



Friends of the Earth

Bromley

November 2011 No. 287 Newsletter

Bromley FoE: inquiries to Birch House, Grays Road, Westerham TN16 2JB
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November Meeting

**Friends Meeting House,
Ravensbourne Road, Bromley**

Global Problems, Global Solutions

Some positive solutions to the complex environmental problems facing our planet. The transition from "The Fossil-Fuel Age" to "The Solar Age"

Richard Priestley

writer, environmentalist, speaker, teacher and gardener

Tuesday 1st November - 7.30pm.

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Copy for the next Newsletter must be with the Editor by
SUNDAY 20TH NOVEMBER. Contact details inside front cover.

Christmas is getting closer – Christmas meal info on page 2

Diary dates:

Nov 1st (Tues)	Bromley FoE's November meeting: Richard Priestly on Global Problems: Global Solutions
Dec 6th (Tues)	Bromley FoE's December meeting. It's Festive Fayre time again
Jan 3rd (Tues)	Bromley FoE's January meeting and AGM

Would you like to have a Christmas meal?

We are looking at the possibility of FoE members going out for a Christmas meal. If we get sufficient people (twenty) Croft Tearoom could put on an evening meal for us on Thursday 8th December, based on the menu below.

However, if there are more people who are available and would prefer this to be a daytime event, they are serving this menu at lunchtimes between 1st and 21st December.

Alternatively, if everybody is just too busy during December, when there are usually so many different events on, we might instead wait until the New Year and go to one of the Croft Tearoom's regular Sunday lunches.

We are hoping to take soundings and come to a decision at our 1st November meeting, but it would be most helpful if you could telephone Ivy on 01689 872642 ahead of that to indicate your interest and your preference of type of event. The Christmas menu is shown below.

CHRISTMAS MENU

Courtesy Glass of Mulled Wine or Sparkling Cranberry
Parsnip Soup

Turkey & Kent Sausage Platter *OR* Vegetarian Roast
(Both served with Root Vegetable Mash, Buttered Sprouts
& Carrots and home-made Chestnut Stuffing)

Kent Ice Cream (Christmas pudding flavour) *OR* Home-made Mince Pie & Cream
Tea/Coffee & Chocolate

£16.50

Meals are made by our Cook in our own kitchen and we source our produce from small, local farmers & producers.

Next Newsletter - copy details:

Any news, articles, poems, questions, views etc for the next Newsletter must be with the editor **by SUNDAY 20TH 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, reasons

October Meeting Report – from Annette Rose

We were given a very interesting and thought provoking talk from Dr. Howard Lee, Lecturer and Sustainability Champion at Hadlow College. Degrees in sustainability and agriculture are taught at Hadlow. The college has links with other Universities and colleges including The University of Brighton.

Dr. Lee began by outlining how there has been a national decline in agricultural teaching, with many colleges having closed. Research in farming has been slashed at the very time when it has become important for the country to grow its own food.

The high cost of oil has led to an economic decline and the general trend continues to be up despite variations. As demand of oil exceeds supply, we are likely to see global shocks. We are also at post peak for gas and supply is declining as demand is rising. This is a cause for concern as our way of life is dependent on oil and gas.

Dr. Lee explained that the Transition Town Movement has evolved at a time of peak oil and growing anxieties about our dependency on fossil fuels. Rob Hoskins is the founder of the transition movement and has written 'The Transition Companion' about the ideas behind communities becoming more self sufficient.

Dr. Lee showed a slide on what would happen in a 'Life without Lorries'. By Day 2 there would be little food on the shelves of supermarkets as they work on a 'just in time' basis and people would over buy in a panic situation.

By Day 4 most of the country would be paralysed and by Day 5 there would be severe disruption in many areas of life. He pointed out that our infrastructure is very fragile.

Agriculture is highly developed in Britain with an enormous range of knowledge and skills held by our farmers. Despite a great deal of government interference, they have continued to do a good job. Most medium sized farms have farmers that have to work very hard to make a living. Wheat yields have increased over time but are beginning to level off. Most food grown in this country needs fossil fuel inputs. Every calorie of food grown takes 10 calories of fossil fuel energy. It is worrying that there is a growing trend of the loss of agricultural land in Britain. This is partly due to new laws which put more control with local communities and building developments could be in favour over protecting agricultural land.

