

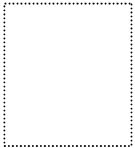


Friends of the Earth

Bromley

March 2012 No. 291 Newsletter

Bromley FoE: inquiries to Birch House, Grays Road, Westerham TN16 2JB
email: r.watson865@btinternet.com; website: www.bromleyfoe.co.uk



March Meeting

Friends Meeting House, Ravensbourne Road, Bromley

HOW GREEN IS EUROPE?

Bromley FoE Inaugural 40th Anniversary Lecture

*Jean Lambert, Green Party Member of the European Parliament
Jean is vastly experienced on European successes and failures
and specialises in issues like the environment and human rights.
Please come and bring a friend!*

Tuesday 6th March - 7.30pm.

Copy for the next Newsletter must be with the Editor by
SUNDAY 18TH MARCH.

Contact details inside front cover.

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Diary dates:

- March 6th (Tues)** **Bromley FoE's March meeting:** Jean Lambert – Green Party MEP - How Green is Europe?
Country Market, Orpington Village Hall, 10am - 11.30am
- Mar 7th (Wed))
- March 17th (Sat)** **Bromley FoE Campaign stall** – Energy Campaign: Penge High Street, 2.30 - 4.30 pm
- March 20th (Tues) Sevenoaks FoE's March Meeting at 26 Beechy Lees Road, Otford, TN14 5QJ, 01959 524906: Bees – either a talk or a film
- March 30th (Fri) / 31st (Sat) Bromley Meeting House 50th Anniversary, Bromley FoE Stall. 10am - 4.30pm
- March 31st (Sat) Croydon Greenpeace – Talk by UK Tar Sands Group, Milan Bar, Ground Floor, Grants Department Store, 14-32 High Street, Croydon, CR0 1GT, 9.45am-11.45am
- April 3rd (Tues)** **Bromley FoE's April meeting**
Chris Lloyd - The What On Earth Wallbooks
- May 1st (Tues)** **Bromley FoE's May meeting**

June Meeting

Due to the Diamond Jubilee Bank Holiday on 5th June our meeting will be held on Tuesday 12th June.
More details next month.

Re-user items [1]

Wall lights brass fittings and tulip-shaped glass shades; 2 single, one double. Matching central pendant light with 5 lights. Small donation to Bromley FoE.

Louvre doors, pine, suitable for wardrobes or cupboards; 6 sized 62½" x 21" (535 x 1590mm) and 6 sized 21" x 21" (159 x 159mm). Small donation to Bromley FoE. Contact Sheila Brown 01689 851605.

Next Newsletter - copy details:

Any news, articles, poems, questions, views etc for the next Newsletter must be with the editor **by SUNDAY 18TH MARCH:**

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

**Lecture by Jean Lambert,
London member of the European Parliament, on
HOW GREEN IS EUROPE?**

Bromley Friends of the Earth is pleased to announce a major event to mark the group's 40th anniversary. The group – one of the first environmental organisations to be formed in Britain – has invited Jean Lambert, a London Member of the European Parliament representing the Green Party, to give an inaugural anniversary lecture on *How Green Is Europe?*

The event will take place at the Friends Meeting House, Ravensbourne Road, just off Bromley High St, at 7.30pm on Tuesday March 6. All are welcome. Entrance is free and there will be refreshments.

Jean Lambert is eminently qualified to speak on the subject, having been an MEP since 1999. She is active in many policy-making groups in the European parliament, especially human rights, energy, and diversity. She has also campaigned for action on London's illegal air pollution, opposing nuclear trains passing through the capital and increasing the number of 'green' jobs.

Jean, a former teacher, said: 'As a Londoner I am committed to making the capital an inclusive and sustainable city.'



**Jean Lambert MEP
Guest speaker at
Bromley FoE's
March meeting**

**Tuesday 6th March
7.30pm**

February meeting report – Graham Hemington

Bromley's Area Action Plan

We had a most informative talk by a representative from Bromley Civic Society. The Area Action Plan was adopted by Bromley Council in October 2010 as a statutory Development Plan which forms part of the Local Development Framework.

