



**Friends of
the Earth
Bromley**



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March 2018

No. 363

ewsletter

March Meeting

Friends Meeting House, Ravensbourne Road, Bromley

Cllr William Huntington-Thresher

Bromley's Executive member for Environmental Services

“Bromley’s Environmental Challenges”

Tuesday 6th March – 7.30pm

We will also be having the first Traidcraft stall of the year

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Copy for the next Newsletter must be with the Editor by

***** SUNDAY 18TH MARCH *****

Contact details inside front cover.

Diary dates:

Feb 26th to Mar 11th Fairtrade Fortnight
Mar 6th (Tue) **Bromley FoE's March meeting:** Cllr William Huntington-Thresher, Executive Member for Environmental Services plus Traidcraft stall

Mar 10th (Sat) FoE Greater London South East Regional Gathering, The Printworks, SW9 0HP, 10am to 5pm. Register at <https://greatersoutheast2018.eventbrite.co.uk>

Mar 22nd (Thurs) **Visit to Waldo Road** Reuse and Recycling Centre (see p11)
Mar 24th (Sat) **Bromley FoE stall** with Bromley Against Fracking, The Mall, Bromley, 2.30-4.30pm

Apr 3rd (Tue) **Bromley FoE's April meeting**
May 5th (Sat) Bill's Open Garden Event

March Meeting – Tuesday 6th March 2018

Cllr William Huntington-Thresher
Bromley's Executive Member for Environmental Services

"Bromley's Environmental Challenges"

William took on the lead Environment role at the Council in September and Bromley Friends of the Earth look forward to working with him on the environmental challenges facing Bromley Borough.

Tonight he will address a wide range of environmental issues, respond to our concerns, outline future strategy and possible future ways of working together.

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 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.

February Meeting report - Sue and John Boccock

Our February speaker was Pamela Zollicoffer. She is a local Amateur Alleyways Historian; by using her photographs and archive material, she was able to offer us an insight into her fascination for alleys and pathways.

It began when she decided to reach Bromley High Street by a "back route" near to Bromley South Station and via a footbridge with several steps. On her way she met a man who wondered what she was doing. She explained that there were many benefits of walking and mentioned some of them: no special equipment needed, it can lower blood pressure, it can dispel cabin fever, which can be brought on by boredom and by spending too much time indoors.

Pamela then continued by explaining the meaning of the word alley. It derives from the Latin "ambulare" meaning to walk and also links with the French word "aller" also meaning to go, to walk. An alleyway can also be regarded as a metaphor for a journey and the entrance to an alleyway is like a portal or a door.

Some alleys are roofed when they provide a pedestrian passage through railway embankments. This is because the alley follows the rights of way which existed before the railways were built. Pamela referred to Wikipedia for more details about alleys and alleyways. They are narrow paths, lanes or passageways, often reserved for pedestrians and which usually run between or behind buildings. They can also be rear access or service roads or paths.

Some alleyways have names: College Slip, Love Lane, Walters Yard and indicate their historical links —the name of someone who lived nearby, a benefactor perhaps.

We were then taken by Pamela on an exploration of some alleyways, some "pathways from the past". Our first was the footpath to the A 21 Kentish Way Road which bypasses the town. The road was built in the 1980's and opened 1985. The pedestrian steps and path is the first acknowledgement to an ancient footpath.

The council had to compulsorily purchase all the properties along the proposed route of the road. All the residents had to be relocated, whether they lived in owner occupied or privately rented accommodation before demolition and road building could begin.

The second alleyway we were informed about was Love Lane which runs parallel to Kentish Way and is near to Palace View which was home to the Bishops of Rochester. Coles Child was Lord of the Manor and had bought up the Palace from the Bishop. He had Love Lane partially rerouted to give him more privacy to the entrance of his drive to the Palace.

The condition was that the footpath was separated by a border of open railings, with shrubs that did not exceed more than four feet in height and the path was to be dedicated to the public.

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Chelsea Physic Garden Visit – Ann Garrett

An enjoyable visit to one of London's oldest botanic gardens was kindly organised by Sue and John Bocock on February 16th.

After a fortifying stop for coffee at the Army Museum, on a very cold day, we arrived at the meticulously laid out Physic Garden. There were an amazing amount of different plant species, but the focus of the garden at this time of the year, was on snowdrops.

