



**friends of  
the earth  
Bromley**

**May 2020**

No 388

**Our Next Meeting**

????????????????????

**Who, What, When?**

**We'll Let You Know**

**Due to Corona virus and following advice from Friends of the Earth, our May meeting has been cancelled.**

Usually 7.30pm The Friends Meeting House, Ravensbourne Road, Bromley  
Everyone always welcome when we have a meeting

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[www.bromleyfoe.co.uk](http://www.bromleyfoe.co.uk)



**NEWSLETTER**

## Next meeting ???

Due to the Coronavirus and following advice from Friends of the Earth, our May meeting has been cancelled.

The Open Garden will not take place this year due to Bill's house move.

All other dates listed on this page will be subject to cancellation/postponement according to the guidelines in place at the time. The situation is changing daily and as we go to press, we are facing the fact that older people has been advised to self-isolate in their own homes.

*In the meantime, you are all encouraged to become 'Armchair Activists'*

## Diary Dates

***Please note that due to the Coronavirus, many events have had to be cancelled***

**25<sup>th</sup> April (Sat)** Bluebell Walk - **Cancelled**

**5<sup>th</sup> May (Tues)** Bromley FoE's monthly meeting - **Cancelled**

**13<sup>th</sup> May (Wed)** 7pm to 10pm RSPB online event. Mark Eaton from the RSPB will be giving a talk on 'Successful Conservation Action'. If you are a member of Bromley RSPB, you will receive an email on how to access the talk, or you can email [bromleyrspb@gmail.com](mailto:bromleyrspb@gmail.com) - **Still on!**

**2<sup>nd</sup> June (Tues)** Bromley FoE's monthly meeting - **TBC**

**13<sup>th</sup> June (Sat)** Groundswell - **Postponed**

**20<sup>th</sup> June (Sat)** 'Play for the Planet'. A musical event at Orpington Liberal Club. A fundraiser for BFoE - **TBC**

**28<sup>th</sup> June (Sun)** Keston Countryside Day - **TBC**

This is correct at the time of going to press but obviously will be updated in the next monthly newsletter. If you need any further information on these events in the meantime, you can email us on [bromleyfoe@gmail.com](mailto:bromleyfoe@gmail.com)

## Next Newsletter Copy

Any news, articles, poems, questions, views, articles for sale will all be considered for publication. Please send them to the editor via one of the methods below to arrive not later than **Saturday 16th May**

**Post:** 17 Everard Avenue, Hayes, Kent BR2 7LR

**Email:** [Robert.clark9@btinternet.com](mailto:Robert.clark9@btinternet.com) (please write 'Newsletter' in the subject line)

## **While You're Isolating**

**Futurelearn.com**

[www.futurelearn.com](http://www.futurelearn.com)

**Libraries**

[www.better.org.uk/library/london/bromley](http://www.better.org.uk/library/london/bromley)

**Nature**

Chris Packham is doing several encouraging talks on his facebook page.

**RHS Podcast**

[www.rhs.org.uk/podcasts](http://www.rhs.org.uk/podcasts)

Seasonal advice on gardening from experts. You don't have to be a member or subscribe to listen to these podcasts.

**Virtual tour of Jubilee Park**

See page 16

**Check FoE's 9 Tips on page 10**

**Write Something for This Newsletter**

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

## **#LoveWhereYouLive**

Keep Britain Tidy are asking people to get involved in their campaign.

'We want to inspire our online community to create a wave of positive action from the comfort of their own homes.'

The campaign encourages individuals to promote the campaign on social media, using the hashtag above, based around a theme they themselves have chosen.

They suggest ideas like finding *'your favourite recipe to reduce food waste; mending, repairing & upcycling things around the home; keeping in touch with people in need; home-schooling ideas;*

*discovering nature in your garden & gardening; nifty ideas & eco-friendly crafts; setting up a virtual book club... and many more - be creative!'*

## **Environmental Positives During Covid-19**

Ann Garrett

Using local shops more to help keep them in business eg a small flower shop in Sundridge Park sells plenty of fresh vegetables. Bromley market stalls had a good supply of fresh fruit before the lockdown.

Sharing food from local allotments, where the food is more organic and makes less use of pesticides detrimental to wildlife.

Eating less mass produced food, will mean weight reduction, less obesity.

Walking more to avoid public transport, means some people will be able to get more exercise, which will be beneficial for health.

Less driving will reduce pollution.

Using more things we have in the home already, while in isolation.

In the longer term, a simpler lifestyle could reduce consumption and overproduction.

More exchange of services and goods like the old LETS system will be valuable for 'recycling' our skills.

## Kid-Friendly Activity Pack

Aleanna Shaughnessy, FoE  
Supporter Relations Manager

Anyone with kids in their lives will know how hard it is to explain the state of the world at the moment – or just to keep them busy. Whether you're a parent, grandparent, or family friend, this is new for all of us.



But if there's one thing I've learned from listening to my 10-year-old and attending the climate strikes last year, it's that this generation is passionate about saving the planet.

And just because we're all staying home to save lives right now, that doesn't mean we have to stop helping the environment.

FoE have designed our Planet Protectors pack for 5 to 11-year-olds to teach them about our planet and how they can shape its future. The pack includes a variety of activities so young nature-lovers can:

Plant wildflower seeds and watch the bees come buzzing.

Put up their own 10 Top Tips to Save the World poster.

Get creative with plastic-free stickers.

Busy themselves with a fun activity handbook – perfect for indoors or out.

If you'd rather, something suitable for all ages – including yourself – then our Bee Saver Kit is a great choice. It

doesn't matter whether you have a garden or a window box, all of us can help save the bees and get a little closer to nature in the process.

Our kit comes with a handy bee spotter guide, wildflower seeds, and bee postcards to send to your loved ones.

At times like this, I know that not everyone can afford to donate – and we're so thankful for all the other ways our supporters help us. But I'd be lying if I said this crisis won't impact us financially.

Every pack ordered helps them carry on fighting for people and planet. It funds our behind-the-scenes work, as well as our front-page successes like our recent win against Heathrow expansion.

## Jubilee Country Park

Sue Folkes

In case you are unable to visit Jubilee Country Park during lockdown, but do have access to the internet, we are bringing the park to you - a virtual visit to Jubilee Country Park!

The link below will take you on an experience of our nature trail through the seasons. It is a compilation of over 500 images; most are taken in the park but supplemented by pictures of butterflies, birds and mammals that inhabit the park, but can be too elusive when someone is trying to photograph them!

The images are accompanied by commentaries from the girls of Bromley High Junior School, who took many of the pictures during a series of field trips since 2017. Because of the school shut-down, we have been unable to record the commentaries for spring, but the text and images are all here.

[www.jcpnaturetrail.btck.co.uk](http://www.jcpnaturetrail.btck.co.uk)

If you enjoy the trip, please feel free to share.

## **Friends of Bromley Town Centre Parks and Gardens**

Ann Garrett

This group consists of some dedicated volunteers who walk regularly around the parks and gardens of central Bromley, keeping an eye on the wildlife and biodiversity. They meet with Council officers and the Environment Agency to preserve important heritage aspects of these open spaces. They also write reports of their experiences and discoveries.

Like Bromley Civic Society they are involved in monitoring the impact of new planning applications and developments on the local environment.

The following poem, dedicated to the group and walkers, was written last Jan-

uary after a walk round the Civic Centre/ Bishop's Palace lake.

