



**Friends of  
the Earth  
Bromley**



**June 2018  
No. 366**

# ewsletter

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## June Meeting

*Friends Meeting House, Ravensbourne Road, Bromley*

**Continuation of French documentary film  
Demain / Tomorrow**

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> June 7.30pm** (*prompt start please*)

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Copy for the next Newsletter must be with the Editor by

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

Contact details inside front cover.

**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*

## Diary dates:

**June 5<sup>th</sup>**

### **Bromley FoE's June meeting:**

Continuation of film "Demain" / Tomorrow. 7.30pm – please be prompt.

**June 9<sup>th</sup>**

### **Coolings Garden Centre, Knockholt:**

BFoE stall 10am to 4pm, setting up from 9.30am. Volunteers needed please to take shifts to run the stall. This will be an information stall, focussing on the nature campaign and asking the public to sign postcards to ask the council to adopt a pollinators action plan. There is a 'Keep it Local' craft fair running that day too.

**June 24<sup>th</sup>**

### **Keston Countryside Day, Keston Common. 2pm to 5pm.**

BFoE stall. A chance to promote all our campaigns and speak to the public. Volunteers needed please to help run our stall. A pleasant community day with lots of other local groups including local beekeepers.

**June 30<sup>th</sup>**

### **Wild Flower Walk Jubilee Park:**

10am Blackbrook Lane Car Park. Led by members of the Friends of Jubilee Park.

**July 3<sup>rd</sup>**

### **Bromley FoE's July meeting**

Tools with a mission – recycling in action. *See page 5 for more info.*

**July 7<sup>th</sup>**

### **National Meadows Day, Jubilee Park:**

BFoE stall 10.30 to 3.30. Set up from 10am. Volunteers needed please at this new event for us. We will focus on the Nature campaign and will have activities for children focusing on bees and butterflies.

*If you are able to help on any of our stalls this year, please sign up at the monthly meeting or email us at [bromleyfoe@gmail.com](mailto:bromleyfoe@gmail.com). Thank you.*

## **June Meeting – Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2018 - Film "Demain" (Tomorrow)**

A continuation of the film, part of which we saw in April, featuring food production and economics. The film seeks solutions to the environmental problems facing mankind and is optimistic and positive in its approach. It identifies initiatives that have proven themselves in ten countries around the world: concrete examples of solutions to environmental and social challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in agriculture, energy, economy, democracy and education. (NB: It is a long film and we shall only see some of it tonight.)

## **Next Newsletter - copy details**

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

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

## May meeting report – Anne Clarke

### London as a National Park City

Paul de Zylva, as Chair of the National Park City Foundation, came to explain how London could be the world's first "National Park City". When first approached with the idea, he was a bit sceptical but when he thought about it in depth he saw how exciting it could be – being organised to be helping nature and population alike instead of just a concrete jungle.

London can't be a National Park, but forming this National Park CITY Foundation and discussions with other cities abroad caught people's imagination and the project is backed by the Mayor of London.

A campaign was started in 2013 to make a working definition: a geographical space for a better quality of life for humans and animals, connecting more people to nature, creating more high quality green and blue spaces, green corridors, and London will be the first city involving several organisations and companies backing it.

There'll be fundraising, and support projects to attract more money towards it in 2019.

Paul also showed us a fantastic Ordnance Survey map with all the green spaces, gardens, allotments (30,000 of them) etc, and we realised how urban London really is.

It's supposedly the greenest city in the world, with 77% green and 2.5% blue (rivers, canals and the like). It has Crystal Palace, Hornimans, Mudchute

Farm and the nature reserve on the Isle of Dogs, all helping.

Corridors were achieved with ways like the railway embankments, the Thames Path, London Loop, Green Chain walk and Bonnington Square near the Oval where the residents leave their hedges and pavements as areas for wildlife to flourish.

London's Mayor wants to make the area 50% green and we must value what is there for culture, recreation, making parks more attractive for children to play and exercise in (1 in 7 children hadn't been in an open green space in the past year.) Improving the greenness of London could help improve the health of the population, thereby saving health costs. Although 56% of our wildlife has disappeared in the last 50 years, it is not too late for a turnaround. We must preserve some of our old buildings as birds and other creatures are nesting in old brickwork, drains etc.

