



friends of  
the earth  
Bromley



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May 2014  
No. 317

# ewsletter

## May Meeting

*Friends Meeting House, Ravensbourne Road, Bromley*

### Enough Food for Everyone

**Vicki Hird**

FoE's Senior Campaigner for the Land, Food and Water Programme

*We are in danger of exhausting those key resources we think of as renewable – especially food and fresh water. We need to create resilient systems that provide the diverse foods we need whilst sustaining the soil and other systems for the future.*

**Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> May - 7.30pm**

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Copy for the next Newsletter must be with the Editor by

\*\*\* **SUNDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> MAY** \*\*\*

Contact details inside front cover.

***Apologies to those whose contributions have been omitted –  
there just wasn't room for everything this time***

**Diary dates:**

**May 3<sup>rd</sup> (Sat)**  
**May 3<sup>rd</sup> (Sat)**

**Bill's Open Garden and Plant Sale** (*see below*)  
**Progressive Bromley Film Co-op: 'A Very British Coup'**  
Friends Meeting House, Bromley. 6pm for shared food and social, film at 7pm

**May 6<sup>th</sup> (Tues)**  
**May 11<sup>th</sup> (Sun)**

**Bromley FoE's May meeting:** Vicki Hird (*see front cover*)  
**St Christopher's Bluebell walk at Cudham** (*see last month's newsletter for details*)

**May 22<sup>nd</sup> (Thurs)**

**LOCAL AND EUROPEAN ELECTIONS**

**Jun 3<sup>rd</sup> (Tues)**

**Bromley FoE's June meeting**

**Jun 13-15**

**BASECAMP, Hope Valley, Castleton, Derbyshire** (*see last month's newsletter*)

**Jun 29<sup>th</sup> (Sun)**

**Keston Countryside Day**, with FoE stall

**Bill's Open Garden and Plant Sale - Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> May**

Arrangements are now all in place for a lovely day when Bill opens his garden on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> May. Do come along if you can and support this event.

Time- 3pm- 5pm; Place- 22 Greencourt Road, Petts Wood, BR5 1QW

Entry fee- £3 includes tea and cake. Thank you in advance to all the people who are helping. If you need any more information, please call Bill on 01689 820469.

**Keston Countryside Day – Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> June**

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

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

**Disclaimer:** *Please note that any opinions expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of Bromley Friends of the Earth or of Friends of the Earth*

**Next Newsletter - copy details:**

Any news, articles, poems, questions, views etc for the next Newsletter must be with the editor by \*\*\* **SUNDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> MAY** \*\*\*:

**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

## April meeting report - Sue & John Bocoek

It was a pleasure to welcome our speaker for April, Alister Hayes, the Policy and Planning Manager of the London Wildlife Trust . Alister had previously worked in Bromley's Countryside Management Department gaining more than twenty years of valuable experience in wildlife and habitat conservation.

He introduced his talk on London's Living Landscape describing the London area and illustrating with maps of its geology, and population growth and the resultant effects of increasing urbanisation. Much of the London Basin had, in previous centuries, been boggy and wet, the Waterloo area being a marsh.

The London Wildlife Trust, founded in 1981 is now over 30 years old. It is one of forty seven Wildlife Trusts. The Kent Wildlife Trust being one of the largest in the country,

Alister explained how LWT is involved with several water based projects. One of which, the Lost Effra Project named after the historic tributary of the Thames and is now channelled underground into the sewer system. This Effra project aims to make the areas surrounding Herne Hill more resistant to flooding and to improve the natural environment for wildlife.

The project area covers Herne Hill, Loughborough Junction and Dulwich, all within the boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark. This area suffers from a range of climatic issues: the flash floods of 2004 when flood water and sewage entered homes and

businesses five thousand, residential, nine hundred and twenty non-residential and eleven schools were all at risk of flooding.

