



**friends of
the earth
Bromley**



October 2016

No. 346

ewsletter

Bromley FoE: enquiries:

email: bromleyfoe@gmail.com, website: www.bromleyfoe.co.uk

October Meeting

Friends Meeting House, Ravensbourne Road, Bromley

Barney Smyth – Fairtrade Foundation

How Fair is your Coffee?

What are the challenges facing farmers

Does 'Fairtrade' really mean fair trade?

Tuesday 4th October – 7.30pm

In this Issue:

Diary Dates	2	Hinkley Pt - Greenpeace	12
Woodland visit	2	Hinkley Pt - Paul	11
September mtg report	3,5	Paris Accord	14,15,18
Waste4Fuel	4,6	FoE Air pollution	15
Church Hse Gdns	6	Fairtrade conference	16
Miller's Mutterings	7	In the firing line	17,18
Freshwater Habitats	8,9	Pledge for Env'ment	18
Climate and Energy	9	Bromley contacts	19
FoE Campaigns info	10,11	Non-members page	20
FoE Opencast coal	11		

Copy for the next Newsletter must be with the Editor by

***** SUNDAY 16TH OCTOBER *****

Contact details inside front cover.

Diary dates:

Oct 4 (Tue)	Bromley FoE's October Meeting Barney Smyth – Fairtrade Foundation plus Traidcraft stall
Oct 15 (Sat)	Campaign stall in The Mall (Bromley), 2.30pm – 4.30pm
Oct 16 (Sun)	Outing – Goudhurst (see below)
Nov 1 (Tue)	Bromley FoE's November Meeting plus Traidcraft stall
Dec 6 (Tue)	Bromley FoE's December Meeting and Seasonal Social

October meeting – How Fair is your Coffee?

We have become a nation of coffee drinkers!

The UK now consumes 2½ times as much coffee as tea! The general public have engaged with the idea of fairly traded coffee and other products, which are now widely available – but how does this translate in the commercial world?

Visit to David Scott's Woodland on Sunday 16th October

Visit to David Scott's Woodland on Sunday 16th October at 1.30pm at Scobb Farm, Jarvis Lane, Goudhurst, Kent TN17 1LP.

Apple picking and pressing will be taking place, also chance to see bee hives that are kept in the woodland.

More details will be given at the October Meeting or contact David Scott on 07941-017844

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

Next Newsletter - copy details:

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

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.

September meeting report – John and Sue Boccock

The Climate Crisis: Did the Paris Agreement save us ??

Our speaker Asad Rehman began his talk by outlining the context in which climate change is taking place. It is most acutely felt by those who are least responsible for its cause and those living in the poorer countries. Climate justice means addressing the climate crisis as well as its causes. One in three people (3 billion worldwide) are without access to clean energy, one in ten people (nearly 700 million) are without access to fresh water. There are 30,000 avoidable deaths each day.

Continuing with his global inequality theme, Asad gave us the following statistics: 85 families own as much wealth as 3.5 billion people. The richest 1% own 50% of global wealth. The poorest 80% own 5.5% of global wealth. 10% of the population is responsible for 50% of global emissions.

The huge disparities of wealth are clearly illustrated by comparing America where 5% of the population earns an average annual wage of \$41,064 with India where 18% of the population earns only \$3,148. Wealth has been accumulated by burning fossil fuels and exploiting the natural resources of other countries.

James Hansen, a NASA scientist, discovered evidence from the Antarctic suggesting that sea levels could rise ten times faster than previously, and predicted that that meant 10 feet by 2065. The authors included this chilling warning: "We conclude that multi-

metre sea-level rise would become practically unavoidable" if emissions aren't cut.

Asad continued by giving us more details of what is happening to our climate including the following:

- A record 14 consecutive hottest months have been recorded
- A record 3 consecutive hottest years have been recorded
- Vanishing Arctic Sea ice
- Bleaching of Great Barrier Reef
- Breached symbolic CO2 levels which are now at 400 parts per million.

The impact can be seen in the following:

- Failing agriculture
- Greater food insecurity
- More intense droughts and floods – Pakistan 30 million affected
- Typhoons and hurricanes – typhoon Huyain 7,000 dead, 2 million made homeless
- Water shortages – Sahel drought 23 million affected and 3.5 million displaced
- Extreme weather – the Indian heat-wave this year saw temperatures reach 51 °C.

Commenting on the Paris agreement, Asad described it as "An important diplomatic triumph" holding the global temperature increase to well below 2°C. This is the first time there has been an agreement to limit the increase in warming to 1.5°C and that efforts can be made to eradicate poverty.