The botanical name for the snowdrop is *Galanthus*, first described by Carl Linnaeus in 1753. *Galanthus* is from the Greek 'gala' meaning 'milk' and 'anthos' meaning 'flower', alluding to the colour of the flowers. The specific epithet *ivalis*, means 'of the snow'. Native to parts of Europe and the eastern Mediterranean region, some species contain galantamine, a compound used to treat Alzheimer's disease.

We discovered a huge mass of snowdrops in one corner of the garden and there were snowdrop baskets hanging from some of the trees like snowdrop lanterns!

The garden contained various garden areas such as Monocotyledon and Dicotyledon Order beds, a garden of edible plants, one of history beds and also a garden of useful plants. A statue of Sir Hans Sloane dominated the middle of the whole Physic Garden.

In between examining an exotic mix of herbal plants, we escaped into the warmth of green houses, discovering

poisonous as well as non-poisonous medicinal plants. The visit ended in the cosy Physic Garden cafe for lunch, although some of the group returned to the Army Museum for hot soup.

Many thanks to Sue and John for once again enabling us to enjoy one of the numerous eco delights of London and its surrounding countryside.

February meeting report - *continued*

The third alleyway Pamela took us along was one linking Widmore Road with Sherman Road and Hawes Road passing the School of Science and Art (later a library and now the Clock Apartments) where there is a parish boundary marker of cast iron dated 1865.

This was one place Pamela told us where the medieval ceremony of Beating the Bounds took place. It was led by clergy and parishioners and last took place in 1890. The Roman God of Boundary was called Terminus. He had a stone statue to commemorate him but this has now disappeared.

Lastly, mention was made of St Blaise Avenue alleyway which runs between St Blaise Avenue and the Civic Centre where a notice pinned on a tree reads "Do not feed the rats".

A very interesting and informative talk. We look forward to a Pamela guided walk along the alleyways of Bromley very soon.

The Mall Precinct Stall

Many thanks to all who have signed up to help on March 24th from 2.30 - 4.30pm. We will be having support from Bromley Against Fracking and doing a final push to get the FoE anti fracking cards signed, in the hope that we will be able to organise a meeting with Cllr Huntingdon -Thresher to discuss the issue at some time in the future.

Climate, Energy and Transport

Melting Ice

Sea levels are set to rise by more than 2ft (60 cm) by the end of the century - at least twice as much as previously predicted, warns new research. The higher rate of increase - caused by accelerating melting of polar ice sheets - would devastate coastal areas throughout the world. It would mean ocean levels gaining an additional millimetre a year for each of the coming decades.

The findings published by the National Academy of Sciences could mean that places as far apart as Bangladesh and parts of Washington DC and Shanghai, being engulfed by rising waters. A spokesperson said ' this is a game changer as far as the climate change discussion goes'.

Nuclear Power - Fukushima

Around 900,000 tons of highly radioactive water is being stored in huge tanks on the site. This water is contaminated with tritium - radioactive hydrogen. Since it's impossible to separate tritium from water, it is now planned to dump it all into the sea.

This is likely to contaminate any fish or animals which it encounters and end up in the food chain. The local fishing community are objecting strenuously, saying that this will destroy the still fragile reputation of Fukushima fish products.

There are also more than 22 million one-tonne bags of radioactive waste from the 'clean-up' to be dealt with. These are currently stacked in farmers' fields, beside roads, along beaches, and near schools and houses.

Wood Burning Power

Experts say that burning wood for power releases much more carbon into the air than gas. This is the stark view of Professor John Beddington, one of Britain's chief climate advisers, who has warned that cutting down trees as a replacement for the use of fossil fuels could rebound dangerously.

He has stated that that there is now a real risk that increasing wood burning to reach renewable energy targets could turn out to be misguided. Wood pellets are part of a biomass programme to reduce carbon emissions, but this is now questionable. Solar and wind power should now dominate programmes to boost renewable energy generation.

Transport

New car sales slumped to the ninth month on a trot in January, as the squeeze on consumers and concerns about emissions for diesel engines hit the number of vehicles leaving show rooms.

/continued on next page

Bromley Biodiversity – We are promoting the posters of our local species in decline again this year, alongside our partners within the Bromley Biodiversity Partnership. Last month we featured toads and if you especially live in an area of the borough with breeding ponds, do please keep a watchful eye out still. There are ponds in the areas of Keston Common, Bull Lane Chislehurst, Elmers End, Crystal Palace Park, Bromley Hill and Green Street Green to name but a few.

This month it is the lovely brightly coloured (male) bullfinch.. Please see the poster (*sorry, no room for it in this month's newsletter; please ask Judy if you want a copy*) for more information on this pretty bird, together with contact details to report any sightings.