During the mid to late eighteenth century access to landscape was became increasingly important, much common land was lost due to urbanisation, Penge Common becoming Crystal Palace. A response to this was the formation of the Royal Parks of which Richmond is a prime example. This was followed much later by the National Parks Act of 1947. This then led to the formation of Special Protection Areas which included the Walthamstow Wetlands, the largest purpose built body of water in London and the London Wetlands .

In addition Special Areas of Conservation, such as Richmond Park, noted for its Stag Beetles were created, and also Sites of Special Scientific Interest, (SSSIs). Six of these are in the Borough of Bromley and include High Elms, Ruxley Gravel Pits, Saltbox Hill, Hayes and Keston Common, and Crofton Heath.

There are 140 reserves in London. These include Scadbury and Hayes and Keston Commons. The local authority has to own the land before it can be designated a Local Nature Reserve.

There are also Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCS) of which there are 1557 in London, an example being Betts Park near Crystal Palace and Penge.

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## April report, *continued* ++++ Bee World – One Year On

The total number of different species recorded in the London area now adds up to a staggering 13,100 species.

Alister then mentioned three approaches to landscape:

- Green Arc – bringing the outdoors closer to everyone
- Green belt- Bromley has the largest area of all London boroughs.
- Green Chain, now in existence for 40 years links 100 green spaces.

There is also the All London Green Grid, offering access to open space, a productive landscape, managing flood risk and making connections between people and nature and people and their work. He then posed a rhetorical question, “How big a landscape does each of these four species need, a hedgehog, a jay an eel and a bee? (*Answers in the next newsletter!*)

A living landscape where people are connected to wildlife. Alister drew our attention to the three R’s, restore, recreate and reconnect.

- Restore habitats for wildlife.
- Recreate habitats neglected or damaged and linking up to wider landscape.
- Reconnect people to wildlife.

Alister ended his presentation by showing us a number of slides demonstrating the diversity of landscapes in the UK testing our knowledge of our environment ranging from The New Forest, the South Downs, the Norfolk Broads and the Lake District

### One Year On.... Bee World at Tugmutton is one year old!

*Judy Palmer and Annette Rose write:*  
We would like to thank everyone who came along on April 12<sup>th</sup> to help celebrate our Bee World being one year old.

We inspected the growth shooting up this month and identified some *Wild Carrot, Meadow Buttercup, Bulbous Buttercup* and *Doves-foot Cranesbill Geranium molle* appearing to tempt the bees and butterflies.

We were joined by the Tugmutton Friends group, plus Sue Holland the Council’s Biodiversity Officer, and spent a pleasurable hour or so chatting about the plans under way to enhance the meadows as a local area of biodiversity.

The Council plan to sow more wildflower seeds next to our plot, the new wattle and daub fencing on the stream side is allowing more sunlight in to other parts of the area and the new bridge construction over the stream should be getting under way soon.

The Friends have created a natural ‘bug hotel’ at one end of the meadows which is also evolving nicely. They hope to raise some funds this year to have a biodiversity information board to add another dimension.

The sun came and went while we were there, the birds were singing their hearts out, and two or three butterflies flew by – aren’t we lucky to have areas such as this nearby.

### **Fracking Campaign Stall**

Really grateful to all those people who turned up to help on March 22nd on a very cold day. We gave out a lot of leaflets, but people generally weren't stopping to sign the cards as the bitter wind was even blowing through The Mall. A few stopped to ask questions and wanted more information, so the new leaflets identifying where fracking is taking place in the UK were very useful.

It is good to know that Roisin Robertson of Greenpeace has set up a Bromley Against Fracking group.

### **UN Green Energy Directives**

'Mitigation of Climate Change', by the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a panel of 200 scientists, have made it clear in a report that by far the most realistic option for the future is to triple even quadruple the use of renewable energy green power plants.

Only through such decisive action will carbon dioxide be kept below the critical level of 480 parts per million before the middle of the century. The report is asking nations to commit to 1-2% of GDP in order to replace power plants that burn fossil fuels.