### **A Stroll Round the Lake**

The end of January sun spread its warmth across the grass

A lone purple crocus had emerged after days of cold and gloom

A maroon brown carpet of late Autumn leaves layered luxuriously across a bank

A heron took flight swiftly from its perch, anxious for food

The lake waters, clear of weed, sparkled like a large mirror reflecting myriad trees

Banfield Brook bubbled with determined flow

A moorhen peered out curiously from under a bush

The fir trees' branches swayed in the gentle breeze

Bushes of herbs in Kari's garden showed new shoots with ease

Ann Garrett Ashley  
January 29<sup>th</sup> 2020

### **CrowdFarming**

Robert Clark

This was a new concept for me, but having looked into CrowdFarming, I found a very optimistic network of farmers around Europe and beyond, with a great business plan.

They have teamed up and created a way to sell their organic and naturally created produce direct to customers without involving middlemen. You can buy avocados straight from a farmer in Spain, as if the farm were on your doorstep.

Of course there are questions around how efficient transporting single orders across Europe is, but this has been addressed in the blog section of their web site. Nothing is transported individually.

I ordered a box of oranges recently and they were delivered about two weeks ago. The minimum amount to buy from this farmer was 10kg, from which I got 21 medium and large navel oranges. They weren't the cheapest oranges I have ever bought, but they were organic and were definitely not packed in plastic.

Produce available is as diverse as sea salt, pasta, rice, olive oil, seaweed, honey, chocolate, chickpeas, walnuts, a host of fruit and much more.

Well worth a look at: [www.crowdfarming.com](http://www.crowdfarming.com)

## **Bananas**

Vicky Fricker wrote to Lidl highlighting their unnecessary use of plastics, particularly on their bananas. While other supermarkets, such as Sainsbury's, are looking at alternatives like paper bands around their bunches, this is Lidl's response to Vicky.

*At Lidl we fully support the need to*

*tackle the important issue of plastic waste and the detrimental impact that this is having on the environment. Lidl has long been committed to the reduction of unnecessary plastic waste, and was one of the first retailers in the UK to encourage customers to re-use their shopping bags. We have charged for our plastic carrier bags for the last 23 years for this reason. This commitment was further reinforced in 2017 through the removal of all single-use bags from our stores.*

*In the same year we made some strong positive steps ahead of legislation by eradicating microbeads from all cosmetic and household products, and committed to the removal of plastic-stemmed cotton buds, which we are in the process of replacing with biodegradable stems.*

*We are proud to have one of the highest proportions of loose fruit and vegetables of all British supermarkets, and continue to test and trial the removal of packaging throughout the range. We remain mindful that packaging can be beneficial in optimising shelf life and helping to reduce food waste, both in store and at home, so we are also working closely with our suppliers to increase the proportion of recyclable material used.*

*In tackling plastic waste we believe that, rather than focussing efforts on one system and one waste stream, the most effective way to achieve this is through a fully developed and comprehensive approach to combating littering, minimising waste and strengthening resource efficiency.*

*We will work closely with the industry*

*and government in developing a progressive and fully developed approach to resource efficiency and the circular economy, in order to deliver an effective long-term solution to the issue of plastic waste.*

*Lidl Customer Service*

## **B Corps**

Robert Clark

It was good to read that the Guardian Media Group (GMG) are seeking 'B Corporation' status. 'B Corps' are organisations that value purpose as much as profit. It covers many different aspects of a business such as social and environmental impact.

Like many companies talking about their purpose, GMG thought that they should do more than just talk - taking action on things like: working practices; how they recruit; environmental performance; and how they support local communities.

There are currently around 3000 'B Corp' certified organisations in the world. Some better known names such as Danone and Body Shop are newly certified or acquiring certification. There are also lots of smaller companies involved in the scheme. GMG is the first major media organisation to seek 'B Corp' status.

GMG aims to become carbon neutral by 2030, and seeks to eliminate the gender pay gap at the top of the organisation by 2022. They also look to become a more diverse and representative em-

ployer, and see this as a priority.

The certification process measures a business across five areas: governance, workers, community, environment and customers. Recertification has to be sought every three years.

GMG hope that showing what steps they are taking to improve their business, and their climate pledge, will encourage customers to take action in their own lives. This could be by taking fewer flights, shopping more locally or using less plastic. If all organisations thought in these terms, then there would be a positive road ahead.

## **Miller's Mutterings**

Chris Miller

HOORAY, some great news during this very difficult time. We are thrilled to be able to report that, at the end of March, Peter was able to plant all the spring wheat, barley and oats. The conditions were excellent.

A little wet about an 1" under the surface, but that will give the seed moisture to help germination. The heavy and continuous rain had beaten down the top of the soil and made a crust, but the new drill easily managed to cut through and provide a good seedbed. At one point, dust rose up from the drill! We wouldn't have believed that a week or so ago. He worked from the driest to wettest field which had dried out sufficiently by the end of the week.

Believe it or not, if we had a little shower of rain over night, that would be per-

fect to 'bed' the seeds in. A dressing of fertiliser will be applied next.

Samples of the seed that should have been planted last autumn will be tested for germination but we don't envisage too many problems with it, but always better to be safe than sorry.

Steve's first drive of the truck with his new knee was to take the straw to the deer farm. As you know, Peter normally does this with the tractor and trailer, but as he was busy planting, Steve and I both trundled down there with 4 bales at a time.

I hadn't visited the farm, so was very interested to see the deer. There are three different breeds - fallow, sika and one which I now cannot remember the name of - but it was lovely to see them roaming the valley. It was good, too, to get out in the sunshine and do something manual. That was the last of the oat straw, so no more deliveries to them for this season. We have a little wheat straw left, but people still need it up until harvest time.

Our accredited crop inspection is on hold for the moment, but they are trying to come up with a way of checking our details by another method.

The bird song now is wonderful and great to hear the chiff chaffs - of course we eagerly await the return of the swallows. It is always a special moment when we see the first ones arrive. The cowslips are just emerging on Chelsfield Green.

The larch flowers are only out for a short time, but great to see. The male flowers grow on the underside of the shoots and

are clusters of creamy yellow anthers. The female flowers are sometimes known as larch roses.

We all know the weather saying 'April showers bring May flowers,' but here is a new one (not that I've heard a cuckoo in the last few years):

The cuckoo comes in April,  
and stays the month of May  
Sings a song at midsummer,  
And then goes away.

Chris Miller  
Court Lodge Farm

## Wipes

Robert Clark

For those of you who might need to use toilet wipes, but find it ethically stressful, this might be an alternative to the expense of installing a bidet.

Natracare Safetoflush moist tissue is a wipe made from 100% paper fibre with no plastics at all. It uses an organic natural anti-bacterial formula.

Packs of 30 may seem rather expensive, but each sheet is very large and can easily be cut in two, getting double for your money.

<https://www.natracare.com/products/wipes/moist-toilet-tissue/>

## The Cure of Troy

Human beings suffer.  
They torture one another.  
They get hurt and get hard.  
No poem or play or song  
Can fully right a wrong  
Inflicted and endured.

History says, 'Don't hope  
On the side of the grave,'  
But then, once in a lifetime  
The longed for tidal wave  
Of justice can rise up  
And hope and history rhyme.

So hope for a great sea-change  
On the far side of revenge.  
Believe that a further shore  
Is reachable from here.  
Believe in miracles  
And cures and healing wells.

Call miracle self-healing.  
The utter self revealing.  
Double-take of feeling.  
If there's fire on the mountain  
And lightning and storm  
And a god speaks from the sky

That means someone is hearing  
The outcry and the birth-cry  
Of new life at its term  
It means once in a lifetime  
That justice can rise up  
And hope and history rhyme.

*Seamus Heaney*

## The Dept Cycle

Sheila Brown

A friend in Australia sent this.

*I have wondered - if all the countries in the world are already deep in debt and we (all of us) keep borrowing, who are we borrowing from? The following seems quite instructive.*

It is a slow day in an old outback town  
and streets are deserted.

Times are tough, everybody is in debt,  
and living on credit.

