



friends of  
the earth  
Bromley



January 2014

No. 313

# newsletter

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## January Meeting

*Friends Meeting House, Ravensbourne Road, Bromley*

### Question time with Cllr Colin Smith

Cllr Smith is Bromley Council's portfolio holder for the Environment. This is your opportunity to find out more about the Council's policies.

**Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> January - 7.30pm**

Everyone welcome – bring a friend

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Copy for the next Newsletter must be with the Editor by

**\*\*\* SUNDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY\*\*\***

Contact details inside front cover.

***Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> January – Bromley Film Co-op shows The Yacoubian Building at Bromley Friends Meeting House***

**Diary dates:**

- Jan 4<sup>th</sup> (Sat)** **Bromley Film Co-op** - showing of The Yacoubian Building  
6pm for shared food and social time, 7 pm film
- Jan 7<sup>th</sup> (Tues)** **Bromley FoE's January meeting:** including our AGM, plus Cllr  
Colin Smith, Bromley's Environment portfolio holder
- Jan 19<sup>th</sup> (Sun)** **Bromley FoE group lunch at Croft Tearoom**, 12.45pm.  
Sign up and bring your deposit of £5 to the January meeting or  
contact Sheila (*see p4 for menu, p15 for contact details*)
- Feb 4<sup>th</sup> (Tues)** **Bromley FoE's February meeting:** speaker from Sustrans
- Feb 24 – Mar 9** **Fairtrade Fortnight 2014**
- Mar 4<sup>th</sup> (Tues)** **Bromley FoE's March meeting:** speaker from Fairtrade  
Foundation, with Fairtrade products on sale

**Bromley FoE's January meeting - YOUR BIG CHANCE TO FIND THE FACTS!**

Bromley FoE's January meeting will be a Q&A session with Cllr Colin Smith, Bromley Council's portfolio holder for the Environment. There will be plenty scope for questions because his territory covers everything from recycling to planning, fracking and bio-diversity.

So if you would like to know more about what the council is or isn't doing now is the time to put democracy into action. Prepare your questions now!

**Opposition to 17-storey building to replace H G Wells Centre**

Bromley FoE has lodged an objection to a proposal to demolish the historic H G Wells Centre at Bromley South and replace it with a building up to 17 storeys high. The building would be part seven storeys, part 11 storeys and part 17 storeys and would be for mixed use – some for community use, some for office space and 52 flats.

Our objection is that the development would be out of scale with the surrounding buildings and that its bulk would cause it to dominate the district. We also pointed out that the block would overlook housing in the area, leading to loss of privacy, and that the development would mean the loss of the H G Wells Centre with its unique architecture.

**Disclaimer:** *Please note that any opinions expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of Bromley Friends of the Earth nor 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 19<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY \*\*\***:

**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

## December meeting report – Ray Watson

A long-time defender of Bromley heritage was how joint co-ordinator Ann Garrett introduced our speaker Tony Banfield, chairman of Bromley Civic Society. And that is what he ably demonstrated during a *tour de force* of major schemes to develop the High Street district.

He also demonstrated how tough it is when developers and Bromley Council offer little co-operation to hold discussions on heritage matters. He said: 'We are now doing battle with the big boys and big money'.

Tony supported this claim by detailing the recent campaign to build over part of the historic Queen's Gardens in the heart of the High Street area. The gardens were given to Bromley in 1898 with a covenant prohibiting any development. However, a plan was put forward to permit five restaurants and other buildings, but even in the face of objections from many parts of the borough, the council refused to let its opponents see the details in the covenant. Indeed, Tony claimed, nor were some councillors allowed to see it.

He described the long and tortuous battle that followed, ending with a public inquiry that campaigners lost.

He also outlined the many steps that were required on an earlier occasion when a slice of the Queen's Gardens was sold to increase the area available for building the large shopping mall adjacent to the area. That too, was lost.