Overall the majority of London's councillors have come out in favour of the London as a National Park City idea, although in a developers' world it was politically confrontational. "Time Out" had given it coverage, though, and with videos, meetings and talks people found a new way of looking at things.

After his talk, Paul dealt with questions on how the City relates to climate change, flooding, and improved land management. He also referred to the launch event for London National Park City Week – see below.

*/continued on page 5*

## **Bill's Open Garden + Alleyways Walk reports / New Meeting Format**

### **Bill's Open Garden Afternoon**

MAY has been a busy month for us, starting with Bill's Open Garden Afternoon. This was well attended with guests enjoying a beautiful spring day, tea and cakes and a multitude of plants for sale, as well as bargain second hand books, bric-a-brac and a chance to go home with a raffle prize.

Our thanks to Bill for opening up his garden once again and for the huge amount of work he puts into raising plants to sell and making the garden lovely for the day. Also to the team of caterers, cake makers, washer-uppers, tea-pourers, and those who 'manned' the stalls.

Over £400 was raised, to be used for campaign expenses and to support local projects.

### **Bromley Alleyways Walk**

Sue and John also organised a guided walk by Pamela Zollicoffer who took ten of us around some of the alleyways and paths of central Bromley. This was a follow-up to the very interesting talk she gave us in February.

There were many interesting things to look at along the way, for example, the site of an Air Raid Wardens' post in Queen Anne Avenue which suffered a direct bombing hit killing the two wardens on duty.

The area where the hut stood was planted out as a garden and a memorial was erected which is a

tribute to all Air Raid Wardens. Some of these alleyways are really old and can be seen on old maps and pre-date our current roads. Pamela is forever exploring them and seeking out interesting facts. We followed the walk with an enjoyable lunch at Nick's Cafe.

### **New, improved meeting format**

Following concern being expressed that our monthly meetings sometimes go on 'far too long', a number of suggestions have been discussed and will be implemented for future meetings.

Members may have already noticed that we have been aiming to be much tighter in our timings, with a punctual start at the beginning of the meeting and for the second half.

We will aim to limit questions so that the first half does not extend and for the tea break to start and finish more promptly. People were unanimous that the tea break is of utmost importance for socialising, welcoming new people, getting to know people and exchanging ideas.

During the second half we will cut down on the amount of information given out. If things feature in the Newsletter, we will just draw attention to this and not repeat the whole item, and we will use the notice board and a table to display information. We will aim to conclude the meeting by 9.30 pm, with everyone asked to help with washing up and clearing away chairs so that we're all gone, lights out and locked up by 9.45 pm.

## May meeting report - *continued*

After the break, Paul updated us on FoE's delight at the ban on neonicotinoids approved by the European Parliament, the new Agriculture Bill that will be presented to the Westminster Parliament later this year and the Fisheries Bill which is expected to have its Second Reading early in July.

### **London National Park City Week**

*(from the GLA website)* - From 21-29 July, the city will host the first ever London National Park City Week. There'll be loads of fantastic events and activities all week long as we celebrate London's unique green spaces, trees, waterways and natural environment.

We're working with the National Park City Foundation and our partners across London on the events programme. We want to give Londoners the chance to explore the city with walks, talks, explorations, family activities and to help make the city greener.

We'll publish details of the full London National Park City Week programme in June.

### **Events will include:**

- Walks and explorations** to discover some of London's lesser known green gems, footpaths and waterways
- Family activities** in parks across the city
- Encounters** with urban wildlife from butterflies to bats
- Opportunities** to help look after local green spaces and find out what you can do at home.

There's more info about the London National Park City week at <http://www.nationalparkcity.london/week> and the week kicks off with a free event at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> June.

### **June meeting Request for plastic rubbish!**

**Judy Palmer writes:** Our group has opted to have 'bunting' on our summer stalls made of plastic waste rubbish this year!

Therefore, could you please bring some of your **plastic rubbish** to the **June** meeting as our first big stall is at Keston countryside day on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

And Annette and I would especially like your plastic drink bottles to re-use to make bee hotels for our stalls!