Bee Count, 2018

This year the Bee Count runs from 17 May – 30th June and there is a sign-up form at <https://act.friendsoftheearth.uk/act/join-great-british-bee-count-2018>.

We will have more information available during the next two months. You may remember that last year Friends of the Earth and Buglife produced a report on helping pollinators locally which you can download here if you so wish. <https://www.friendsoftheearth.uk/bees/helping-pollinators-locally>

Peat in compost bags

Who remembers campaigning way back in the 1990's to raise awareness of the plight of digging up peatbogs for compost? Yep, here we are in the next

century and peat is still being mixed in with other composting materials. It is even being advertised on bags as having '.....only 50% peat content'. Really??

Well, I sent an email on the issue to one shop and in the reply, they apologised for any inconvenience I may have been caused in the matter. And apart from the fact that it will be recorded on their product database to help improve quality, that was it. Helpful and informative?? Huh.

Campaign News - continued

The total number of car sales dropped 6.3 per cent to 163,615 and diesel sales were down by a quarter.

Sales of 'green' vehicles with electric or hybrid motors rose by almost 24% and accounted for 5.5 per cent of the market. There are concerns, however that consumers are keeping their old cars running.

Biggin Hill Airport A recent report from Flightpath Watch about Biggin Hill airport states that the airport defines itself as a World Class Business Aviation airport, and that its vision for growth was supported by 79% out of the 15,000 residents consulted.

Flightpath Watch, though, established that 90% of the local population were in fact opposed to development of the airport and to longer operating hours. Proposals for a new aviation school at the airport, will only add to an increase in expansion.

Miller's Mutterings – Chris Miller

I mentioned a few months ago that we were trying to sort out our waste as we are trying to be “green”. The two new cardboard/plastic bins have been working out ok but completed filled within a couple of days by our tenants. Peter has been trying to source further companies that can help us and surprisingly it is not as easy you would think. Eventually after many telephone calls to various providers, he found someone to help and our new roll on roll off skip was delivered at the end of January.

It is amazing our plastic/cardboard policy in this country, fruit and meat packaging that is black apparently shows off the produce better but is not recyclable as the machines that sort the plastic cannot see it, so it goes into landfill. A well known energy drink bottle is recyclable but not the plastic shrink wrapper around it. We learnt quite a lot from the waste disposal expert during this procedure. We now recycle all our cardboard, paper, plastic, tins, metal, oil, fertiliser sacks and pesticide containers. The last two items to a special farming recycle yard.

Nothing to report on the field side but still waiting for confirmation from Europe regarding what we can grow this coming year. Getting a bit close, as we need to source seeds to plant. As usual hay and straw deliveries continue and, guess what; Peter is still doing the electrical work on the old stables. I think he will be an expert by the time all the buildings have been rewired.

It is lovely to hear the birds starting to sing again including the skylarks and the other Sunday afternoon we noticed a large flock of fieldfares circling around our tall lime trees. About 60 perched in the trees and the rest flew around, amazing sight. Also, I have seen a kite over the farmhouse, unmistakable with the forked tail.

Steve's great grandfather is having a difficult time we notice from his letters. Trying to run two farms, here and at Fairtrough plus the engineering side with labour being short, must have been very difficult. The weather after Christmas had been wet and then turned to snow; here is an extract from one of his letter to Stanley, his eldest who is in Malta with the Army from 29th February 1916.

“Things are most trying here just now as the weather is fearful, we have had snow off and on continuously since last Weds afternoon. It is quite 3 feet deep in places in Goddington Lane. The papers say it is the heaviest snowfall since 1888.

“I was rather fortunate because I had nearly 500 bags of stuff out before the snow came, which we sent to market. Trade was good, and I sold right out except a few savoy greens. Greens which sold on the previous Sat at 1/6 to 6d, made as much as 4/-, also cabbage, so that was a bit of luck.

(Explanation of 1/6, 6d, 4/- at the end of this article on page 11)

Plastics campaign – Plastic-free Fridays +++ Plastic waste

Rosie Cotgreave, FoE Activism Coordinator, Plastics campaign, writes:

Today we're launching **#PlasticFreeFriday** to encourage people to get single-use plastic out of their lives. Take the pledge today and share with your friends and family. (Go to <https://friendsoftheearth.uk/> and search for "plastic free Friday")

As you know, plastic is choking our marine life, making a mess of our favourite parks and beaches, and has even been found in drinking water.

