



friends of
the earth
Bromley



June 2014

No. 318

newsletter

Bromley FoE: enquiries:

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

June Meeting

Friends Meeting House, Ravensbourne Road, Bromley

Protecting the Environment with Intelligence – An Introduction to EIA

Anna Cairns and Lynne Davies
Environmental Investigation Agency

*Undercover investigations...hard-hitting campaigns – that is the EIA.
Learn more about this independent agency and how it
aims to protect the natural world from environmental crime.*

Tuesday 3rd June- 7.30pm

In this Issue:

Diary Dates	2	Big Green Energy	8
Keston Day	2	Intu cinema plans	9
Open Garden success	3	Save Our Seeds	10
Fracking	3	Cold Homes Week	11,14
May mtg report	4,14	Balcombe	12,14
Campaigns info	5,6,14	Bromley Contacts	15
Make It Better	6	Non-members section	16
FoE S/East Gathering	7,8		

Copy for the next Newsletter must be with the Editor by

***** SUNDAY 15TH JUNE *****

Contact details inside front cover.

Open Garden day raised £400 – see page 3

Diary dates:

- Jun 3rd (Tues)** **Bromley FoE's June meeting:** The Environmental Investigation Agency
- Jun 13-15** **BASECAMP, Hope Valley, Castleton, Derbyshire** (*see last month's newsletter*)
- Jun 29th (Sun)** **Keston Countryside Day**, Keston Common with FoE stall
- Jul 1st (Tues)** **Bromley FoE's July meeting:** Paul de Zylva, FoE's Senior Campaigner – Nature and Eco-system security
- Jul 20th (Sat)** **Foal Farm Festival**, with FoE stall

Progressive Bromley Film Co-op

Saturday 7th June

6pm for shared food and social time

7pm Film – to be arranged

Friends Meeting House, Bromley

Keston Countryside Day – Sunday 29th June

We're holding a Grand Fundraising Raffle to be drawn on June 29th at Keston Countryside Day so get your pennies ready and you could win a hamper full of goodies.

If you have anything you would like to add to the contents, please ring Anne Clark on 020-8289-8483 or e-mail a.clark367@ntlworld.com or bring to our next meeting.

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 JUNE *****:

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

Open Garden success story – Sheila Brown and Judy Palmer

Judy Palmer says A Big Thank-You!

Bill, Annette & Judy would like to say a very big thank-you to everyone who contributed towards Bill's Open Garden day on May 3rd. There were so many visitors at one point, it was difficult to see the garden for the people! There were lots of plants to buy, tea to drink and cakes to eat and the sun shone down on us all afternoon.

So a big thank you to all the contributors and hard workers (so many, but especially Anne Clark who was washing-up and boiling kettles / filling teapots like a demon!) who make it a successful fund-raising venture: a grand total of over £400 was raised. Thank You

Open garden success – Sheila Brown writes:

At the AGM, Bill Priestley proposed that, rather than scrabbling around for donations towards the hire of the hall or raising subscriptions, we do a spot of fundraising, and volunteered to take on the rôle of Fundraising Officer for the group. Bill's first undertaking was to open his garden on the first Saturday of May.

The days leading up to this were somewhat nail-biting, with cool and possibly showery weather forecast, but somebody must have been praying hard because the day dawned fine and cloudless and turned into an absolutely perfect summer's afternoon.

Bill had worked hard in the lead-up, growing dozens of plants which were set out for sale, and had also primed the publicity machine with many of his

neighbours and friends coming along to swell the ranks. Judy had masterminded the catering and various people had contributed cakes. And so an idyllic summer's afternoon was enjoyed in a suburban garden, drinking tea, sampling delicious cakes, choosing plants, browsing the FoE stall and enjoying a tour of the environmental features of Bill's garden.

Thank you so much Bill, for all you put into this event, and to Judy and Annette for "backstage" support. A total of over £400 was raised. Well done everyone!

