



Friends of the Earth

Bromley

November 2008 No. 251 Newsletter

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November Meeting

Friends Meeting House,
Ravensbourne Road, Bromley

**How Green is Mayor Boris?
asks Darren Johnson,
Green Party London Assembly member**

Tuesday 4th November

7.30pm.

Everyone welcome – bring a friend

In this Issue:

Diary Dates	2	FoE Conf - Peter	10,11
December mtg plug	2	Solar panels	12,13
January mtg plug	2	Breaking the silence	13
October mtg report	3,5	CYW- Staying Ahead	14,15
Transport info	4,5	CYW – Feeding Europe	15
Campaign info	6,13	CYW – Leading the ...	16,17
Letter to Council	7	Peace Pledge Union	18
FSC problems	7	Bromley FoE contacts	19
FoE Conf - Dan	8,9,11	Non-members section	20

Copy for the next Newsletter must be with the Editor by
SUNDAY 16TH NOVEMBER. Contact details inside front cover.

Don't forget – The December meeting is our annual social event (Dec 2nd)

Diary dates:

November 4th (Tues)

Bromley FoE's November meeting – Darren Johnson, AM, asks How Green Is Mayor Boris??

December 2nd (Tues)

Bromley FoE's December meeting – Our annual social evening. Please bring seasonal food and / or drink, preferably Fairtrade

January 6th (Tues)

Bromley FoE's January meeting – our AGM plus speaker Mike Greenough's different view about renewable energy. Is it up to the task?

Time to be merry (i.e. our December meeting)

This December we shall again have a social evening – no speaker, just a chance for the group to meet up and chat. Also, we invite members to tell a joke, read a poem, sing or play an instrument (three minutes per person maximum, please!). Please advise Sheila or Ann if you wish to give a bravura performance!

We would welcome contributions of seasonal food and drink, preferably Fairtrade. Note that hall rules prohibit alcohol – but there will still be Sheila's excellent punch!

Action please, for 2009 (i.e. our January meeting / AGM)

The strength of any FoE group is in the actions of its members. One of our aims for 2009 is to be more active in supporting the many campaigns being fought by National FoE. To do that we need more campaigners to be appointed at our AGM in January and also to fill one or two vacancies such as press officer.

None of these tasks need to be onerous and nor is experience necessary – there is detailed information available. Nor need they be time-consuming – as ever in FoE you give only what you can; there is no pressure to do more. And you will find them stimulating and be proud you are making a contribution.

Thank you time.

Thank you to the eight Bromley FoE members who attended the Petts Wood speech by Bruce Kent of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament at which we had a publicity stall and a chance to make a brief statement to the audience. The meeting was organised by Orpington branch of the Women's League for Peace and Freedom.

Next Newsletter - copy details:

Any news, articles, poems, questions, views etc for the next Newsletter must be with the editor **by SUNDAY 16TH NOVEMBER.**

by post to John Street, 82 Babbacombe Road, Bromley, BR1 3LS

by phone to: 020-8460-1078, **by email** to: johnstreet@gn.apc.org.

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

October meeting report – by Ray Watson

When a real enthusiast talks on his favourite subject, it really shows through. And few can top Alan Wyle, our speaker at the October meeting.

His subject was – of all things – shopping. Or rather saving local shops from closure by turning them into community ventures.

Alan's work is to get together people of a village, small town or local district and persuade them that they can save their local shop by making it jointly owned by the residents themselves. He said there are 180 such shops in the south east and another 80 on the way.

It is a patch that Alan knows well – he and his wife ran a local shop for 12 years which, he said, was a lot of hard work.

So, why should a community shop succeed when other owners had failed? The huge difference, he said, was that the pride of ownership, even a £10 share turned people's attitudes upside down; the shop was theirs so they made sure they used it. Profits were ploughed back into the shop or into local events.

Plus there was the added bonus of keeping the locality 'alive' so there was no need for people to move away. He claimed that the existence of a local shop, particularly in a village, added 15 per cent to property values. And there was less crime because there was more daytime activity in the area rather than it being dormant while commuters were away.

But the existence of a village or local shop brought many other benefits. The shop becomes a meeting place and information point for residents, it is a place to visit for mothers home all day with children, and it reduces road traffic out of the locality. In a word, he said, it becomes the centre of the community.

Alan added: 'And supermarkets don't do community – they say they do but they don't. Can you imagine a supermarket responding to a phone call asking for a bottle of milk to be delivered after the shop had closed? Or to look after a schoolchild because a parent was late to pick him up?'