/continued on page 5

Waste4Fuel breakthrough – Bromley Council has now completed the purchase of the land in question

Annette Rose writes: We had some good news that there had been a breakthrough with the former Waste4Fuel site. Bromley Council had announced a deal to purchase the land which means clearance could begin.

However there are still concerns.

BFoE has responded with this letter.

We are very pleased to read your news regarding the clearance of the rubbish mountain at the former Waste4Fuel site in Orpington.

When the due process of the law is completed, Bromley Friends of the Earth sincerely hope that there will be stringent adherence to the environmental policy guidelines, as set out in the National Policy Statement for Waste Legislation, during the waste removal.

Can you also reassure us that consideration is going to be given to the following points?

1. Due to the proximity of the site to the Ruxley Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) the Environment Agency monitors daily the level of any contamination and seepage into the adjacent waterways and ensures that it is not breached
2. The removal of any hazardous waste is disposed of without endangering human health and the disposal is undertaken in a safe and sustainable fashion
3. The London Fire Authority continue to monitor safety and any

possible fire hazards during the clearance

4. The EA continues to closely monitor that the levels of air pollution stays within permitted levels
5. The waste is removed to an approved and registered disposal site
6. Any future use of the land does not have any detrimental impact on the SSSI and the welfare of the local residents.

We believe that the local residents are pleased with the news of the conclusion of this long-running saga, but they are anxious to hear that there are definite dates to begin and to complete the site clean-up.

Waste4Fuel land deal complete

As this newsletter was being compiled, Bromley Council issued a press release announcing successful completion of the land deal. Here's an extract from it.

A land deal which will finally allow work to remove the rubbish mountain on the former Waste4fuel site in Orpington to begin, has now been successfully completed.

The breakthrough follows months of complicated negotiations between the Environment Agency and the former landowner, brokered by Bromley Council, who had previously announced the deal 'in principle' last month.

/continued on page 6

September meeting report - *continued*

A climate solution has to be fair. No single country can protect its own climate by reducing its own emissions or solve its own climate problems. Countries must be persuaded to co-operate with others to seek solutions. Success is most likely to be achieved if countries do co-operate.

Did we win or did we lose ??

Climate will never be resolved in one fell swoop. It's a study against powerful vested interests. Climate change will create a new class of migrants.

Secretary of State John Kerry warned a conference in Alaska in August 2015: "You think migration is a challenge to Europe today ... Wait until you see what happens when there is an absence of water, an absence of food ... The day could come, if we don't respond rapidly, you could have millions of climate refugees. You could have people moving from whole areas where today you can grow things ... "

Whether political or climate refugees, 3,500 people died in the Mediterranean last year and already this year this number has been exceeded.

The International Red Cross has said there are now more environmental than political refugees. 83% of all refugees and displaced people stay within developing countries. Those that do make it to developed countries tend to be the educated or those with access to money / support.

Asad posed the rhetorical question – How can we be successful? We need to build power by some of the following means:

- Change how we produce and consume energy and food
- Stop deforestation
- Offer justice for impacted people
- A just transition for workers

Finally, we were given some good news.

China has always been called the bogeyman of climate. However, power generated from wind and solar increased more in 2015 than China's total electricity demand. All new demand is being met by renewable energy sources.

Following his thought-provoking talk Asad was asked if Hinkley Point should go ahead – answer – NO.

On climate change deniers (e.g. Nigel Lawson) "most of the public and politicians now get it. Don't worry about deniers, there will always be deniers."

How will it work when there is no wind? – Most systems are a mix, big off-shore wind and wave; the big problem is energy storage.

The conclusion was "We can win – we must win."

Exciting Leisure Opportunities in Bromley's Church House Gardens

This is the statement Ann Garrett and Sheila Brown sent to Doug Patterson, Bromley Council Chief Executive, expressing their concerns about future leisure facilities in Church House Gardens. This was in response to a consultation meeting attended by Ann.

Bromley Friends of the Earth is concerned that any extension of leisure opportunities does not encroach on any of the important 'green' spaces. There is already a good range of activities offered for different age groups on present sites.

Preserving green space is a growing responsibility in terms of climate change which local councils should take seriously in influencing all planning decisions.

It is vitally important to conserve the present ambience of the gardens, and there are certainly sufficient catering facilities in the Churchill Theatre, although these could be extended to an all day cafe, and the nearby high street.

Church House Gardens is a valuable wild life area and this is another significant consideration in what is already a 'busy' environment of human activity.

The Urban Open Space Policy G8 only allows very small scale development, and we urgently advise retaining the green spaces in this beautiful part of the Town Centre Conservation Area.

We have seen an erosion of a green area in Queens Gardens with the building of the new restaurant

complex. This was built against the wishes of many local residents and environmental groups.