Tony's greatest fear is that some historic buildings and views are being lost when developers move in -- they are rarely sympathetic to preserving heritage sites. A simple example here is at Bromley North where street furniture like lighting posts and shop fronts are being changed; Victorian-style lamp-posts are being replaced by more modern ones even though local traders are opposed. He called this design concept 'aggressively modern'.

Another recent example followed the discovery of an old well pit in the Bromley North area which had been used by local residents for decades prior to mains water being supplied. It had a particularly handsome brickwork lining and brick dome. The Civic Society asked for it to be preserved but without warning it was totally demolished.

Turning to a number of large development schemes under the council's High St Action Plan, Tony said the proposed high-rise buildings were forming 'the Croydonisation of Bromley'. For instance, a 20-storey block under construction at Bromley South on the site of the former Westmoreland Road car park was twice as high as the surrounding buildings and blocked the view to the Keston Ridge.

Other high-rise buildings proposed would drastically change the look of the High St and adjacent areas. Under discussion with developers is a massive scheme to demolish shops on

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## Annual Accounts (or lack of them) and AGM

### **Annual accounts: watch this space!**

*Sheila Brown's mea culpa* - Sorry, this is where the Annual Accounts for Bromley Friends of the Earth would normally be shown. I should like to pay tribute to past treasurers, Bill, Ivy and Debbie for meeting this deadline, which I have failed miserably to do. Accounts will be available for the AGM in January and will be published in the February newsletter.

### **All change at AGM in January**

At Annual General Meetings an organisation elects or re-elects its officers for the coming year. Ray Watson has served as group secretary for the past twelve years and has been a wonderful support to the Joint Co-ordinators, as well as being the group's Transport campaigner and one of our team of reporters. He is now standing down from the secretary role but we are grateful that he will continue in his other functions.

Ray will be a very hard act to follow, but we should love to hear from anyone who feels called to act in this way for the group. There is also the possibility of dividing the various tasks. If you are at all interested in finding out more, please contact Ray, Sheila or Ann.

Ann and Sheila are happy to continue as Joint Co-ordinators for another year – unless anyone else is itching to take on this task.

*Sheila writes:* At last year's AGM, in the absence of anyone coming forward, I agreed to take on the treasurership, following on from Debbie who had done an excellent job

in computerising our accounts. Everything has been recorded and banked, no problems there, but I haven't quite managed to do the final bit of closing the books for the year end, so there will be a slight delay on the accounts (see above).

I would love it if someone a bit more confident and competent in this area were able to come forward and take on this task. Could this be you? If numbers are your thing, we'd love to hear from you.

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### **Sunday Lunch at the Croft – please join us**

We have booked a lunch at Croft Tearoom, St Mary Cray on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> January, 12.45 pm. The cost will be £17.50 for 3-courses plus tea/coffee (it would be nice to add on a tip). A £5 per person deposit is payable. The menu choices are:

#### **Starters:**

Roasted Butternut squash soup with bread and butter *or*  
Tomato, rocket and mozzarella salad with a homemade lemon dressing

#### **Main:**

Ratatouille and Goats cheese crumble *or*  
Herb crusted stuffed mushrooms  
Both served with new potatoes and green beans

#### **Dessert:**

Lemon Mousse with shortbread *or*  
Fresh Fruit Salad with elderflower cream.

### **UN Warsaw Climate Conference**

This was considered to be a big disappointment by the Third World countries and their supporters.

It took 36 hours of non-stop haggling after a fortnight of talks to reach some kind of agreement. Earlier on green delegates had walked out of the conference in protest at the stubborn attitude of the Polish, other EU and 'Western' governments to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions targets. International FoE was critical that the summit had been 'captured' by the corporates and the coal industry.

Climate economist Nicholas Stern warned that the actions that were agreed were completely inadequate when compared with scale and urgency of the risks that the world faces from rising levels of greenhouse gases and the dangers of irreversible impacts. Countries finally agreed on a consensus text outlining the road to a new global warming pact to be signed in Paris by 2015. This did not mention any figures or set specific targets.