A tourist visiting the area drives through  
town, stops at the motel, and lays a  
\$100 bill on the desk saying he wants to  
inspect the rooms upstairs to pick one  
for the night.

As soon as he walks upstairs, the motel  
owner grabs the bill and runs next door  
to pay his debt to the butcher.

The butcher takes the \$100 and runs  
down the street to retire his debt to the  
pig farmer.

The pig farmer takes the \$100 and heads  
off to pay his bill to his supplier, the Co-  
op.

The guy at the Co-op takes the \$100 and  
runs to pay his debt to the local prosti-  
tute, who has also been facing hard  
times and has had to offer her "services"  
on credit.

The hooker rushes to the hotel and pays  
off her room bill with the hotel owner.

The hotel proprietor then places the  
\$100 back on the counter so the travel-  
ler will not suspect anything.

At that moment the traveller comes down the stairs, states that the rooms are not satisfactory, picks up the \$100 bill and leaves.

No one produced anything. No one earned anything.....

However, the whole town is now out of debt and looks to the future with optimism.

*And that, ladies and gentlemen is how a Stimulus package works.*

## **Monkey Puzzles**

Robert Clark

I have a feeling of guilt around some of my plant preferences: as a child I grew cacti: as a youth, bananas and cannas, and as an adult it's been lemons and chillies. Now there's something new.

Early in the new year, we walked beneath a monkey puzzle tree and found that there were hundreds of seeds on the ground. These were not just ordinary seeds, but large, juicy bullets of life demanding to be planted. How could I resist? We collected up around 30 of these (allowing for failure of course), and took them home to try.

It seemed like an odd time of year for a tree to try and reproduce with cold January weather to contend with. I guessed they would usually like warmer weather, so I put them in damp soil in the airing cupboard for a bit.

After several weeks, something wonderful happened. Some of the hard, elongated nuts I had half pressed into the soil, started tipping over. I was to dis-

cover that this was due to one strong root driving downward, pushing the shell of the seed up and over.

A green stem appeared and over a few more weeks, now moved into the light, split into two apparent umbilical cords between the nut and plant. From the root side of the plant a spiky finger of Jurassic growth thrust skyward slowly but surely, still being maintained by the seed pod until it reached a few inches tall.

OK, so now I have quite a few Monkey Puzzle seedlings. I've probably got a few years to work out what to do with them before they get too large. They are a bizarre looking, really architectural trees and need space.

Endangered in their native Chile, scientists in the UK have been trying to help restore the numbers by propagating seeds collected from Chile and returning plants.

Wakehurst have been working on this project and have a large plantation of their own. Rain, snow and wind are no problem and they survive in a surprising range of soil and climate conditions.

There's nothing indigenous about these trees, not unless you go back a long, long way perhaps. But every tree is useful in helping the environment. Perhaps this is the wrong magazine to publish this article in, but for me the excitement of growing something that 'shouldn't be', interests me the most.

## 9 Tips from FoE

Of course, it's important to remember that government advice on COVID-19 is constantly being updated – so please check the latest guidance before undertaking some of the activities outlined.

### 1. Create a wildlife-friendly haven

If you have a garden, patio or roomy windowsill at your disposal, turn it into a mini-haven for our wildlife.

There are numerous ways to give nature a boost, however small your outdoor space is:

Help feed our bees and butterflies by planting nectar-rich plants and shrubs. Pots on a patio, herbs in a planter, and even a hanging basket or window box can help. There's so much satisfaction from seeing a tiny little seedling sprout, so for added incentive, put a seedling or two by your laptop and watch it grow daily.

Build a bee hotel for your garden and provide a home for these crucial pollinators. Attract them to your little patch of the world with our Bee Saver Kit, which contains wildflower seeds (as well as a garden planner and cute bee postcards).

Create a woodpile. Woody cuttings from trees and shrubs can provide a habitat for mosses, lichens and fungi, as well as insects.

If you have a lawn, give your mower – and back – a rest by letting some of it grow longer. When you do mow, cutting less often will help give pollinators

and other insects places to feed and shelter among the grass.

Use peat-free compost – this is really easy to do and just takes a quick check of the packaging. Peatlands are important habitat for birds, insects and plants, and they store billions of tonnes of carbon. Help keep our threatened peat bogs intact by using one of the many good alternative composts that now exist.

Dig a small pond, or research how to install a water feature to provide a habitat for insects, frogs and newts – as well as water for birds. Go rogue, using anything you have lying around rather than thinking you must go shopping for materials first. This is definitely one of the more time-intensive home activities to embark on, but we promise that these are the ones that massively repay with added satisfaction.

Put up a feeder to attract birds to your



garden, balcony or windowsill – the RSPB has simple, family-friendly instructions for making your own – and learn the songs of different birds.

## **2. Keeping distance but staying in touch**

With social contact temporarily on hold, our need to stay connected with family and friends still needs to be met. Even introverts are starting to miss people. As well as standard phone calls, get familiar with group calls and video chats on places like WhatsApp and Facebook, and explore platforms like Zoom if you want to chat online to a bigger group.

When did you last take time to write mail that wasn't electronic? A lot of us have forgotten what our handwriting looks like and nobody can deny the delight of a letter from a friend, near or far. Staying connected doesn't mean total reliance on a wi-fi connection. Until Royal Mail indicate otherwise, the post is still operating as normal, so re-discover the original instant messenger and pen a letter to someone: it'll make their day, and help fill yours with satisfaction from writing by hand instead of constant keyboard typing.

It's also a great time to get to know your neighbours if you don't already (at a safe distance, of course). Many communities have already banded together and created WhatsApp groups to help vulnerable people or those in self-isolation – check out COVID-19 Mutual Aid to see if there's a group in your area. Or just ask your neighbour over the fence.

## **3. Ace of green space**

We're currently allowed outside our homes for just a short amount of time each day, so make the most of it and drink it in.

A run or a bike ride to a local park or other green space will help combat cabin fever and take a break from the same four walls. And you won't just be getting exercise. The World Health Organisation says green spaces are important for improving our wellbeing and helping our mental health.

Thankfully, you don't need to confine wildlife to your daily jaunt outside. Take the time to research and learn a bit more about nature near you. What's that bird you can hear, what's that wildflower you walk past every day? Follow the RSPB's #BreakfastBirdwatch hashtag to learn more about the birds singing in your garden. Or download one of the many apps that help us read natural signs and learn what nature is trying to tell and show us, especially in the first phase of spring.

## **4. Physical and mental wellbeing**

There's so much you can do at home to boost your physical and mental wellbeing. Sit-ups, burpees, planks, and other exercises give you great workouts without needing any equipment. And, of course, there's the bottomless trove of the internet for exercise inspiration and free workouts for all abilities.

Yoga is well-suited to doing at home, as it requires minimal space and equipment, and you can do it to fit around your daily routine. If you're a beginner or need some guidance, our partner

Liforme has produced a guide to home yoga practice to get you started.

Take a quick look at YouTube and you'll see body coach Joe Wick getting children active all over the UK with his free PE classes every weekday at 9am.

Looking after our mental wellbeing is important at the best of times. Meditation apps such as Headspace can help you de-stress and focus, and there are countless other meditation resources online to explore while we're adapting to new routines.

### 5. Soul food

As the old saying goes, cooking is good for the soul. It can also be a chance to get creative, particularly as food shopping becomes more challenging. We've put together a list of cheap and (relatively) easy recipes as recommended by staff and supporters, so try giving them a go.

And if there's any food left over after you've done your magic in the kitchen, then try composting your food waste if you don't already. It makes great soil improver, which can be used to grow

your own herbs and vegetables.