Any developer for Church House Gardens needs to be made aware of strong local opposition to over-development of precious green space in Bromley Town Centre.

Waste4Fuel deal complete – cont'd

As the council now owns both the land and the access road leading to it, work to remove the waste will start shortly, following several weeks of careful logistical planning by the council's waste contractor, Veolia, as how best to tackle the massive task in hand.

The estimated total cost of securing the land and clearing the rubbish mound is estimated to be £2.7million, with the Environment Agency securing much of the funding and the council contributing £300k.

The site, which has continued to be a fire risk, has seen the Environment Agency work in partnership with the council with the firm resolve to find a permanent solution to this exceptional problem.

Cllr Colin Smith said "The council is absolutely delighted to have achieved this result and to now be able to deliver on our long standing promise to local residents. This is truly a red letter day for those worst affected."

Miller's Mutterings for October – Chris Miller

The peas were cut at the beginning of August and, having learnt from last year that it is best to cut them slightly earlier than you think, have done well and will be going for human consumption as dried peas.

The haulm (stems) were still green in places, so were left for a day or so before Peter baled it. As it left the combine, you could hear it crackle as it dried out in the sunshine but it baled well and now in store ready for someone to purchase later in the year for cattle fodder. Any offers?

After all the rain in June, the wheat has taken some time to ripen but was cut in the middle of August. The grains were very slightly moist but the proteins and hagberg levels were still there.

If you cut the wheat too dry a lot of the goodness goes, so it is sometimes better to cut early and pay for drying charges rather than wait. When to cut is obviously crucial.

The new variety, Skyfall, came out well and despite the weather this year it hasn't made much difference in tonnage between our older variety. The reason for trying the new variety was it is much less susceptible to disease so less pesticide needs to be applied. We are very pleased with the crops so far.

There was plenty of straw this year so we have sold some straight from the field. We had to leave the straw for a few days to dry out before baling as the stalks were still a little green, same as the peas, but with all that hot

sunshine it didn't take too long to dry. Some of you may have seen tractors out in our big field late into the night clearing the bales. Quite a sight to see three machines working with headlights in the dark!

The rest we have stacked in our barns ready to sell to stables and straw contractors over the coming months.

As I write we are waiting to cut the barley but the company doing the trails cut their strips and seemed happy with it. We will let you know the results perhaps next month.

The old saying about whirlwinds is that when you see one you will have five days dry weather. Whether this is true or not we don't know but we have seen them regularly since the middle of July!

We sometimes see large whirlwinds lifting swathes of straw circulating in the air and then just dumping it down anywhere.

PS Just to keep you informed, now that the crop has been harvested, work will commence in the field between Church Road and Court Road, village side, to lay a high voltage electricity cable 1.1 metre deep to service the village and Well Hill. A substation will also be built on the site of the old fire station.

Freshwater Habitats Trust Survey – Annette Rose

I was lucky enough to be able to go on a one day training course run by the Freshwater Habitats Trust at High Elms. In the morning, we learnt about the work of the trust, the dangers to wildlife of pollution in our waterways and how to test bodies of water for pollution. The afternoon was spent doing a survey of a pond at High Elms, testing the water and identifying some of the invertebrates.

Freshwater wildlife needs clean unpolluted water to survive. Sadly, monitoring is finding that more than 90% of our waterways are affected by pollution. In many cases this is phosphate and nitrate which has got there by run off from agricultural land, and is usually from fertilizers.

This nutrient pollution is bad news as it causes algae, fungi, bacteria and some water plants to grow more rapidly which means much of the wildlife is smothered or crowded out. Ponds often become covered with a surface sheet of duckweed which makes the water underneath dark and with low oxygen levels. Many species are not able to survive and in extreme cases, even the fish will disappear.

Although government agencies monitor our larger waterways, little is known about the smaller streams, ponds and ditches. The Trust have launched a survey called 'Clean Water for Wildlife' to look at water quality and to find places free from pollution. Funding has come from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Checking water quality used to mean expensive tests in a laboratory but now there are some small reliable kits

available. We were shown how to use the kit which is fairly straightforward. Basically, a sample of water is taken and then there are two tubes for checking levels of nitrates and phosphates. The colour changes in the tubes give a reading on how severe the pollution is.

Alarmingly, tap water always comes out at bright pink, the strongest level! We were reassured that all tap water is the same now and the levels are not harmful to human health.

The Trust is asking for volunteers to test local water sites. This includes ponds, rivers, streams, ditches and canals. Your garden pond and water butts are also of interest.

You are asked to complete a survey sheet, and enter the data from your testing online. This will give a much better picture of pollution across the country. BFoE has already ordered some of these testing kits and we have some volunteers to help in our group.