But if we encourage enough people to make small changes to their lives then we can cut down the amount plastic pollution in our environment - and send a message to companies and governments that they need to act too.

So please take the pledge yourself, encourage others to join too, and share your successes and challenges on social media using the hashtag #PlasticFreeFriday.

I also just want to say a massive thank you to all those who attended the teleconferences recently and those who have sent me their thoughts. I'm pulling it all together now and will soon have more to share with you about the direction of the campaign.

If you want to stay up to date with the Plastics campaign then please let us know who your campaign contact will be by filling in this form (<http://bit.ly/2EAM5xr>)

Plastic Waste: Judy Palmer writes:

News items on this issue to catch my eye in the past few weeks included one from India where volunteers had removed 12 million kilograms (which is nearly 12,000 tons!) of rubbish from a stretch of a Mumbai beach. The volunteers have been clearing it daily and it was waist-deep in plastic.

City authorities need to improve their waste collections and the inhabitants of a near-by slum will need to stop using a water creek as a rubbish dump before the rest of the beach becomes clean though. So volunteers are visiting the slum area and advising the residents on where the nearest recycler is – no council pick-ups there.

Another item was that our MPs are going to make a commitment to reduce the use of single-use plastic items at Westminster. So no more plastic straws or stirrers in their drinks for them and no more plastic disposable coffee cups (and lids), plastic cutlery or disposable water bottles either. Leading by example is a good lesson.

And talking of lessons.... The Church of England is urging worshippers to give up single-use plastics for Lent and sent out a list of suggestions to all its dioceses. And apparently some senior Tory MPs have already vowed to cut down on their plastic use for Lent.

A third item was the news that the UK is considering adopting the Norwegian recycling scheme for plastic bottles. In Norway the consumer buys a bottle and */continued on next page*

Plastics campaign – Single-use plastics waste - Judy Palmer

One of the most talked about topics of the moment is single-use plastic waste and how to tackle the problem. How can we as individuals help? Well, consumer-led campaigns can be really effective and even the simple act of refusing a plastic bag can have a knock-on effect.

Plastic is embedded in our lives now, though some of us oldies can remember times when glass was the predominant container for our daily pinta and we were opening tins more than plastic packets. Cellophane and clingfilm were not the prime wrapping choices, but paper in some form.

We can't go backwards though, but we do need to think more sustainably. We need to put pressure on councils, the Government and the plastic and chemical companies; enough is enough – the planet is suffering and we will suffer too.

I have been thinking of ways in which we can each take a small step to reduce our plastic waste. After all, we are environmental campaigners, so we should be able to!

Small steps can lead to big footprints, can't they? So here are three small changes to think on this month to help reduce the march of plastic into our lives.

1. Refuse single-use plastic bags. Take your own bags with you.
2. Find the paper bags in stores instead of the small plastic ones they provide for loose produce; mushroom bags are generally provided, or paper ones for a

single cake or bun. If you can't find any, ask a member of staff!

3. Take a container with you if you need to visit the deli counter – single-use plastic comes in the shape of tubs for loose olives and a plastic bag for a wedge of cheese.

And keeping an eye on our plastic waste boxes for recycling – can we reduce anything here? There's often more plastic than glass or tin in it! So how can a small step eliminate one or more of these plastic products without spending more money or losing out on buying the product? More next month!

Plastic waste - continued

when it is finished with, it is deposited in a machine which reads the barcode and produces a coupon for the deposit. Only two types of plastic bottle are accepted, along with approved labels and glue – no contamination from rogue plastics. There are similar schemes in other Nordic countries, Germany and parts of the US and Canada. It will be interesting to see which way the UK goes.

Recycling is still the more expensive option of course, oil and gas, the main ingredients needed to manufacture plastic, are cheaper in cost. But, as environmental groups have long pointed out – a deposit return scheme boots the industry to re-think the whole cycle of production: product design, manufacturing, transport and back to disposal. Come on, it needs to be done.

Plastics campaign - Single use plastic water bottles – Annette Rose

It is great to see Friends of the Earth putting together resources on reducing plastic waste. There is a great interest from the public on this subject as people have realised the great damage that is being done to our oceans after seeing Blue Planet 2 with David Attenborough.

On the FoE website there is a page entitled '9 really good alternatives to plastic. 'Last month I wrote a little on plastic in teabags which is on that list. This month I'm thinking about plastic single use water bottles.