The Plan will ensure that development over the next 15 years will be carried out in a balanced and coordinated manner; this will be done by setting out a comprehensive framework to guide the delivery of housing, employment, leisure and associated community facilities, infrastructure and transport initiatives within the centre of Bromley.

The vision behind the Plan is:-

- (i) to promote and enhance Bromley's position as a metropolitan town centre, making it a vibrant place where people want to live, work and shop;
- (ii) to ensure the development contributes to Bromley's attractiveness as a commercial, cultural and residential town (to compete with Croydon, Lewisham and Bluewater) with an overarching responsibility for biodiversity.

We were then given some details of each site in the Plan, and told that full information including maps is available on the website Bromley Area Action Plan.

Site A – Bromley North Station Area

Office space and 250 residential units – likely to be challenged. Refurbished bus terminal and market area? New car park?

Site B – Bromley College Area

Bromley College (Grade I listed) is under threat from a development of 70 flats on the corner of Tweedy Road and London Road, which is just five metres from the College and the Town Centre Conservation Area. Planning permission is being sought; in short, a very sensitive site!

Site C – Old Town Hall

To be converted to a 4-star hotel with car park.

Site E – The Pavilion

Site to be redeveloped into shops (with hope of attracting John Lewis). Leisure facility to be moved to Civic Centre (Site F)

Site F – Civic Centre

Improved pedestrian links at crossing over Kentish way to better integrate the Centre with the town centre. New building – leisure and residential – in the vicinity of the Old Palace; the latter's cultural landscape must not be compromised.

Site G – Lower High Street (West Side)

The Council want 1000 homes in 10 storeys and new retail outlets (they are hoping for "Regent Street standard" shops!)

/continued on next page

February meeting report - *continued*

Site J – Bromley South Station

New improved facilities – work in progress now.

Site K – Westmoreland Road Car Park

Replace existing car park with a mixed use development comprising a cinema (9 screens, 1261 seats), nine restaurants, a 130-bed hotel, car park (400 cars) and a tall, residential apartment block (6 – 19 storeys).

Existing objections from Bromley Civic Society and Ravensbourne Valley Preservation Society about

(i) the extreme height of the apartment block: significant impact on neighbouring properties – it will dwarf houses in Newbury Road, significant reduction in daylight hours, loss of privacy, etc.

(ii) proposed car park has only 400 spaces; of these, 100 to be reserved exclusively to serve shoppers, commuters, the cinema, restaurants and the hotel. After reservation for disabled drivers, etc, only 261 spaces will be available. Compared with the existing car park provision of 489, the new capacity would be just over half of the existing capacity. In addition the car park must cater for the 1261-seat cinema. So, when the existing car park is demolished, where will all the parking go? Likely to be a contentious site!

Site L – the former DHSS building, Bromley South

Proposed mixed development to provide a hotel, apartments and small retail units. It will involve building of a tower block at the junction of Masons

Hill and Westmoreland Road. Concern over the impact of this tower block on the protected views of the Keston Ridge.

Site M – Queen’s Garden

Many objections to the developer’s proposal to build five restaurants on the terrace adjacent to the Sports Pavilion and to extend into the parkland area at the southern side of Queen’s Garden: this would involve the loss of a significant part of this public open space, currently owned by the Council (see Bromley FoE Newsletter, February 2012, p7 for more information).

Site N – Area around Churchill Theatre

Major new public square south of Churchill Theatre. It must provide an attractive link between the High Street and the Library Gardens.

Site P – Sainsbury’s Area

Changes affecting the supermarket and car park. Will with murals to be retained?

Other points

- 1) Sustainability and energy efficiency were mentioned but no details available.
- 2) A previous talk by Doug Black of the Bromley Civic Society highlighted some of the complexity in planning and some likely objections (see Bromley FoE Newsletter, September 2009, page 6).