On my course I met up with people from Jubilee Country Park and Whitehall Recreation Ground and Residents Associations. There are good opportunities for us to work on this project alongside other local groups.

On a happy note, our survey of the pond at High Elms showed almost pristine conditions, with extremely low levels of pollution. It was explained that this was because there were no ditches and it wasn't linked to the rivers network.

/continued on page 9

Campaign Stall

Many thanks to those people who have signed up for the Oct 15th Bromley Mall Precinct stall from 2.30 - 4.30 pm. We will be joined by Bromley Against Fracking members and will have a solar panel and small wind turbine model to demonstrate alternative energies.

Climate and Energy

Hinkley Point

The Government have finally agreed to go ahead with Hinkley Point nuclear power station at a cost of £18 billion. The decision also leaves the door open for a Chinese - built reactor in Essex.

Critics have commented that the move will raise household bills, because consumers will be landed £30 billion subsidy over 35 years. Strict security conditions will be put in place, and business leaders and unions welcomed the decision which will bring 25,000 jobs.

Green campaigners who are opposed to nuclear power for safety and waste disposal reasons have stated that it will only provide 7% of the UK's energy, and will continue to press for greater investment in renewables.

Energy Targets

A damning parliamentary report has warned that the Government is on course to miss its modest international renewable energy targets.

Under important EU goals, Britain must ensure that 15% of its energy

must come from renewable sources by 2020, including 30% of electricity, 12% of heat and 10% in transport. While the electricity sub-target should be exceeded by 2020, the Government is not even half way towards its target on heat. The proportion of renewable energy used in transport actually fell last year.

The Energy and Climate Change committee reported that Britain is at risk of failing to meet the targets "not because they are impossible, but because Government departments have not co-operated effectively." Leaving the EU, Green campaigners say, cannot be an excuse to simply forget our vital energy commitments.

Corbyn and Climate Change

Jeremy Corbyn has vowed to re-instate the department of energy and climate change should he become prime minister. This was part of his launch of an environmental manifesto.

Freshwater Habitats Survey, cont'd

We found many species in our water tray samples including a newt, water beetles, pond snails, leeches and larvae.

So what can you do to help? If you would like to do some water sampling with Bromley Friends of the Earth please let us know. You can email us at bromleyfoe@gmail.com or let us know at the next meeting.

Find out more about the work of the Freshwater Habitats Trust and their survey at freshwaterhabitats.org.uk.

Friends of the Earth Campaign News

The Bee Cause

In 2016 we're focusing on one of the causes of bee decline – pesticides. Specifically neonicotinoid pesticides or neonics. We're still waiting for a decision on the long term use of neonics across Europe (the European Union banned some neonics in 2013). The decision is due next year, but with Britain's impending exit from the EU, our government has the perfect chance to protect our bees.

There have been some great signs this year, the National Farmers Union's request to use neonics was rejected and some county councils have taken action. But we need to see neonics banned for good.

Here are some of the ways your group can make that happen:

Add your name calling for a complete ban on neonics; join the campaign and get everyone you know to join too. It's time to stand up for our bees and get the government to implement a full ban.

Ask your MP to support a ban on bee-harming pesticides; sign online, share, order some campaign postcards and gather support in your community. Get in touch if you're planning a hand-in with your MP, we'd love to help.

Work with your council; we're keen to see more county councils follow Dorset – especially Conservative-controlled councils. Get in touch to find out how we can help.

Promote Bee Worlds – encourage others in your area, like community groups, businesses or schools to create a Bee World, a wildflower haven for bees and other pollinators.

Join the Bee Cause and be part of a growing movement to keep toxic neonics out of our fields and gardens for good.

Fossil Free

With a decision on the fracking appeal in Lancashire looming and the first ever application approved in Yorkshire, it's more urgent than ever to take action on fracking. That's why we've teamed up with Frack Free Ryedale, 350.org, People and Planet and SumOfUs for the week of October 24-29 to show Barclays that we won't stand for it funding fracking in the UK.

Barclays Bank owns 97% of Third Energy, the company that wants to frack in Yorkshire. Now is the time to stop them. Make sure you get all the resources your group needs to take part. Download an action pack now.

If you'd like to get some inspiration for your actions and hear a preview of what other groups have planned, email fracking@foe.co.uk to register.

People across the UK are getting together to stop fracking every day. Let's keep up the pressure and plan some amazing actions together this October to send a clear message to Barclays that we won't stand for them funding fracking in the UK.

/continued on page 11

FoE – Opencast coal mine called in by Secretary of State

Amazing news: the Secretary of State has “called in” the opencast coal mine proposed for Druridge Bay because of climate change concerns. This means that it’s central government who will ultimately decide on whether the coal mine gets the go-ahead. This is a victory for the local community and it’s a victory for you. Thank you for your support.

