



**friends of
the earth
Bromley**



February 2015

No. 326

ewsletter

Bromley FoE: enquiries:

email: bromleyfoe@gmail.com, website: www.bromleyfoe.co.uk

February Meeting

Friends Meeting House, Ravensbourne Road, Bromley

Is your journey really necessary?

Andrew Bosi, London Chair of Campaign for Better Transport
discusses ways of reducing our need to travel and the Mayor's transport strategy. Andrew has been campaigning on transport issues since 1979.

Tuesday 3rd February - 7.30pm

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Copy for the next Newsletter must be with the Editor by

***** SUNDAY 15TH FEBRUARY*****

Contact details inside front cover.

What did our questionnaire reveal? Find out on pages 9 and 11

Diary dates:

- Feb 3rd (Tues)** **Bromley FoE's February meeting:** Andrew Bosi, Campaign for Better Transport
- Feb 7th (Sat)** **Progressive Bromley Film Co-op:** 6pm for shared food and social time, 7pm film. Friends Meeting House, Bromley
- Feb 21st (Sat)** **FoE's London and South East regional gathering:** @ The Printworks, Clapham Road, SW9 0HP
- Feb 24 – Mar 8** **Fairtrade Fortnight 2015**
- Mar 3rd (Tues)** **Bromley FoE's March meeting:** Fairtrade theme
- Mar 21st (Sat)** **Campaign stall, The Mall, Bromley, 2.30-4.30pm**
- May 2nd (Sat)** **Bill Priestley's Open Garden:** Come along to Bill's house in Petts Wood and enjoy homemade cakes and teas. Plenty of plants to buy. 2pm to 4pm.
- June 12-14** **FoE's BASECAMP** at Castleton, Derbyshire

February's meeting

Campaign for Better Transport's vision is a country where communities have affordable transport that improves quality of life and protects the environment.

An independent charity, it works by providing well-researched, practical solutions to transport problems, pressuring national and local government to adopt them, and empowering ordinary people up and down the country.

Gardening tips for February from your gardening correspondent Bill

Now is a good time to put compost round your raspberry plants preferably having previously removed any weeds. If they ate Autumn Bliss (the type I have distributed) then cut off the top dead bits that have flowered back to a live green bud which is now visible.

It is also time to spread your homemade compost over the lawn, if you have enough to spare.

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 15TH FEBRUARY***:**

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

January meeting report, including AGM, Judy Palmer & Annette Rose

January Meeting report part 1 – Judy Palmer

Our January meeting followed a slightly different course this year. Joe Jenkins, the FoE Director of Engagement, was due to come down for a second visit, but had to cancel due to illness, but Adeela Warley, FoE Head of Communication, substituted for him very well. As Sheila was occupied with the reviews, she invited Bill Priestley up to chair, keeping us to time.

As we had lots to chat about we held our AGM first, beginning with Sheila's review of our 2014 activities, a list of which was published in the January newsletter.

The group has been lucky to have two co-ordinators for several years now, but as Ann Garrett is standing for the Green Party in the general election this year, she has stood down from her co-ordinator's role. Before she did so, she gave an overview of the campaign actions we had participated in.

After this we had a great tag-team effort of Ann and Sheila thanking all the Bromley FoE people who have done something for the group over the year, which was most impressive. This then led into a review of the group's accounts, which are healthy thank you! And thanks must go to Sheila for undertaking to do this again in 2015, as well as being our sole Co-ordinator. John Street proposed acceptance of the accounts, and Annette Rose seconded. They were duly passed.

Bill led us into voting for our co-ordinator – Sheila being unanimously voted in again. All the campaigners and admin team people are also staying in place. The group is without a press officer and group secretary full time, though Judy will still monitor the group's emails and Ann will undertake to do some liaising with the press later on in the year.

Anyone who would like to join the team would be most welcome! Please see the back of the newsletter for the full list. And thank you to everyone who has volunteered to help.