### 6. Become a bookworm

Tired of being taunted by that half-finished biography by the bed? Catch up on all the reading you meant to do but could never prioritise. Why not just peruse your shelves for any book with a bookmark – now's the time to finish it. There's no end of immersive worlds in reading, so it's a perfect time to delve into that as-yet untouched novel, or finish one you've already started. Take a look at recommendations from our staff on books and films to distract yourself with, and maybe even try making yourself sleepy by reading a real book before going to bed.

### 7. Spring into action

"The Mole had been working very hard all the morning, spring-cleaning his little home..."

A spot of spring-cleaning may not be the most enticing idea, but you might never get a better time to mend that broken shelf, (finally) clean the oven, or revamp the spare bedroom. And, if you're clearing out your house and garden, remember to check which

items can be refilled, re-used and recycled.

While you're at it, try your hand at making eco-friendly cleaning products. Vinegar is a cheap, non-toxic alternative to popular cleaning products – and we promise it won't leave your home smelling like a bag of chips.

### 8. Keep on quizzing

Is there hidden plastic in



Credit: Well Preserved on Flickr - CC2.0

your teabags? Do birds flying low mean it'll rain?

We've pulled together facts from our weird and wonderful world to bring you a range of quizzes, from trees and wild-life to the not-so-nice hidden plastics.

Test your knowledge – and challenge your friends at your next Zoom party.

### **9. Make your voice heard**

From climate breakdown and plastic pollution to protecting our precious wildlife sites, there's a wide world of environmental campaigning that you can be part of and will help bring about positive change. Go online and find out how you can help make the world a better place.

And finally, there's brilliant advice out there, from the innovative to the unexpected, for filling this strange time on our hands. But you know what? Let's also remember to down digital tools and just daydream, watch a bird out of the window or stare into the middle-distance. Many of us have more time on our hands because the commuting distance from bedroom to "office" is considerably shorter, so let's see what it's like (and what creativity abounds) when we let ourselves be bored.

Stay well, everyone.

## **Synthetic Foods – Part 1**

Peter Gandolfi

There is a growing interest in these foods at the moment, possible because of the recent increased awareness of vegan diets.

Synthetic foods can be divided into a number of groups. Here I am using two: those that make use of foodstuffs that we produce for our own use, and those that can be considered completely synthetic.

The first group contains the many fake meats now available, as well as a number of plant based preparations, that include textured vegetable protein and Jack fruit (bread fruit) that can have a fibrous texture similar to meat. More of these later perhaps.

We will start with a look at one of my favourite 'fake meats' - **Quorn**.

Microbial biomass, single cell protein was used during World War 1, when Germany used yeast biomass as human food. It was also used in the 1960s, due to fears that food supplies for humans would be rapidly exceeded by global population growth. Petroleum and chemical companies, including BP and ICI, funded projects to use the growth of edible yeasts, moulds and bacterium. It was a team from ICI that eventually found *Fusarium venenatum*. This is a 'mycoprotein', a fungus made from a strain of soil mould by fermenting it in vats with glucose, vitamins and minerals. It is also heat treated to remove excess levels of ribonucleic acid.

Previous attempts to produce fermented protein as food were thwarted by high levels of RNA which, without the heat treatment, can be metabolised by humans to Uric acid, which can lead to gout.

The dried fungus is mixed with egg albu-

men, which acts as a binder, and its texture is adjusted and pressed into various shapes. The product is high in protein and dietary fibre, and low in saturated fat.

It was not until 1985 that the government approved the sale of Quorn, where it was launched as a joint venture between Rank Hovis McDougall and ICI. It derives its name from the Leicestershire village of Quorn.

Once battery eggs were phased out in the production, the Vegetarian society gave their seal of approval. A vegan version is now available that uses potato protein instead of egg.

Quorn was originally marketed as 'mushroom in origin'. This was contested by the American Mushroom Institute who filed complaints as Quorn is made from a microfungus, and is not a mushroom. It has been stated that although a mushroom is a fungus, Quorn's fungus is not a mushroom and in fact is as closely related to mushrooms as humans are to jellyfish.

Quorn is non-GMO and has a claimed carbon footprint 10 times less than that of beef.

The original 1987 patent has now expired, allowing anyone to make mycoprotein using the patented process, with other brand names, but without the 30 years of past experience.

Environmentalist George Monbiot says that '*Quorn seems almost indistinguishable from chicken or mince to me.*'

I'm not so sure of that, but it does take up flavours readily and has a good texture

## **Did Bats Cause the COVID-19 Pandemic?**

This article is from the Bat Conservation Trust website.

No, the pandemic was caused by people. Human activities that alter the environment can increase the risk of disease spillovers from wildlife to people (a zoonotic spillover is the transmission of a pathogen from an animal to a human).

The science writer, David Quammen, who has published two books on wildlife and diseases, wrote about this back in January (9). He argues that we specifically made this pandemic (or epidemic as it was then) by engaging in unsustainable ecological destruction and the dangerous and devastating trafficking and illegal trade of wildlife for human consumption.

Deforestation and subsequent intensive livestock farming on the cleared land will bring wildlife into much closer contact with humans and livestock than would naturally happen, providing the opportunity for a spillover event. Opening up roads through pristine rainforest increases access for hunting. The live wildlife trade, in which many different species of wild animals are brought together in markets, provides conditions for spillover events. The traded animals are held in cramped, stressful, unsanitary conditions, with many different species caged side by side and slaughtered to order. The species in these markets would not

be found together in such close proximity in the wild. Such trade increases the chances that viruses can jump from one species to another, and ultimately from animals to humans.

Would culling bats stop the disease?

No, culling bats will not end the COVID-19 pandemic or any future emerging infectious disease outbreaks; in fact this may well increase the dangers since stressed animals may become more disease prone. It is human activity that led to the current pandemic, and it will be changing human behaviour in relation to wildlife that may prevent future pandemics. To prevent future outbreaks we need to stop uncontrolled habitat destruction and control the trade in wild animals. See 'How did COVID-19 get from wildlife to people?' above.

There are over 1,400 bat species around the world (of which 17 are resident and breeding in the UK). Many have adapted to living alongside us in both urban and rural environments, in our gardens, parks and even roosting around our homes, without posing a threat to their human neighbours.

Many bat species are in trouble and need our help to survive. Some bat species have legal protection (all do here in the UK) but globally many don't and much more needs to be done to ensure the survival of bats and other wildlife around the world. While the killing of bats will not have any effects on the spread of COVID-19, it would adversely affect the conservation of bat populations and the benefits they bring to people and our ecosystems. Bats pro-

vide enormous benefits including pollination, seed dispersal and pest control, worth billions of dollars annually. (See the BCT news item 'What have bats ever done for us' for more information).

The Secretariats of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, the Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats and the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds have issued a statement of facts relating to bats and COVID-19.

Do bats carry more diseases than other animals?

No, bats don't host any more disease-causing (zoonotic) viruses than any other groups of animals (mammals and birds) of similar species diversity. There are more than 1,400 different bat species, the second largest group of mammals by species. Taken as a group, bats are considered 'reservoirs' (long-term hosts) of a number of viruses, but most of these are not harmful and cannot be passed to humans.

What about bat soup, or 5G or secret laboratories?

There is a lot of misinformation circulating around the COVID-19 pandemic. It is really important that people check the facts behind the stories they see in the media or via social media platforms. There are excellent fact checking websites, including Full Fact UK, Snopes, etc., and the FAIR website provides guidance on how to detect bias in the news media.

## Brixton Windmill

Anne Clark

With the current situation of less flour on the shop shelves, I was interested in the report recently that local bakeries and shops were being supplied freshly ground flour from Brixton Windmill, jogging my memory of our lovely BFoE outing to the windmill a while ago.

A train ride from Bromley South, we arrived at Brixton on one of John and Sue's (usual) sunny days, to hop on a bus for three stops up the Hill to Blenheim Gardens. A little easier than the old C19th cable-pulled trams!