On Fracking - With apologies to William Shakespeare

Julie Etter writes :To frack or not to frack, that is the question: whether it is nobler in the mind to suffer the drilling and destruction of outrageous business or to stand and fight, shake your fist and say ' Avast, we do not want your dirty business, earthquakes in diverse places, fire and sparks emitting from our taps, the precious water that should emerge therefrom, being used in thousands of wasteful gallons, then being consigned to pollute forever and cause disease and desperation'.

Alas this looks like a 'no-win' situation but forsooth it is a 'no-brainer' for we must, we will win, gird up your loins, brothers and sisters - FRACK off, FRACK off !! and cry 'Hurrah' for our tenacity !

May meeting report – Ray Watson

Here's a tricky question: How do you change a person's eating habits without risking an earful for having the temerity to tell them what to eat?

The answer came in a presentation at our May meeting by Vicki Hird, national FoE's senior campaigner for the land, food and water programme.

What we eat -- and how much -- is of immense concern to environmentalists because the pressures of feeding the earth's growing billions of population puts huge strains on the planet. So, do we seek to grow more, adding to those pressures? Or do we encourage to Eat Smart – eat less and eat more of the items that are healthy for the individual and also healthy for the planet? The answer is easily apparent.

But first, Vicki drew attention to the issues facing those trying to convert people to Eat Smart – and the increasing demand for food means there is a daunting collection of them:

- It is becoming more difficult to increase output because of high temperatures caused by climate change; indeed, food output has been decreasing in areas affected by higher temperatures
- The world's food distribution mechanism is failing to get the right food to the right areas
- Water is frequently in short supply or poisoned by chemicals
- Animal habitat is reducing as humans move into agricultural land
- Vast amounts of food is wasted

- Consuming junk food and items like sugar, means that obesity adds vastly to health costs
- Planning decisions are resulting in loss of farm land
- Changing eating habits – think China and the Far East – call for more dairy and meat farming, of one of the least efficient areas of food production
- Increased herds of livestock add to greenhouse gases now polluting the air

All of these reasons and more demonstrate why we should all Eat Smart, said Vicki.

There were, she said, signs that individuals, councils and even the Government was beginning to understand the problem and the need to ensure that the best use is made of food output and that food security is given more attention. Vicki also noted a large surprising surge of interest in food problems from younger people during the horsemeat scandal.

She suggested that a start is being made in London with the recognition that the food industry is a huge emitter of greenhouse gases and user of energy. What was required was a survey to demonstrate the size of the problem in London, starting with measuring food's footprint – something that had already been done by Oxford. Planning authorities should be more aware of the need to ensure that supermarkets and distribution centres

/continued on page 14

Campaigns, Climate and Energy – Ann Garrett

Campaign Stall

It is possible that there will be an extra Fracking Campaign stall on June 28th in The Mall Precinct, Bromley from 2.30 - 4.30 pm. This has yet to be confirmed at the planning meeting, and may not be possible as it is Keston Countryside Day on June 29th. I will let you know at the June meeting.

Report on Innovations Meeting

This was held on April 17th at The Printworks and organised by Neil Kingsnorth head of the FoE Activist Team. Members of local groups were present to provide ideas which could be taken forward to Base Camp for discussion workshops instead of having formal motions and resolutions.

We exchanged ideas in small groups and then joined together for a plenary session.

The suggestions included : - encouraging community groups in local areas to affiliate to FoE, virtual on-line co-ordinators groups, fun social evenings to raise funds for other charities, networking of individuals like the hubs already in process, TCV green gyms - local digging, clearing waste/rivers/canals, competitions and quizzes, promoting groups to national FoE members, social media activities, local lobbying, skills-based training sessions to give people opportunities to develop themselves, and centralising activities in one place for different people to opt in.

We have tried several of these ideas in the past and may be it would be useful to revive some of them from time to time.

Neil informed us that resources have been set aside for community action projects, and that staff have now increased to support local groups. When questioned he emphasised that staff no longer feel over-stretched, and that clearly the lay-out of The Printworks enables easier co-ordination.