### **July Meeting – Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July Tools with a Mission**

This is recycling in action, with unwanted tools being collected, refurbished and sent to the developing world for livelihood creation. These include tools for builders, carpenters, electricians, gardeners, plumbers and shoemakers as well as sewing machines, needles, reels of cotton, buttons and zips. Full details at the meeting plus an opportunity to have suitable items collected from your home.

## **Plastics**

To begin with, some promising news that could be part of a solution to the world's recycling of plastics problem.

An enzyme that gobbles up plastic has been discovered by British scientists!

Researchers created the plastic-digesting protein accidentally while investigating its natural counterpart. Tests have shown that the lab-made mutant has a super-charged ability to break down polyethylene terephthalate [PET] one of the most popular forms of plastic which is used in the 70 per cent of bottles for soft drinks, fruit juices and mineral waters.

The new research sprang from the discovery of bacteria in a Japanese waste recycling centre that had evolved the ability to feed on plastic with a natural enzyme called PETase.

## **The Carbon Footprint**

A study has found that global tourism's carbon footprint is four times bigger than previously thought.

Holidaymakers would need to pay 'significantly' more for each trip to offset the cost of their carbon use. An additional £237 would be needed to offset emissions from a return flight between Australia and the UK.

Tourism is already responsible for a tenth of global greenhouse gas emissions according to the findings published in the journal Nature Climate Change.

## **Nuclear Power**

There is now significant doubt whether nuclear power can provide cheap energy. This is especially so after the Chernobyl, Three Mile Island, the Fukushima and even the Seascale disaster.

Apart from the disaster dangers, nuclear power has another major disadvantage; it isn't easy to vary the output to match demand quickly. It contributed around 25% to Britain's consumption in the 1990s and is down to nearer 20% today.

Energy from renewable sources has been steadily increasing since 2000 as a result of national and international incentives, including the EU renewable energy directive.

## **Fracking**

A legal challenge to the Scottish government's fracking ban began in Edinburgh in early May. In October, the Scottish government imposed an indefinite moratorium on drilling for shale gas and oil in light of 'overwhelming' public opposition to fracking, with 99% of more than 60,000 respondents to a consultation in favour of the ban.

However, Fracking giant Ineos and Aberdeen firm Reach Coal Seam Gas, are seeking a judicial review of the 'unlawful' fracking ban, arguing there were 'very serious errors' in the decision-making process. FoE Scotland, which is intervening in the case, says the ban was necessary 'to urgently cut greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels in line with legally binding climate targets'.

## Plastic Waste news – Judy Palmer

**Judy writes:** One or two articles caught my attention in the last month, in the continuing battle on plastic waste in the UK and across the world.

If you go down to the beach today..... you are definitely going to find plastic rubbish on the shoreline. Many of the latter-day beachcombers up and down the country use social media to advertise their finds, and some enterprising people are even tracking down the origin of some of them; for instance toy figures from Cornflake boxes from the 1950's and Lego bricks from cargo spills from twenty years ago.

And people on ships and ferries still treat the sea as a dustbin, so hundreds of straws and cups are found, plus shotgun cartridges from clay shooting on cruise ships! Then there are the fishing gear and lobster pots, some of which cross the Atlantic from America which end up over here. And if you find any short little pens – they probably came from drains outside the local bookie and ended up in the sea.

Environmental campaigners in Cornwall are also warning of a new danger – ‘plastic pebbles’ which are being washed up there. They are created from melted plastic combining with sand, shingle and seaweed. They think the melted plastic is caused by people across the world throwing plastic bottles etc on beach bonfires or barbecues..... bonkers!

Ships in the Volvo Ocean Race have discovered that plastic pollution has reached the remotest spot in the world,

Point Nemo. This spot in the Southern Ocean is almost 1700 miles from the nearest inhabited land and scientists found tiny particles of microplastic there.

The boats which are involved in the race and the Turn the Tide on Plastic campaign have been carrying out sampling since the beginning of the race in Europe last year. They found that the highest concentrations of microplastic so far, were around the Mediterranean and the South China Sea.

It's a sad fact that two-thirds of litter comes straight from land-based sources and now it has been calculated that there are approximately 5.2 trillion microscopic pieces of plastic in the sea. But trying to help combat this, Reading University is trialling the Sustain It scheme.