### **Fracking**

Lord Browne, chair of the UK's leading shale gas firm Cuadrilla, has stated that fracking is not going to reduce gas prices. This contradicts claims by the Prime Minister and Chancellor that shale gas exploration could help curb energy bills.

He also said that nuclear energy was extremely expensive, and that oil and gas got more state subsidies than renewables.

Browne has criticised the Government for failing to create appropriate regulations for fracking, and said that Cuadrilla will not be fracking at Balcombe in the future. Is this because it isn't a suitable site or due to the protests I wonder?

### **Npower and wind farm project**

Some bad news here - Npower has dropped plans for a 240 -turbine wind farm off the North Devon coast. This is mainly due to technical concerns of 'substantially deeper waters'. The proposed Atlantic Array scheme would have created thousands of jobs and been responsible for powering over 900,000 homes. However more 'technically and economically viable' off-shore projects are planned.

### **Scientists for Global Responsibility and the Nuclear Power issue**

SGR acts as an umbrella group for all concerned: scientists, architects, engineers, and technologists. It supports students looking for an ethical career in science.

The organisation recently held a conference during which Dr Ian Fairlie, a respected scientist, spoke scathingly about the Government's obsession with nuclear power. He made repeated references to Germany saying that it is not often mentioned that 44,000 new jobs in renewable industries will be created there, whereas the proposed new four new nuclear power stations in this country would only create 1,000 jobs. He was particularly critical of the fact that we are planning to give vast amounts of money to the French treasury and inviting China to control our nuclear power stations.

## Transport Comment – Ray Watson

### Unfair rail fare

It is January – the month that rail fares increase with all the certainty of Christmas spending bills arriving through the letterbox. Good that the increase has been shaved off by the Government by a percentage point or two – but this only came about because outraged public opinion warned the Chancellor that he was on very dangerous ground politically.

Organisations like the Campaign for Better Transport and Friends of the Earth conducted forceful campaigns demonstrating that lobbying can succeed. Time perhaps for others to take up the cudgels to win other battles? How about starting with a national petition to embarrass the Big Six energy companies?

### Pay up? No!

Meanwhile, another transport pressure group, the independent Passenger Focus has come up with the research finding that rail passengers want information about services but that they are not prepared to pay for it. Not surprising; who wants to pay to discover that your train has been cancelled? .

Even more so when you recall that as a taxpayer you contribute to the billions of state subsidies that go to the highly profitable, privately-owned train operating companies.

### Gloomy figures

Part of FoE's rail fares campaign was to argue that higher fares would drive people off the trains and on to the roads. That could be happening if judged only by the huge number of

new cars being sold. That said, rail journeys climbed by 50 per cent between 2004/05 and 2011/12 showing an increase every year except for the recession year of 2009/10. Total car sales for the year to November were 2,111,811, a 9.9 per cent increase on the January-November 2012 figure.

When December's sales are added in it looks like the annual figure will reach 2.25 million, the highest since the pre-recession year of 2007. Just think what that means in pollution terms...

### Poor little rich person

You are hereby invited to buy a Porsche Panamera hybrid car. And to help you on your way, you will receive a £5000 hand-out from the Government. Can that be right? Yes – because there is a Government scheme to promote sales of hybrids, expensive or not.

You would have thought that such a hand-out was not really necessary for the Porsche Panamera buyer. Because the car's basic price is no less than £89,900!

### Up in the air – again

Proposals to expand London airports (or not) are appearing thick and fast. Among them: at our neighbour Gatwick, which is currently embroiled in two rows with local residents.

First, the airport operator and the National Air Traffic Control (Nats) have put forward a case for adding another runway. Residents held a crowded public meeting and heartily opposed

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## Make It Better Campaign – Annette Rose

### Chocolate

The UK is one of the biggest chocolate consuming countries in Europe, gobbling up more than 630,000 tonnes of it per year. And some of the impacts aren't too sweet. But we shouldn't feel guilty. Chocolate consumption in Europe provides a livelihood for millions of people in developing countries, and there are ethical ways to produce it.