Finally I spent some constructive time with Ash Stally who is responsible for membership and made helpful suggestions about contacting national members. Altogether a very worthwhile experience.

Climate and Energy

Fracking

I attended a workshop on fracking at the FoE Regional Gathering on April 26th. This involved being given information on the safety of fracking, which covered evidence of environmental and health problems and the worrying fact The Environment Agency has cut inspections of sites by 15%.

Opposition is growing and the Balcombe protests did a lot to raise awareness. There is a particularly strong campaign in Lancashire.

It is important to engage local councils in debate and to ensure proper democratic consultation processes. They are under pressure from central government who are endorsing licences and providing financial incentives.

/continued on pages 6 and 14

The 'Make It Better' Campaign Celebrates its Victories – Annette Rose

As this public campaign draws to close, FoE thanks every-one for their support. Among the successes of the campaign they list 50,000 actions, 7 companies coming clean about their supply chains and 1 'Make it Better law'.

The campaign got Apple and Samsung to tackle the devastation in Indonesia caused by mining tin for their smartphones. And it helped convince the other leading mobile phone companies to do the same.

It heaped pressure on Business Secretary Vince Cable, for a strong company transparency law. For the first time more than 6,000 companies in Europe will have to report on the environmental and social impacts of their operations.

FoE will continue to monitor the smartphone tin mining situation in Indonesia. FoE Netherlands is keeping up the pressure with a campaign for better electronics - focusing on mining, recycling and product durability.

Interestingly, Apple has just launched a new campaign all about environmental responsibility, called 'Better'.

Climate and Energy, *continued*

The final part of the workshop was being involved in role- plays as campaigners meeting councillors and their officers, with one person in each group acting as an observer. One of the key factors to emerge from this exercise was the importance of having

concrete factual information and clear aims.

Costs of clearing Sellafield

The Government has admonished the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority for 'inappropriately' withholding information from the public, after backing the findings of a heavily critical MPs' report into the management of Sellafield.

Overseeing the Cumbrian nuclear plant facility is one of the most hazardous detoxification jobs in the world and the NDA has entrusted a US-led private sector consortium, Nuclear Management Partners [NMP], with managing the clear-up. However, the House of Commons' Public Accounts Committee has been dismayed to find that the costs have been soaring, with the final price-tag estimated at over £70 billion.

With such reports of cover-ups and high cost of maintenance, should the Government be investing in a new generation of nuclear power plants ? May be your views could be contributed to future energy debates in our group.

Onshore wind energy

Bruce Davis, who is managing director of Abundance, crowdfunding UK renewable energy projects and a visiting fellow at Leeds University, has stated that onshore wind power is cheaper than the alternatives, and that it is vote-chasing of the worst kind to abandon it.

/concluded on page 14

Judy's report from FoE's South East Regional Gathering

Judy Palmer reports:

Here are some bullet points I made from the SE Regional day Sheila, Ann & I attended at the end of April. We had a short video message from Craig Bennett on the overview of campaigning to kick start it. (This can be viewed on You Tube if anyone wishes to see it.)

After introductions from everyone we had 2 minute lightning talks from local group members (including me) on varying activities – really interesting to hear how other local groups are getting on. The talks were tightly timed by Tim Gee (the facilitator for most of the day, he's in the Activist Team) so 'practise makes perfect' was needed beforehand!

From campaigner's updates and flooding workshop:

Nature -

- Defra will launch the National Pollinator Strategy, probably on July 7th, at the Hampton Court Flower show
- The WI really got behind the push for a tighter NPS and used the FoE Bee cause logo in their campaigning
- There are almost 200 bee worlds created already
- The Nature Everywhere (following up on the Bee cause) campaign to be launched soon

Climate –

- The three campaigns in this category are: fracking / Run on Sun / energy

- Solar energy use is just beginning to have an impact on the national grid
- There may be a day of action on 21st June, the summer solstice

Flooding –

- There are 5 million homes at flood risk in the UK
- £1billion is the yearly average cost of flooding to the UK economy and there is a £500m shortfall
- There are 800 flood defences below the EA standard
- FoE's interactive map at www.foe.co.uk/floodmap is worth looking at.