Crossing the road to an accommodating, tho' popular, organic cafe, we then made our way on to the Brixton Windmill set in a small recreation area, meadow and gardens, which locals used for various events and arts activities.

We were accompanied by a lady who had come up from Ramsgate to join the last Blue Badge tour of the year.

We all learnt that the mill had been built and owned by the Ashby family from 1816 to 1935 next to an older one that had been used in the 1790s to send visual telegraph messages from Streatham and Lewisham Hills to London to warn of any French invasion. A local 'Friends Group' had been formed in recent years for repairs and to rebuild the sails, getting Ashby's Mill back to working order. ([brixtonwindmill.org/friends](http://brixtonwindmill.org/friends)).

There's a newly painted mural of it in nearby Lyham Rd. We set on our walk

past a 1970s 'low-rise' housing estate with no cars allowed - parking and garaging were on the perimeter. Along the front were fenced fruit and vegetable plots, which we perused enthusiastically.

Land use in Brixton had been mainly for farming and horticulture to supply London in past centuries, being sold off for building.

We passed old workers' houses for the Lambeth Waterworks Co., that was responsible for pumping water from the Thames at Hungerford bridge (now at Kingston).

Beyond the gates were allotments, sometimes supplying the Mill with fruit and veg. We then took a cut through, past Brixton prison (in 1820 the Surrey House of Correction). William Cubitt invented a human prison treadmill in 1821 where flour was milled for the inmates' bread. In recent days it is mainly a resettlement prison, but I couldn't help getting emotional as we passed the small queue of families waiting for the inmates' visiting time.

A little further on, there was the 'Clink' Restaurant, where you can book a breakfast. Many famous names have passed through the prison including the Kray twins.

Points of interest were shown on our way back to the Mill, where we had refreshments, bought flour, jam etc., and visited inside the mill.

Our 15 minute walk back down the hill passed a former Telegraph Pub, now a church; a C19th Tuscan olive oil jar on

the facade of an ironmongers; an Edward VIII pillar box (only 15 left in London); Pykes Circuit Cinema, now a church; an 1890 Citadel and a Royal Mail SW2 delivery Office. Then we went past what was left of the old Brixton (Rush) Common to the station.

Before boarding our train, we called into 'Pop Brixton' opposite where a parking area was bordered by an array of old containers, painted and occupied by retail, crafts, bars, food outlets, market stalls and live music - the place was really buzzing and obviously popular. A really full day's outing - and a windmill I didn't know existed!

## **Bonfires!**

Parisa Wright

Founder - Greener & Cleaner Bromley (& Beyond)

A letter to Bromley Council and others.

*I am writing to you as Chair of the Environment PDS Committee, the Portfolio Holder for the Environment and the Director of Public Health for Bromley.*

*I'm cc-ing my local councillors & also some of the other Bromley councillors and council officers who will have heard from concerned residents & GCB members, including Cllrs Michael Rutherford, Nicky Dykes, Aisha Cuthbert Vance, Kira Gabbert, Kieran Terry, David Jefferys (Chairman of the Health & Wellbeing Board) and Colin Brand (Director of Environment & Public Protection).*

*I'm also cc'ing Revd Martyn Travers for 'Churches Together' & Orpington Baptist*

*Church, Joanna Friel of the Chislehurst Society, Clive Lees of Ravensbourne Residents Association, Mark Dempsey of Shortlands Residents Association, and Peter Martin of Bromley Civic Society, from whom I've sought advice before writing and who have expressed similar concerns and wholehearted support for this plea to Bromley Council. Other groups including Bromley Friends of the Earth and Bromley Living Streets have also expressed their concerns to me on this issue.*

*I am spending my evening writing to you in the hope that we can together address an urgent public health & morale issue in the next week or so.*

*I know you are busy, and no doubt overwhelmed with work relating to this horrifying respiratory virus pandemic. You are clearly making valiant efforts to address this unprecedented situation, and all the human and administrative issues that it has thrown up, but local lungs & mental health are suffering greatly from smoke/burning, as I have raised before, and so I write today having conferred with numerous affected locals and concerned groups, who would hope we can do more as a borough.*

*As you are aware smoke and fumes from bonfires can worsen existing respiratory problems such as asthma, bronchitis and COPD and potentially affect those with heart complaints, causing breathing difficulties to those most vulnerable to Coronavirus. (Credit: Southampton City Council)*

*Bonfires will add to the localised pollu-*

tion and will impact on those with underlying lung and heart conditions as well as exacerbate symptoms in COVID-19 sufferers. All this will put additional pressure on our NHS. (Credit: Newham Council)

As Dr Alyson Cole Warhurst has stated: "Bonfires can set off asthma attacks and are a nightmare for those with respiratory challenges and illnesses, at this time of unique vulnerability. It is almost criminal that someone should think it acceptable to light a bonfire and aggravate the health of the vulnerable risking asthma attacks putting an additional burden on the NHS and the need for respirators, plus exposing the sufferer to risk in hospital itself from Covid19."

Every day I get messages on my telephone, email and social media from residents of the borough fighting the effects of smoke from neighbours burning on bonfires, chimineas & woodburners during the Pandemic. They are anxious about the effect on their lungs and deeply concerned that there is no clear public message from the Council that it is inappropriate to create smoke during this time.

The borough is crying out for clear and firm communications from the Council, not just from individuals, to the public asking them not to burn in their homes and gardens because smoke increases the risks for the elderly, those at home fighting or recovering from Covid19 and other vulnerable residents, in particular those with respiratory conditions.

People are already restricted to their homes and gardens and anxious about

their health – it is simply not reasonable for them to be even more restricted by not being able to use their gardens or having to keep windows closed. Nor is it fair for them to become even "higher risk" (of Covid19) simply because someone wants to be "cozy" or have a "clear out".

As well as increasing the number of inflamed lungs and the risk of hospitalisation (and in turn infection) of our neighbours, it puts additional pressure on the NHS when those vulnerable people call paramedics etc. I understand it also puts additional pressure on the fire service, again at a time where their efforts are better spent elsewhere.

Our communications & strategy officers have helped prepare a clear note on: i) the communications from Bromley Council so far; ii) some helpful examples of clear messages other councils have put out; and iii) some pleas for clarity/help from local residents. I hope that their efforts will not be wasted and that this note may help your efforts to move this communications issue forward as matter of urgency.

As we have seen with people not realising the changes to waste collection, vague and single format messaging does not work in Bromley, with its varied population. The message put out on the Council website (3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020) mentioning waste collection and bonfires was unfortunately quite vague and confusing, both to read and to locate. For example, repeated references to only taking action on "statutory nuisance bonfires" suggests to any lay person

*that there are some bonfires that are fine and sadly, during a respiratory pandemic that is killing thousands and threatening both the NHS and our economy, that is not the case. Also, for example, noting that woodburners are more of an issue for air pollution than bonfires, and then not even asking residents to pause those, has left residents thoroughly confused and concerned. Most folk still either don't know, or don't understand the updates to waste collection. Whether or not waste gets collected, bonfires will continue because people are at home sorting out their homes and gardens and many enjoy a bonfire (unaware of the current health implications)*

*Therefore please can you put a new and clear message out on Facebook, Twitter, your email newsletter and website (Bonfires & Health sections perhaps?), as well as on any hard copy newsletter or letter relating to public health or waste management, AND also provide easy access to a downloadable poster that residents can print and put up on problematic roads, saying something simple and clear like:*

*"During these unprecedented times we are together fighting a respiratory virus that puts pressure on our lungs and on our heroic emergency services.*

*Smoke from bonfires & other garden burning, particularly affects those with underlying respiratory conditions as well as exacerbating symptoms in Covid19 sufferers and those recovering.*

*We are all in this together and so we ask residents to stop burning in their gar-*