This is a challenge to the UK government who are planning to block the construction of on-shore wind farms. The latter are more controversial than off-shore plants, but isn't climate change now far too serious to oppose on-shore plants planning applications?

### **Solar Panels for Schools**

On a more positive note Greg Barker the energy minister has recommended that schools could save up to £1,500 a year by going green. During lessons the panels would provide lighting and power for equipment, and during holiday breaks they would feed energy into the national grid. A typical school could spend £12,000 on a modest system that would pay for itself in eight years and cut carbon emissions by 4.5 tonnes a year.

### **Human Suffering as Seas Rise**

The repercussions on individuals in places such as Bangladesh where people suffer from severe weather are brought home and make an impact by personal stories. When a powerful storm destroyed the riverside home of Jahanara Khatun in 2009, she lost more than her modest house. In the aftermath her husband died and she became so destitute that she sold her son and daughter into bonded servitude. She now lives in a bamboo hut and the vegetables she grows are invariably poisoned by salt water.

These low-lying areas as we know are living on borrowed time, and poorer people are often the most vulnerable.

### **Bio Fuels Talk**

This was given by Duncan Law from Transition Brixton in the second part of the April meeting.

Duncan explained how bio fuels were originally touted as being the answer to energy shortages and climate change problems, bringing

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## **Killer bags a menace to our environment – from Keep Britain Tidy**

A shocking 10.6 billion single-use bags will be handed out at shops in England before the bag charge comes into force on 1 October 2015.

The average person in England uses 133 bags per year and the Break The Bag Habit coalition, of which Keep Britain Tidy is part, is launching a new website to encourage supporters to pledge to stop using single-use bags and to help 'break the bag habit'.

The coalition includes Campaign for the Protection of Rural England, Surfers Against Sewage and the Marine Conservation Society. As part of the coalition, Keep Britain Tidy has been campaigning for a charge on all single-use bags to reduce the number of bags in circulation and the harm caused to the environment.

An incredible 19 million carrier bags are given out every day in England but in Wales, where there has been a bag charge since 2011, bag usage has decreased by between 70-90%. England is the only home nation to not currently have a bag charge.

The new Break The Bag Habit pledge website is supported by the internationally acclaimed photographer Martin Brent with a bespoke series of stunning, yet shocking images entitled "Killer Bags". The images feature actual single-use plastic bags Martin was confronted with whilst diving.

The Break The Bag Habit coalition is also urging supermarkets to adopt the charge as soon as possible.

Supporters making the pledge to stop accepting single-use bags will learn how many bags they have personally offset and their pledge will be added to a grand total. This will highlight the number of bags that have been prevented from entering the environment or waste streams nationally before the bag charge comes into effect on 1 October 2015.

Supporters making the Break The Bag Habit pledge are also invited to share these striking images, and other impactful countryside and coastal scenes spoilt with single-use bags to help generate more pledges. There's an option to share the images on the Facebook walls and Twitter accounts of the UK's supermarkets and shops, calling on these businesses to adopt the bag charge early, reducing the amount of bags entering the environment.

### **Andy Cummins, spokesperson for the Break the Bag Habit campaign:**

"There will be a disgusting amount of single-use bags given out before the bag charge is introduced in England - 10.6 billion of them! Break The Bag Habit are calling on the public to act now and take the pledge to stop using single-use bags without delay at [www.BreakTheBagHabit.org.uk](http://www.BreakTheBagHabit.org.uk).

We also call on retailers to listen to their customers and voluntarily introduce the charge in October across their stores. With seven billion bags being used every year, there's certainly no reason to delay the charge for 18 months."

## MEPs clamp down on wasteful use of plastic carrier bags

*According to a Euro Parl press release*  
- EU countries would have to reduce the use of the most common and most polluting plastic bags by at least 80% by 2019, under draft rules backed by Parliament on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> April. MEPs recommend using taxes and levies, marketing restrictions or bans. Plastic carrier bag litter is a major environmental problem, known to pollute water bodies and aquatic ecosystems in particular.