Campaigns, Energy and Climate info – from Ann Garrett

Just a reminder that our next stall on The Final Demand campaign asking for a review of the big six energy companies profits and accountability, is in Penge High Street beside Boots from 2.30 - 4.30 pm on Saturday March 17th.

Many thanks to those who have signed up to help, but would be grateful for a few more people.

We are also having a stall at a Quaker event at the Friends Meeting House, Ravensbourne Rd, Bromley on March 30th and 31st from 10.00am - 4.00pm each day. Support would be gratefully appreciated.

There is some good local news. Six of us from Bromley FoE (who are also supporters of Bromley Civic Society) were in the public gallery at the Civic Centre on February 14th to see the Development Control Committee refuse planning permission for 5 new restaurants in part of the conservation area in Queens Gardens. The developers are bound to appeal, but it is a success on the part of the campaigners for the time being at least. Grateful thanks to all who attended the meeting.

Climate and Energy

Meat Trade Emissions

If everyone went vegetarian or vegan in the UK according to recent research, it would have the same environmental benefit as taking half of all cars off the road. Scientists have calculated the impact of 61 foods, with fresh meat and cheese topping the carbon footprint league.

They estimate that the combined greenhouse gas emissions from the foods we eat in the UK are the equivalent of 157 million tons of carbon dioxide and that switching to vegetarian diets could cut this by between 22 and 26 per cent. This research was carried out by Professor Nick Hewitt of Lancaster University.

Victory in Solar Panel Subsidy Campaign

Green groups are celebrating after the Government lost its bid at The High Court on January 25th to cut subsidies for solar panels on homes. Friends of the Earth have hailed the victory as a 'landmark judgement'. They have accused the Government of making a mockery of the consultation process, as the proposed date to change the feed-in tariff preceded the end of the period of discussion.

The Renewable Energy Association have called for an end to the 'fiasco' which has put 29,000 jobs in the solar industry at risk.

First greenhouse gas rises since 2003

Britain's greenhouse gas emissions rose by more than 3% in 2010 for the first time since 2003. This statistical information was released by the Department of Energy and Climate Change on Feb 7th. The rise in emissions was driven in part by switching away from nuclear to coal and gas. Andy Atkins of FoE has stated that 'the rise in fossil fuels is bad news for the planet and cash-strapped families trying to meet high energy bills'

/continued on page 8

Transport info – Ray Watson

Pollution problem

The word about pollution problems wreaked by the aviation industry has, it seems, reached our neighbours in Sevenoaks. Asked to comment on expansion plans put forward by Gatwick Airport, Sevenoaks Council sent a strong protest about what it said would be a huge increase in air pollution caused by an increase in motorists passing through the area to reach Gatwick.

The M20, M26 and M25 are all in Sevenoaks and would become even more crowded were the airport be allowed to expand to its target of handling 40 million passengers a year by 2020. The council pointed out that the area was an Air Quality Management zone which is subject to special measures to reduce air pollution.

The council called for better public transport facilities to reduce the number of car journeys. It also said more flights would bring increased noise levels in the Edenbridge area.

While all credit must go to Sevenoaks Council for spotlighting the situation, it is worth noting that when the same problem cropped up at the time of the proposed Biggin Hill Airport expansion – it was Bromley FoE that took the lead in putting forward the arguments - - Sevenoaks and its villages adjoining Bromley borough territory took little interest, even when it was pointed out that Biggin Hill traffic would clog their country lanes.

Perhaps next time the airport expansion issue raises its head we should all work together.

Expansion? Really?

We sometimes get the impression that airports continually want to expand. Not always. Plymouth has closed and a buyer is sought for Durham/Tees Valley, while next month BMI ends its passenger services from Manston.

Meanwhile, environmentalists have been staging daily protests for months around Frankfurt Airport to delay growth plans. They may have a point: Frankfurt is already one of the world's busiest airports.