After this we had time for some campaign updates before breaking for tea. Judy had updates on the Nature/Bees campaign, Marine issues, Flooding/Climate Change, as well as the Run on Sun campaign (*please see updates elsewhere in the newsletter*). We also welcomed a visit from Paul de Zylva, the senior FoE Nature campaigner who contributed whenever needed during the course of the evening.

Ann also spoke about the Fracking campaign, mentioning the wish to meet Cllr Carr at some point with an anti-fracking petition which now has over 200 signatures.

Jan and Trish from the NotoW4Fuel group were at the meeting, but had no real up to date information to pass on at that point. (*Again, please see article elsewhere in the newsletter.*)

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January meeting report - *continued*

In 'any other business' we asked if anyone had any thoughts on the general direction the group was taking, and no was the answer then!

We also discussed forging links with other local park friends groups; strengthening our link with the NotoW4Fuel group; an up-coming FoE Regional meeting in February and the FoE Basecamp taking place in June this year.

January Meeting report part 2 – Annette Rose

Adeela Warley led a discussion in the second half of our January meeting. Adeela is the Head of Communications and Experience at FOE and her job is to take FOE campaigns out to the public. She has been a member since 1989. She recalled her memories of Bromley FoE, participating in an action outside Bromley Library in the 1990s.

It was great to hear her tell us that our group is held in high esteem and she said it is clear that we have great team work and that is what makes our group so successful. She thanked us for all we do.

Adeela went on to give an outline of the campaign plans for 2015. The general Election will dominate till May and it is FoE's job to keep environmental matters at the forefront- for example waste and air quality issues. It was suggested that we could attend meetings of political parties but this must be done within the guidelines provided on the FOE website.

Flooding-Adeela talked about flooding and how FoE will continue to work on this in 2015 and there will be further information on the campaign hub. They will be working at an international level, building towards the Paris climate change talks in December and they will be working with FoE Europe.

Fracking is another high profile area for 2015 and is a hot topic. The good news is there has been little progress on fracking sites so far in the U.K. FOE will continue to work with other anti fracking groups.

Run on Sun- Adeela stressed the importance of this campaign. Starting with schools is a good way to bring in parents and young people. They will be asking MPs and parliamentary candidates to support a Solar Schools Plan. Local authorities will be asked to support solar schools programmes. It is important the government does not jeopardise green tariffs.

There is a potential day of action planned for July 4th and there is a schools pack being produced in collaboration with Solar Aid. There will be further information on these issues on the Run on Sun hub.

Paul De Zylva who leads the Nature Campaign, then gave us an update on how this campaign will widen its work out from the Bee Cause in the future.

A question was asked from the floor about how FoE policy is made.

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January meeting report *concluded*; Rainforest Facts; ReUser Item

Paul explained that sometimes a formal policy review is undertaken, e.g. a recent one on nuclear energy. At other times it is the instinct of the campaigner and working with other groups in the field that leads to policy. There are opportunities at Basecamp to put forward motions.

Another questioner asked about FoE and how they form views on developments in science e.g. policy on GM foods. Paul explained that several of their campaigners have scientific backgrounds and the issues are debated rigorously.

Another question asked about the new large development at Battersea Power Station and Adeena said she would take this issue back to a colleague for discussion.

The issue of waste and the growing amount of fly tipping was discussed. There were concerns about the problems with land fill.

We were joined in the discussion by our colleagues who are trying to get the Waste4Fuel site cleared. They gave us an update on the problems with the site and discussed the importance of keeping this issue in the media. They are still waiting for a meeting with the Environment Agency.

ReUser Item: Have you got old tins of brightly coloured gloss paint hanging around? Bill would like bright reds, blues, greens and yellows, to repaint / customise some old lawnmowers. Phone Bill on 01689 820469.

Rainforest Facts from George our Rainforest Campaigner

Rainforests store water like a huge sponge. In fact, it is believed that the Amazonian forests alone store over half of the Earth's rainwater! Rainforest trees draw water from the forest floor and release it back in to the atmosphere in the form of swirling mists and clouds.

