carbon capture through improving the health of agricultural soil. We would also be free to subsidise water management. Molly struck a warning, however, about Michael Gove's promise of green farming based on a no-ploughing approach, as this would depend on even more profligate use of glyphosate to control weeds. (We note that the UK is currently opposing both France and Germany with its defence of glyphosate in Brussels.)

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## Brexit and the green transition – *continued*

Another negative is the probable end to farming subsidies, without which a host of smaller, more traditional enterprises will find themselves unviable, paving the way for industrial-scale agri-businesses.

Like Molly Scott Cato, Green MP Caroline Lucas is shocked at how, in a country like ours that relies on imports for 40% of its food, Brexit is going ahead without any published plan or open debate about how to safeguard those supplies. Ms Lucas, too, suspects that little is being said on this subject because of an agenda to 'liberate' the UK countryside from the accumulated body of EU law (the so-called *Acquis Communautaire*), with its strong environmental protections.

For Ms Lucas, the jewels in the crown of current UK environmental legislation are the Birds and Habitats Directives, along with the precautionary principle and the polluter-pays principle. All of these are under threat from those who wish to make a bonfire of red-tape, and all of these need to be fought for by anyone interested in the health of our environment.

This battle is taking place right now in the form of amendments to the EU (withdrawal) Bill, currently going through Parliament. Environment Minister Michael Gove has made it clear that the government will accept none of these amendments, leaving future legislatures free to eliminate environmental protections.

And indeed, on 15 November the Government successfully defeated (by 11 votes) an opposition amendment

which sought to retain the precautionary principle (the principle that action should be taken to prevent environmental damage at source), and the principle that the polluter should pay, from EU into UK law.

Ms Lucas went on to warn that the estimated eleven hundred further EU environmental laws currently in force in this country cannot simply be 'cut and pasted' into new UK legislation, as much of this legislation depends on commissions and control institutions for its enforcement. Simply copying the wording of EU legislation into UK law will thus create an enormous 'governance gap'.

Ms Lucas gave the example of how the 'Reach' regulations of the European Chemicals Agency have undergone 38 major revisions over the past ten years alone in order to keep them abreast of ongoing findings and scientific research. Does the UK really intend to take on this kind of regulatory commitment single handed?

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### **Stephen Crowley article - *concluded***

Of course, that is simplistic - it is just back of an envelope stuff. Yes, the wind blows it away, London is more than 1m deep, and so on. But, in essence, there is some truth in it - no wonder London's air quality is illegal. And it's not 'their' fault. It is mine. I am 'the problem.' Like you. Like all of us. Maybe I will write again, to expand on these observations.

## MARINET – Goodwin Sands and Pacific Remote Islands

### MARINET – Goodwin Sands Update

We have just updated the Goodwin Sands campaign group on the current legal position – whether Marinet will move to a judicial review of the Ministry of Defence decision regarding the applicability - and thus designation - of the Goodwin Sands, Kent, under the protection of the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986.

Briefly, the Dover Harbour Board want to dredge nearly 4 million tonnes of sand from the south west section of the Goodwin Sands in order to supply it with sand (aggregate) for its current port redevelopment.

The Goodwin Sands is a candidate Marine Conservation Zone and is also the verifiable final “resting place” of over 60 aircraft and their crew who crashed there during the Battle of Britain in WWII. The Goodwin Sands also likely hosts other crashed aircraft from the remaining years of WWII and is certainly the site of many sunken vessels during this conflict.

All of these sites qualify for designation under the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986 – which seeks to protect the final resting place of service personnel and their aircraft/ship from disturbance – provided the Ministry of Defence agrees to apply and designate these sites or the general area under the Act.

To date, the Ministry is resisting the application of the Act to the Goodwin Sands and, if it persists in this resistance, there is a grave danger that the Marine Management

Organisation will issue an aggregate dredging licence to the Dover Harbour Board and thus the final “resting place” of these service personnel and their wreck will be disturbed and almost certainly damaged or irrevocably destroyed.

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### MARINET - Pacific Remote Islands MPA under threat

#### Sciencemag.org reports, 21st

**September 2017:** Marine scientists are warning that if the Trump administration rescinds fishing protections around eight Pacific islands, the USA will lose one of its best laboratories for measuring how a warming climate affects marine life.

A proposal from Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke, leaked to The Washington Post, argues that regulations on waters around the islands — Howland, Baker, Johnston, Wake, Jarvis, Palmyra, Rose, and Kingman Reef — “should be amended... to allow commercial fishing.”

“We need baselines,” says Alan Friedlander of the University of Hawaii at Mānoa in Honolulu. “We need pristine reefs to see what we’ve lost elsewhere, to better manage damaged reefs and to isolate the effects of climate change.”

Callum Roberts, a marine ecologist at the University of York in the United Kingdom, says: “It’s hard to find words adequate to express my level of dismay at this abject betrayal of present and future generations.”

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**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!

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**Non-members' Section**

If you are not a member of Bromley Friends of the Earth, BFoE, then hello. We are an active local group affiliated to national Friends of the Earth concerned with promoting the understanding of environmental issues. We also campaign on these issues at a local, national and international level.

If you would like to know more about who we are and what we do please contact either of our co-ordinators Sheila Brown (01689-851605) or Ann Garrett (020-8460-1295); their email addresses are on the previous page. Alternatively, you can come along to one of our free monthly meetings held on the first Tuesday of every month at the Friends Meeting House, Ravensbourne Road, and Bromley (that's towards the bottom of the High Street and on the right going south). If you would like to join us then please fill in and send us the form below.

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**Membership Application/Renewal\* Form** (\*please delete as appropriate.)

Please return this form to: **Bromley FoE, 2 Bucks Cross Cottages, Chelsfield Village, Orpington, and Kent, BR6 7RN**. Other enquiries regarding the group: may be sent by email to *bromleyfoe@gmail.com*, or telephone our co-ordinators at the telephone numbers above.

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

Name..... Telephone Number

Address.....

..... Postcode.....

Email Address.....

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

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