*dens for the duration of the pandemic.*

*Thank you for looking out for your neighbours and our heroes in the NHS and Fire Service. Stop burning, save lives."*

*There is a vast body of medical and scientific advice on the harm to health from wood smoke & other burning. Smoke from garden bonfires is unmitigated by any filters, it is a raw toxic concoction going straight into residents' lungs. It contains toxic chemicals including carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, hydrocarbons, and – most dangerous – PM10 and PM2.5. These stay in the air people breathe for some time and are carried over wide areas.*

*Any type of smoke from garden burning will have a significant impact on the health of local vulnerable residents especially at this time of Lock Down. So, as mentioned above, ANY bonfire would be a nuisance and normal rules should really be updated in the light of the pandemic. Whether or not the council has the capacity to deal with that legally/administratively, hopefully they will at least be able to put out the above clear plea to the borough's ample community spirit.*

*I'd be happy to help enlist the assistance of some professional copywriters and graphic designers if that would help the council with executing this desperately needed and overdue public message. Please let us know how we can help the council get this done as the current message is unfortunately somewhat hidden from view and unclear. Certainly, the bonfires etc. go on unabated and politely asking neighbours to stop or filling in the*

*council form has mixed results (if you are lucky enough to be able to identify the actual house causing the haze).*

*Many thanks again for all your hard work in these extremely difficult times. Hopefully this piece of communication will help reduce the workload for council staff, the NHS and Fire Service once people "get the message".*

## **Community Energy**

Richard Comaish

Richard has written to his local MP, Ellie Reeves, regarding community energy. This is her reply.

*Dear Mr Comaish,*

*Thank you for contacting me about the Local Electricity Bill. I agree that community-scale clean energy is an important issue as we tackle the climate emergency and I am committed to the expansion of community energy.*

*Community energy has significant advantages. It can reduce strain on the overall grid. It can tap into the resources and enthusiasm of residents who want to decarbonise their energy supply faster than the existing distribution network. It also provides a powerful tool to build public support for the transition to clean energy.*

*I have therefore in the past supported proposals to allow the creation of local energy communities (LECs). These would be wholly community-owned, non-profit-making organisations and would be able to apply for a licence to generate and supply renewable electricity to their*

*members. While the development of LECs would involve a degree of experimentation, I believe they could become an important and innovative part of our energy system, helping to speed up the transition to clean energy.*

*In addition, I support measures to promote renewable energy directly, such as by fitting solar panels on social homes and those of low-income households, as well as building thousands of new offshore and onshore wind turbines.*

As you know, the Local Electricity Bill is currently scheduled to be presented in the House of Commons on 28 April. However, as I am sure you will appreciate, in light of the coronavirus situation, the status of any future business in the House of Commons remains uncertain. Nevertheless, I can assure you that I will continue to support community-level renewable energy at every opportunity.

*Thank you once again for contacting me about this issue.*

*Best  
Ellie*

*Wishes,*

*Sent on behalf of Ellie Reeves MP  
Member of Parliament for Lewisham  
West & Penge*

## **Deforestation**

Richard Comaish

Richard has also written to his local MP, Ellie Reeves, regarding deforestation and the Environment Bill. This is her reply.

*Dear Mr Comaish,*

*Thank you for contacting me about deforestation and the Environment Bill. As I*

am currently on maternity leave, I will be unable to attend the Environmental Bill's reading but I can assure you that I am committed to ensuring effective protection for the environment and putting an end to deforestation.

I agree we must do more about deforestation, especially in places like the Amazon rainforest. It is a precious asset for the people of Brazil, and for the whole world. We are in danger of forcing species into extinction that we have never even discovered. I believe that as it stands, the Environment Bill is full of loopholes and is a charter for now and not for tomorrow.

I am concerned the environment is being threatened with new trade agreements that will undercut our environmental standards. We must not trade our environment in pursuit of these agreements, and it is essential we uphold the highest environmental and social regulations in all our trade relations.

The Government has stated that at present we are importing deforestation daily. It has also said it is committed to supporting deforestation-free supply chains. It has set up the Global Resource Initiative Taskforce, which it says will identify actions across supply chains that will improve the sustainability of products and reduce deforestation and other environmental degradation. This includes the footprint of products linked to deforestation, such as soya, beef and palm oil. The taskforce is due to report in spring this year, and I will follow developments closely.

I want to see the Government commit to environmentally sustainable, transparent

trade policies and apply these to any future trade relationships it negotiates. I believe we should set a deadline to end the importation of goods that have caused deforestation and consider environmental due diligence obligations to reduce environmental harms in business supply chains.

The Agriculture Bill, also being considered by Parliament at present, states that the Environment Secretary must report to Parliament on food security in the UK every five years, including looking at global food availability. The Opposition has proposed an amendment to the Bill so the report could also consider the impact of food production upon global resource sustainability, including global carbon emissions, impacts on biodiversity and water usage.

This is a climate and ecological emergency and I believe that as well as carbon emissions, our focus must include habitat loss, biodiversity loss and more. Thank you once again for contacting me about this important issue.

Best  
Wishes,  
Ellie  
Sent on behalf of Ellie Reeves MP  
Member of Parliament for Lewisham  
West & Penge

## **The New Lucas Plan**

Ann Garrett  
The following notes were made during attendance at a New Lucas Plan virtual Zoom session on April 7th, and includes some extracts from the minutes.

The opening discussion was based on the

severe health problem caused by the Covid -19 pandemic which has put into focus the essential work of health and social care workers, public transport staff and those who work in the food supply chain.

Many of the lowest paid workers, who do not work from home and rely on both small and larger business employment, are suffering from redundancy and financial hardship, both now and in the future. The question remains about how they can be re-employed in socially useful jobs.

The term ' Socially Useful Production ' was used by the Lucas Aerospace workers in the 1970s re their decision to use their precision engineering skills to make products that would benefit the communities they live in, rather than produce military machinery.

Some people are now changing their line of work to make urgent PPE in makeshift warehouses, and the government has asked people with technical skills to start making ventilators and testing equipment.

The New Lucas Plan can now change the economy to a Green New Deal, and work through the trade union movement, and with environmental organisations, to take on the responsibility of transferring jobs to sustainable product production. For example - recently in the US, General Electric workers walked out of their jobs making jet engines and demanded to make ventilators while their facilities were sitting idle.

This shows the importance of how trade unionists can, in future, play a key role negotiating with environmentalists to change their focus to the production of new green energies.

## Swift Survey

Peter Smart (Recorder, RSPB Bromley Local Group)

Dear Swift Survey Volunteers,

I am very sad to have to tell you that we've been advised by the RSPB Head Office to cancel this year's Bromley Swift Survey. This is due to the fear that the RSPB could have been perceived to be encouraging people to go outside of their homes in contravention of current Covid-19 restrictions.

I realise that this will come as a great disappointment. Many of you had commented saying how much you were looking forward to this year's survey as a touch of normality in these difficult times.

Rest assured that if the restrictions are relaxed, and the RSPB guidance changes, then we will swing into action and kick start the survey immediately. It would be feasible to carry out a meaningful survey even if the start is delayed until June.

In the meantime, I'd like to point you to a couple of websites that may be of interest:

The RSPB National Swift Survey <https://swiftsurvey.org/Rspb/Home/Index> If you do have any sightings of low flying or nesting swifts during your permitted exercise walks, these can be logged via this web page. You can also view sightings

entered by everybody else in the UK for the current and prior years, including the results of the Bromley Swift Surveys for 2018 and 2019.

British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) Garden Birdwatch [https://www.bto.org/our-science/projects/gbw?dm\\_i=NXX,6T9XX,RM4KQS,RA4GL,1](https://www.bto.org/our-science/projects/gbw?dm_i=NXX,6T9XX,RM4KQS,RA4GL,1)

In recognition of the fact that birdwatchers may be climbing the walls under the present restrictions, the BTO is inviting anybody to participate in their Garden Birdwatch Survey for free (there is normally an annual subscription of £17 to participate, which includes excellent free magazines several times a year and various other benefits).