In the 1960s we had a Green Revolution'. Gordon Conway has proposed that we need a second Green Revolution now to change people's way of thinking. How self sufficient are we in food? The level is slowly going down and is at 60% at present. On a good day we could feed between two-thirds and three quarters of the population. We are able to export wheat but import many vegetables. We could produce more if the government saw it as a priority. There has been a surge of interest in food security and the scientific community is aware of its importance. A report entitled 'Foresight /continued on page 6

Transport info, from Ray Watson

Unseen killer

You cannot see it, but you can smell it – and it is dangerous to your health. Air pollution in the capital is getting worse, despite what the politicians say. So much so, that London is in danger of having to pay huge fines for failing to meet EU standards – and that is your money and mine.

The capital's pollution from traffic fumes has now breached EU rules for more than 35 days this year and this could lead to a fine of £300 million.

A warning about the danger was raised by Green Party MEP Jean Lambert. She has written to the European Commission calling for tougher action against the British government, which is asking for a longer period to reach EU targets.

She said; 'The fact that London has the dirtiest air in the UK is an utter disgrace. The mayor has added to the problem by rolling back the western extension to the congestion zone and by delaying by two years the third phase of the Low Emission Zone. I urge the mayor and the government to take the necessary action to clean up London's air for good'.

Friends of the Earth is also working to reduce traffic fumes. Jenny Bates, an air pollution campaigner, said that in the UK 29,000 premature deaths a year were caused by air pollution, of which 4200 were in London. 'It is outrageous that we are continuing to breathe this dirty air and that Ministers have not done enough to comply with EU limits', she said.

Slowly does it!

Sustrans, a national environmental transport group, is inviting Londoners to appeal to the candidates in next year's mayoral election to pledge to introduce a 20 miles an hour limit on roads controlled by the mayor. About 30 organisations, including FoE, are supporting the appeal. You can take part by obtaining a postcard from Sustrans on 020 7017 2352.

Boris Island back again

The mayor's much-derided dream of building a new London airport on an island on the Kent side of the Thames has come back in focus following the release of new government figures on airport capacity. These claimed that Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted would reach full capacity by 2030.

Immediately, one of the mayor's team, Daniel Moylan, deputy chair of the mayor's transport authority, was calling for government action to provide more runways, calling the figures 'an urgent wake-up call'. However, the aviation minister, Theresa Villiers, responded by saying provincial airports would handle the extra traffic. We trust that does not include Biggin Hill Airport.

The figures from the Department for Transport estimated that by 2030 Heathrow would handle 85 million passengers against today's 65 million.

One aviation pressure group claimed that the lack of flight slots would mean that people in the South East would have to abandon short-haul flights to Europe. If that drives passengers on to the railways, then perhaps it is a sort of silver lining!

FoE's 40th Anniversary Local Groups Conference 2011 – Dan Sloan

(continued from October issue)

Saturday 10th September commenced with a presentation titled "The Road to the Future" led by Craig Bennett and Jo Jenkins

Craig introduced the session by outlining the way ahead for FoE over the next 40 years, referring to it as the Perfect Storm. He discussed the increasing problems we will be seeing in forthcoming years, demands we will see over the next 20 years relating to population increase, but also pointed out that these demands create massive opportunities. He explained the need to plan projects and how we move to a sustainable future, how we must take the big journey as a whole and break it down into practical steps. FoE have been putting together rough ideas of route maps to the future of campaigning - he outlined the "quick and dirty" route map drafted early this year, and how they link in with the new campaigns.

These are the 5 areas FoE believe they can have a positive role:

- 1 Climate and Energy Security
- 2 Land Use Food and Water Security
- 3 Nature and Ecosystems Security
- 4 Economics and Resources
- 5 Fair and Planned Transition (to sustainability)

This was an absolutely excellent presentation. Craig has agreed to talk to the group if we can find a suitable date for both him and us - this would be a unmissable group meeting!