He pointed out that £8 of every £10 profit made by a supermarket goes straight back to head office rather than being spent in the locality. He had a slogan for community shops: 'Save the planet and destroy Tesco!'

And other slogan: 'By working together, we will weld together.' His experience showed that by clubbing together to own a shop, residents were much more public spirited and enthusiastic about local life and in helping each other; 'there is much more to a local shop than selling goods'. This was particularly noticeable when older people or the disabled needed neighbourly help which was more forthcoming because people knew their neighbours through going to the shop.

He quoted numerous examples of this. Like, using a room behind the shop for

/continued on page 5

Transport information - – Ray Watson, transport campaigner

A Boris bungle

Mayor Boris is renowned for his bumbling mannerisms – and one fears that might also be spreading to his thinking when it comes to aviation matters.

In his election campaign and in recent statements he appears to favour a new Heathrow located in the Thames estuary. Leaving aside arguments as to whether having another airport is a good move and questions over what environmental damage it might cause, has he considered that approaching aircraft would have to negotiate the huge number of wind turbines that are to be built in the area?

Or, 341 to be exact, spread over 94 square miles – and able to provide power for 750,000 homes.

As a Green Party statement on the issue said: 'Does he really expect planes to slalom their way to the runway?'

Knock-on effect

A further complication to the mayor's suggestion is the demand for expansion of nearby London City Airport in Docklands. In the face of much opposition Newham Council have approved an increase in flights from 80,000 to 120,000 a year. Mayor Boris has already signalled his approval.

In turn, that expansion may well provide difficulties for Biggin Hill Airport's expansion plans because of air traffic control concerns.

Meanwhile, Biggin Hill is continuing its growth, with further applications to build another hangar and more offices. It claims that these plans are covered by the Permitted Development planning rules enjoyed by airports – meaning that local opposition has no say in the matter. Bromley Council, who have to rubber-stamp such applications, may argue that normal planning rules apply rather than the Permitted Development laws. That would open up the discussion.

Also looming at Biggin Hill Airport is the possible move to there of police helicopters, a matter of concern to residents because they are much noisier than fixed-wing aircraft and that the helicopters would operate round the clock, whereas the airport is obliged to shut overnight. A further worry is that a larger swath of the borough would be affected because helicopters are not bound by rules that stipulate take-off and landing routes.

However, no formal application has yet been made to Bromley Council. But such a move would entail re-writing the airport's lease from the council – something that residents fear will result in the airport persuading the council to weaken other parts of the lease.

Victory in Europe

There has been a surprising - and welcome - conclusion to the long-running debate in the European parliament over controls of car emissions. As mentioned in the column last month, German and French carmakers were fighting

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Transport info and October meeting report *(both continued)*

Transport info (continued)

vehemently to dilute rules on maximum car emissions and to oppose fines for those manufacturers who fail to reach the standard.

Much to everyone's surprise the MEPs overwhelmingly voted for the controls as a means of helping to meet climate change targets. This was in spite of considerable pressure applied by Chancellor Merkel and President Sarkozy. The new limits come into force in four years and will mean a maximum emission level of 95g/km. Compare that with the 250g/km disgorged by some of today's cars.

Fancy that...

It has been calculated that the Highways Agency has 40 large road schemes under way. There is just one new rail scheme under development – the 10-mile tunnel due to open in 2017 as part of the London Crossrail project.

October meeting report (continued)

community events or for say, computer lessons given by volunteers, or for people to sell their allotment or garden produce to the shop for re-sale at lower than supermarket prices which he called a case of 'food yards not food miles'. And why not acquire a shared greenhouse for use by all?

Among many questions he was asked how many people were needed to get together to form such a venture and what help was available. Alan said that a minimum of 200 to 300 would be sufficient. On starting a shop from scratch rather than taking over an existing one, he said council grants

were often available because local authorities were worried about the decline in neighbourhood shopping facilities because of the knock-on effect caused by people moving out.

Asked if a local shop could replace a closed post office, he said that some community shops offered a partial service or arranged for a post office person to be present at the shop on a day or two a week.

The second half of the meeting covered a multitude of campaign and other information and the whole evening was enhanced by Sheila's Traidcraft stall, for which many thanks.

Pick up the challenge!

The threat to food from biofuels, GM pressures and the need to focus on the true cost of keeping livestock will be an important issue that FoE will campaign on in 2009. National FoE will be providing the ammunition on the subject but we need someone to keep the group aware of the campaign.

An interesting subject that affects us all! If you would like to discuss getting involved – devoting however much or however little time you have to spare – then please talk to Ann, Sheila or Ray.