More than 480 billion plastic single use drinking bottles were sold in 2016 across the world, up from about 300 billion a decade ago. If placed end to end, they would extend more than halfway to the sun. By 2021 this will increase to 583.3bn, according to the most up-to-date estimates from Euromonitor International's global packaging trends report.

Fewer than half of the bottles bought in 2016 were collected for recycling and just 7% of those collected were turned into new bottles. Instead most plastic bottles produced end up in landfill or in the ocean.

So what can we do? The first thing is to make sure you carry a reusable water bottle with you so you don't need to buy a single use bottle. A BPA free plastic bottle is recommended or you can buy a glass or stainless steel one.

Refilling our bottles should be an easy option. One initiative in the UK is called 'Refill'. This is a national practical tap water campaign that aims to make

filling your reusable water bottle very convenient. The system is being rolled out across the UK but unfortunately hasn't reached Bromley yet.

Participating businesses put a sticker in their windows alerting people that they are welcome to come in and have their bottles refilled at no charge. There is a Refill app to have on your Smartphone to make it easy to locate your nearest water point. The system obviously requires people to remember to take their water bottles out with them.

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Kahn supports boroughs in identifying suitable locations for water fountains and bottle-refill stations during the planning process in new or redeveloped public spaces, such as town centres, shopping malls, parks and squares.

"Free drinking-water fountains that can refill water bottles, as well as be drunk from, should be provided in appropriate locations in new or redeveloped public realm," the new Blueprint for London report notes. Such locations include busy pedestrian areas, parks and squares.

If you have had to buy a one use drinks bottle while out there should be options to recycle it. Various recycling schemes are being looked at at present by the government, which would put a deposit on bottles bought and they could then be returned to reclaim the deposit. This system seems to be working well in Norway. According to BBC News, Norway's bottle collection rate stands at an impressive 97%, while 600 million plastic bottles were recycled in 2016.
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**Single-use plastic water bottles -
*continued***

We are lucky enough to have clean safe water from our taps in this country and much of the water being bought in plastic bottles in supermarkets to drink at home is unnecessary. Unfortunately a lot of countries don't have this and populations of countries such as Cambodia rely on buying clean water in plastic bottles.

There is no rubbish collection so bottles are left in piles on the roadside or on the beach where they are washed out to sea. The plastics problem is a global one so action needs to be taken at the individual and society level but also we need an awareness of international problems.

If you haven't already done so, please sign the Friends of the Earth petition on Plastics demanding that the government takes action now. There are also other campaigns asking the big soft drink companies to improve their products and the recycling of their bottles.

**Visit to Civic Amenity site –
Thursday 22nd March**

Sue and John have arranged a trip to the Civic Amenity Site (aka the tip / the dump) in Waldo Road for Thursday 22nd March at 11am.

Please meet at the Civic Amenity site in Waldo Road (not the Homesdale Road end.) Parking is possible in Tesco's nearby. Please let John or Sue know if you are coming.

Miller's Mutterings - *continued*

I had hardly anything to sell on the Saturday as it was impossible to find for the snow but I should not have done so well on the Sat with it as I did on the Friday. We have nothing up tonight except greens 2ft long, & snips etc so expect a happy time in the morning."

Not many weather sayings for February other than Candlemas Day, which I wrote about in last year's notes but thought the following was quite interesting.

During a fierce blizzard in 1891 in Devon, corn was reported to have germinated and grown to a height of 3ins beneath the snow – the ground was warm when the snow fell and the snow would have had an insulating effect against the cold air temperature above.

NB – for those who don't remember duodecimal currency: 1/6 = one shilling and sixpence (7½p), 6d = sixpence (2½p) and 4/- = four shillings (20p).

Re-User column [1] – Wanted

Original squat 1lb honey jars for using with next year's honey crop. With or without lids. I will donate 10p to Bromley FoE for each example.

To see the type of jar required ask Peter at the FoE meeting, or view at: www.bromleyfoe.co.uk/honeyjar.htm

Peter Gandolfi 01689 831826

My Patch - Sundridge Park Village – Ann Garrett

Caring about and helping look after one's local neighbourhood is something that most people can relate to.

This means preserving heritage buildings and areas, keeping local businesses, shops and facilities and building a sense of community, in what is a rapidly corporate-dominated world.

It can also involve campaigning to retain green-belt land and oppose inappropriate developments such as high-rise structures in mainly low-rise suburban areas. Part of that campaigning involves bringing local people together such as the community of Ethelbert Close and Road in Bromley Town Centre who are highly concerned about new development proposals.