Without rainforests continually recycling huge quantities of water, feeding the rivers, lakes and irrigation systems, droughts would become more common, potentially leading to widespread famine and disease.

Did you know that we also depend on trees to cleanse our atmosphere? They absorb the carbon dioxide that we exhale, and provide the oxygen we need to breathe. When rainforest trees are burnt they release carbon dioxide, which pollutes the atmosphere and contributes to global warming.

Deforestation is in fact considered the second major driver of climate change (more than the entire global transport sector), responsible for 18-25% of global annual carbon dioxide emissions.

Eco tip from an AA man

Modern car batteries last best if you do 10,000 + miles per year. Lots of people like me only do 3 or 4 thousand miles per year. To improve the longevity of these batteries put them on trickle charge for 3 or 4 hours every 3 or 4 months.

Bromley FoE Accounts for year ended December 31st, 2014

	2014	2013	2012
Balance at January 1st	781.42	969.64	933.04
Income			
Subscriptions	357.00	299.00	381.00
Donations	221.00	121.00	128.00
Hall collection	334.00	305.00	369.34
Tea profits	57.24	67.00	56.37
Stall income	113.95	*215.08	88.70
Open Garden	418.47	0.00	0.00
Prior year adjustment ☒	0.00	☒286.00	0.00
	1,501.66	1,293.08	1,023.41
Expenditure			
Hall hire	462.00	440.00	403.00
Newsletter §	353.60	508.00	416.30
Stall rentals & other expenses	12.97	53.96	51.00
Goods for resale	0.00	166.95	0.00
Speaker expenses/gifts	81.00	138.70	0.00
Conference subsidy	79.50	0.00	0.00
Payments to other organisations	162.50	100.00	30.00
Donations to National FoE	200.00	50.00	30.00
Other (including gifts)	63.65	23.69	56.51
	1,498.42	1,481.30	986.81
Surplus / (deficit) for year	86.44	(188.22)	36.60
Balance at December 31st	867.66	781.42	969.64

§ Newsletter 2013 overcharged £83.20; this amount deducted from 2014 figure

* includes sale of Bee goods in 2013

☒ to bring accounts in line with bank statement balance

Notes / Comments on the Accounts ++ Waste4Fuel Update

In presenting the accounts, the following comments were made.

Under 'Income' –

Subscription income was up on the previous year.

Stall income was down. In 2013 we had fête stalls at Chelsfield and Cudham. In 2014 we only had Keston; Cudham was rained off. Also in 2013 sale of Bee goods purchased by the group for resale is included in the total.

The Open Garden was a new and extremely successful event (thanks to Bill and a team of helpers) and we hope to repeat this in 2015.

The 'prior year adjustment' was a one-off for 2013 to bring accounts total into line with actual bank balance as there had been a discrepancy over previous years.

Under 'Expenditure'

The hall hire payment had increased by 5%. The Newsletter costs are much lower. This is due to a miscalculation and overpayment in 2013. The actual figures should read £424.80 in 2013 and £436.80 in 2014.

Stall rental costs also down, as above.

The purchase of the Bee goods is shown as a one-off for 2013.

Conference subsidy for fees and travel was last used prior to this in 2010.

Our payments to other organisations was made up of £50 to Marinet which we pay annually, £12.50 sub to Campaign for Better Transport, of

which we are a member. £100 paid to BRAAD (Bromley Residents Against Airport Development), the new pressure group opposing new proposed development at Biggin Hill.

Gifts included those in memory of past loyal members who passed away, Joyce Pitt and Keith Galley and to Ray Watson stepping down as Group Secretary after 13 years.

Waste4Fuel Update

Annette Rose writes: The residents near this closed waste site continue to suffer.