Some stats locally (the data is from the EA and work to constituency boundaries) –

Number of homes at risk of flooding

- Bromley & Chislehurst: 1558
- Orpington: 1885
- Beckenham: 2379

Number of homes at significant risk of flooding –

- Bromley & Chislehurst: 191
- Orpington: 50
- Beckenham: 74

Flood defences below EA maintenance standard –

- Bromley & Chislehurst: 0
- Orpington: 0
- Beckenham: 1

Sheila's report from FoE's South East Regional Gathering

Sheila Brown reports:

Ann, Judy and I attended the recent FoE regional day at the NCVO building near King's Cross. Regional days are kind of mini-conferences, bringing group members together for news, networking and re-energising.

The day started with a message from Craig Bennett, FoE Policy and Campaigns Director, then local group members (including our own Judy Palmer) gave lightning talks – brief 3 minute exposés of their local situation. Paul de Zylva gave an update on the Bee Cause and a preview of the new, wider Nature campaign to be launched in July.

The new Run on Sun campaign was unveiled: Friends of the Earth want every school to have the chance to go solar and for schools to be at the front of the local renewable energy revolution. Going solar can help schools save money (up to £8,000 a year) by generating their own “free” electricity and receiving money via the Feed-in Tariff for surplus energy generated. Starting with schools, it is hoped to extend the campaign to other community buildings.

Skills and issues workshops took place in the afternoon. Ann attended the one on fracking, Judy took part in one concerned with the climate movement through the lens of flooding and I chose the Run on the Sun one.

It was a lively and full day, after which there was a chance to adjourn to a local pub for further discussion.

A Big Green Energy debate, *continued from last month*

Sheila: With regard to the 'piped' solar, when I said 'not sure of the logistics' and as I believe there is considerable loss from our own National Grid, I imagine this could be a problem. Also there is the (very topical) question of political vulnerability in getting supplies from somewhere distant.

You rightly bring geothermal, ground source and air source heat pumps into the discussion. We had a speaker on geothermal, again some years ago. I do feel this type of heat pump is a great idea, but very few people even know of their existence.

Ann: I think FoE ought to be much more pro-active in challenging nuclear power. In CND we have been campaigning for years.

We in Bromley and Beckenham would like support from FoE members when leafleting against nuclear train flasks which travel though Orpington and Bromley South on their route from Dungeness to Sellafield. Those of us in the anti-nuclear movement need help with street activism. Local Greenpeace members have co-ordinated with us on occasions.

I hope people read the energy and climate column each month in the FoE newsletter, and have noted the many examples of the dangers of nuclear power and ideas for alternative energies. There will be one in the May newsletter on harnessing energy from rivers and lakes.

Bromley Civic Society – Objections to Intu's cinema plans

In principle we would welcome new leisure facilities but this proposals simply duplicates what already exists and, we assert, threatens closure of the Empire to the detriment of the Bromley North Village economy.

Intu's assertion is that the town can sustain the Empire (4 screens) as well as the new development being built at Bromley South (9 screens) and this new proposal (5 screens) 18 screens in all as well as a further 5 in nearby Beckenham. We find this absurd and unproven.

We note, too with concern, that Intu have gone ahead with a full planning application without consultation with the Council (according to our Ward Councillors) and without consultation with either of the other two operators. Rather than acting responsibly as part of the overall Town Centre economy Intu are acting as if they were an out of town operation with little regard for the consequences of their actions to neighbouring traders.

While Intu claim their operation is materially different from the other two this is cosmetic based on presentation style. The cinemas are small but it should be noted that two of the four at the Empire are also small as well as four of the nine in the new development at Bromley South.