Although Sundridge Park Village (adjacent to Bromley Town Centre) has no present threats, it has Plaistow Lane running through it which is like another by-pass and is heavily polluted, destroying any sense of unity.

Despite this, small shops and businesses are thriving. They include The Lavender House café, Sundridge Coffee, two Indian restaurants, a post office store (competing with a new Tesco on the Plaistow Green roundabout), a launderette, two dry-cleaners, a learner drivers business, two antique shops, an undertakers, two up-market furnishers, three hairdressers, a flower shop, a children's clothes shop, an ironmongers, two estate agents (one of which was previously a printers - a sad loss), and a local Tai take-away.

Recently Larder, a butcher's shop and deli, opened selling locally sourced products. The Prince Frederick pub and Sundridge Park Station aren't far away.

My road Plaistow Grove received publicity with the death of David Bowie who lived at number four while attending Burnt Ash Primary and Ravenswood Secondary schools and where he learnt to play the saxophone and guitar.

The following poem 'Neighbourhood Watchers' about some of the people who live there, reflects the pros and cons of a small road, where people are very aware of each other's comings and goings, and where anonymity isn't always possible !

The ideas came over a period of time on my weekly stint as a street friend, clearing rubbish from the road and alleyways.

Suggestions of eco friendly businesses wanted!

Annette Rose writes: I am beginning to compose a list of useful names of businesses that our group may find of interest.

If you can think of a business that we could add to our list, please email us at bromleyfoe@gmail.com or let us know at the monthly meeting please.

Neighbourhood Watchers – Ann Garrett

*Everybody is watching somebody else
Nobody is generally unwatched*

*All lies smugly still at night in Plaistow Grove
Curtains and blinds
Closed in the cottages
Miss Button's bedroom window
Open just a little*

*Ossie the dog barks stiffly
As strangers saunter or stagger
Down the alley way
Leaving litter, beer bottles and Cola cans
Without thought*

*Early in the morning
Justin the builder revs his van
And departs in full throttle
Margaret peeps out from behind her curtains
Seeing all*

*Commuters make their way to the station
Grabbing their Metros or City A.Ms
Where Mick delivers tickets precisely
Listening and observing all*

*At number 4 the 'ghost-like' tones of
Davy Jones's boyhood voice still hovers
A foretaste of 'Major Tom'
Unnerving cosy respectability around*

*At number 8 they scrape away the wallpaper
Discovering more Sex Pistol's graffiti
The polystyrene ceiling tiles have long gone, but
Johnny Rotten's shadow still runs naked down the Grove*

Ann Garrett Ashley [Dec 21st 2011]

Notes: David Bowie lived at No 4 and the Sex Pistols had one of their last rave parties at No 8 where Johnny Rotten whipped off the ceiling tiles and ran naked down the road. Sundridge Park station is at the end of Plaistow Grove

London Co-ordinators' Meeting Report – Sheila Brown

The new London Regional Campaigner at FoE, Catriona Currie (known as Cat) called this meeting as FoE have decided they need to give more support to local groups. Co-ordinators can feel isolated and might value a forum where they could share with and learn from one another.

Fifteen people attended from twelve local groups; some, like us, have joint co-ordinators and appreciated being able to share the responsibility with another person.

We introduced ourselves and said what our group was working on; most seemed to be involved in the Clean Air campaign. (Here I picked up a good idea from Havering FoE: they have put together a leaflet on clean air and have been distributing this outside schools.) Also mentioned were divestment, waste treatment, plastics, wildlife issues / protecting habitat, bees, climate and working with other groups locally.

London Plan

There was a presentation on The London Plan 2018, a vast tome. The Plan has some strong environmental policies, notably on London becoming zero carbon by 2050, banning fracking, protecting open spaces and the Green Belt and working towards a 'healthy city' by encouraging planning which improves Londoners' health, promoting healthy lifestyles, [making places greener, ensuring homes are well insulated, encouraging growing food by protecting allotments].

The Plan envisages 21% population growth by 2041.

FoE has identified many areas where they feel the Plan does not go far enough. For example, we should target zero carbon earlier than 2050. It also contained very little on renewable energy.

Local Elections

There was discussion of what local groups could do ahead of in the Local Elections in May. Suggestions included writing to all candidates asking their views on various things, organising local hustings, writing to local papers, highlighting air pollution. FoE could support by creating a list of questions to ask candidates.