"MEPs have today voted to significantly strengthen draft EU rules aimed at reducing plastic bag use and waste, notably to include obligatory European reduction targets and a requirement that plastic bags come at a cost. As front-running countries have demonstrated, dramatically reducing the consumption of these disposable bags is easily achievable with coherent policy. Swiftly phasing out these bags is a readily implementable solution to the pervasive problem of plastic waste in the environment," said lead MEP Margrete Auken (Greens/EFA, DK), whose report was approved by 539 votes to 51, with 72 abstentions.

### **Reduction targets: 50% by 2017, 80% by 2019**

MEPs say that lightweight plastic bags thinner than 50 microns – the vast majority of plastic carrier bags used in the EU – are less reusable than thicker models and become waste more quickly. They are also more prone to littering the environment

Member states would have to at least halve their consumption by 2017 and reduce it by 80% two years later - compared to 2010 figures. They

should use measures such as taxes, levies, marketing restrictions or bans to stop shops from giving out plastic bags for free, except for very light ones, used to wrap loose foods such as raw meat, fish and dairy products.

Plastic bags used to wrap foods such as fruit, vegetables and confectionery should be replaced by 2019 by carrier bags made of recycled paper or biodegradable and compostable bags. Requirements for compostable and biodegradable packaging should be amended, MEPs say.

### **Background**

In 2010 every EU citizen used an estimated 198 plastic carrier bags, some 90% of which were lightweight; these are re-used less frequently than thicker bags and are more prone to littering. In a business-as-usual scenario, consumption of plastic bags is expected to increase further. Estimates also suggest that over eight billion plastic carrier bags became litter in the EU in 2010.

### **Bio-Fuels Talk, continued**

development to poor countries where bio crops such as wheat, maize, soy, sugar and palm oil could be produced on cheap land.

Evidence is being mounted, however, to expose bio fuels as being disastrous for both people in developing countries and the environment, as land-grabbing and over-production is taking place on a large scale. This is leading to severe poverty and desecration of the land and also deforestation.

## Sevenoaks FoE Meeting: Geology of Kent with reference to Fracking

**Sheila Brown writes:** Six members of Bromley Friends of the Earth joined Sevenoaks FoE at their March meeting to hear an interesting talk by geologist Peter Golding on the geology of Kent with regard to fracking.

He started by saying he was neutral about fracking but that there was a need to de-carbonise our energy production. As a geologist he saw fracking as an exciting possibility to open up new boreholes and get new information as so much is still not known about the sub-surface. He did admit that some of the environmental aspects are quite bad and that the gas obtained is methane.

Fracking means fracturing rock, the rock being shale. shale is basically hardened mud – it can be very hard but does vary. Shale is source rock with organic matter in it. Oil and gas move to reservoir rock (sand) and a cap rock is needed on top to seal it in: that's what you have in oil and gas fields.

With shale gas and oil, nothing moves. Shale is impervious, so it is trapped at depth and does not move up; therefore it needs to be extracted from a much lower depth. A problem is possible leakage from the borehole. In the USA the boreholes are not as deep as they would have to be here.

Also in this country there are a lot more regulations and the big oil companies appear not to want to get involved in fracking as they would not make money out of it. (There was speculation that they might let the small companies start things off and then move in.)

How was the methane actually formed?  
*Editor's Note – This fairly long paragraph has been omitted so that the report fits into two pages. It's available from Sheila or the editor if you want to read it.*

Fracking first happened in the late 1940s, exploding boreholes to get more oil. The new sort of directional drilling was more recent – at Wych Farm in Dorset horizontal drilling was used but he was not sure whether this involved fracking.

The main potential areas in the UK are in Northern England which is carboniferous and the Weald which is Jurassic. There are also areas in South Wales and near Bristol.

The possibility of "earthquakes" was briefly mentioned. He preferred to call it a "tremor", the magnitude being 1.6 – 2 (by contrast, the Folkestone one was a 4) so regarded as very minor and the least worrying aspect of fracking.