Chocolate – don't you just love it? But can we make it more environmentally friendly? Our Make It Better campaign calls for better-designed products that do less damage to the planet. We want to get away from confusing labelling. Instead we want producers to be more responsible for how things are made. To start off, we thought we'd take a look at chocolate.

### Chocolate and the environment

#### Thirsty work: water

It takes 2,500 litres to produce 100g of plain chocolate, mostly from cocoa and milk production. 100g of plain chocolate requires 2,400 litres.

#### Solution

It's possible to use a lot less water. Cadbury, for example, reuses 30% of waste water at its cocoa processing site in Chirk.

#### Burping cows: carbon

Producing a 49g Cadbury Dairy Milk bar releases 169g of greenhouse gas emissions, much of it as methane from dairy cows.

#### Solution

A diet with plenty of minerals curbs excessive belching. Locally-grown

feed, instead of imported soy, also reduces dairy farming's carbon footprint.

#### Wrapper's delight

Cadbury found packaging accounted for only 2% of a Dairy Milk bar's emissions. This is good news.

#### Solution

But let's not get complacent. Over-packaged Easter eggs, for example, show there's still work to be done.

#### Bean scene: cocoa

Sometimes forest is cleared to grow cocoa in plantations which need increased irrigation and use chemical fertilisers and herbicides.

#### Solution

Cocoa is successfully grown under tree canopy, which aids moisture retention and prevents disease. Let's see more of this.

#### Palm oil

Palm oil lurks in many chocolates. In south-east Asia, rainforests are cut down to grow palm oil, releasing carbon dioxide and threatening wildlife.

#### Solution

Why use palm oil at all? After all, chocolate maker Divine produces delicious treats without it. This is based on an article that first appeared in 'Earth Matters', Friends of the Earth's supporter magazine.

**A poem about Fracking, by Roisin Robertson**

They frack us here  
They frack us there  
Those fracking frackers  
Frack us everywhere  
Have you seen the UK map with numbers on it  
Each square is a licence to drill  
Not hills, not lakes not rivers,  
Not communities not homes  
Not schools or hospitals  
Just squares in grids all over the land  
Representing profit to  
Those with funds in-hand  
Like colonies with straight lines  
Which caused so much death and bloodshed  
In foreign tribal lands

And even our sovereign the Queen  
Is in it  
She owns the shale & the gas  
The rights to minerals under your feet  
The oil and gas in her portfolio neat

Far away from poisoned water  
Produced from a fracking well  
Separate from the cleaning pools  
full of toxin dangerous for life  
Like mini Fukushima's  
With a 30 year half life

Far distant from the silica dust  
Which chokes & cloaks the lungs  
The Queen is in her Castles  
Counting not her honey  
But the profits and her money

The politicians on their thrones  
Propped up by corporate cash  
Not listening to the volume of voices  
Calling for sense – the backlash  
Who say frack off you frackers  
your dreams of money-grabbing  
are built on foundations of sand  
if We have anything to do with it  
and We believe that we can

## Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Bill ("Gagging Law")

*Sheila Brown writes:* In response to a request from the campaigning organisation 38 Degrees, five members of Bromley Friends of the Earth joined twelve other people at 5.30 pm at Jo Johnson's surgery, a total of 17 including a woman with two small children (so 19 if you include the children!).

There was supposed to be a petition to hand in, but this did not materialise. After a long wait, twelve people went in to speak to Jo Johnson who was very gracious and listened to what the elected volunteer/spokesperson had to say, and was then platonically re-assuring about the effect of the bill.

What Jo Johnson had to say:

- Aims of the Bill - to set up a statutory register of lobbyists. Open to all. One must register to undertake lobbying activities.
- People involved in a charity may lobby on behalf of the charity; that's ok.
- Professional lobbyists / large lobbying companies have to register, and big firms need to register who they represent.
- The role of 3rd parties (not political parties) e.g. Countryside Alliance, Trade Unions - these are already bound by electoral law.
- The aim is to lower the amount that can be spent; to lower amount third parties can spend.
- They need to make sure that Trade Unions keep up-to-date records of who their members are.