The survey has been running since 1995, and is amongst the biggest citizen sci-

ence projects in the country. Gardens across the UK constitute a major wildlife habitat, and the survey allows trends in bird populations to be monitored. I've been participating for about 20 years, and as a result have developed a far greater awareness of the birdlife in our garden. I heartily recommend it.

## Bluebells!

For those of you who regret the cancellation of the bluebell walk this year, I hope these pictures can make up a little for it, especially if you were unable to get out and see any bluebells for yourself.

These pictures were taken from the footpath in the woods at the back of Biggin Hill Airport.



## MARINET

Marinet was established in 2002 as a Friends of the Earth local group network, campaigning for marine reserves and to conserve fisheries. In 2014 members voted overwhelmingly to become independent, to give it the freedom to choose its own campaigns. In campaigning terms, Marinet is not prepared to accept decisions or solutions which are based on the lowest common denominator that all parties can agree to. Rather it stands for scientific truth, and advocates principles of management built on the logic of scientific evidence. Marinet is always looking to the future, and encourages its members to engage with issues that they are interested in and to



coastal sea bathing waters (and inland rivers too) which in many cases are badly polluted by sewage discharges. They work in partnership with Surfers against Sewage.

Other ongoing campaigns include marine aggregate dredging, ecosystem management, coastal defences, fisheries in crisis, marine pollution, plastic pollution and radioactivity. Do have a look at their website:

take responsibility for campaigning action.

Bromley Friends of the Earth has been a Marinert member for several years. We've had speakers over the years but not recently. We give an annual donation and I've received a letter sending our group greetings and grateful thanks from the Marinert directors.

Current headline campaigns include Conserving the Great Blue Whale, and they are buying copies of a book written by Deborah Wright to donate to libraries of higher education establishments which run marine management courses, to give students at these establishments knowledge of best principles of marine governance. They are also working on a pamphlet *Sand, Sea and Sewage* to be the centrepiece of a campaign on the quality of our

[www.marinert.org.uk](http://www.marinert.org.uk) which has links to relevant films, updates on these campaigns and information on Marinert's work.

### **Marinert : Good News**

There is growing pressure to recognise large scale environmental damage and destruction as an international crime. Polly Higgins spent 10 years developing this idea, and now it seems finally to be



gaining a pace. Even the Pope is considering making Ecocide a sin.

There is a detailed article on the New Statesman's web site, which we unfortunately don't have the permission to reproduce in full. But it makes compelling and encouraging reading.

If you can, have a look here: <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/environment/2020/03/could-ecocide-become-international-crime-1>

## **Campaigns**

### **Planning Monitoring Team**

Checking the monthly planning applications that the council publish is a really interesting job especially if you know your local area well. The current team are looking for help from people who would be willing to keep an eye on the applications in their own back yard from the comfort of their home, and raise an alert to anything which may require us to officially comment on.

If you would like to find out a little more about what is involved, then please contact Tamara Galloway at: [tamaragalloway@yahoo.com](mailto:tamaragalloway@yahoo.com)

### **Climate, Energy and Transport**

Ann Garrett

#### **Ice Caps Melting**

Greenland's melting ice caps raised 2.2mm last year, scientists have warned, with the human induced climate crisis accelerating and the loss of tons of ice.

Data from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) showed

that around 600 tonnes of ice was lost from Greenland last year. This was partly attributed to the Arctic region experiencing its warmest summer on record.

The loss of land-based glaciers directly causes the sea to rise, with researchers warning that around 400 million people will be at risk from flooding every year by the end of the century.

#### **Impact on Climate from Grouse Shoot Fires**

The controversial practice of setting heather-covered moorland on fire, often carried out by game keepers to create more attractive habitats for grouse, is now banned in some parts of northern England.

Research by the University of Leeds has found that burning grouse moors degrades peat-land habitat, releases climate-altering gases, reduces biodiversity, and increases flood risk.

Yorkshire Water and United Utilities which leases some of the land, have said that all burning on their land must cease, due to the present coronavirus outbreak. This is also supported by the National Trust.

The move follows requests from the emergency services and local councils, who fear that fumes might affect people suffering from Covid-19.

#### **Greener Energy at Record High**

Greenhouse gas emissions fell 3.6% last year as energy created by renewable sources climbed to a new high.

Electricity generated by wind and solar power and biomass produced 36.9% of

UK energy, revealed the Business and Energy Department.

Emissions of the pollutants causing climate change are now down 45.2% on 1990, which is encouraging news.

### **HS2 Work is Ready to Start**

Ministers have given the go-ahead for the HS2 rail project to begin construction, despite the coronavirus lockdown.

A notice to proceed will be issued to firms contracted to design and construct bridges, tunnels, embankments and viaducts for phase one of the high speed rail link between London and Birmingham.

The companies involved will ensure that there is social distancing and hand washing facilities for the workforce.

The project is running tens of billions of pounds over budget and is several years behind schedule. The final bill could reach £106 billion at 2019 prices, a government commissioned review has warned.

There are serious concerns about the detrimental effect on wildlife and biodiversity and the destruction of vast expanses of woodland. Brave eco campaigners are protesting in trees on the route, and have had some difficulties in getting enough food during their protests due to the action of bailiffs trying to evict them.

Friends of the Earth are strongly opposed to the project and want to see investment in the whole UK rail infrastructure.

## **Plastics in the Environment**

### **Reusable Coffee Cups**

From Monday 6th April Starbucks at Gatwick Airport's South Terminal introduced a trial of reusable coffee cups. The scheme allows customers to purchase their coffee and borrow a free reusable cup which they can deposit at a collection point before their flight.

It has been noted that people who would normally use reusable cups at coffee shops would not bring their own with them when going on a flight. This scheme is to try and crack the disposable culture, saving waste and creating a 'closed loop' environment.

More than 7000 paper cups could be saved each month if this idea is successful. An estimated 2.5 billion are used in the UK each year, most ending up in landfill. However, at Gatwick around 5.3 million of the 7 million paper cups used are already recycled.

### **Cardboard Shortage**

There is an international shortage of cardboard following a mass cutback in recycling collection due to Coronavirus.

Scrap paper and card that would have gone to recycling centres and been turned into packaging for essential goods such as drugs and food stuffs has just dried up.

Another major source of scrap were shops such as Primark and Argos, most of which have been forced to remain closed.

The council cite Coronavirus and lack of staff as being the issues here. Bromley

FoE have asked the council, while sympathising with their predicament, when the recycling might restart. Many people will return to putting their recyclable waste in their general waste, setting us back years. Some have even resorted to burning their rubbish causing additional health problems.

One good point that may come from this though, is the fact that when cardboard is available, it may only be used where most necessary - a reduction in excess packaging that we have sought for a long time.

## **Nature/Trees**

### **Trees destroyed as planting fails to materialise**

Obstacles to planting mean the promised large-scale woodland creation in England and Wales is failing to happen, leaving nurseries with vast over-stock that they are having to destroy, growers say.

Maelor Forest Nurseries near Wrexham said they would have to destroy half a million two-year-old oak trees worth £150,000, after only 300,000 of the 800,000 oaks they sowed two years ago had been ordered.

They were basing this on the announcements that the government would be putting funding in, but blamed the 'incredible bureaucracy' around tree planting in England and Wales, coupled with the need to consult the public.

Warwickshire tree nursery J&A Growers' owner said they would also have to burn 50,000 one-year-old oaks as there is no market for them.