High speed costs

The government's decision to go ahead with the High Speed rail link between London and Birmingham has produced further mind-numbing figures -- apart from the estimated £32billion cost. Interest payments alone will be a staggering £1billion a year (from the taxpayer's purse) while fares to cover costs will need to rise 27 per cent above inflation.

All of which gives some credence to those who say HS2 is for the rich – and who argue for spending that sort of money on improving existing rail and coach links.

It is not planned for the HS2 to link with Birmingham's airport. In which case, locals point out, it will take longer to cross the city from the station to the airport than the rail journey from London.

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Huge development proposed on farmland at Ruxley/St. Mary Cray

Local non-league football club, Cray Wanderers, are proposing a football ground and hotel complex development on farmland on the Bromley/Bexley border at St. Mary Cray/Ruxley.

The proposed site is along a country road, Sandy Lane, opposite the entrance to the former site of St. Mary Cray maternity hospital, what is now the ski slope. One of those opposed to the scheme, said: I am not sure what the legal designation of the land is, but it certainly forms part of the Green Belt in practice.

The club has set up a survey on its own website to gather comments of support from Cray Wanderers fans. It also gives an opportunity for us to make observations. I have given my observations, you may want to use some of these points in making your own comments.

The form is set up in a biased way. You have to indicate support for one of the proposals in Box 2 for the form to submit. I clicked on 'community use' here and put a comment in the box below to say I'd only done it to make the form go. When the planning application is submitted (9th Feb according to the site), then we will let Bromley council know about this bias in the survey.

Climate and Energy – cont'd from p6 (highly relevant for our Final Demand campaign). He has stressed the importance in a message to the new energy secretary Ed Davey, of switching to clean British power and cutting down on energy waste in order

reduce fuel bills and emissions, and safeguard energy supplies.

Climate Change and Animals

Animal and insect species in Europe are losing the fight to keep up with rapid changes in climate in a new phenomenon called 'climate debt', according to an international study.

More than 11,000 birds and butterfly species have been analysed over 20 years by scientists in the largest study of its kind. Releasing some of the data for the first time, scientists have revealed that how species are failing to keep up as warmer temperatures move north. The findings saw birds lag behind their normal climate zones, on average by 212 kilometres and butterflies by 135 kilometres.

Some of the birds such as the black and pied flycatcher are unable to adapt to the encroaching warmth and are not naturally moving north to cooler areas, according to experts writing in the journal Nature.

Transport info – cont'd from page 7

Coming your way

A minor revolution is about to take place in the world of road signage. The Department for Transport is to reduce the need to have both painted lines on the roads as well as upright signs, and illuminating road signs will no longer be necessary except for restricted heights and in 20 mph zones. And a welcome move is to make it easier to introduce 20 mph areas.

Jess Gold's Animated Earth Concert Tour 18th June - 5th July

Here's some information about Jess Gold's summer concert tour. I am a musician and the creative director of Project Earth Rock, as well as being an active Friends of the Earth campaigner.

We are going to be launching the Project Earth Rock album with a 14 date 'Animated Earth' Concert Tour this summer. You can hear songs from the album that we will be launching on the tour at the link below. We won't just be playing songs on the album, there will be other popular eco material too.

The purpose of the tour is to:-

1. Raise awareness of the issues of sustainability and climate change
2. Create enjoyable outreach opportunities for local activist organisations, a new way to introduce people to your work
3. Create a fund-raising opportunity for local groups..

I will be travelling with a wonderful clarinettist and a percussionist/ animator who will be creating satirical cartoons during the show based on ideas generated by the audience, and hopefully one or two other guest musicians too.

A little bit about me...

Jess Gold is an 'all round, sing-along, climate conscious entertainer'. She has been writing songs since 1995. Her first band incarnation was Red Sea Blue, a group that carried out three tours in America, visiting summer camps and community centres, before she decided to stop flying.