There was yet another fire at the Waste4fuel site in St. Paul's Cray. It caused chaos on the roads and the A20 was closed due to poor visibility. This time it started in the redundant machinery on the Northern boundary of the site and it is being investigated. The Environment Agency has stated that it is monitoring for the potential environmental impact from the fire water run off on the adjacent Ruxley Lakes SSSI.

The NewsShopper covered the incident and stated 'Residents have been forced to live in the looming shadow of the enormous pile of filth for more than four years, despite countless promises to clear it.'

At the time of writing, the No to Waste4Fuel group is still waiting for the Environment Agency to meet with them to discuss the situation.

Campaigns, Climate and Energy – by a Special Correspondent

Campaign Stall

There will be a stall in The Mall Precinct, Bromley from 2.30 - 4.00 pm on March 21st. Bromley Against Fracking are planning to join us again, and we hope to get more cards signed to give to Cllr Stephen Carr. We will also have Run on the Sun and Bee campaign materials on the stall. Your help would be greatly appreciated.

Climate and Energy

Lima Climate Conference

This ended in mid December, but climate campaigners were disappointed that negotiations for a climate change agreement headed for an unsatisfying conclusion, after two weeks of talks. The proposals were too weak to keep global warming to the agreed limit of two degrees above preindustrial levels, setting the world on course to a climate disaster, according to developing countries at the summit.

The talks at Lima had been charged with producing the blueprint for a climate change agreement due to be finalised in Paris at the end of next year. The final proposals take the pressure off industrialised countries to provide up to \$100bn a year in climate finance to poor countries in 2020.

Nuclear Power is Greenest say Top Scientists

Nuclear power is one of the least damaging sources of energy for the environment and the green movement must accept its expansion if the world is to avoid dangerous climate change, some of the world's leading conservationist biologists have warned.

They say that it is too risky to rely solely on renewable energy sources to replacing fossil fuels because of problems due to scalability, cost, materials and land use.

What they don't say, however, is how nuclear waste will be safely disposed of in the future, and how nuclear power stations are vulnerable to accidents and extreme weather conditions such as Fukushima.

Dr John Large, the British nuclear expert, in a recent report has suggested that due to a number of unexplained but apparently co-ordinated flights of unmanned vehicles over French nuclear installations, nuclear power stations are open to drone attacks.

Meat Production and Climate Change

A research paper produced last December on climate change and livestock production notes that the consumption of meat and dairy produce is a major driver of climate change.

The global livestock industry is producing more carbon emissions than all planes, trains, road vehicles and ships combined. Therefore reducing the world's consumption of meat is critical to curb climate change. The Stern report of 2009 refers to the fact that meat is a wasteful use of water and creates a lot of greenhouse gases, and recommends a vegetarian diet. Heart disease, diabetes and some forms of cancer are also attributed to diets high in animal products as it happens.

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Criticism of Wind Turbines

According to critics wind turbines take power from the National Grid even when not generating energy themselves, it has emerged. They need energy to keep their blades rotating in cold weather to stop them icing up. RWE the energy company that runs wind turbines off the North Wales Coast say its machines constantly contribute energy to the National Grid in all weather conditions.

The energy the wind turbines require they say is minimal compared to what is returned to the network. All energy generators including nuclear and gas-fired power plants use some electricity as well as producing it.

Around 10% of energy generated in the UK, comes from wind power. Britain's offshore and land wind turbines have a total capacity of 12.1 gigawatts, enough for 8.8 million homes. The Tories have said they will cap the number of onshore turbines if they win in May.

Green Watchdog Ethics

The Environment Agency according to the Independent on Sunday, apparently invests millions in controversial industries which it then regulates.

In the UK the EA's pension fund, worth £2.3bn - invests in companies investing in fracking, incineration and nuclear power, all of which the Agency is involved of regulating. Globally the fund also invest millions in mining and chemical companies, arms manufacturers and gambling

companies - also in Starbucks which has been accused of tax avoidance.

These investments could be open to legal challenges in the future due to the conflict of interest which undermines the credibility of the EA.