Support for Local Groups

FoE values its local groups; we were asked what kind of support we'd like, whether further meetings should be held and how frequently. The consensus was six-monthly. Cat would like to visit local groups, and I've invited her to our March meeting. It was suggested that groups could work together on London-wide issues e.g. Clean Air and cleaning up plastic waste.

Someone asked about media training. Many groups reported similar experience to us in putting much work into preparing something for local newspapers which then never saw the light of day. It was agreed that training will be provided, also on social media.

One delegate thought maybe the importance of Climate Change was in danger of being forgotten; a new campaign on this will be launched within the next six months.

Participation in FoE Brexit campaign planning phone call

John Street writes: There were two FoE people taking part – Rosie and Kierra. Kierra will be the Brexit lead for FoE. Apart from Rosie and Kierra, there were only two of us on the call. Apparently, a previous call was better attended.

Kierra started by giving an update in the political situation.

FoE had campaigned to stay in Europe as the EU's environmental protection measures were better than the UK's. It was important to hold politicians to account regarding environmental protection. Many environmental protection measures had their basis in EU law.

EU environmental protection measures should be brought into UK law in an effective way. FoE are working with friendly MPs helping to table amendments to the EU Withdrawal Bill and to make the case why the Bill needs changes and to ensure that laws are safeguarded by primary legislation. We need all EU laws to be brought across and not just bits and pieces the current government prefers.

Gove has spoken about animal sentience and May has said that food standards will not be watered down.

What else should we be thinking about ?? e.g. working with FoE Europe, splashes in the media, or particular battles. For now, we want to influence politicians, as they are the ones who make the legislation.

Timeline for this

We are roughly at the mid-point of research into how we meet them

(MPs). We hope to sign this off by early March. Should look at what we can do in local areas in the summer and autumn. There's no end point yet – this campaign will continue at least until next year.

Rosie then asked what we thought our main issues were when talking to our MPs.

I didn't feel particularly equipped to answer this question, as I don't even know whether Bromley FoE has ongoing conversations with our MPs and I certainly wouldn't claim to speak for Bromley FoE.

Rosie then asked for suggestions as to the best way for local groups / individuals to influence the process without using MPs.

Suggestions included strengthening other environmental groups so that it wasn't just one group lobbying MPs on this, and getting other members of the public involved. Suggestions for resources needed by local groups included visits by Kierra (or other FoE staff member) to explain the campaign.

How to get the most out of FoE campaigning

Apparently MPs loved the loads of bee postcards they received – I think it was the bees rather than the postcards themselves. My personal view is pre-formatted postcards only work if there are vast numbers of them.

Suggestions made in the previous call included: more in-depth briefings for use when talking to MPs; get others to lobby MPs; identify clear asks for MPs; work with MEPs.

London to become a National Park City in 2019

Paul de Zylva, Chair of Trustees, National Park City Foundation (NPCF) writes: I have some very good news for you. London is on course to be declared the world's first National Park City in 2019.

This amazing achievement is down to the grassroots support and activity to get official backing for the idea from over 1,000 local and regional politicians, including on the London Assembly and the Mayor of London. 346 of 654 ward teams from across all of London's boroughs have declared their support so far. We hope they all will.

What now?

We're in a new phase moving from making the case for London to be a National Park City to making this a reality and showing what it means in practice, working with the Mayor of London, local communities and borough councils, and the growing range of businesses, professionals and agencies that want to play their part.

What can you do now?

The simplest thing is to let others know that London is set to be declared the world's first National Park City. Telling people is bound to raise queries and you can make use of the Q&A on our revamped website.

Of course, being a National Park City will not see London turn into or compete with the Peak District, New Forest, South Downs or other National Parks. It draws on the principles of National Parks but in a city setting, and

allows everyone to explore how to improve life across London with more people doing the kind of things that make life especially worthwhile - more time spent in nature outdoors, for instance, a greater sense of place and knowing how we can all make London resilient.

You can also help shape the coming year as we build to the declaration of London National Park City in the first half of 2019. There's no need to wait for the declaration to be active. Getting planting and outdoors more, letting us know if your event could be badged as part of London National Park City, writing for our website and advising on how to bring London National Park City alive in other ways all count - let us know what you want to do.

This is because to make the London National Park City a success - and make our city greener, healthier, wilder and more enjoyable - there needs to be good leadership at all levels, from balconies and streets to gardens and schools.

In May we will confirm precisely when London will become a National Park City and we'll work out a timetable for its launch. There will be a new website and we'll announce more of our plans and share more ways for you and everyone else to be involved as an individual, group or organisation.