She then formed Pilpel, an outlet for her song-writing in a contemporary folk genre. She got involved with Friends of the Earth in 2005 and her song-writing evolved and began to reflect her new eco-activist focus. In the summer of 2008 whilst in the middle of a career crisis, she met Luke Concannon (JCB song man) whose enthusiasm for her songs gave her the gentle push she needed to leap into the unknown world of giving up the day job.

Since then she hasn't looked back. An album of 12 original and fresh songs about sustainability and climate change is nearly complete. She has been working in schools running song-writing workshops and giving concerts about sustainability issues. Summer 2010 saw Jess trying out her songs with adults at festivals, including Glastonbury, to a warm response. She also enjoys entertaining campaigners at camps and conferences.

We are looking for local groups who would like to organise a concert maybe in co-operation with other local organisations who are interested in sustainability issues. We will be charging £400 for the show and asking for some home hospitality for the band. You could apply to the local groups fund at head office to help offset costs. We will be providing an entertaining and enjoyable show, so you can charge a reasonable ticket price to cover costs and bring some extra spares in.

PS – Thanks to Ann Garrett for this item

Friends of the Earth Regional Gathering 4th February 2012

Sheila Brown writes -

Regional Gatherings, held in about six different regions of the UK in the winter and then again in May or June, are opportunities for Friends of the Earth members to gather between annual conferences, in a wider framework than their own local group, but not so large a canvas as the annual conference.

It can be quite a full day, with whole group sessions and then splitting into smaller groups for workshops and skill sharing. A feature of recent Regional Gatherings has been “Lightning Talks” – local group members giving short presentations, this time on things that inspire them to campaign.

At the end of the day there is the chance to socialise or continue discussions at a local pub.

Review of FoE's priority campaigns for the coming year

The Final Demand campaign is directing pressure on the power companies to reduce the CO2 they use in the actual production of electricity; the majority of our power stations are fuelled by gas or coal and, as they near the end of their productive lives, it would be desirable to replace them with new, non-fossil technologies producing less CO2.

The Electricity Market Reform Bill – hope is by the end of 2013 to get the government on a path to being carbonless. The problem is, the Big Six energy companies are hooked on fossil fuels and show no sign of caring. They tend to be focussed on short

term profits rather than the long term effect on the planet; fossil stations are quick and easy to build. These companies are good at playing the prices market – raising prices when global prices rise, but not reflecting any drops. FoE hopes to turn the focus onto the price of gas by way of media interviews and debates in the media.

Our petition has been signed by in excess of 50 MPs and a total of over 30,000 people.

The High Court victory in relation to the Feed-in Tariff was a great triumph.

The next phase in the Final Demand campaign will be launched early April. We need to keep building on petition numbers and to influence the government to make the big switch that is needed.

Greener Products Campaign

Too much stuff and not enough planet. Life support systems are under dangerous strain. How can we know if the products we are buying are “green”? Currently companies are under no obligation to publish the CO2 impact from the manufacture of their product. This problem needs to be tackled at base.

The objective is to switch onus of responsibility to the manufacturer, rather than it being on the consumer to read labels and decide whether or not to buy. This needs to happen EU-wide, not just in this country. The campaign will be launched in October.

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FoE's Regional Gathering (Sheila Brown), *continued*

A questioner from the floor highlighted the fact that so many of the products we buy are produced overseas and drew a parallel with pork production where high welfare standards have been brought in and this has had the effect of the consumer choosing a cheaper product from overseas. The same is likely to happen with overseas products having less rigorous production standards and undercutting home production.

Bees Campaign

We all know that our bees seem to be in trouble. Without bees we would have one-third less food. Bee numbers are indicative of biodiversity. The fact that bees are in trouble means there is a bigger picture here. Main factors are loss of habitat, modern farming practices and use of pesticides, and disease. All these are interconnected.

FoE will focus on bees as pollinators, their significance in economic terms and in providing food.