The Sustain It bottles have an embedded microchip, so the student swipes the bottom of the bottle then chooses a drink from a vending machine by pressing an option on a digital screen.

The university says it has cut down on plastic bottles by 40% since last September. The scheme was launched by Coca Cola and there are hopes other universities will follow suit. It appears that manufactures are gradually waking up to the fact they need to be part of the solution of our plastic waste problem.

## Bees and Biodiversity – Judy Palmer

The **Great British Bee Count** is under way! Please join in if you can, it is easy to download the app –



**Great  
British  
Bee  
Count**



and get counting! Let's see how many we can count this year..... and maybe beat last year's total?

**Bees & Neonics** – following on from the good news last month when countries in the EU voted to ban three bee-harming neonic pesticides on all crops grown outdoors, we hear that the EU top court has upheld the ban, after the chemical giants Bayer and Syngenta went to the European Court of Justice to try and overturn the ban.

**Biodiversity news.** Just to re-cap on the priority species we are hoping to record this year in the borough – we have asked for sighting records to be submitted to [bromleybiodiversity@gmail.com](mailto:bromleybiodiversity@gmail.com) on toads, bullfinches and house sparrows so far, and the last two species are the purple emperor butterfly and swifts.

Here are the posters –

### RETURN OF THE PURPLE EMPEROR

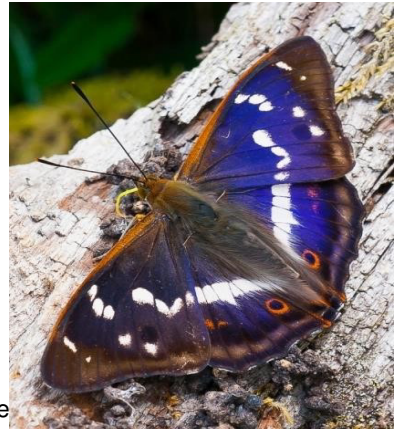


Left: Caterpillar on goat willow leaf



Close up of caterpillar head to show 'horns'

Right: Adult male. Female is similar but lacks purple iridescence



Images reproduced with thanks to Peter Eeles and UK Butterflies  
<http://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/index.php>



## Bees and Biodiversity - *continued*

New records are extremely valuable so if you see one of these butterflies or their caterpillars please e-mail the date, place (postcode or grid reference), number seen and if possible a photo to Bromley Biodiversity Partnership at:

[bromleybiodiversity@gmail.com](mailto:bromleybiodiversity@gmail.com)

Your information will enable the protection of any breeding colonies and the targeted management of the woodlands where they live to promote the recovery of this rare and beautiful butterfly.

on flying insects and spiders. If they are flying at roof level they may be looking for nest sites.

Please let us know if you see any and if they are nesting near you.

E-mail the date, place (postcode or grid reference), number and how high they were flying to Bromley Biodiversity Partnership at

[bromleybiodiversity@gmail.com](mailto:bromleybiodiversity@gmail.com)

Your information will enable local targeted habitat improvements

### How You Can Help Swifts:

- Put up swift boxes
- Ask for swift bricks to be included in new builds or roofing works
- Be careful not to disturb existing nests .
- If swifts are present do not work on walls or roofs May-August
- For more information about swifts see: [www.swift-conservation.org](http://www.swift-conservation.org)

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### Save our Swifts!



Swifts spend most of their lives on the wing, only landing to nest and raise young. They arrive in the UK in May to breed, nesting high on buildings, often under the eaves, leaving in August to return to southern Africa.

The number arriving in the UK declined by 47% 1995-2014. In Bromley numbers recorded are now very low. Reasons for the decline include loss of nest sites, less insect food & changing climate.

Listen for their screaming cries and look for their crescent shapes as they fly high above us, often in groups, feeding

## FoE Press Release – The Great British Bee Count has begun

Wildlife and gardening experts are calling on the public to grow weeds to help Britain's bees, as a new Friends of the Earth survey reveals that 57% of people would allow their garden to grow wilder - for example by letting weeds and wildflowers grow or allowing patches of grass to grow longer - if it could help bees and other wildlife.

The call for wildlife-friendly gardening coincides with the start of Friends of the Earth's Great British Bee Count (17 May-30 June), which is being supported by the gardening experts: Kate Bradbury, Val Bourne, Martin Cox and Alys Fowler.