Over 10,000 people – you amongst them – objected to a new opencast mine at Druridge Bay. Yet objectors were given just 5 minutes in total to speak at the council’s decision meeting, and councillors ignored their evidence, voting to approve the application in early July.

A decision on a huge new opencast mine to extract 3 million tonnes of coal, at a place as special as Druridge Bay, is clearly a decision of national significance – doubly so when the government has signed the Paris Climate Agreement and committed to phasing out coal power stations.

And it’s a historic decision too – this is the first time that a coal mine application has been called in on climate change grounds. You can read the full call-in letter here.

There will now be a public inquiry. It will be a key test of the government’s commitment to ending coal and leaving fossil fuels in the ground.

If you supplied a postal address when you sent your online objection, you should expect a letter from Northumberland County Council within two weeks asking you if you would like

to take part in the public inquiry. You don’t have to do anything more, but if you would like to add anything you can reply with extra evidence.

We’ll be in touch again as the details of the public inquiry emerge with ways we can take further action together.

Let’s end coal together once and for all!

FoE Campaign News *continued*

Clean Air

You’ll be able to get involved with our air pollution campaign later this autumn. We’ll give you the tools to monitor air quality and ideas and activities to build a campaign to tackle air pollution near you. We can’t wait to tell you more about it, but for now contact fran.graham@foe.co.uk or visit our website for more information.

Some more exciting news is that our first batch of Clean Air Kits which went on sale yesterday have already sold out! These were offered to a group of our supporters who expressed an interest over the summer. More will be released in a few weeks. The kits will allow individuals to measure air quality near them, and give tips and ideas to help them avoid and take action on pollution.

If they want to get more involved with the campaign, we’ll suggest they get in touch with their nearest local group. So keep an eye out for contact from people who have bought a kit in the coming months.

Greenpeace on the Hinkley Point go-ahead

The government has given the Hinkley nuclear power station the green light.

This means that government ministers have decided to ignore energy experts who've said Hinkley is a bad idea. They decided to lock Britain into building a nuclear reactor that hasn't yet been proven to work. And they decided to ignore the hundreds of thousands of us who signed a huge petition calling for Hinkley to be canned.

This is - quite literally - a deal that doesn't make sense. The government knows that electricity from renewables is predicted to be cheaper than Hinkley by the time it comes online. And the government knows there are huge obstacles Hinkley faces, like if technology used in the reactor will be proven to be safe.

For more than a decade, successive British governments have insisted that new nuclear plants should play a big role in powering the UK. But all we have to show for it is Hinkley -- a power station that's 9 years behind schedule, won't be ready for at least a decade, and is billions of pounds over budget.

All the time Hinkley has suffered setbacks, the UK has kept relying on fossil fuels. Tackling climate change is too urgent for the government to keep sitting on its hands and waiting. That's why we should be urgently investing in renewables now, not wasting huge sums of cash on a power station that may or may not be possible to build.

Though the result isn't what we hoped for, it's important to remember that the Hinkley project could still turn to dust. There are fears that EDF - the French energy firm building Hinkley's reactor - could go bankrupt]. And no one's sure if crucial technology set to be used in the nuclear plant will ever work.

Whatever happens next with Hinkley, personally I'm proud of what we've achieved together in just the last few months.

Together we're a worldwide movement of people who are determined to protect the planet -- for us, and for generation to come. So let's keep working toward a clean energy future. Because together, we will win.

In addition - Simon Bullock, senior climate campaigner for Friends of the Earth said:

"Hinkley is a project from a dying era, which would saddle Britons with eye-watering costs for decades, and radioactive waste for millenia.

"Renewables, smart grids and energy storage are the fleet-footed mammals racing past this stumbling, inflexible nuclear dinosaur.

"The PM should act in Britain's interests and invest in a renewable, non-nuclear electricity grid – it will give us more jobs and less pollution, at lower cost. This is blatantly the wrong decision from the PM."

What is the point of Hinkley Point C? – Paul Enock

On 17th September Teresa May approved EDF's construction of its as-yet-unproven reactor type. The project requires up-front investment of £18 billion (not accounting for inevitable price-hikes and over-runs). After completion, British taxpayers/electricity consumers will contribute a further £30 billion (latest estimate by the National Audit Office) in price subsidies to the French state-owned company over 35 years.

May's decision was made in the face of overwhelming negative opinion from economists and experts in power generation and nuclear technology as well as concerns about national security.