In the USA in the 1980s contaminated water was pumped at high pressure into mines causing a magnitude 4 earthquake, but the mine was close to a geological fault. Faults do exist in the UK, including in the northern area where Cuadrilla put boreholes near Blackpool.

When pressed to say how much shale gas and oil there might be in the UK, the British Geological Survey came up with a figure of 164 – 447 million cubic feet of gas and 658 – 1834 million cubic feet of oil.

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## Sevenoaks FoE meeting, *continued*

However there is a difference between 'resource' and 'reserve', resource being what is there and reserve what you might get out of it, which could be 10-50% and even the geologists don't know.

Kimmeridge Clay is thought to be the most plankton rich and potentially the most promising. This extends over a large area of England including the North and around Manchester and Sheffield and across the South, from Dartmoor to Kent.

He described the fracking process.

- 1) drill to shale deposit
- 2) horizontal drilling into shale bed
- 3) use high pressure water and chemicals; sand too pumped in to keep the hole open.

Frackers say the process is benign; opposers say it is dangerous. Some of the chemicals are biocides (which destroy living organisms).

Various chemicals are needed to stop erosion of the well itself and others to maintain the viscosity of the materials pumped down. There are gelling agents and various acids. These will come back up the borehole with the gas. There is sea water buried in the sedimentary basin, which has been sealed in the shale for millions of years.

The process will strip out substances from the shale, including lead and radioactive material, all of which will come up the borehole. Next the gas comes up. He referred to the danger of leaks in the borehole.

However, various problems face the frackers:

- 1) Initially, machinery needed to do the drilling; the noise and congestion it will create. The resulting social pressure with demonstrators coming in from outside.
- 2) Problems with the procedure itself: earth tremors and high pressure material coming up existing fractures.
- 3) The leakage of methane is seen as very serious as methane is a "greenhouse gas". If there is too much gas, they might flare it, resulting in CO<sub>2</sub>.

How will they capture the gas?

Basically we have the infrastructure as we have gas pipelines from the North Sea. With the boreholes, the main flow is in the first year, then it tails off to a lower level for a couple of decades.

In conclusion (and in our opinion quite amazingly in view of some of the things he had told us) he felt that fracking was probably a good thing, as it was better than importing oil and gas from politically unstable areas. This because, if it is in our own back yard, we would have control over it.

It was an extremely interesting presentation put over very plainly, and I hope my interpretation of it is reasonably accurate!

## A Big Green Energy Debate

**Rob Clark writes:** Some of the local group campaigners have been asked if there are any ideas they want to put forward for debate and possible inclusion in this year's Basecamp. Basecamp is FoE's local groups' and activists' gathering where all aspects of environmental campaigning can be discussed and debated.

I put forward a view on green energy to see if anyone responded or considered it worthy of further discussion. Here's a brief exchange between a few of us. Please come back to the editor with your view so we can keep this debate going and see if this is a subject worthy of inclusion in Basecamp.

**Rob:** To be honest my main hobby horse at the moment is power. I don't know if I'm missing something because FoE are not shouting loudly enough or whether we/they don't have a firm enough or broad enough policy. It seems to me that the government are making a half hearted attempt to offer some funding for alternative power generation while we slowly move towards a scenario whereby the nuclear/shale gas option will be inevitably required.

All the debates in the media I see and hear generally present people's opinions as very black or white on this subject: you either like windmills or hate them. The debate is not about windmills, it goes far beyond that.

The windmill lovers are portrayed as unrealistic with their heads in the clouds by the media and no real argument is being put up against this.

I think there are a multitude of schemes getting off the ground to generate alternative power but these are not publicised except perhaps very locally.

Do we need to be clearer about our position and what the real options and alternatives are?