Questionnaire Responses

Annette Rose writes: Thank you very much to those who returned their questionnaires from the December newsletter. They have been very helpful to us. We had 11 returned to us. Here is a brief summary of your comments.

What does BFoE do well?

Comments included that we are a friendly and sociable group and outings have helped with this. People feel welcome at meetings and enjoy the range of speakers. The monthly newsletter is appreciated and people felt it was useful and informative. People feel that they are kept up to date with National FoE campaigns. It was commented that we have 'a good pro-active attitude'.

What could we do better?

It was suggested we would benefit from some younger members and that we could make more contact with groups outside the Bromley area. We could have different people introducing the speakers. We would benefit from more people to help with campaigns, particularly Run on Sun and No to Waste4Fuel.

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**Picture Palace Campaign –
Refuse KICC's application for change of use of 25 Church Road**

The campaign petition site said:

25 Church Road is the only large, purpose-built, public entertainment venue in the town centre. Located in the heart of the Crystal Palace Triangle, this landmark building has a long history of serving the community by providing local entertainment from its roots as a 1920s art deco cinema through to its use as a bingo hall as recently as 2009, when Kingsway International Christian Centre (KICC) bought the building and attempted to take it out of leisure use for the first time in over eighty years.

As the last remaining dedicated D2 'Assembly and leisure' venue left in Crystal Palace, it has played a substantial role in serving the cultural and entertainment needs of Crystal Palace for generations. The long standing, and vital, contribution to the cultural life of Crystal Palace was recognised in 2014 when Bromley Council agreed to register the building as an 'Asset of Community Value.'

However, the potential opportunity to return 25 Church Road to its historic public entertainment roots and preserve its long established status as a major 'Assembly and Leisure' venue, is once again under threat by KICC's latest planning application for a mixed use D1 Church, conferencing and counselling centre with some D2 'Assembly and leisure' elements - although there would be no obligation whatsoever for the owners to run any D2 leisure activities once the 'change of use' had been granted

If successful the proposed 'change of use' would result in the loss, perhaps forever, of the last remaining dedicated D2 Public entertainment venue in Crystal Palace and any meaningful preservation of this recognised 'Asset of Community Value'.

We, the undersigned, consider such a loss to be unacceptable and the proposed change to mixed use to be detrimental to the cultural and economic vitality of Crystal Palace.

We therefore call upon Bromley Council, as the Statutory Planning Authority:

1. To continue to recognise 25 Church Road's status as an 'Asset of Community Value'.
2. To take into account 25 Church Road's 'Asset of Community Value' status as a MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATION AGAINST any change of use from D2 to a mixed use D1/D2.
3. To refuse KICC's planning application, as contrary to both planning policy and the clearly voiced views of the traders and residents of Crystal Palace to save 25 Church Road as a public entertainment venue.

... and ...

An incredible 5,600 signatures on our petition in just over a week.

Sorry – out of space - More info at
www.cinema4crystalpalace.org.uk

Looking forward into 2015, it will be another 'busy-bee' year! The pesticide issue is raising its ugly head again – it's been a year now since the EU ban on some of the bee-harming pesticides has been in force. The pesticide-interested parties are still insisting the bees aren't suffering. And as it's not permanent, the ban expires in December 2015.

Our group will be promoting the Bee Cause, and trying to find another site for a third BFoE Bee World (anyone got any suggestions?) as FoE will be hoping to achieve the creation of another 200 bee worlds across the country. Wouldn't it be something to see bee worlds across every county, linking bee / pollinator corridors across the country?

Here are some more stats for you, provided by Sion Elis-Williams, the Bee Cause Campaign Assistant:

Stat 1: Bees put food on our plates. They pollinate 75% of our most vital crops and favourite foods including apples, cranberries, melons, broccoli, tomatoes and strawberries. Some crops, including blueberries and cherries, are 90% dependent on honey bee pollination. Almonds depend entirely on bee pollination when trees bloom. Without bees and other insects we'd also have 20% less vitamin C, 41% less vitamin A and 9% less calcium in our food.