The adopted Town Centre Area Action Plan TCAAP states that the Council will seek retention of existing leisure facilities and seek to extend the range

We do expect the Council to bear this in mind in their decision making. What is certain is that if the Empire closes, the Council has no ability to ensure the (now locally listed heritage asset) building would retain any kind of alternative leisure use in fulfilment of the AAP aspirations.

Intu, on the other hand, accepting the AAP pledge of retention of existing leisure facilities could well meet the aspiration of extending the range by proposing something different rather than simply seeking to grab trade from the existing cinema operators and those with an existing permission.

Re design, at the time of planning in the late 1980's much was made of the supposed fine quality of design of the Shopping Centre in all its aspects. This proposal, while being on the roof is merely a shed of such poor quality to be harmful to the architectural integrity of the host building and detrimental to the setting of the conservation area.

The Council is both freeholders of the Intu land and part owners of the Shopping Centre and we hope will act responsibly towards the wider needs of the Town Centre and refuse this inward looking and self-centred proposal.

The Soil Association's Save our Seeds campaign

Graham Hemington writes:

The EU is currently drawing up new laws to regulate the sale of seeds, plants and plant material. The proposed legislation will significantly widen the scope of the current laws that require registration of vegetable and cereal seeds.

If they go ahead, these new rules are likely to see us lose hundreds of varieties of plants, limit what we can grow and eat, force seed merchants and possibly garden centres out of business, make it harder for smaller organic growers to operate, reduce genetic diversity and ultimately leave us all less able to respond to the challenges of climate and environmental change.

The Soil Association thinks this proposed directive is misguided and will endanger the future resilience, sustainability and security of our food supplies. So we're calling for your support to help us stop them. Here's how -

1. Donate to our appeal

A donation to our Save Our Seed appeal will help us in the fight to save our seeds allowing us to:

- Continue to lobby in the UK and Europe, and to compete with the seed industry lobbyists working for Monsanto, Syngenta and others
- Launch a public seed campaign, uniting the public, industry and politicians
- Work with smaller seed companies and help to represent their interests

- Monitor activity in the EC to make sure these changes to laws aren't passed via the back door.

2. Write to your MEP

MEPs could reject the seed directive in Strasbourg. Please contact your MEP and explain why you think this legislation is a seriously bad idea. See www.soilassociation.org/saveourseeds to find out more about how to contact your MEP. If you're not online, your local library or town hall will be able to provide details of your MEP.

3. Save some seed

If you have a garden or allotment, why not grow some open-pollinated seed varieties this year and save some of your own?. Not only is this a fascinating exercise, you will also reap the advantages of breeding seeds ideally suited to the unique growing conditions of your own garden or allotment.

4. Support small seed suppliers and varieties

The more we grow and save unusual seed varieties, the more chance we have of saving them. See www.soilassociation.org/saveourseeds for a list of organic seed suppliers and local seed swaps.

5. Buy organic vegetables

Organic growers use innovative and sustainable growing techniques, working with nature rather than against it, helping to preserve unusual seed varieties. Voting with your wallet to support them is crucial.

Cold Homes Week - Letter from Graham Hemington to Jo Johnson, MP

Dear Mr Johnson,

Last winter over 31,000 people died of the cold. Millions of others have to make the desperate choice between heating and eating due to high energy bills.

I support Cold Homes Week and the Energy Bill Revolution campaign calling on the Government to use the money it gets from carbon taxes to make our homes highly energy efficient. This is the only permanent solution to high energy bills and fuel poverty.

Please support the campaign by emailing MPSupporters@energybillrevolution.org find out more about the campaign at www.energybillrevolution.org.

There is enough carbon tax to bring 9 out of 10 homes out of fuel poverty and in time to help super-insulate every UK home.

Please let me know if you will join e in supporting this vital campaign to end the cold homes crisis once and for all.