**Sheila:** My favourite option is Solar, from the really big installations (Concentrated Solar Power - CSP) which Spain has adopted, and California, I believe, down to smaller solar farms - there is one going in in the New Forest area, I believe, and permission being sought elsewhere, and finally down to our own domestic installations. Ours works well during the summer months, starting from now, with enough sunshine hours to run the washing machine with "free" electricity, and what we don't use goes into the grid.

We had a speaker on CSP half a dozen or so years ago. They were talking about piping electricity to Europe via grid from installations in North Africa. Not sure of the logistics.

Small, local installations are good and there is starting to be talk of this here, with FoE's Campaign X is looking at this.

Thanks for your input, Rob, and starting this debate. How do people feel we should take it further?

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## Big Green Energy Debate, *continued*

**Rob:** I agree with your comments but have some additions. I too have preferences regarding alternative power generation but I think this is a luxury perhaps as we need to use all sources to maximise the amount of alternative energy. No one solution can provide enough to replace or even come near to matching fossil fuels.

I think one of the main issues is storing energy from solar or wind. Demands are high at night when solar panels aren't producing anything and if there's no wind either then we have to rely on something else, maybe hydro or tidal, geothermal, ground or air source heat pumps etc.

I did guess that FoE might be covering this in one of their campaigns. My point really is though I'm a FoE member I don't know what they're doing on this without making some considerable effort to look it up. I really think that FoE should be taking a lead on this and the general public should know that FoE is championing a particular integrated solution on the power issue. For a start I'd like to see a legal requirement for all new homes to have solar on the roof for example. Larger schemes should be built with ground source heating. If there's a new road going into an estate then it should have pipes under it.

A personal view on the 'pipe' from Africa idea. I agree we need to share as much as possible but I would tend against any major reliance on getting any of our vital services from other countries for fear of getting into the issues that we currently have with

Russian gas. If they decide to turn us off we are in big trouble as we are reliant on their supplies. This does add another political layer to the Crimea issue as, if we oppose Russia then we are threatening our gas supplies. I believe this threat is being highlighted at present but only to further the insistence that we need home grown shale gas.

**Christina:** I just want to add that as my fiancée works in an energy consultancy we receive 'Energy in Buildings & Industry' (EIB&I). Not an inspiring title but always a good read even for the layman. Anyway to get to the point this is the face of the energy market not what you read in the paper.

For the media the energy industry is bad and powerful (oil/gas) and the environment is good but weak (windmills). In this mag it is all green issues i.e. heat pumps in the ads and articles; solar in every issue; smart meters; improving efficiency with modern technology; anaerobic digestion; biomass!

The frustration over government restrictions is evident in every mag.

This information about green achievements is what the public does not know and should be advertised with a goal of more green energy. I'm sure the industry would be grateful if FOE put pressure on the government.

*To be continued – in the next newsletter.*

## Fukushima poem, from Ann

### Fukushima

The 2011 Tsunami across low-lying shores swept in  
Led to myriad loss of life and kin

It flooded the Daiichi reactor of nuclear power  
in one most fateful craze-ridden hour

Ripping its complex innards apart -  
Leading to explosions sudden and sharp

Officials in panic started the cover – up  
But geiger counters revealed the bluff

As radiation levels rose to dangerous highs  
the Japanese Government began its legacies of lies

A hundred thousand forced to leave their homes  
as the 'silent menace' infiltrated like demon drones

The World's shocked and stunned outcries were heard  
But not for long as most governments preferred

To keep their love affair with the nuclear dream  
Despite ordinary peoples' warning scream

Corporate businesses like TEPCO still push their wares  
Bending to investors' lust for shares

Ignoring scientific findings of nuclear clusters  
Radiation increases amid Fukushima managers' blusters

Now as polluted waters leak into the seas  
Few listen and act upon the agitators' pleas

*Ann Garrett Ashley - July 27<sup>th</sup> 2013 - Dedicated to Nobu Ono, Atsuko Kamura and Michiko Yamaguchi of the Fukushima Action group*

## Visit to the new FoE Office, Sheila Brown

Sue, John, Ann and I visited the new Friends of the Earth offices at The Printworks, Clapham Road, about ten minutes from Stockwell and The Oval tube stations. We had been invited to a meeting about the Campaign X combined with a Reception and chance to see the new offices.