In an email sent to Jo Johnson on 7th September, I concentrated on the economics involved, firstly pointing out the obvious – that given the dramatic fall in the costs of alternatives, Hinkley is objectively a bad deal (onshore wind and solar are already cheaper and offshore wind is becoming so).

My main argument, however, was that the only economic model that goes some way to justifying the extravagance of Hinkley C is the large-scale centralised supply of constant base-load power, but this model is incompatible with the government's commitment to low-carbon energy generation, undertaken when it signed the Paris Agreement in December last year.

This is because the economics of low-carbon technologies require a restructuring of the grid in a decentralised way. This will require the

kind of investment in new technology and the kind of long-term financial commitment we will now lavish on Hinkley C instead:

“... Hinkley will block scarce resources going to necessary UK renewables, grid upgrades, and energy efficiency. Don't believe the hype: it's not 'nuclear and renewables' – because of the sheer cost of nuclear, it's 'nuclear or renewables.’” (Paul Dorfman, Senior Fellow, UCL Energy Institute)

The government's line is that we need nuclear generation “to ensure a dependable energy supply”. In this, it ignores the speed of global developments in alternative energy generation and storage. For this reason I offered to present Mr Johnson with a copy of a highly readable survey of the field by the economist Chris Goodall, *The Switch* (Profile Books, 2016), which I urged him to make known to his parliamentary colleagues.

Jo Johnson has not so far replied. The offer of the book still stands.

Why has this government defied technological and market trends to impose such a rotten deal on us all? In my opinion, we must look at the interests that accumulate around the centralisation of power (in both senses of that word). The welcome given by Unite and Labour to Mrs May's announcement demonstrate that decentralising our power generation industry – as low-carbon generation requires – will have to be done despite resistance from this country's main political groupings.

**The warning signs are stark.
There is no excuse to ignore the Paris accord.**

This article appeared as the second leader in the Observer on September 18th 2016

The sea ice covering the most northerly part of our planet shrank last week to its second lowest level on record. Once stable at around 7.5m sq km in summer, the Arctic ice cap has been dwindling for several decades and dropped to an area of 4.1m sq km a few days ago, a victim of the rising fossil-fuel emissions and increasing temperatures that now beset the Earth.

At the same time, the US space agency Nasa announced that August 2016 had tied with July 2016 as the hottest month globally ever recorded. Our world is heating up dramatically.

As winter returns to the far north, its ice cover will slowly return, of course, though it will certainly not be restored to its former glory. The overall trend of summer Arctic sea-ice cover has been a steadily downwards one for the past 30 years, an inexorable decline that has deeply worrying implications for the region, and for the rest of the planet, as we report today.

An Arctic that is regularly free of sea ice in summer - a real prospect for the middle of the century - will open up that fragile, pristine wilderness to all sorts of potential woes: overfishing; pollution related to oil drilling and mineral extraction; the eradication of indigenous species; and the destruction of native communities.

In addition, with little or no ice left to reflect solar radiation back into space, and its dark waters absorbing more and more of that radiation, the Arctic will heat up even further, enhancing the global warming that has already taken a grip on the planet.

As Professor Gail Whiteman, of Lancaster University, remarked last week: "Forget the FTSE: Arctic sea ice is the real barometer of global risk."

Urgent action is clearly needed, a point that is not lost on international climate negotiators. In a few weeks, they are scheduled to assemble in Marrakech in order to discuss the ratification of the Paris agreement, which was hammered out late last year and which seeks to limit the burning of fossil fuels in order to restrict carbon dioxide emissions and so limit global temperature rises to around 2C since pre-industrial times.

To date, a total of 27 nations - including Brazil, China and the United States - have formally backed the plan, and a further 20 countries are expected to add their names in the next few days. Crucially, the United Kingdom has made no commitment to back the Paris accord. Yet the agreement needs the formal support of 55 nations before it can come into force.

The fact that Britain still refuses to put its name to the treaty is therefore deeply worrying.

/continued on pages 15 and 18

FoE - Government “refusing to take the bold action needed” on air pollution

Reacting to today's government response on the action they are taking on air quality, Jenny Bates, Friends of the Earth air pollution campaigner, said:

“Despite the mounting evidence of the dangers people face having to breathe our illegally dirty air, the government is refusing to take the bold action needed to cut the 40,000 early deaths from air pollution each year in the UK.

“Road traffic is the biggest problem for air pollution and diesel is the worst of all. We urgently need the government to put in place a plan to phase out diesel from our roads. A carefully-designed scrappage scheme would be an important step to help people

switch away from dirty diesel vehicles - but the government has today rejected this vital recommendation.

“We also need to have Clean Air Zones in all our cities and major towns so that everyone, no matter where they live can breathe easier, but the government is not providing funding other than for the five already planned - nor are they responding to the call to make it easier from local authorities to constrain new traffic-generating developments which would add to air pollution.