Reply from Jo Johnson

Thank you for writing to me about cold homes an energy bills. I agree it is intolerable that people suffer in cold homes and I can assure you that the Government is firmly committed to tackling fuel poverty. Last winter saw particularly long periods of cold weather, and all across Europe there were increased cases of flu and respiratory conditions.

This year, extra money is being given to help the NHS deal with potential increased pressure.

I strongly welcome the Government's recent decision to roll back green levies from energy bills. This will save an average of £50 on household bills and all the major energy companies have confirmed that these savings will be passed onto their customers.

In addition, when people buy a new home, they could get up to £1,000 from the Government to spend on important energy-saving measures under new plans, or up to £4,000 for 'hard to treat homes'. A new scheme for private landlords to improve the energy efficiency of their properties is also being introduced. Together, both schemes will be worth £450 million over three years.

Cold Weather Payments have been increased from £8.50 to £25 to help vulnerable people during periods of severe weather and in 2011/12, an estimated 5.2 million payments were made. Winter Fuel Payments have also been maintained, supporting over 12 million older people.

The Government's Warm Home Discount scheme helps around two million low income and vulnerable households with their energy costs each year. In 2012/13 this includes more than one million of the poorest pensioners who have already received an automatic £130 discount on their electricity bill.

/continued on page 14

Balcombe: trials and installations - Tony Bosworth (FoE)

Green Party MP Caroline Lucas has been on trial in Brighton for her part in the anti-fracking protests in the village last summer. Her defence is that “using peaceful means to try to stop a process that could cause enormous harm is not only reasonable but also morally necessary”.

This idea of ‘necessity’ arose in 2008 when six Greenpeace protestors were acquitted of causing criminal damage to Kingsnorth Power Station on the grounds that the threat of climate change constituted a ‘lawful excuse’ for their actions.

If ever there was an issue where action is necessary, it’s climate change. The recent floods have underlined that climate change isn’t just going to affect countries on the other side of the world in the distant future – it’s here and now. And the Met Office has said heatwave summers could be the norm by the 2040s.

And it’s not just in the UK: this year the US has seen record cold temperatures in many places and Australian scientists have concluded that the country’s record heatwave last year was caused by climate change.

What is the reaction of our supposedly ‘greenest Government ever’? It wants to “extract every drop of oil we can” from the North Sea and is promising the most generous tax regime in the world for shale gas. And at the same time it is cutting funding for energy efficiency measures which would help cut the number of people dying of cold in winter.

We need to say no to this vision of our energy future. And the right place to start is with unconventional gas and oil.

Fracking for shale gas and oil and coal bed methane extraction just add to the stock of fossil fuels that we can’t afford to burn if we want to tackle climate change. As Oxford economist Professor Dieter Helm has put it “The problem is that we have too much fossil-fuel resource, not too little – enough to fry the planet several times over”.

How do we say no?

We need to show that the claims made by the fracking industry and its supporters don’t stand up to scrutiny: it’s very unlikely to cut energy bills, it’s not clean (the academic jury is still out on whether shale gas is cleaner than coal, but the bottom line is that it’s still a fossil fuel) and it involves big risks for the local environment and human health. In short, fracking is a risk we simply do not need to take, and cannot afford to take.

We need to show that there are alternatives. And that’s where Balcombe is showing the way. The local community isn’t just saying no to fracking – it has launched Repower Balcombe, an initiative to install solar panels on village roofs to generate all the electricity the village needs.

Alongside community solutions we also need big-scale renewables, and that’s why the announcement of a £300 million investment in offshore wind manufacturing in Hull was a real boost.
/continued on page 14

Campaign Against Climate Change – news

You may have heard that we have been up to a lot recently.

On the 3rd & 4th May, we had a conference with Power Shift UK. Over a hundred of us and Power Shifters from all over the UK (from Edinburgh and Glasgow to Bristol and Warwick) came together to have frank discussions about climate science, our assumptions when reaching out to people on the issue of climate change, sharing ideas, making connections and plans for actions together.

A huge thanks is owed to all those who stewarded, who made it all run smoothly.