Residents Sceptical about Nuclear Power Plants

Over half the people living near nuclear power plants have concerns about nuclear power according to a new study. Researchers from Cardiff University and University of East Anglia said about two-fifths (38 per cent) of local residents accepted their local nuclear power station reluctantly and 16 per cent were opposed to it outright. The results are a warning to the government against assuming support for new-built power stations on existing sites.

The safety of nuclear power stations is generally of great concern. It has been reported that half of the UK's nuclear power stations have been shut down, or are running at reduced power - threatening the country with shortages very soon.

This startling crumbling of Britain's atomic industry will fuel the already heated debate whether to build a new generation of nuclear reactors. Two of Britain's 10 atomic power stations have been completely closed down for nearly a year. Another two have their reactors shut down for months and two more are running at 70 % capacity.

Scotland and Energy Tide Farm

Scotland's First Minister, Alex Salmond has welcomed plans that could see the world's largest tidal-powered farm built off the Scottish coast. Three sites are under investigation for up to 60 under water turbines, generating 60 megawatts of power for 40,000 homes.

This is great news and sets the UK a fine example. We need to invest

quickly in tidal power all round our coastline. A massive programme is urgently required to break the nuclear reliance.

Letter from Ann Garrett to Bob Neill, MP re climate change bills

Dear Bob,

I would be most grateful if you could use your influence and voting powers over the following bills:-

1. The Planning Bill - could soon become law, with no mention of climate change and with communities having no meaningful right to participate in decisions about where they live.

It is important to show there is a strong local voice that needs to retain the right to be heard about planning decisions, and that wants climate change to be acknowledged.

2. The EU Renewables Directive - says that 20% of all EU energy should come from renewable sources by 2020. The UK has proposed a 15% target, but is attempting to undermine the EU target level. It is vital that the UK retains its 15% target.

3. The Climate Change Bill - is still missing the 60-80% reduction target and the aviation and shipping emissions.

4. The Energy Bill - lacks a good Renewable Energy Tariff. This tariff would encourage businesses,

/continued on page 13

Sustainable communities – Action please, Bromley

A new Act has come into force that puts a legal obligation on the government to work towards sustainability. But local councils have to opt in, so we have sent the letter below to Bromley Council:

Dear Cllr Carr

Re: Using the Sustainable Communities Act

This group has asked me to write to you to urge you to do all you can to ensure that the council decides to 'opt in' to the new Sustainable Communities Act process when invited

to so by the Government, probably some time this month.

The Act is important to the residents of the borough in that for the first time we have a law that gives local government and local communities the power to drive central government policy and action to reverse community decline and promoting sustainable communities by demanding greater support for local transport, local food, local shops and Post Offices etc.

And this is not a consultation process – government just cannot say No! However, your council must elect to opt in when asked.

Problems with Forest Stewardship Council and logo

This item comes from the newsletter of Southwark Friends of the Earth.

By now, most of us will recognise the FSC logo and declaration on most packets of paper products. However there is a very serious problem within the Forest Stewardship Council as they appear unable to identify and certify the species of woods and timber and which companies apply for their accreditation.

Due to internal problems, as at present still unresolved and likely to remain so for the foreseeable future, several well known organisations, including Greenpeace, WWF and now Friends of the Earth have withdrawn their support, as the practice no longer complies with the principle.

FoE announced on their website they are "deeply concerned by the number of FSC certifications that are now sparking controversy and threatening the credibility of the scheme. We cannot support a scheme that fails to guarantee high environmental and social standards. As a result we can no longer recommend the FSC standard."

This is very regrettable but we're can now no longer take this logo at face value. The stores which stock FSC-marked paper products are allowing themselves to be misled and, not having done their homework, are wittingly or unwittingly misleading their regular patrons with their printouts.

Friends of the Earth Conference – report from Dan Sloan, part 2

This report from Dan Sloan covers the second and third days of the Conference.

Day 2 - Saturday 13th September

The day started with an extremely enlightening Question and Answer session with Tony Juniper and Andy Atkins (the new director). Tony took this opportunity to step back a little and allow Andy to express his thoughts and permit us to get to know him better. The general feeling was that Tony will be leaving us in very good hands!

How to get the Renewables Day of Action in the Media

This workshop was one of many, all relating to Priority Campaign Actions, and with the Renewables Campaign being launched at the conference, most of the workshops related to renewables.