A further superb workshop was "Weaning the World - consumption" also chaired by Craig Bennett with Dr

Michael Warhurst (senior campaigner) and Dr Alan Knight (sustainability director for B&Q and other companies, chair of Peat Task Force).

On Sunday at a planning workshop for the forthcoming Energy Campaign - taking the Energy Campaign to the Public, we came up with and discussed ideas of how the campaign could be run to catch the attention and collaboration of the general public.

Motions to the conference were debated and voted for on Sunday morning with the following results:

Motion (1) Better Planning Protection for Agricultural Land: *Bromley FoE voted FOR - Conference voted FOR*

Motion (2) Environmental Improvement of 23 Million Homes: *Bromley FoE voted AGAINST - Conference voted AGAINST*

Motion (3) Campaign for Short Public Information Films about Climate Change on Television: *Bromley FoE voted AGAINST - Conference voted AGAINST*

Motion (4) Campaigning on Polar Climatic Changes as a Driver for Attitudinal Change: *Bromley voted AGAINST - Conference voted FOR*

Motion (5) Climate Change International Boycott Campaign: *I voted AGAINST on behalf of Bromley after hearing the arguments - Conference voted AGAINST*

Motion (6) Personal Allowances and Fair Shares: *Bromley voted AGAINST - Conference voted AGAINST*
/continued on next page

October report and FoE Conference report – *both continued*

Food and Farming Report' January 2011 is an important report. The report suggests that we need to produce more food from less land with less impact on the environment. Science may help to make this happen to a certain extent but Dr. Lee feels we need to have a Plan B.

He mentioned organic farming and posed the question 'Can organic farming feed the world?' He thinks it is possible although it would mean that populations would have to cut their consumption of meat to 2 or 3 times a week. He explained that organic farms are dependent on fossil fuels to drive tractors as they have to weed more so are not necessarily zero carbon.

The population is not evenly distributed. 80% of British citizens live in urban areas. So when thinking about food security, this is the biggest challenge. There are already some groups that are working on this including the London Farmers Markets and the Transition Towns.

Dr. Lee went into some detail about Kent and its land use. He suggested that more open spaces could be used for food production. The 'Food Footprint' is the area needed to feed the population of a town. He suggested that we need more community led schemes to increase the amount of food grown for a local area. He called these 'Integrated Development Areas.' These may consist of several parishes. They would encourage people to work together to access food, water and energy. If people work together, they become very powerful. There could be better use of back gardens and

community allotments for vegetables, fruit and chickens.

So far little has happened to make areas more self sufficient. In Dr. Lee's view it will take a number of 'food shocks' to change people's behaviour and the government will have to raise the issue up the national agenda. The price of food will need to go up. At present, food is cheap. In the 1940s, people spent twice what we spend now. In the future, it may become attractive for groups to grow their own food but the food will need to be guarded. We also need to reduce our wastage of food.

Conference report, *continued*

For full information on each Motion (Statement of intent; Background information; FoE Staff Response) please refer to the FoE website: http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/event_background_documents/motions_paper_2011.pdf

The conference concluded with the John Preedy Memorial Lecture, this year presented by Kate Pickett, co-author of the groundbreaking book "The Spirit Level - Why Equality is Better for Everyone." This was a faultlessly presented graphical lecture on how inequality leads to different social conditions.

The book written in collaboration with Richard Wilkinson is now available in paperback at £10.99 and a really enlightening read! More information may be obtained on their website: www.equalitytrust.org.

Richard Priestley. Global Problems: Global Solutions

Humanity faces a complex network of interlinked problems and challenges: climate change, ocean acidification, loss of biodiversity, resource depletion, hunger, poverty, global financial instability, unemployment, population growth, myriad forms of pollution, inequality and injustice. The list is long. Deep concern and worry are very human reactions.

There is also much to feel very positive about. A tremendous diversity of grassroots groups are emerging in every country on Earth, demanding and working to create a better, more ecologically sustainable, fairer and more just world. Simultaneously a cleantech revolution is unfolding that shows the possibilities for our species making the transition from 'The Fossil Fuel Age' to 'The Solar Age'.