- The right to protest is not affected by the Bill. It is not the intention to take away people's right to protest.

So, in other words, *"Go away and don't worry your little heads about this"*. This was much the same as he said a few months earlier when there was another 38 Degrees lobby of Jo Johnson.

38 Degrees, however, have issued the following statement because of their concerns over the bill:

Imagine this: it's election time. Politicians are out campaigning for votes. Normally, we'd see the Women's Institute out too, and Oxfam, and local campaigns on issues from schools to hospitals to housing. They'd be pushing candidates to say where they stand and what they'd do on key issues of the day.

Next election, the gagging law could put an end to that. If it goes through, thousands of organisations will be severely restricted in what they can spend - and what they can do - in the 12 months before voting day. We'd all lose important ways of holding politicians to account and telling them what we think.

The outcry has been huge. A coalition of 100+ organisations is supporting an independent, expert Commission, chaired by a former Bishop of Oxford. It's just produced a heavy-weight report laying out step-by-step how to fix the gagging law and protect our democracy.

**Being a 'buddy' – a fun way to work!** – by *Annette Rose and Judy Palmer*

In the December newsletter Ann asked if there were any volunteers happy to be a campaign 'buddy' in one of the six campaign areas we are working on in 2014 and we thought we would advertise the fact that it has been a very beneficial experience for us in 2013!

We meet up in between the monthly meetings to have a chat, and a cuppa! and brainstorm ideas on how to push the Bee campaign forward. Our two co-ordinators do the same we believe, but you don't necessarily have to physically meet, this can be done by email or phone. And for much of 2013 we have had a small team of people working on promotions.

Yes it does take up a little time and you have to be prepared to read information and send/receive emails, but if you can spare the time to help the group, it is so worth-while. You will be fully supported by an experienced campaigner while you learn the ropes and you are welcome to try it out for a month or two to see if it is for you.

The six campaign areas we hope to focus on are The Bee Cause, Make it Better, Sunny Schools (coming soon) Transport, Fracking and Planning. You can read about these on the FoE website.

If your interest lies in one of these areas and you would like to 'buddy up', please let us know at the January meeting.

**December meeting report, cont'd**  
one side of the High Street from market Square to Bromley South. So far the council had not found a developer to take on the task.

Also in the mix is a proposal to develop the borough's two former town halls which are listed buildings, while a recent planning application now under consideration calls for a part seven storey, part 11 storey and part 17 storey block on the site of the historic H G Wells hall at Bromley South.

In summary, Tony was asked about his general feeling towards the ongoing development of central Bromley. His reply: 'As regards Bromley's heritage, I despair'.

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**Transport comment, continued**  
the suggestion. An oddity came out of the meeting: West Sussex council voted in favour of the runway without holding any public consultation. No doubt, that will be remembered at the next local elections there.

Then there is a Nats proposal to revamp the flightpaths to and from Gatwick and other airports, which, locals say, is just a ploy to squeeze in more flights and would mean noise problems for areas currently not under the flightpaths.

However, we should take the flightpath re-jig seriously because Biggin Hill Airport is also part of the consultation.

## FoE say - EU must stop dithering on biofuels reform

Commenting on the EU energy ministers' vote against biofuel reforms proposed by the Lithuanian presidency, FoE's Biofuels Campaigner Kenneth Richter said:

"Proposals by the Lithuanian presidency to limit the use of transport fuels made from crops were woefully inadequate – they would have done little to stop the negative environmental and social impacts of Europe's biofuel demand.

"The EU must stop dithering on this crucial issue. The next EU presidency must take meaningful action to stop biofuels driving up global food prices and causing greater climate-changing emissions than fossil fuels."

### Notes to Editor:

1. The reform of EU biofuel law is a long standing and controversial issue. Scientists as well as environmental and development NGOs have demanded the introduction of penalty factors for biofuels such as palm oil that lead to higher greenhouse gas emissions than fossil fuels through deforestation, so-called "indirect land use change (ILUC) factors". They also want a phase out of the use of agricultural crops for biofuels as the competition with food production over land and water is driving up food prices and encourages land grabs globally.