Now in its fifth year, the Great British Bee Count – sponsored by Ecotalk, and supported by Buglife, the invertebrate conservation trust - enables people to find out more about the bees that visit our gardens, parks and countryside, and what they can do to help them. Using a fun, free and easy-to-use app thousands of verified sightings from this year's Great British Bee Count will be submitted to the government's Pollinator Monitoring Scheme [PoMS] – which will provide the first comprehensive nationwide health check for Britain's wild bees and other pollinators.

### **Friends of the Earth Bee campaigner**

**Emi Murphy** said: "Join the Great British Bee Count and do your bit to help the nation's bees. Habitat loss is one of the biggest threats bees face – so it's the perfect excuse to get a bit lazy in the garden this summer and allow things to grow wild and play your part in protecting these crucial pollinators.

"Thousands of verified bee sightings from the Great British Bee Count will also contribute to the national Pollinator Monitoring Scheme – the first comprehensive health check of Britain's bees and other pollinators."

People are being urged to play their part in helping Britain's bees and other wildlife by allowing their gardens to grow a bit wilder, with a few wildflowers or 'weeds' and long grass patches. The Great British Bee Count free app contains information on what people can do to help bees including bee spotting and a bee-friendly plant guide. According to a King's Fund report around 87% of UK households have a garden and estimates suggest that private gardens cover an area about the size of one-fifth of Wales – lots of space to create bee-friendly paradises!

### **Dale Vince, founder of Ecotricity and Ecotalk,**

said: "Britain's bees play a vital role in our environment and in pollinating the crops that feed us - but for the last 50 years they've been in decline, this is mostly due to the impact of industrial scale farming as well as a general loss of habitat - land for nature.

"The Great British Bee Count is a great initiative, and Ecotalk is delighted to support it. We've launched Ecotalk, Britain's green mobile phone service, powered by renewable energy with the proceeds being used to buy land and give it back to nature - to create new habitats for the bees and other creatures of Britain."

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## Environmental book-share + Book Reviews

### Environmental book-share / book reviews

Many of us have interesting environmental books we have bought and read or promised ourselves we will get round to reading. An idea has been put forward that we might have an on-line lending library scheme, with members offering books for loan. This could also extend to magazines such as Resurgence.

Available books could be listed in the Newsletter. A person wishing to borrow a particular book could then contact the person offering it, who could then bring it to the next meeting. It would be the responsibility of the lender to keep track of where their books were and of the borrower to return the book(s) within a reasonable timeframe. And, of course, any books no longer required could be offered for sale / contribution to funds.

It would also be great if readers could produce short reviews of books they have read – see review by Annette below.

### Book Review 'The Bees' by Laine Paull – Annette Rose

I thoroughly enjoyed and recommend this unusual book.

The main character is Flora 717, a bee.

Through the life of Flora we discover so much about the life of bees, including the environmental dangers they face. Flora bravely battles away through a series of struggles including terrifying invasions by wasps, internal massacres and chemical attack. It is a work of

fiction and imagination that reads rather like a science fiction book and yet there is much to learn here.

The Times review by Angus Clarke says 'This cunningly imagined thriller hurtles us through the very bizarre life and adventures of Flora 717..... Strangely thought provoking. A hive may be an implacably totalitarian society, but it is also a clever context for a writer creating a female action hero, for that ultimately, is what Flora 717 is.' This book made me look at bees in a whole new light.

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### Press Release – Great British Bee Count, *continued*

#### Kate Bradbury, Daily Telegraph, Gardeners' World magazine, said:

"The more we learn about the different bees that visit our gardens, parks and schools, the more we can do to help them. There are so many bees to learn about, from big buzzy bumblebees to teeny tiny solitary bees, not to mention the well-loved honeybee. Every single one has a different flower or nesting preference, something that makes them unique."

#### Val Bourne, Daily Telegraph 'Spring Cottage' column, Saga, Amateur Gardening, said:

"My earliest garden memory, aged about three, is of watching a bumblebee on a dark aquilegia and I've been hooked on bees ever since. I'm proud to be an ambassador for the Great British Bee Count."