My work focuses on studying and presenting the people, places and projects at the cutting edge of this change. Some towns and villages are now in the 'post transition' phase. Their dependence of fossil fuels is reduced to zero as they now generate all their energy needs, for heat, transport and electricity, for domestic, commercial and industrial uses, all from locally sourced, owned and controlled renewable energy resources. The business case for going radically green is becoming clearer by the day.

By studying the most ecologically sustainable and socially just examples of best practice across sectors as diverse as energy generation, governance, building, transport and

farming, we learn important lessons for how we might better manage our own towns, cities and countryside. The opportunities to create sustainable forms of prosperity for all humanity are almost limitless. Radical and systemic change is necessary, possible and desirable.

I present my positive and solution focused ideas to audiences of all types in all the ways I know how. I'm writing a book, a blog and have published a couple of articles, give talks to many and diverse audiences.

Bromley FoE's AGM - Your chance to shine!

January's group meeting is also our annual general meeting – and it gives you the chance to make an impact on the work we do. Officers and campaigners are up for election and it would boost the amount of campaigning we do if you would join them in taking on a task. How much time you spend, or what job you would like to take on, is entirely your decision; no one pushes you to do more than you wish.

Bromley FoE looks like having a busy programme in 2012 and your extra support would ensure that we keep the environment well to the fore in the crucial days ahead.

Please talk to Ann, Sheila or Ray about thoughts and ideas you may have to add your efforts to the work already being done.

You will find it very satisfying!

Shell continues abuse in the Niger Delta

The Anglo-Dutch oil giant Shell has contributed to human rights abuses in the Niger Delta by paying huge sums to armed militias, campaigners have claimed. The campaign group Platform, in conjunction with other NGOs including Friends of the Earth, said it had evidence that Shell had made routine payments to militias, exacerbating the conflicts.

This is appalling news since we know that oil excavation in Nigeria is resulting in terrible pollution to the land and air and causing struggling farmers and villagers to lose their livelihoods and suffer permanent ill health. The Nigerian government has been criticised for failing to protect the rights of its citizens, and Shell has strongly denied its role in hiring militias.

Transition Totnes and its influence

The Transition Movement has grown enormously since the recession hit three years ago and is now operating in 35 countries throughout the world.

When the first transition town was established five years ago in Totnes, the 'experiment' was simple - working to create a more sustainable community without so much dependence on oil. By 2008, there were 100 registered initiatives in 11 countries, and today there are 850 Transitions in three times as many countries.

The founder Bob Hoskins has stated that 'communities are realising that they are more vulnerable, and the current situation means that people are less complacent about where the economic

activity of the future is going to come from'. The movement is about ordinary people making things happen, and this is often in the urban environment which is interesting.

Disposing of energy efficient lightbulbs - An FoE member writes:

I have been using eco-bulbs (light bulbs); they last a long time, but my first one failed. I replaced it and then wondered how I would dispose of it responsibly, so I phoned the recycling team at Bromley and was told they had no special allocated sites for them.

I was told to wrap it in newspaper and put it in my ordinary rubbish. I said "No, I am not going to do that because they contain mercury. The lady went away to get further advice, came back and said "Yes, they do contain mercury but it's only a very little bit!"

I then spoke to someone at FoE Head Office and he said that the government had decreed that all councils must arrange for these to be responsibly disposed of.

So where do we go from here? Should we lobby the council to fulfil their obligations? In the mean time, said light bulb is still sitting on my table.

Maybe FoE group members can shed some 'light' on this for me.

Replies via the editor, please.

Civic Voice, CAAT, and Campaigns info

Civic Voice says – Campaign Success on Neighbourhood Planning.

Civic Voice and the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) have welcomed a Government amendment to the Localism Bill which clarifies the purpose and role of business-led neighbourhood forums, echoing as it does an amendment at Committee Stage promoted by Civic Voice and the RTPI and tabled by Baroness Whitaker.