“Whilst politicians might talk big on air pollution, today the Government has shown that it is unwilling to take the necessary action to save lives.

The warning signs are stark – *continued from previous page*

The government claims that it is committed, ultimately, to backing the agreement but the longer it delays, the more it is likely to lose the leadership it once commanded when it came to climate change issues.

Even if Britain misses the legislative deadline set for the Marrakech meeting, an announcement now that it is committed to the Paris agreement would send a much-needed message to the world. It would let them know that the current UK government still realises the urgency of the situation and the perils that face the planet.

The problem is not one that should be viewed as being vague and global, however. It is a precise danger and it is a local one as well. As the planet

heats up, so the United Kingdom is also becoming warmer and wetter.

Our eight warmest years on record have occurred from 2000 onwards, and during that time we have also experienced six of our seven wettest years. The atmosphere, as it heats up, is holding on to more and more water which it then releases as bursts of intense rainfall.

This point was emphasised by the National Flood Resilience Review, published earlier this month, which admitted that we are now facing a greater threat of flooding due to heavier rainfall and rising sea levels than ever before.

/concluded on page 18

London Fairtrade Supporter Conference and Schools Conference

Sheila Brown writes: I attended the London Fairtrade Supporter Conference in London on September 15th along with John Bassendine from Sevenoaks FoE. This was organised by the Fairtrade Foundation. It started with a presentation by a South African gold miner about Fairtrade Gold and the realities of life for gold miners.

I attended a session about coffee; this was one of the original products to attract the attention of the Fairtrade movement. We will hear more about this at our October meeting and the challenges and opportunities being faced.

Fairtrade's CEO highlighted a Coffee Co-operative in Rwanda, situated at a very high altitude and producing a top quality product. Fairtrade is very much about giving empowerment to communities and especially empowering vulnerable women; it has high levels of trust and public engagement.

The Fairtrade mark now faces challenges from other certification labels, such as the Rainforest Alliance which is strong on biodiversity but does not have the same level of support for producer communities. There needs to be more public awareness of what unfair trade is. He concluded by saying that Fairtrade was the original social network before there were social networks!

A session entitled Deepening Fairtrade's impact included a presentation about Liberation Nuts (we had a fascinating talk about their Brazil nuts at our February meeting – see

March newsletter), reference to Waitrose's deepening involvement with a Coffee Co-op in Brazil where they installed concrete patios which greatly improved the efficiency of the coffee bean drying process, and Traidcraft's work in Myanmar where they have established a fair-trade rice supply chain – a really revolutionary project. Fairtrade aims to be the facilitator of direct trading relationships.

There was a session about Brexit and what implications this might have for Fairtrade and plans for next year's Fairtrade Fortnight. John attended these two sessions.

London Fairtrade Schools Conference

Monday 10th October 2016, 9:30am-2:30pm, Friends House, 173-177 Euston Road, London, NW1 2BJ

A conference for pupils, teachers and support staff in London. Get inspired by Fairtrade!

The conference is open to students aged 7-14 years old. Up to 2 adults and 8 students can attend from each school. Places cost £2 per student/adult. Please bring packed lunches. We will be providing snacks and drinks for breaks.

Book places on the London Fairtrade Schools Conference at <http://fairtradelondon.org.uk/upcoming-events/>

Life in the firing line

This article first appeared in the New Scientist, w/c August 29th 2016

Insults, name calling and character assassination are no match for conservation causes backed by evidence, says Chris Packham

I was taught to read by my father. We had an ancient set of stained and battered encyclopaedias and we started at A and headed to Z. He likes facts. For him they are the fabric of knowledge and knowledge is paramount.

Unsurprisingly, I either inherited or imbibed that desire to know things and I long ago realised that the things most worth knowing are those which are true. That's why I almost became a scientist and I enjoy meeting them, because they are people looking for truth. For me science is the art of understanding truth and beauty; there is no more noble pursuit.

It is also why I happily stand up for conservation where there is irrefutable evidence of harm - the decline in birds of prey linked to grouse shooting or the unjustified culling of badgers or misguided demands to hunt foxes.

I do so even when the issues are allegedly controversial and I am accused of extremism simply for stating the facts, or doubt is cast on my right to speak out because I happen to present wildlife programmes for the BBC. Such attacks show that those I oppose have lost the rational case.

Of course we all like to play with opinion and subjectivity, and I have my own particular emotional arena in which to do so.

I might suggest that Justin Bieber's entire body of work is not worth one track by the Ramones, but if you disagree with me I wouldn't fight you over it.