## CAAT news – GET North: BAE dropped

Artists and musicians in the North of England were horrified to discover the cultural festival they had been working on for months was to be sponsored by arms company BAE Systems. It took them just a week to force the world's third largest arms company to withdraw.

The Great Exhibition of the North, or "GET North" is a three-month long cultural events programme planned for the summer of 2018. Based in NewcastleGateshead, it aims to celebrate "great art and culture, design and innovation from across the North."

The first most people heard of the event's sponsorship was at its programme launch at the end of February. For members of the Commonsers Choir, it was going through the goody bag and wondering, "So why are we getting a free coffee cup carrying the logo of an international arms dealer?"

And there it was: the company's logo on the back of the programme - one of three "premier partners" and a press release from earlier in the month confirmed that BAE was "proud to be part of the exhibition."

It's understandable that an arms company in need of an improved public image might wish to be associated with such an event. But artists and performers were having none of it.

Some, like the Commonsers Choir and ceramicist Emily Hesse withdrew immediately. Singer-songwriter Nadine

Shah caused a media splash by announcing her withdrawal on twitter "I am disgusted to hear of their involvement and refuse to be in any way associated with them."

Other performers, including the Unthanks, said they had entered into "negotiations that we hope result in a successful exhibition that doesn't hold or rely on these associations."

Artist Jill Gibbon's public petition calling on the exhibition organisers to drop the sponsorship gathered thousands of signatures, and a coalition of artists and cultural workers mobilised under the umbrella "Art not Arms."

Within three days, exhibition venues, the Sage Gateshead and the BALTIC Centre, issued statements distancing themselves from the sponsorship and some ticket sales had been frozen.

On 6 March the Museums Association reported that the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport was in "crisis talks" with the organisers. The next day, it was all over: BAE quietly announced "We have decided to redirect our support to other initiatives better suited to both our skills and innovation objectives."

Such an about-face would not have been undertaken lightly. It is testament to all those who organised and their principled refusal to be co-opted by the arms trade, and indicates the extent of public outrage over BAE's role in conflict and repression around the world.

## Global Justice Now – Our health, not their wealth

### ***From Ninety-nine, the magazine of Global Justice Now:***

We're told that the pharma industry is broadly a good thing. But its failings are systemic, writes Radhika Patel

The story the pharmaceutical industry likes to tell is one of progress and partnership. These are companies which work in the public interest, and an industry that ultimately saves lives. Yet time and again pharmaceutical giants are slapped with fines, told to clean up their act or simply get away with looking out for their own profit margins at the expense of patients around the world. The real story is of a set of companies that systematically put their wealth before our health, and an industry that perfectly illustrates the problems of corporate power.

### **How they get away with it**

The rules that enable pharmaceutical companies to charge soaring prices for medicines were written by corporations themselves via the World Trade Organisation. This gives them patent protection on new medicines - for up to 20 years no one else has the right to produce them. In effect this creates a monopoly for new drugs. But these patents do not act as an incentive to boost innovation, as the industry argues. By making tiny changes to a medicine, companies can extend their monopoly and patent rights. And without competition, they are free to charge whatever the market will bear.

These rules have allowed the pharmaceutical industry to become

driven by financial interests. There is more incentive to develop drugs that rake in a profit. And people who are more likely to be able to pay higher prices for medicines are prioritised. This disproportionately affects people in the global south.

Take tuberculosis. It is now the biggest infectious disease killer in the world and affects far more people in the global south. Yet despite the fact that it took 1.7 million lives in 2017, it has taken 50 years for a new drug to come to market. Profit comes first, need second.

### **Paying twice**

This is an increasing problem closer to home too. New groundbreaking research from the British Medical Journal has found that the UK is paying more than the estimated generic cost of producing medicines (including a profit margin) for 77% of drugs on the World Health Organisation's list of essential medicines. Many patients in the UK are priced out of vital medicines because the NHS cannot afford them. In 2017 alone our cash-strapped NHS forked out £17.4 billion for medicines – but it still had to ration and reject drugs that were too expensive.

Our report in September with Stop AIDS revealed a number of expensive medicines which used UK public funding to pay for the early, innovative and riskier stages of research and development.

*More info on GJN and the rest of this article from [globaljustice.org.uk](http://globaljustice.org.uk)*

## Jubilee Debt Campaign – Britain's household debt crisis

Britain is in the midst of a severe and prolonged household debt crisis.