## **Reforestation Britain**

Around 24.7 million trees were planted in the UK in 2019, mostly in Scotland. The Government has committed to doubling this by 2025. If this actually happens then it is good news for campaigners.

One concern is that tree planting will happen blindly in a bid to counter climate change. A box ticking exercise must not be how this plays out, rather, sites must be selectively chosen for suitability.

Existing valuable meadowland for example, can offer as much benefit as poorly planted trees. We still need a diversity of environments and trees should be planted in the right places only.

The National Trust have pledged to plant 20 million trees, The Northern Forest 50 million trees, water companies and partnerships 11 million trees, The National Forest 8.5 million trees and the Woodland Trust are giving away 1 million trees to whoever has a place to plant them.

The National Forest are looking at substitutes for the single-use plastic tubes that are used to protect newly planted trees. Biodegradable alternatives are being trialled.

## **Peat**

I can remember campaigning about the use of peat in garden centres many years ago. We thought we had won the battle with a government deadline to remove peat from home gardening, via a voluntary scheme, by this year. The last few times I have had to buy potting compost from local garden centres I noticed that

it was difficult to avoid products that contained peat. We seem to have gone backwards, and it's worse than ever!

There is a campaign by gardening experts and writers against the use of peat though. It's using the hashtag #PeatFreeApril. They want as many people as possible to search out and use alternatives to peat throughout April.

With the current pandemic situation I think this might get put on hold, but it is a good thing to try. My experience is that if the sack does not say it is peat-free then it almost certainly isn't. Look for the peat-free, it's usually there if a little hidden. If you can't find it, then please ask. The more people that ask for it, the better.

The RHS are almost peat-free themselves. Only almost because they are still researching alternatives to peat for their carnivorous plants.

### **Hedgehogs Poo**

Hedgehogs should be coming out of hibernation soon. Their poo is quite distinctive being thin and long (about 4.5 cms) are glitters slightly when moved, as light catches the beetle wing covers in it.

The ongoing hedgehog survey has shown a few records around Jubilee Country Park. Most records so far in the Borough of Bromley are near nature conservation areas and other open green spaces, so please listen for grunting hedgehogs foraging at night or put out some dog or cat food (never mealworms) in a place where you can



observe them. As they travel so far every night (1-2 kms) they may be using your garden, so long as there is access into it.

If there is no access between your garden and neighbouring ones or other green areas, this might be a good time to make access (a 13 x 13cm hole) to help them forage, (and try to keep them away from roads) - so long as your neighbours agree.

Please let us know via our email: jubileecountrypark@yahoo.co.uk if you see hedgehogs or hedgehog poo in your garden, and we will pass the information on to Judy.

### **E-Facts for the Month**

6 per cent of the world's electricity is currently devoted to computing and...

#### **...The carbon footprint of pets**

Pets have a higher ethical footprint than you may think. A recent study by researchers at the University of California

estimated that the 165 million cats and dogs in the US consume the same amount of energy as 60 million people, effectively increasing the population by a fifth. Alternatively, the dietary carbon footprint of US pets is equivalent to that of 13.5 million cars.

In the UK, pet cats kill more than 275 million small animals a year. Feral cats even more.

Dogs and cats are responsible for a quarter of the greenhouse gas emissions caused by animal agriculture, according to a new study, adding up to a whopping 64 million tons of carbon-dioxide equivalent emitted in the production of their food.

## Supplies That Don't Cost the Earth

*This is a regular reference point for useful and practical resources, helping us to sustain the greenest lifestyles we can. These are not recommendations from Bromley or National FoE, but are just suggested by BFoE members. Any suggestions or reviews gratefully received. [bromleyfoe@gmail.com](mailto:bromleyfoe@gmail.com)*

### Internet

[www.greenfinder.co.uk](http://www.greenfinder.co.uk) - a useful directory of environmental companies for all kinds of things.

Naturallythinking, Unit 2 Mill Lane Trading Estate, Mill Lane, Croydon, CR0 4AA, 020 3856 3588: <https://naturallythinking.com/>

<https://www.ethicalsuperstore.com/>

### Facebook

Greener & Cleaner Bromley (& Beyond) Consumer action!

Hayes Life Freebeecyclers There may be something similar in your area.

### Low or Zero waste Shops

While some of these shops are not specifically low waste, they do supply food loose or in large packs, thus reducing waste.

Wickham Food Centre (WFC) opposite M&S West Wickham.

Bromley International Food Centre, 237-239 High St, Bromley BR1 (opposite the Bromley Picturehouse Cinema)

The Turkish Food Centre (TFC) opposite the Catford Bus Depot in Bellingham.

South London Shop Without Packaging (SWOP), 7 Burnt Ash Lane, Lee.

Carnivore and Herbivore Shops in Southborough Lane, Bromley near the library.

Crystal Palace Food Market, Haynes Lane, SE19 3AN. facebook - 'The Store Cupboard'.

### Apps

Karma and TooGoodToGo. Both allow you to purchase spare food from local restaurants at short notice and at very reduced prices.

## Reuse

If you have any items that you no longer need and that could be of use to someone then please let us know and we will publish them in the Newsletter. Alternatively, you could bring them along to our monthly meeting and put them on the table in reception . Any donations to BFoE from sales will be greatly appreciated.

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## List Of Roles

Everyone can be contacted via the groups email address: [bromleyfoe@gmail.com](mailto:bromleyfoe@gmail.com)

### Acting Co-ordinators/Mentors:

Sheila Brown 01689 851605

Ann Garrett 020 8460 1295

**Secretary:** Vacant

### Treasurer:

Sheila Brown

### Press Team:

Ann Garrett

### Programme Organiser:

Sheila Brown

### Outings Organisers:

John & Sue Boccock 0208 290 0485

Merchandising: Anne Clark

### Membership Secretary:

Dan Sloan 07414 920920

### Newsletter Production:

Dan Sloan

### Instagram and Twitter Admin:

Emmanuelle Coetzee

### Fundraising Officer:

Bill Priestley 01689 820469

### Admin Team:

Judy Palmer, Rob Clark, Annette Rose

### Web Site & Technical Support:

Peter Gandolfi, Mary Ingledew

### Refreshments

Mary Ingledew, Sylvia Chance

### Meeting Reporters:

John & Sue Boccock, Anne Clark, Annette

Rose, Peter Gandolfi, Sheila Brown -

further volunteers for this team would be welcomed

### Campaigns (Contact via group email)

### Nature/Trees:

Diana Hurd, Judy Palmer, Annette Rose, Tamara Galloway, Ruth Fabricant

### Anti Fracking:

Ann Garrett, John Catlin

### Plastics:

Annette Rose, Sheila Brown, Emmanuelle Coetzee, Ruth Gardner, Judy Palmer, Ruth Fabricant, Viv Gardiner

### Climate:

Sam Gee, Ann Garrett, Tamara Galloway, Ruth Fabricant, Judy Palmer (liaison with Climate Alliance)

**Planning Monitor:** Tamara Galloway, Ann Garrett

### Newsletter Editor:

Rob Clark 020 8289 1503  
[robert.clark9@btinternet.com](mailto:robert.clark9@btinternet.com)



## Non-members Section

If you are not a member of Bromley Friends of the Earth (BFoE) then hello to you. 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 acting co-ordinators Sheila Brown or Ann Garrett (their details are inside the back page of this newsletter.) Alternatively you can come along to one of our 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, on the right going down. 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 (\*delete as appropriate)

I would like to support Bromley Friends of the Earth and enclose my annual subscription (£8 single/£15 couple/family.) I also enclose a donation (optional) of £..... to help towards the work of our local group.

Name: .....

Address: .....

Post Code: ..... Phone No: .....

Email address: .....

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

.....

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 [bromleyfoe@gmail.com](mailto:bromleyfoe@gmail.com) or contact one of our co-ordinators via their details inside.