The Timeline for the campaign is as follows:

* October 6-7, 2008

EU Energy Council meeting discusses Renewables Directive

* October 25, 2008

Day of Action

* November 1, 2008

Majority of action postcards need to be with MP's, to give them time to write to Gordon Brown and for Gordon Brown to respond before the Energy Council meeting in December

* December 8-9, 2008

EU Energy Council meeting discusses Renewables Directive- most likely that a decision will be taken on the Directive at this meeting

* November 2008 – May 2009

The campaign continues after the Day of Action, focusing on engaging other people in our community in supporting the campaign. At this point it moves away from the EU Directive and on to the UK Renewables Strategy.

The Day of Action will be taking place in High Streets up and down the country. It will consist of a postcard campaign – asking members of the public to sign as postcard which we will send directly to the campaign organizers for forwarding to MP's.

There will also be a "Graffiti Wall" poster which we will be asking members of the public to sign.

Where possible it would help to get MP's, Councillors, well-known personalities to have their photographs signing the wall. Get photos of this and submit with press releases to local papers / local radio etc. This always helps to get good media coverage and reaching a wider audience to spread the message.

It was also suggested that groups may use blogs, vox pop, and other online means of increasing their audiences, and getting more people along to the days of action.

We will be Setting up our Day of Action stall in Bromley High Street on Saturday 25th October between 11.00 and 15.00 – come and join us!

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Dan Sloan's FoE Conference report part 2 - *continued*

Afternoon Seminar – Can we Solve Climate Change with Action

This was a very well attended seminar, much of it devoted to “Transition Towns”. This is a subject that I was not familiar with, but have since bought a book to with which to update by myself. I will happily pass the book on to anyone else who would be interested in reading more, once I have finished.

It was stressed that public pressure for action was required, and that public acceptance of measures taken was important in order to gain support.

Our role would be to:

- 1 Support the Low Carbon Communities Campaign
- 2 Encourage and actions to drive down emissions
- 3 Mobilize local pressure at local government level
- 4 Build public acceptance on the deeper measures that must be taken
- 5 Keep the focus on politics – the local politicians tend to use environmental issues as a political lever, we need to use that to our advantage
- 6 Approach Local council with ideas to reduce the carbon footprint and encourage sustainability.

Review of the Year & Earthmovers Awards

Saturday afternoon, this was probably the most enjoyable event of the weekend, so impressive to see what so many groups and individuals have been accomplishing – very inspiring. I believe that this session will be reported elsewhere in the newsletter, so enough said.

Vehicle Economy Workshop

This was a local group led workshop. It was generally an opportunity to look at the technical side of how vehicles have developed over the years, and how their performance has altered as they have become heavier, faster, yet more efficient. We were presented with masses of figures relating the reduction in mpg as speeds increased.

Fuel consumption increases at twice the rate of the increase in speed. The needed power to propel a car at 50mph is thus roughly 4 times that needed to propel the same car at 25mph. The power needed to propel this same car at 100mph is 16 times as much as to propel it at 25mph.

Silent Disco

Later on Saturday evening there was a “Silent Disco”. A silent disco is a regular disco but where everyone is given their own set of wireless headphones to listen to the music.

There are two DJ's playing simultaneously on two separate channels, which means you only listen to the music that you want to hear. If you don't like the music from the first DJ just flick the switch and listen to the second DJ.

If you prefer to chat rather than dance (my category) you just slip off the headphones and enjoy a good conversation while all the more active people dance!

/concluded on page 11

Friends of the Earth Conference – report from Peter Gandolfi, part 2

Earthmover Awards

A high point of the Saturday afternoon was the presentation of the Earthmover Awards. These are awarded to celebrate the achievements of local groups and individual campaigners in a number of categories. Each category winner had the chance to present their achievement. All nominations were inspirational, and showing that local groups can make a difference, but for reasons of brevity, only the winners will be mentioned here.

Successful solutions –

Winner South Bedfordshire FoE

It was noticed that a new housing development had no sustainable transport plan, so a campaign was started to push for better transport. The group consulted with resident groups, community groups and local retailers to understand local needs, and then negotiated with decision makers for a year. 'Meetings with councillors always go better if you take a chocolate cake'. The result was securing £7 million funding from local and national government to create sustainable transport links, including a high frequency bus service, pedestrian and cycle paths into town and secure cycle parking. The group is now part of the steering process to implement these proposals. Very impressive!