2. The EU Commission had proposed a cap that would have meant that only 5% out of the overall 10% target for "renewable energy in transport" could come from crop-based biofuels.

Alternative ways to meet the target are through the use of renewable electricity in trains and cars and the use of biofuels from waste streams.

3. In September the EU Parliament weakened the proposal by voting for a 6% cap and ILUC factors only from 2020.

4. The presidency of the EU Council of Ministers (currently held by Lithuania) further watered down the proposal to a 7% cap and no ILUC factors. This proposal was today rejected by a blocking minority of countries.

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### Return flight of the bumblebee – *Judy Palmer*

A species of bumblebee not seen in Britain's meadows for 25 years has made a stunning recovery.

The short-haired bumblebee was declared extinct in Britain in 2000 as the destruction of wildflower meadows left it with a dwindling habitat.

But a project that began four years ago has been an overwhelming success.

It involved creating more than 800 hectares of flower-rich grasslands in Kent and Sussex and introducing queen bees from Sweden. They have now successfully nested and worker bees were recorded for the first time this summer.

The project has also led to an increase in populations of five other bumblebee species threatened with extinction.

## WDM's new campaign: Food Justice

*WDM recently sent this letter to its supporters:*

It won't be long until many of us are tucking into our Christmas dinners. At a time when people celebrate with food, it's worth remembering the role of small-scale farmers who work to produce food sustainably for 70 per cent of the world's population.

The knowledge, practices and methods of small-scale farmers are under threat from corporate agriculture, which drives Land grabbing, relies upon damaging and expensive chemicals, and prioritises export markets over the right to food.

Colonialism as we knew it may have ended in Africa, but economic colonialism continues. Initiatives designed to open up African markets and centralise power over the food system in the hands of a few corporations are being ruthlessly pursued. This must be challenged.

WDM's African allies have publicly denounced the current push for corporate control of African agriculture as neo-colonialism. Taking our cues from our allies we're launching a new campaign to challenge the corporate takeover of African agriculture.

Our campaign will support the movement for food sovereignty and fight against the UK government's complicity in this corporate takeover. This vision for a fairer food system allows communities to produce healthy food sustainably and helps them retain control of their production. It doesn't

rely on agro-chemicals or corporate control.

Together with our allies, we will challenge corporate dominated food production and pressure key decision makers and companies not to pursue inappropriate models of production for Africa.

Throughout Africa, activists and communities are resisting the corporate takeover of their food systems. Our campaign will support this movement and fight against the UK government and British corporations' complicity in this.

Last year the G8 launched its 'New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition.' While the name might sound like it could tackle hunger, it is actually going to undermine Africa's ability to produce food for consumption in a sustainable and democratic way. It represents economic colonialism under the guise of supporting agriculture.

### **Corporate control**

Under the New Alliance, G8 governments along with major companies such as Unilever, Monsanto and Diageo, will provide finance for industrial farming systems. In exchange, countries will have to change their seed laws, make land grabbing easier and open up their markets further to major corporations.

It is just one of a web of initiatives that are being used to centralise power over African agriculture and shift it from small-scale producers to multinational companies.

*/continued on page 14*

## Soil Association and the GM battle

This letter from the Soil Association drove one FoE member to send it to me; the most “objectionable” parts are in bold italics.

This summer has shown us that the battle over GM is far from over. ***All the major supermarkets now feed GM to their farm animals, without labelling it as such, although Waitrose do keep GM feed out of their poultry.***

Owen Paterson, Secretary of State for the Environment, seems determined to railroad GM into our countryside and into our food, without protecting the integrity of organic food or the right of any farmer to grow GM free food.

Most disturbingly, the influence of international corporations on politicians and others — for example ***the World Food Prize being awarded to a Monsanto executive this year — seems to be shaping opinion that organic ways of farming are irrelevant to the need to feed a growing population,*** when major studies show that the opposite is true.