The Government amendment tidies up a clause in the Localism Bill which would have left business-led neighbourhood forums free to engage in positive planning without the express purpose of promoting or improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of an area. If successful, the amendment means that neighbourhood forums, whether resident or business-led, will have the same powers and the same overall purposes.

CAAT says - UK continues to sell arms to unsavoury regimes even as repression continues

Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) says that the government has failed to respond adequately to critics of arms sales to repressive regimes in the Middle East and North Africa. In a written statement Foreign Secretary William Hague stated that there were no fundamental flaws with the UK arms export licensing system, although mechanisms should be strengthened to enable revised risk categorisation,

quicker response and "immediate licensing suspension to countries experiencing a sharp increase in insecurity."

Yet, recently released government figures reveal that the UK government continued to issue licences for arms exports to Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and other authoritarian states in the Middle East and North Africa, even as popular protests swept the region.

From April to June 2011 licences were approved for military and dual-use equipment to the region totalling £2,023 million. Weaponry ranged from combat aircraft to ammunition, body armour and components.

Campaigns info, Ann Garrett

Many thanks to the 3 people who helped with the street stall on Oct 15th. We collected some 20 signatures on the new Big Energy Conversation stage 2 petition. No leaflets were available yet from national FoE so we attracted the attention of the public with a slogan and signs about reducing high energy bills.

The two main objectives on the petition to be sent to David Cameron, are:

1. To launch an independent enquiry into the Big Six's power over consumers and influence over politicians and
2. Not to axe support for clean British energy produced by communities, councils, businesses and householders. The whole emphasis of the campaign is to stop the big energy companies ripping us off!

Campaign against Climate Change – from their latest newsletter

The countdown to this year's COP has begun:

Stand up for Climate Justice with us on Saturday December 3rd.

Before that there's the chance to discuss the issues at our Climate Justice Conference on Saturday 12th November. This is at the Institute of Education from 12noon to 5pm. See <http://www.campaigncc.org/> for more details.

Countdown to Durban – Stand up for Climate Justice!

March in London, halfway through the international climate negotiations in Durban

This year the floods in Pakistan have returned displacing 5 million and killing hundreds. Last year's floods were the worst in living memory with 20 million affected and 2,000 killed. Last year also saw record breaking temperatures in Russia with wildfires and crop failures while this year we have seen the latest in a series of exceptional droughts in East Africa causing famine in Somalia.

The frequency and severity of weather related disasters is on the increase and scientists tell us this is due to human-induced climate change caused overwhelmingly by the high emissions and high consuming lifestyles of richer countries like our own.

It's the poorest and most vulnerable around the world - many of them in Africa where this year's climate talks

are being held - who have done the least to cause the problem but who are suffering the most. And all this is set to get worse. Yet climate change and the conversion to a low carbon economy are routinely dismissed as minor concerns.

Join us and stand up for climate justice on Saturday 3rd December midway through the Durban Climate Talks. Put the date in your diary now. Watch out for more details at www.campaigncc.org/standupforclimatejustice

ReUser Item (2)

Two nearly new high quality 15" CRT computer monitors available for a small donation towards Bromley FoE.

Contact Peter Gandolfi, 01689-831826

ReUser Item (3)

Wooden chairs available. They are not suitable for long periods sitting at the computer.

Two wooden chairs with metal frames, two wooden chairs with PVC seats, and four wooden chairs that are unsafe to sit on, but the wood could be used for something else.

Contact Tamara Galloway, 01689-855352

Bromley Friends of the Earth - List of Contacts

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Letters to the Editor

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

Need a lift to meetings?

If you require a lift to Bromley FoE meetings, please contact Ray Watson or Sheila Brown on the numbers shown above.

Disclaimer

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

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

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

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

Non-members' Section

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

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

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

Please return this form to: **Bromley FoE, 2 Bucks Cross Cottages, Chelsfield Village, Orpington, Kent, BR6 7RN**. Other enquiries regarding the group should be sent to: Birch House, Grays Road, Westerham, Kent, TN16 2JB; phone 01959-571566, email r.watson865@btinternet.com.

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

Name.....

Address.....

..... Postcode.....

Email Address.....

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

.....