Stat 2: Food businesses face daily challenges. One of the things that sets sustainable restaurants apart is that they consider not only immediate

challenges to the success of the enterprise but also threats to the natural systems on which economies and businesses ultimately depend.

Stat 3: In a world without bees we could still grow self-pollinating crops like wheat and rice. But without bees to pollinate crops our diets would be bland, boring and less nutritious. I hope Sustainable Restaurant Association members agree that saving bees makes sense, on every level, and I hope we can work together to create many more Bee Worlds.'

It would be great to see restaurants taking up the challenge, and also create a Bee World in their grounds.

Questionnaire responses – cont'd

Thank you for all the suggestions for speakers and topics for talks that you have given us. We will certainly be following these up and including those we can in our future programmes.

One person suggested that it would be useful to do a questionnaire annually and this will be considered.

If you gave your email address, you may receive occasional emails between meetings to update you.

And finally, if you missed out on completing your questionnaire, it is never too late to have your say! If you have an idea for a meeting or would like to make a suggestion, give your idea verbally or on paper at the monthly meeting or you can email us at bromleyfoe@gmail.com.

Friends of the Earth Campaign News

FOE Sri Lanka's success on toxic agrochemicals

In 2013, Friends of the Earth Sri Lanka brought a legal case to force the authorities to take legal action against the importers of arsenic-contaminated pesticides and to regulate the use of highly toxic agrochemicals in the country. The use and sale of pesticides containing Glyphosate, Propanil, Carbaryl, Chlopyrifos and Carbofuran has now been banned in agricultural districts where there is a high incidence of chronic kidney disease. Over 100,000 people in these areas are suffering from an unidentified kidney disease.

Defending the laws which protect nature

We're working with UK and European colleagues on the potential threats to the European Nature Directives. The new EU Commission and Parliament are being urged by the UK and Dutch governments in particular to weaken these fundamental backstop laws that protect our best wildlife species and havens.

School Energy Champions

Friends of the Earth, together with our partners the Centre for Sustainable Energy and Bristol Energy Network, have won a successful funding bid to Bristol Green Capital. In 2015, we'll be recruiting and supporting a team of Energy Champions to work across the city and surrounding area.

Friends of the Earth's special role in the project is to run our Schools Run on Sun campaign locally. Working closely with Bristol City Council, we want to get

as many schools as possible in the area hooked up with the funding and know-how to install solar power.

Opportunity to shape Run on Sun training events

Alongside the upcoming regional gatherings, we hope to run a series of training days around the country too. We'd like your thoughts on what would be most useful to focus on at these events. Here's a few ideas we've had already:

- Working with others in your community to build support for a school
- Working with Local Education Authorities and Councils
- Working directly with schools
- Working with politicians in the run up to the General Election
- Working with other renewable energy groups

If any of these appeal to you or if there's something else you'd like to concentrate on, please get in touch with Tom at tom.wright@foe.co.uk or 020 7566 1673.

Getting involved in Global Divestment Day

On 13 & 14 February thousands of people across 5 continents will turn out for Global Divestment Day - taking collective action demanding our institutions drop investments in fossil fuels. Join an event near you, or start your own. There are guides and resources online to help. The Fossil Free divestment movement is growing rapidly around the world - join in at <http://gofossilfree.org/uk/global-divestment-day/>.

Doubts over fracking jobs claims as new report says 24,000 jobs in clean energy for North West

A new report from Friends of the Earth, supported by PCS Union and North West trades councils, shows that industry claims about job creation from fracking are overstated, and that any jobs boom would be short-lived. The report also shows that investment in energy efficiency and renewable energy would create more jobs than more investment in fossil fuels.

The report, titled ‘Making a better job of it’ finds:

Overstated jobs claims: the report most often quoted by the industry and its supporters claims that job creation will be over twice as high as that seen in the US, according to peer-reviewed evidence assessing how many jobs are created for a given amount of gas produced.