Bee action plans will look at bees at home; a bee-friendly home will have lots of wild flowers and plants which attract bees. This can then be extended by working with our neighbours – then extending it to ones street, to local schools, to ones local area and then nationally. They want to make this a political issue; the aim is to persuade the government to take action. The campaign will go live in April.

Workshop – I joined the “Final Demand Street Theatre Workshop.” This entailed dressing up and pretending to be representatives of

some of the Big Six energy companies, but with spoof names, e.g. British Gas, EDF-off and E-not-on, and to approach members of the public, thanking them for their contributions to the company's profits and huge salaries! As we know, the general public don't always engage, so some just took the leaflet (or not) and smiled sweetly. Those who did engage were then enlightened that we were really campaigners for Friends of the Earth, and invited to sign a petition. Another workshop group on film making was able to film this action.

Practical Environmental Change – four speakers outlined how they had implemented change at grassroots level. See separate article by Mary Bassendine (page zzz)

FoE's Local Groups Conference in September

The good news is, this will be in London, at Imperial College, giving the possibility of attending as a day visitor. The date is 14-16 September. Put it in your diary now!

**Bromley FoE's
40th Anniversary Inaugural
Lecture**

Jean Lambert, MEP

How Green Is Europe

**Tuesday 6th March
7.30pm**

FoE's Regional Gathering – Practical Environmental Change

Sheila Brown and Mary Bassendine (Sevenoaks FoE)

Practical Environmental Change workshop – four speakers outlined how they had implemented change at grassroots level.

Organiclea – *A workers' co-operative growing food on London's edge.*
www.organiclea.org.uk

This group negotiated to use the derelict Hawkwood Plant Nursery site from Waltham Forest Council. It included growing space, warehousing and greenhouses. The site had become a dumping ground and a favourite haunt of drug addicts etc.

They cleared the site, reglazed the greenhouses and brought the site into use as a growing space once again.

The project served both an environmental and social purpose and much good will was built up over time. When the feed-in tariff was announced, the group set up an Industrial and Provident Society, to raise the £29,000 to fit 10Kw solar panels to the south-facing warehouse roof.

Food On Our Doorstep – *an online guide to locally produced food*
www.food-on-our-doorstep.org.uk

This group produced a local food directory for High Wycombe Bucks with funding from Chiltern Conservation Board sustainability fund – one councillor took a particular interest. It grew out of the transition movement and was a collaboration between a number of groups with 10 to 12 people at the core.

Local schools were involved and produced eye-catching artwork, and had lessons linked to the project. Google map produced on web. It was launched at a National Trust property apple day.

Learning points

- find out what's going on in your local community
- acknowledge and respect different "belief sets"
- focus on what you have in common
- consistency is important – work out guidelines: maximum impact over the long term – once started you are in it for the long haul

Transition Heathrow – *a grassroots action group working to build resilient communities*

www.transitionheathrow.com

In 2007 the climate camp was set up because of the threat of a third runway at Heathrow when the villagers of Sipson were to lose their homes. The campaign was successful in halting this development. In 2009 Transition Heathrow squatted on derelict land in the village with the support of the residents with whom they had been working.

Local people got behind the idea and all worked together promoting a sense of community. They transformed the derelict space, cleared 30 tons of rubbish, reglazed the greenhouses, installed solar panels and a wind turbine, therefore drawing no energy from the grid. The land is now used for local food growing

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From EDF Energy to Graham Hemington

I know many people are concerned about their energy bills, particularly at this time of year. I also recognise that what customers really want from their energy supplier is fair, clear and transparent prices.

In short, they want action rather than words. That is why EDF Energy became the first major supplier to announce it was passing on falls in wholesale gas prices to our customers. The 5% cut to gas bills will save our dual fuel and gas only customers around £36 a year.

We have a strong track record of offering our customers fair and competitive prices and, in particular, to provide what help we can during winter. We were the last of the major suppliers to increase prices last year and did so by the lowest amount for both electricity and gas.