Campaign of the year –

Winner New Forest FoE

The aim was to raise awareness of climate change and to encourage Brockenhurst households to reduce their carbon footprint. The National Park Authority granted £9000 from its sustainable development fund, and the

plan included the distribution of hundreds of leaflets, the showing of relevant films etc hosted by inspirational speakers and running an environmental education programme. The enthusiasm has spread to other local villages and Brockenhurst is now set to become a transitional town,

Communicating –

Winner Southwark FoE

Southwark group launched a project to target Peckham's inner city community, where it was claimed that environmental concerns were a white middle class issue. The course 'homes going green in SE15' was run for residents by the residents and designed to appeal to people from a variety of backgrounds. The course ran for five months and consisted of workshops on a green lifestyle and practical local solutions that would save money. Participants also visited local eco-homes and recorded experiences of the project in diaries. Results showed that over 90% of those that attended wanted to share their experiences with others. The group has now been offered £3000 from Southwark council to repeat the course, and the group has been asked to help design a mini 'homes going green' package for the community wardens service.

FoE group of the year –

Winner Darlington

The groups new coordinator decided it was time to boost the groups membership and local profile. Using a grant from the local groups support fund, the group booked stalls at the local farmers market to engage the
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FoE conference reports, concluded

Dan Sloan's report, concluded - Day 3 - Sunday 14th September

Biofuels

At this workshop we heard the progress of the biofuel campaign and the summer of action to date, and were asked where should FoE go from here, is there anything we could be doing that we are not.

It was a bit of a celebration of the achievement of the campaign throughout the year, someone even brought a bottle of champagne to share around! (More workshops like that please!)

Motions to Conference

The Afternoon was dominated with Motions to Conference (for full details and background of the motions please contact me, Dan Sloan 07957 354703 email: dansloan@chelsfield.org), the results as follows:

- Motion 1 - Anti-Nuclear Power (previously titled "Nuclear Waste" - passed
- Motion 2 - Peak Oil and Fossil Fuel Prices - passed with amendment
- Motion 3 - Waste & Re-Cycling Campaign – passed with amendment
- Motion 4 – Population - failed
- Motion 5 - Student and Youth Involvement - passed

As motion 5 was passed a contingent of young members strategically sitting down one of the aisles stood and held a banner (prepared at odd breaks through the day) aloft, celebrating the rebirth of a young FoE.

The whole weekend was a complete success in terms of organization. I would recommend to as many of our members as possible to put your names down for 2009 conference which will be in Leeds – we may have up to six delegates, but rarely are all the places filled.

So, if you would like to be inspired, if you feel you would like to be more involved, if you feel you would like to increase your knowledge and meet the people who know, then keep an eye out for 2009 request for delegates!

Peter Gandolfi's report, concluded

public in their priority campaigns and to secure new members. Membership has now risen from 4 to over 30 with over 50 attending their screening of an inconvenient truth, (a councillor promised to show the film to the whole council). The group is now running a successful waste campaign.

Commitment to FoE – Winner Keith Kondakor, Nuneaton FoE

Keith was a long term campaigner, who had become very experienced in waste management. 'My life is rubbish'. He had managed to stop a number of incinerators being built, by showing a lack of public involvement in Warwickshire's waste management process, and by using the Freedom of Information act to gather vital information. He had at one point applied as manager of a local incinerator, (he did not get the job)! He has also been instrumental in sharing his expertise with local groups having similar problems.

Solar Panels – one person's experience

Tim Aldred tells what it was like

Shortly after moving into our house in Shortlands, we started to explore the possibility of installing solar water heating to help cut both our fuel bills and our carbon footprint. We now have a well functioning system that has helped to cut our summer gas bills in half!

For many days during the summer we have not had to turn on the hot water heating at all - it is rather satisfying to run a hot steaming bath, knowing that all the water has been heated by the sun! However, as September arrived, we needed to top up the system with the boiler more regularly - and expect that the boiler will need to work harder as winter draws on.

Getting the work done

After some false starts, we managed to find a reliable company (Dawsetway, based in Woolwich) who assessed the house carefully and did everything very efficiently within a few days. Given that we were having work done, we took the opportunity to upgrade to a new condensing boiler. This should itself be 20-30 percent more efficient, even before the reductions from the solar panels.

They also filled in the various forms required to claim the £400 government grant. [*Warning!* We did have to rebuff one double glazing style con-artist who tried to get us to commit to an installation at double the market price - never agree to anything that you have to sign up for on the spot "to get the discount".]

Getting permission

When I first rang Bromley Council to ask if installing solar panels would be legal, the immediate (and not particularly helpful) reply was "it depends"... It turned out that the main issue for them was how far the system would stick out from the roof plane. But on sending in the plans (and a cheque for £67) a certificate of legality appeared within a few weeks.