As an autist I'd be surprised, but I'd let it go, for the simple reason that if you want to Win an argument you must be pragmatic, dispassionate and rigorous - you must argue from a foundation of solid, measured, qualified fact. Then you should Win.

I've learned that if you peacefully, democratically and calmly present irrefutable evidence or facts in a reasonable and polite way and consequently win an argument, then your adversaries can be left wondering how to react.

Reason says they should accept defeat and modify their stance accordingly, but we are talking about humans here, and so often this is a big ask. Ego, pride, selfishness, vested interests and, even worse, money may motivate them to reject that reason and lash out blindly and violently, ignoring the facts.

In my idealistic youth this would have angered and disappointed me but as my time to make a difference dwindles,

I know I must ignore their mischief, repel their misguided energies and deliberately and calculatedly exploit their weaknesses.

/continued on page 18

Pledge for the Environment – Judy Palmer

Friends of the Earth are working with other organisations to push for an environmentally-friendly Brexit, and part of this campaign is to try and persuade as many of our MPs as possible to sign a habitats protection pledge.

Our group has started to do this by making three cards which ask them to sign the pledge. They contain a copy of the pledge together with signatures from members of the public and we will take them with us when we meet them.

Leaving the EU should not mean that our environment has to suffer by having weaker protection. Bees and other pollinators, along with other species, are already suffering, let's try and reverse that process.

In some other news – Bayer are trying to buy out Monsanto, lots of money in the chemical, pesticide and pharmaceutical business isn't there.

And Sir David Attenborough helped to launch the latest update to the **State of Nature** report recently. You can find it on the RSPB web site should you wish to read it.

The report is compiled of data from more than 50 nature conservation and research organisations, and covers the UK and overseas territories. It shows how some species are recovering and flourishing, but also how some are in danger. And it sets out examples of how we can put things right.

The warning signs are stark - concluded

Monthly rainfall totals in winter could be up to 30% higher than recent past extremes, it stated.

Last December's record flooding - which saw 341mm of rain fall in 24 hours at Honister Pass in the Lake District, for example - is certainly likely to be surpassed in the next few years. Yet the government is so far committed to making only the most rudimentary of infrastructure improvements in order to combat the problem, and has pledged a mere E12m of extra cash for anti-flooding measures. That level of response is simply insufficient.

There is a real need now for the government to assure the public that it understands the risks we face from climate change and commit itself fully to this urgent and pressing issue.

Life in the firing line - continued

For me, winning is not about a victory, it's about not giving up. And when you've got science as your sword and truth as your shield you really have little to fear, so you can just keep going. For as long as it takes. Or for as long as you've got.

Chris Packham is a naturalist, TV presenter and author

Bromley Friends of the Earth - List of Contacts

Co-ordinators:

Sheila Brown 01689-851605
email – sheilabrown336@msn.com

Ann Garrett 020-8460-1295
email – anncgarrett@yahoo.com

Secretary:

vacant

Treasurer:

Sheila Brown 01689-851605

Press Officer:

Ann Garrett

Programme Organiser:

Sheila Brown 01689-851605

Outings organisers:

John & Sue Bocock 020-8464-5990
johnbocock@hotmail.com

Newsletter Editor:

John Street 020-8460-1078
johnstreet@gn.apc.org

Membership Secretary:

Dan Sloan 01689-838819

Bromley FoE web site:

www.bromleyfoe.co.uk

Peter Gandolfi
petergandolfi@hotmail.com

Admin team:

Judy Palmer: Group emails
bromleyfoe@gmail.com

Rob Clark: Facebook co-ordinator
bromleyfoe@gmail.com

Annette Rose
annette.rose1@ntlworld.com

Fundraising Officer:

Bill Priestley 01689-820469

Campaigns –

Campaigns Organiser:

Ann Garrett 020-8460-1295

Transport:

Ray Watson 01959-571566
r.watson865@btinternet.com

Climate and Energy:

Ann Garrett 020-8460-1295

Food and Ethical Farming:

Peter Gandolfi details above

Planning and development:

Tamara Galloway 01689-855352
tamaragalloway@yahoo.com

Campaigner:

Annette Rose
annette.rose1@ntlworld.com

Fracking / Clean British Energy

Ann Garrett

Bee Cause

Judy Palmer
judy.palmer@talk21.com

Monthly Meeting reporters:

John and Sue Bocock, Anne Clark,
Graham Hemington, Annette Rose and
Ray Watson

Merchandising:

Anne Clark 020-8289-8483

Teas:

Mary Ingledew / Sylvia Chance

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

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

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

Non-members' Section

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

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

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

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

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

Name..... Telephone Number

Address.....

..... Postcode.....

Email Address.....

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

.....