Unfortunately due to various travel problems (traffic and train cancellation related) we arrived at 7.30 rather than 6.30 just as the Campaign presentation had come to an end and a lot of the nibbles had been nibbled, but we were welcomed with great hospitality and given a tour of the new offices.

The reason for the move was that FoE owned the Underwood Street building but it had only 45 years left on the lease, so they felt it was saleable at the moment but might lose value if they hung on too long. Having done the sums, they decided they could sell and make enough money to pay rent on the new offices.

The building is called The Printworks because apparently it used to house the Freeman's Catalogue which was printed there. It has recently been completely refurbished and offered as "loft style" offices. I am not sure if "loft style" means that it is offered completely empty and without dividing walls.

FoE has the 1<sup>st</sup> floor and has customised this with various different meeting areas, one which is, I think, modelled on a tree house, and a recording studio and technical area and also various zones representing

different areas of the world. The offices are open plan with rows of computer screens. The idea is that all desks space is interchangeable, so-called "hot-desking" where no-one has their own individual space but employees plug their laptop in wherever there is a space, the idea being to promote mixing between different teams.

Some of the staff had been a bit unconvinced about this (I know I'm somebody who likes my own space and comfort zone) but reported that they found it worked very well and liked it a lot better than they had expected. Each person has a locker to keep personal belongings and work papers.

The non-cluttered worktops gave the place a somewhat impersonal look (what happened to family photos on one's desk?) but this was softened by use of plants around the place, some real (hope there is someone green-fingered to water them) and some fake trees, giving it an environmental feel.

Staff said it was so much better to be all together on one floor whereas at Underwood Street they were on, I think, four floors, so the bonding is working well.

## An overview of DEFRA consultation day on the National Pollinator Strategy

**Judy Palmer writes:** The consultation period for the NPS is now almost over, but during this period Defra hosted three consultation days in parts of the country (though one was cancelled due to poor uptake) and I applied for a place at the one in London on 16<sup>th</sup> April.

I was one of several FoE people who were at the conference, plus a scattering of other organisations' representatives and interested members of the public.

We were given three presentations

1. Status and Value of England's pollinators
2. Introduction to the National Pollinator Strategy for England, its Priority Actions and details of the proposed call to action – Bees Needs: Food and a Home
3. Gathering of evidence: monitoring and research to address key gaps in our understanding.

We could ask questions after each presentation and there was a question time section before we all broke up to answer more specific set questions, which were recorded on a large sheet of paper, then taken back to be analysed and recorded.

These are some of the points which came across from the three presentations –

- data collecting is minimal at the moment
- pollinators appeared to be declining in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, appear to be starting to rise in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

- data for honeybees needs to be formalised
- the lack of data is a drawback
- 130 organisations have registered an interest on being involved in the strategy
- the need for schoolchildren, the next generation, to be involved is really important
- research projects are needed
- management of farmland needs to be better
- management of land in towns needs to be better
- basic messages need to be broadcast (we were shown a short animated film as a demonstration)
- habitat change is a most significant contributing factor
- any policies must be underpinned by evidence, they must be effective and value for money i.e. they need to be cost effective
- we need to know where we are now, where we would be without policy intervention and with policy intervention
- monitoring of species needs to be sustainable.

We were also given an 18 point summary list of evidence-gathering actions from 2014 – 2017 showing the action points and who is leading them.

So, Defra appear to really want this strategy to work and appreciate all the hard work other organisations are putting into it – this is a rather large national experiment, isn't it?! It is so worth it.

## Bromley Friends of the Earth - List of Contacts

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### Admin team:

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Anne Clark / Ivy Smith

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

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

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

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**Non-members' Section**

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

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

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

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

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

Name.....

Address.....

..... Postcode.....

Email Address.....

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

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