However, the situation should be easier for others now that the Town and Country Development Act (2008) has been passed - this makes it clear that as long as the system doesn't extend more than 20cm from the roof plane (and a typical panel is roughly 10 cm) solar panels count as a permitted development - see http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2008/ukSI_20080675_en_1 if you want to refer to the act in correspondence with Development Control.

Getting a grant

The government gives grants of £400 - it was very easy to apply for this online at www.lowcarbonbuildings.org.uk. A condition of the grant is that you must have already taken a number of standard energy saving moves, such as insulating the loft properly, switching to energy saving light bulbs and installing thermostatic radiator valves - all stuff that any environmentally concerned citizen should be doing anyway.

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Breaking the Silence – a play; report by Lois Kirby

Breaking the Silence was a one woman monologue on the life of Rachel Carson, written and performed by the actress Liz Rothschild.

In it she told eloquently the story of Rachel Carson's life. She struggled to be taken seriously as a female scientist in the 1950s and had to fight government policy and commercial interests in order to be heard, and to get published.

She was also brave enough to admit to emotional involvement in her subject, a scientific heresy that still prevails today. But it is this that makes her message so powerful.

Liz Rothschild spent four years researching the piece and was given access to field notes and to personal letters. Thus the voice she gave to Rachel Carson was entirely authentic.

After the performance, the actress hosted a discussion of the play and its issues. She also explained her own background and interests. She is married to an organic farmer, and is involved with pesticide action groups.

The play was performed at the Edinburgh Festival after which it went on tour. I saw it at the Croydon Warehouse.

The solar panel experience (cont'd)

The bottom line

The total cost of the solar system was £4,000, or £3,667 taking into account the grant (and the council's fee). The new boiler cost around £2,500.

I estimate that we are now saving at least £300-400 annually at current prices, though I won't know for sure until we have completed a full year with the new system. This implies that the whole system will pay for itself in 15 years, or about 10 if you don't need a new boiler. All while saving 1.8 tonnes of CO2 per year (based on my calculation of 35 kWh/day saved).

So it is economically viable, and very good for the planet - we haven't regretted it for a minute. But it is expensive up front, and that means for many it will be out of range. More grants please Gordon!

Climate change letter (cont'd)

householders and communities to invest in installing their own small-scale renewable energy technologies by guaranteeing a long-term premium payment for the energy they produce.

In view of the importance of democratic local rights, and the seriousness of the climate change situation, I urge you to support the proposals and amendments.

With many thanks in anticipation for your attention and support.

Note – Richard Comaish has similarly contacted Jacqui Lait and Graham Hemington has contacted John Horam.

FoE's Change Your World – Staying Ahead

Under Tony Juniper's inspired leadership, Friends of the Earth grew in reputation and size. When he stepped down, the Board replaced him with Andy Atkins and James Whiting. So who are they and where are they taking us? And where do local groups fit in? We asked them to tell us in their own words.

On who does what

Andy is Executive Director, responsible to the Board for the overall leadership of Friends of the Earth, particularly ensuring soundness of vision and strategy. He'll represent Friends of the Earth and its campaigns at high level externally, with the media and policy makers, major donors, supporters and key coalitions. James is Managing Director, reporting to Andy and responsible for the effective internal functioning of Friends of the Earth and implementation of strategy, including managing the senior management team.

On leadership

Leadership is a broad subject and many of you will have ample experience so we'll highlight just three aspects. First, there are leadership functions required to lead any group: maintaining clarity of purpose, aims, and activities; organising and resourcing the group; and ensuring the people involved are motivated, equipped, guided and coordinated.

A second point is the importance of diffused leadership. Key leadership functions can be provided to the group by different people. Everyone will naturally be stronger at some functions than others, so the best leaders

encourage others to contribute to leadership to ensure that all of these elements are provided.

Thirdly, and critical for anyone who aspires to influence others, is self-leadership. This is the ability to motivate and manage yourself — prioritising, managing emotions to build and sustain relationships, continuing to learn, and modelling the attitudes and behaviours you wish to see in others.

On our priorities

Friends of the Earth is rolling out an ambitious new five-year strategy which aims to tackle the overarching environmental crises of climate change and biodiversity loss, underpinned with work on sustainable economics and rights and justice. An immediate priority is to bring clarity and closure, particularly by tying up a few remaining loose ends in the strategic plan.

We're still in an intensive orientation phase so our thoughts on next steps are provisional. We want to move fast to build on the organisation's great strengths — the expertise and commitment of its strong local groups network and staff body, its reputation and its membership of a unique international network.