Short-term jobs, long-term risks: jobs figures quoted are peak numbers which tail off rapidly. Cuadrilla claims shale gas production would create 1,700 jobs in Lancashire but this figure is for one year only, and falls to under 200 only three years afterwards.

But local communities would face risks to the local environment and their health for many years. And despite the several years of disruption from Cuadrilla’s proposed exploration at Roseacre and Preston New Road, the sites would create only 11 net jobs each.

Renewable energy and energy efficiency are a better jobs bet: they create over six times as many jobs as gas per unit of power generated or

saved, and around three times as many jobs for the same amount invested.

Huge potential in the North West: exploiting the region’s huge renewable energy potential and saving energy in the region’s homes could support another 24,000 jobs.

Friends of the Earth’s North West Campaigner Helen Rimmer said:

“The North West has world-class renewable resources and investment should focus on clean energy technologies such as tidal, solar and offshore wind, and energy efficiency – which tackle climate change and create more jobs than over-hyped fracking.

“Lancashire County Council should reject Cuadrilla’s fracking plans and support energy solutions which will create more jobs without risking the county’s environment, local economy and communities.”

Chris Baugh, Assistant General Secretary of Public and Commercial Services Union said:

“PCS welcome this important report from Friends of the Earth. We were told fracking would be a game changer driving down our energy bills, claims not even Lord Browne, Chair of Cuadrilla believes. Now we’re told the dash for gas is about energy security and jobs. “

FoE: EU allows Member States to ban GM crops

Commenting on today's decision by MEPs to allow EU countries to ban the growing of GM crops in their territories, Friends of the Earth Senior Food campaigner Clare Oxborrow said:

"This decision is good news for nations like Scotland and Wales, whose political leaders have opposed GM crops and can now ban them from their fields. But this ruling is a double-edged sword that could open the door to GM crops being grown in England.

"Successive UK Governments have consistently championed GM crops and food - despite the fact that this technology has been hugely over-hyped and delivered little.

"GM crops are not the solution to the food and farming challenges we face. Instead of continuing to back this technology, UK Ministers should give their support to resilient and sustainable systems that boost our health, economy and environment."

Notes to editors:

1. On Tuesday 13 January the European Parliament voted on new legal mechanisms for national governments to ban the cultivation of GM crops in their countries. Governments will be able to ban entire categories of GM crops, e.g. all GM maize, or all herbicide tolerant crops. This could lead to GMO-free fields for the next decade, as all GM crops currently in the pipeline for Europe are maize seeds.

For over 15 years the cultivation of GM crops has been controversial in the

EU. Nine EU countries have banned their cultivation (Austria, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg and Poland). These national bans have been challenged by the European Commission, as well as the biotech industry, resulting in many national environment ministers supporting proposals to strengthen their legal rights to ban GM crops.

The European farming sector shows limited interest in GM crops. In 2014, only 0.1 per cent of crop land was cultivated with Monsanto's GM maize Mon810 (the only GM crop approved for growing) in Spain and smaller areas in four other countries. In 2013, biotech companies BASF and Monsanto announced that they were phasing out the development of GM crops for the European market and started withdrawing most pending authorisations.

2. In countries where GM crops are grown they have led to:

- Further intensification of farming, putting pressure on scarce resources;
- Huge increases in the use of herbicides - with knock-on impacts on the environment and people's health;
- The GM contamination of non-GM food and animal feed, including by non-approved varieties
- Financial losses for non-GM farmers and food producers;
- Farmers being sued by biotech companies for breaching patent rights after their crops have been contaminated with GM.

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Monthly Meeting reporters:

John and Sue Bocock, Anne Clark,
Graham Hemington, Annette Rose and
Ray Watson

Merchandising:

Anne Clark 020-8289-8483

Teas:

Mary Ingledew / Sylvia Chance

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: 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.....

Address.....

..... Postcode.....

Email Address.....

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

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