Thank you so much for all you have done so far - it's no mean feat.

The London Plan – Air Quality Management – Paul Enock

The London Sustainability Exchange held a roundtable discussion on 15th February, focussing the draft new plan and what might be missing from its proposals for improving air quality. The meeting was hosted by Siemens at their 'Crystal' building in London's Docklands.

In his introductory talk, Mark Jenkinson of Siemens boasted that the Crystal site was probably one of the 'greenest' buildings in the world. The key speaker and main person of reference for the evening was Stephen Inch from the GLA's Air Quality Team and principal author of this part of the plan. Unsurprisingly, he was keen to emphasise its merits.

Perhaps the greatest merit of the air quality plan lies in its ambition, which is to meet European standards for air quality as quickly as possible, to meet the tougher WHO standards by 2030, and by 2050 to make London the world's leading major city for the quality of its air. By this time, London will have introduced a zero-carbon policy for transportation and construction, in keeping with its status as a National Park City.

Stephen Inch was keen to emphasise how the 500-page draft plan in fact complements and arises out of the other two major documents that the Mayor has been working on: the Transport Strategy and the Environment Strategy.

To take transportation, (transport now accounts for 26 per cent of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions, and transport emissions actually rose by

2% between 2015 and 2016), the London Plan aims by 2041 to ensure that 80% of all journeys use sustainable methods of transport (public transport / cycling / walking) as compared to the present level of 67%.

Much of the discussion focussed on fine-grain guidance for councils and the lack of resources for enforcement. In responding to a question about individual councils' resources to conduct their own air-quality monitoring,

Mr Inch observed that "all but two of London's boroughs have declared their entire borough to be an Air-Quality Management Area," (AQMA), and that the air-quality action plan will have material weight in planning decisions.

Furthermore, air-quality planning is to be incorporated at the initial stages of planning a major development and not (as at present) considered as an add-on when the plans are already advanced (often through introducing mitigation or even off-setting).

Technological tools for air-quality modelling are already impressive. Concerns were expressed that those areas not presently AQMAs or the more heavily polluted AQFAs (Air-Quality Focus Areas), could become targets for more relaxed planning proposals.

The example was given of building a school on a polluted TfL red route that falls within an area that is otherwise within current air-quality standards. Mr Inch's reply was sanguine, if a touch
/continued on next page

Bromley Swift Survey – How many swifts are nesting near you?

Peter Smart, from RSPB Bromley, writes:

Swifts have been nesting in our buildings for centuries and have been a common sight performing their aerial acrobatics over our borough's towns in the summer. They spend the rest of their year in Africa.

Unfortunately, their numbers are in severe decline. Between 1995 and 2015 the UK lost more than half its swifts. Numbers appear to have fallen even more in Bromley over the same period.

The RSPB believes that loss of nest sites is at least partly responsible. Due to our tendency to seal up buildings during renovation or knock them down, swifts are returning to discover their nest site has gone or access is blocked.

We are running a **Bromley Swift Survey** between May and July this year to discover where they are still nesting. We need to find this out quickly so that action to provide nesting spaces can be targeted in the right areas.

No knowledge of swifts or previous experience of doing surveys is needed. It will be really simple and easy, and help will be available if needed, for example on how to identify a swift.

We will ask participants to go for a short walk along the streets near to where they live or another location of their choice. A balmy summer's evening would be best as the swifts

will be most active then. The walk should be repeated at least once a month between May and July – so a total of three short walks. The participant would make a note of any swifts they see flying at rooftop level as this means that the birds will be nesting nearby.

To take part in the survey or find out more information you can either:

- Email our Group's Recorder on bromleyrspbrecords@gmail.com
- Phone us on 07392 790 719 or visit rspb.org.uk/groups/bromley

The London Plan – *continued*
too bureaucratic: If we estimate a building time of 7 years and a populating time of 3 years, by the time the school is opened, the quality of the air in the area will have been improved sufficiently. Perfect!

Any surprises? City planners are emphasising not just technical and spatial methods for reducing air pollution, but are focussing on changing our behaviour. Planners know that they have to make people drive their cars less.

Therefore, the London Plan prefers zero provision for residential parking on any site with a high planned transport access level: to quote from page 413 of the draft plan: "Car-free development should be the starting point for all development proposals in places that are (or are planned to be) well-connected by public transport, with developments elsewhere designed to provide the minimum necessary parking".

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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, 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.

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 £8 annual subscription. 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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