Focusing our national campaigns on two overarching issues will require greater collaboration between teams within Friends of the Earth and externally. It will also require more effective communication to link our longstanding work (on waste, recycling, transport etc) to the two overall aims. / *cont'd next page*

FoE's Change Your World – Feeding and Fuelling Europe

Real Food campaigner, Kirtana Chandrasekaran, writes about an exciting new international project to reduce the impact of Europe's destructive soya consumption.

As the world's largest importer of soyameal, and second largest importer of soyabeans, the European Union has a major influence on global soya trade. Our ever-growing demand for soya to feed livestock and increasingly to fuel our cars is bad news for wildlife, communities and the environment in big exporter countries in South America. It's also creating an unsustainable future for our food and farming in the European Union.

Later this year, a coalition of 20 international Friends of the Earth groups and Via Campesina, the European wing of the biggest farmers' organisation in the world, will launch a global project to raise awareness of the impacts of European consumption of animal feeds and fuels. This includes soya for both animal feed and biofuels — both of which compete for land and are responsible for diverting food away from those that need it the most.

This exciting project includes Friends of the Earth groups from across Europe and in Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay. It is a great example of our global grassroots network coming together to influence policy making around the world. Over the course of the next year, the Feeding and Fuelling Europe project will publish on-the-ground reports from South America and provide a platform for speakers from affected

communities to share their experiences across Europe. Through this unique international partnership, and our forthcoming UK livestock campaign, we'll build a united front of farmers and campaigners here and around the world.

CYW – Staying Ahead (cont'd)

The increasingly dynamic context means we also have to become more flexible and agile in how we allocate resources and take other decisions in response to opportunities and threats. And we have to maintain and enhance our thought leadership — presenting credible, accessible analysis of today's environmental problems alongside compelling solutions, to win the public and political support necessary to deliver just and sustainable development.

On local groups

We're both honoured to have been appointed to lead Friends of the Earth. But local groups have a pivotal leadership role too - leading our strategy at ground level, providing local environmental leadership, and providing the majority of our Board members. We rely on you to tackle local environmental problems by influencing local decision-makers to adopt the right solutions. We rely on you to help others connect these with the big picture of global warming and catastrophic rates of biodiversity loss. And we rely on your strategic and tactical advice. How do you rate Friends of the Earth's leadership in your area? What could you contribute to it?

FoE's Change Your World – Leading the Revolution

After the October 25th Day of Action, our Renewables campaign moves into its second phase - building massive community support for a home-grown energy revolution. Local Activism Coordinator, Neil Kingsnorth explains what happens next.

Renewable grassroots power

In my job working with Friends of the Earth local campaign groups I am privileged to be able to get a real sense of the power of our activist network as a whole. When travelling to small towns, big cities and communities of all sizes, I meet what is without doubt the most effective, skilled, knowledgeable and inspiring collection of grassroots environmental campaigners in the country.

But I'm not the only one to recognise that — community groups, organisations, businesses, politicians and the media all know our name. They know our reputation for winning campaigns and they listen to what we have to say. They look to us to take a lead on advocating genuine solutions to environmental problems.

On 25 October this year, the full force of our grassroots network will be focused on the Renewables Day of Action. Groups across the country will be out on the streets building the pressure on a crucial issue at a critical time. The pressure you build on that day will, we hope, make the Government re-think and fully commit to the EU target of creating 15 per cent of our energy in the UK from domestic renewable sources by 2020.

Delivering the goods

Of course, setting targets is one thing. Delivering on them is quite another.

Once we've put pressure on the UK Government to commit to a proper target, we need to make sure it starts delivering on that target. The Government has said it will publish a strategy for how to meet the EU target next spring. There are a number of policies that we want them to adopt in that strategy which would lead to a genuine, lasting renewables revolution. We're working hard right now to achieve the level of detail we need.

This is where we need you - as part of that powerful network - to lead again. The Renewables Campaign Day of Action will create the pressure to act. The next step is creating the political space in which the Government can deliver.

Doing our bit

To convince the Government to take the steps necessary to transform our energy landscape, we need to show them that there is plenty of grassroots support out there. Instead of seeing it as a political gamble, we want the Government to know that there is widespread support for delivering a strong strategy for an energy revolution.

We need them to know that the country wants it and that it's not just the usual 'greenies' making the noise. Essentially, we need to convince other groups, organisations, businesses and

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FoE's CYW – Leading the Revolution - *continued*

institutions across communities all over the UK to show their support for a lasting, home-grown, renewable energy revolution.

Putting pressure where it's needed is something you're seriously good at. After the Renewables Day of Action it's time to focus attention again, this time with you taking the lead in your own community.