We need to put even more resource into fighting for the right of farmers and consumers to choose, ensuring our voice is heard and to show that organic methods can yield bigger dividends for people and the environment than GM ever could.

We need your help to:

- Convince retailers to label meat, eggs and dairy fed on GM feed, so that you have a choice.
- Ensure our voice is heard in the media and by politicians — both

when we believe something is wrong, but also to share better solutions to feeding the world.

- Research and publish the latest evidence on how organic farming methods, not GM, are the fair and responsible way forward.
- Support the farmers and growers who are saving our heritage seeds, so that they are available for future non-GM breeding programmes.
- Encourage the many scientists who are making great advances in plant breeding, producing crops that are already helping poorer farmers in continents like Africa, without the use of GM.
- Continue to publicise the ever-increasing evidence of the side effects of GM such as super-weeds, wildlife impacts, increased pesticide use, reduced crop diversity and debt for small farmers, as they emerge in the US and elsewhere.

When a news story breaks, like Owen Patterson's speech in July, we need to be briefing journalists, getting letters to papers, issuing press releases, arranging' spokespeople and locations. We need the facts at our fingertips, accurate ones. We must be able to get the team into radio and TV studios all around the country, at short notice.

This reactive work is always the hardest thing for a charity to fund, but it is vitally important we maintain this presence in the media to tackle the might of the PR machines of the big agro-chemical companies.

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## WDM's new campaign, *cont'd* +++ Soil Association and GM, *cont'd*

### WDM's Food Justice campaign

Please take a look at the leaflet that I've included with this letter. It shows how major corporations and governments are using positive sounding initiatives as a front for taking over African agriculture for their own benefit.

A range of platforms from the Bill Gates supported 'Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa' (AGRA) to the World Economic Forum's 'New Vision for Agriculture' are pushing corporate farming on the continent.

With your support, we can resist neo-colonialist practices such as:

- Countries being forced to make land grabbing easier and stop using controls to make sure that too much food isn't exported.
- Farmers' being made to be dependent on chemicals, which will drive many of them into debt as well as creating soil degradation and reducing biodiversity.
- Corporate controlled seeds being pushed on farmers. Many of these can't be kept from year to year because of new pro-corporate seed laws.
- Producers not in a position to adopt the technologies being prescribed by AGRA and the New Alliance being forced out of agriculture, and left with few other options for making a living. This will narrow Africa's base of producers and centralise power in the hands of corporations.

In most sub-Saharan countries agriculture makes up the main form of economic activity for between 50 and 90 per cent of the population. The

majority of these people are likely to be undermined, not supported by these initiatives.

WDM has an opportunity to challenge this approach and promote a food system that recognises that a one size fits all approach isn't appropriate throughout Africa.

Small producers focus on the needs of the communities they serve rather than distant markets. Using ecologically sensitive production methods that are appropriate for their locations, they are well placed to feed communities and be resilient to crop failure and other threats they face.

Corporate driven agriculture turns over huge areas to export production, drives producers off their land and out of agriculture, and leaves countries unable to service their own food requirements. Your support will help us stand up for small-scale producers.

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### Soil Association and GM, *cont'd*

Our members and supporters have been staunch supporters of our GM campaigning over the years - without you we could not have achieved the victories we've had in the past and we are incredibly grateful. We now urgently need your continuing support to fund our GM campaigning and research, to ensure that farmers continue to have the right to farm without GM and that the public can choose to have a GM free diet. Please help if you can.

## Bromley Friends of the Earth - List of Contacts

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### Bromley FoE web site:

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#### Climate and Energy:

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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:

Anne Clark / Ivy Smith

### 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.

**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, 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, Kent, BR6 7RN**. Other enquiries regarding the group should be sent to: Birch House, Grays Road, Westerham, Kent, TN16 2JB; phone 01959-571566, email [r.watson865@btinternet.com](mailto:r.watson865@btinternet.com).

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

Name.....

Address.....

..... Postcode.....

Email Address.....

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

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