Last Friday, a couple of the CCC team went to Kirklees to visit Valleywind who are setting up an energy cooperative. This part of our Climate and Energy Revolution Tour, in which we are travelling to film stories of people already blazing a trail in harnessing wind and solar energy in a democratic and non-corporate way.

The end result will be a film called Time To Act on Climate Change: Join the Energy Revolution

By interviewing people and filming projects such as ValleyWind in Kirklees or the Solar project in Balcombe, who when faced with having 'fracking' put on their doorstep decided to become energy independent and have solar, we aim to show that the alternative to fossil fuels is real and that energy democracy is possible, as well as necessary when faced with climate change.

With all this going on, as well as planning with French friends what we'll do in Paris next year for COP21, it would be really great to see you and have a chat over a drink.

We are having a 'do on 31st May at 6pm - 11pm at Amnesty International UK's Human Rights Resource Centre, 25 New Inn Yard, London EC2A 3EA.

The nearest stations are Shoreditch High Street, Old Street and Liverpool Street.

There will be music and satire from the Zero Carbon Band, as well as sublime vocals from Pete Deane and performance poetry from Madame Miaow, amongst other acts. As well as veggie buffet, cheap bar and free non-alcoholic cocktail!

We will be trying to raise some funds at the same time, so there'll be a ticket price on the door of £10 or £7 concessions. But if you and a group of friends want to come, you can get a table and one of you gets a free ticket!

Just let me know if you want to do this, and I will sort it out for you.

You can register for the event at <http://www.supporters.campaigncc.org/index.php?q=civicrm/event/info&id=31&reset=1>, but if you don't you can still turn up on the night.

The continuations page

Tony Bosworth on Balcombe (p12)

And we need to make our voice heard by politicians. Non-violent protest is a part of this.

It's not just happening in Balcombe. Wherever unconventional fossil fuel exploration is being proposed, local people are protesting - in Lancashire, Salford, Nottinghamshire and many other places. And it's great when our elected politicians themselves have the courage of their convictions to join the protests.

We know what the real answers to our energy crisis are: energy efficiency and renewables. But getting these involves saying no to false solutions such as shale gas. Let's hope that the example of Balcombe – opposition to fossil fuel extraction coupled with support for community-based renewables – spreads far and wide.

Cold Homes week letter (p11)

The Green Deal is expected to revolutionise energy efficiency in the UK by offering households upfront finance to make energy efficiency improvements, paid for by energy bill savings. So far over 200,000 low income and vulnerable households have benefitted under the Energy Company Obligation and support will be extended until March 2017.

Following an independent review, a new definition of fuel poverty has been set out so that support is focused on those who need it most. A new target is proposed to ensure that fuel poor households attain a certain standard of energy efficiency in their home.

Finally, if you are worried about your energy bills, I would encourage you to contact the Energy Savings Advice Service, which offers free and impartial advice. The number to call is 0300 123 1234.

Climate and Energy (pp 5,6)

Developing renewable technologies is the best way that the challenger energy brands - Ovo, Co-operative Energy, Ecotricity, and Good Energy can mount a serious attempt to compete with the Big Six on equal terms.

If this present government is re-elected, they have made it clear that they will reduce subsidies to stop any new wind farms being built.

Davis emphasises that renewable energy should be treated as a priority planning decision and that energy policy should be decided in the interests of the country as a whole.

May meeting report (p4)

are located as close as possible to shopping centres to reduce pollution caused by food transportation while planning decisions should take into account the dangers of agricultural land being built over for housing.

Vicki said that on a more local scale much more could be done by individuals; for instance, the borough of Hackney has an organic vegetable box scheme covering 3000 families.

So, her message is: Eat Smart by having a healthy, sustainably green diet by reducing items like meat and, at the same time, benefit the planet.

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Fracking / Clean British Energy

Ann Garrett (as above)

Bee Cause

Judy Palmer
judy.palmer@talk21.com

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

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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