Here's how it works

It's all about building up a broad level of support from your community for our demands. During the Day of Action you will have got a lot of postcards signed by individuals on the streets by asking them to support the campaign. After the Day of Action we're asking you to do the same sort of thing, but this time approaching community groups and businesses and asking them to sign a special postcard as a group, to support the campaign.

We'll provide you with everything you need and the Action Guide will be packed full of information and advice, tactics and ideas. We'll help you identify the various types of groups, organisations and businesses that exist in your community; work out how to prioritise who to go to and make sure you can get them on board.

You can then approach local shops, community groups and businesses in your area and ask them to add their support to the campaign by signing a postcard. MPs receiving the cards will get a sense of cross-community support and we'll keep a record of the different community representatives all

over the country that are backing the campaign.

If you or groups in your community want to get more involved than just signing a card, we'll provide extra ideas and resources. For example, you could take representatives from a wide spectrum of community groups to see your MP or send out a joint press release with quotes from various organisations.

At the same time ...

Friends of the Earth is a founding member of Stop Climate Chaos coalition — a coalition of 80 organisations campaigning together on climate change. Stop Climate Chaos is launching a new energy campaign looking to stop the plans for massive investment in coal-fired power stations and push for a renewable energy-powered future instead.

Friends of the Earth has helped develop the plans for the renewables side of that work and we'll be engaging with the campaign fully as it progresses. Where there are ways that you can get involved, we'll be sure to let you know.

The coming months provide really exciting opportunities to create lasting change to the energy make-up of this country and in doing so start to tackle climate change head on. With your help Friends of the Earth will be leading that change forward, from the grassroots right up to the national level.

What is the Peace Pledge Union?

The Peace Pledge Union is an independent organisation of individuals from all walks of life. Their shared belief is that war and violent conflict are neither necessary nor inevitable. Their shared aim is to work towards creating a just world free from war.

After centuries of war it's clear that possession of weapons does not prevent war. Nor have weapons created security or lasting peace.

In fact, the possession of weapons has itself been the spark of violence. Armed violence has killed, maimed and devastated the lives of many millions of people. It has depleted and destroyed our environments and sown the seeds of present day conflicts and wars. Wars and preparations for them absorb vast human and financial resources and impoverish us all. But none of this need be so.

Violent conflicts and wars are endorsed by social and political acceptance. Children learn it very young. Most are taught that it's wrong to harm and kill; yet almost from birth they receive the opposite message. Whether from violence-condoning toys, games and films, or from adult society's aggressive behaviour, attitudes and policies, the implication - that violence can be acceptable - is there. Because it's apparently unquestioned, we can grow up thinking that violence is 'all right'.

Children are among the most vulnerable of human beings. Yet some societies conscript children as young as seven into their armies. Some societies (including the UK) operate

foreign policies leading to the deaths of thousands of children world-wide.

Few societies are immune to such child abuse. If we agree that the care and education of children are important priorities, we should be urgently raising awareness of the causes of violent conflict and looking for the means to prevent it, at all levels, at all costs.

As long as there's been violent conflict there have been individuals and groups striving to prevent it and create social conditions in which violence need not arise. Working for a peaceful future takes many forms, from refusing to take part in war and violence, to promoting and practising education for peace and the creation of humanitarian international laws. The PPU's annual White Poppy campaign challenges 'popular' assumptions about war, and spotlights creative techniques of conflict prevention and conflict resolution.

Most of us want a world at peace. But many find it hard to see how armed violence can be prevented, and believe that sometimes it's an acceptable means of solving problems. If we think in this unquestioning way, we're prevented from devising and exploring creative alternatives to violent conflict and war. Only those alternatives - non-violent, positive, life-enhancing - will lead to a safer world, in which children can grow up not even knowing how or why to point a gun.

For more information about the PPU please visit www.ppu.org.uk or phone 020-7424-9444.

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Letters to the Editor

Why not write us a letter if you have a strong opinion on something or just want to share your thoughts. Send them in and perhaps even start a discussion - who knows.

Need a lift to meetings?

If you require a lift to Bromley FoE meetings, please contact Ray Watson on the number shown above.

Disclaimer

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

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

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

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

Non-members' Section

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

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

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

Please return this form to: **Bromley FoE, 2 Bucks Cross Cottages, Chelsfield Village, Orpington, Kent, BR6 7RN**. Other enquiries regarding the group should be sent to: Birch House, Grays Road, Westerham, Kent, TN16 2JB; phone 01959-571566, email raywatson@iclway.co.uk.

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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