And this winter, EDF Energy is again currently, the cheapest major supplier for typical dual fuel customers based on a national average of regional standard prices - as we were last winter. We are also offering free loft and cavity wall insulation to any qualifying household, irrespective of whether they are EDF Energy customers or not. This is in line with our ongoing commitment to help consumers reduce their energy costs and become more energy efficient.

Further information can be found at <http://www.edfenergy.com/products-services/for-your-homelenergysaving-advicefineasures-home-insulation.shtml>, or by calling our dedicated team on 0800 015 7786.

When it comes to price, its worth remembering that wholesale energy makes up around half the cost of an energy bill. Other costs include transmission and environmental obligations, which we have no control over. We buy our energy months and even years in advance to try to keep prices as stable as possible to protect customers from extreme volatility in their bills.

EDF Energy is also investing billions of pounds in new low carbon power stations to ensure we have a secure energy source, which will keep the lights on in the future.

We know we need to do more to win your trust. We believe fair tariffs are vital to help us address this. We have also simplified our tariffs to make it easier for customers to compare prices. We will also continue to listen to our customers and look at ways of further improving.

In the meantime, information about our internal complaints handling procedure, which explains how we will deal with your complaint, can be found on our website at www.edfenergy.com/products-services/for-your-homecustomer-services/making-a-complaint

If you would like a physical copy of this booklet, please contact us and we will send one to you free of charge.

FoE on the government's water summit

Govt holds emergency water summit as UK faces drought

The Government must get tough on water companies and do more to save water or drought will keep threatening British crops, Friends of the Earth warns today (Monday 20 February 2012), as Environment Secretary Caroline Spelman prepares to hold an emergency summit between companies, wildlife groups and river users.

The green campaigning charity says that the drought crisis has been a long-time coming, as successive Governments have consistently allowed the over-abstraction of water from several English rivers and ignored the problem of leaky old water pipes. Meanwhile, climate change increases the risk of weather extremes like drought happening in future in Britain.

Last week the Centre for Hydrology and Ecology said that average rainfall in the UK so far this winter has been the lowest since 1972, with the Midlands and Anglian regions having had their second driest years in almost a century. The Environment Agency warned that half of all British households could face hosepipe bans unless a long bout of exceptionally heavy rain fell by April.

Friends of the Earth's Senior Nature Campaigner Paul de Zylva said:

"Leaky old water pipes and over-abstraction from rivers mixed with unusually low rainfall this winter is a dangerous - and expensive - concoction.

"It's little surprise we're in drought - successive Governments have ignored expert advice on saving water, burdening farmers and households with the consequences.

"Ministers keep holding water summits but if they are serious about safeguarding water supplies and protecting crops and wildlife, they must urgently stop water companies drying out our rivers and place water saving at the heart of our planning system."

Regional Gathering – Practical Environmental Change, *continued*

Wey Valley Solar Schools – a community based energy co-operative working with schools
www.weyvalleysolar.co.uk

£620,000 raised from 120 members of the community to install 50Kw arrays on secondary schools in the Waverley and Guildford area. One school, Rodborough, was an eco-school and had applied many times unsuccessfully for grants for solar PV.

A core group of 3 full time volunteers and one salaried individual, spun off from FOE, set up a co-operative, an ethical, democratic business, which promised a return of 5% increasing to 6% in the third year on deposits. Finance was swiftly raised on this basis.

A motivated community with the support of 60 volunteers, an attractive investment, broader social and ethical objectives and an environmental outcome contributed to the success of the project.

Bromley Friends of the Earth - List of Contacts

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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.

Disclaimer

Please note that any opinion expressed in this Newsletter is not necessarily that of Bromley Friends of the Earth or Friends of the Earth.

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 should be sent to: Birch House, Grays Road, Westerham, Kent, TN16 2JB; phone 01959-571566, email 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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