Household debt, not including mortgages, has increased by nearly 20% in the past 2 years, and is now at £239 billion, higher than just before the crash in 2008.

3 million households are now stuck in a debt trap, paying more than a quarter of their income on debt repayments. And the poorest families are being hit the hardest. Low wages, insecure work and social security cuts mean that growing numbers of households simply don't have enough money to cover their basic needs, and are being taken advantage of by rip-off, predatory lenders charging exorbitant interest rates.

No-one should have to get into debt just to put food on the table and heat their homes. That's why we're launching a new campaign on household debt.

We need your help to call for government action to end exploitative lending and tackle the growing burden of unjust debt on the poorest households. Together we can help give families a fresh start.

### **Household debt is on the rise again**

It is now a decade since the onset of the global financial crisis and the 'Great Recession'. The growth in household debt in the run up to 2008 has been identified by the Bank of England as a key factor in the cause of the crisis, and the Bank has also said that the legacy of high household indebtedness has held back economic

recovery. Yet very little has been done to tackle the household debt burden over the last 10 years. In fact, a series of government policies and policy failures have contributed to a new rise in household indebtedness.

### **The Debt - Poverty trap**

This rising household debt burden is not distributed equally across society. Rising household debts are hitting the poorest families the hardest, and leading to a debt-poverty trap. People are having to take on debt just to cover basic needs and then facing spiralling debt servicing costs which further eat into their available income and push them into further debt.

According to recent analysis by the Centre for Responsible Credit, 3 million households (containing just under 7 million people) are now severely indebted — paying more than a quarter of their income to their lenders.

Almost half (45%) of the severely-indebted population are concentrated in the very poorest households. On average, these very poorest indebted households are paying out 35% of their incomes on debt repayments. This is over three times the level paid out by borrowers with the highest incomes.

### **How did we get here?**

*Sorry, there's no room for the rest of this article which comes from Drop It, the magazine of Jubilee Debt Campaign who can be found at [www.jubileedebt.org.uk](http://www.jubileedebt.org.uk)*

## Bromley Friends of the Earth - List of Contacts

### Co-ordinators:

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**Secretary:** vacant

### Treasurer:

Sheila Brown *details as above*

### Press Team:

Ann Garrett, Paul Enock, Annette  
Rose

### Programme Organiser:

Sheila Brown 01689-851605

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### Newsletter Editor:

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### Membership Secretary:

Dan Sloan 01689-838819

### Bromley FoE web site:

***www.bromleyfoe.co.uk***

Peter Gandolfi  
*petergandolfi@hotmail.com*

### Admin team:

Judy Palmer: Group emails  
*bromleyfoe@gmail.com*

Rob Clark: Facebook co-ordinator  
*bromleyfoe@gmail.com*

Annette Rose  
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### Campaigns –

#### Campaigns Organiser:

Ann Garrett *details as above*

#### Bees / Nature:

Judy Palmer  
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#### Fossil Free (includes Climate, Energy, Fracking):

Ann Garrett *details as above*

#### Clean Air:

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#### Brexit:

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#### Planning and development:

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#### Monthly Meeting reporters:

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Anne Clark, Paul Enock, Peter  
Gandolfi, Graham Hemington, Annette  
Rose

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#### Teas:

Mary Ingledew / Sylvia Chance

#### Technical Support:

Peter Gandolfi *details as above*

#### Fundraising Officer:

Bill Priestley 01689-820469

**Reuser Column**  
**Don't throw It away - Reuse It!**

If you have any items to sell, or anything that you require, please send details to the Editor. Items will be displayed for three months, the number in brackets after an item indicating for how long it has appeared. Could you please contact us if an item has been sold / obtained, so that it can be removed from the newsletter?

Any donations to Bromley FoE generated from this column gratefully received!

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## **Non-members' Section**

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

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

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

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

I wish to support Bromley Friends of the Earth and enclose my annual subscription (£8 single / £15 couple/family). I also enclose a donation (optional) of ..... to help towards the cost of producing and distributing the monthly Newsletter.

Name..... Telephone Number

Address.....

..... Postcode.....

Email Address.....

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

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