



Friends of the Earth

Bromley

September 2009 No. 261 Newsletter

Bromley FoE: inquiries to Birch House, Grays Road, Westerham TN16 2JB
email: raywatson@iclway.co.uk; website: www.bromleyfoe.co.uk



September Meeting

Friends Meeting House,
Ravensbourne Road, Bromley

The Stop Climate Chaos Coalition!

Ronel Klopfer

Campaigning by the organisation with 11million supporters

Tuesday 1st September

7.30pm.

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Copy for the next Newsletter must be with the Editor by
TUESDAY 15TH SEPTEMBER. Contact details inside front cover.

Bromley FoE outing to Morden Hall Park – details on page 2

Diary dates:**Sept 1st (Tues)****Bromley FoE's September Meeting** – Ronel Klopfer from Stop Climate Chaos coalition**Sept 11th (Fri)****Reclaim Beckenham Studio** - 9.30am; contact Ann Garrett for more details**Sept 12/13 (Sat/Sun)****FoE local groups conference in Nottingham****Sept 26th (Sat)****Bromley FoE stall** in Bromley High Street on Climate Change**Oct 3rd (Sat)****Visit to Morden Hall Park.** Meet 12 noon at Beckenham Junction tram stop**Oct 6th (Tues)****Bromley FoE's October meeting** – Howard Whitehead, London Network Developer from FoE Underwood Street**Oct 28th (Wed)****Planning meeting** – 80 Glen trammon Road**Nov 3rd (Tues)****Bromley FoE's November meeting** – Tony Pearson on National Parks**Dec 1st (Tues)****Bromley FoE's December meeting** – Andy Atkins on the Copenhagen Climate Change talks, followed by the seasonal social**Friends of the Earth Outing on Saturday 3rd October**

Morden Hall Park is a green oasis in the heart of suburbia beside the meandering River Wandle, with parkland, meadows, wetlands and waterways, woodland and a rose garden, a Riverside Café and a second-hand bookshop. Deen City Farm is located nearby.

The meadows were last farmed in medieval times so have not been subject to artificial fertilisers or pesticides, and are rich in grasses and wild flowers. Morden Hall Park is a National Trust property.

Meet at 12 noon at Beckenham Junction Tram Stop.

Next Newsletter - copy details:

Any news, articles, poems, questions, views etc for the next Newsletter must be with the editor **by TUESDAY 15TH SEPTEMBER,**

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

Campaigns info, by Ann Garrett

Compassionate Solution to Climate Change

The following information is important for our next Farm Chain stall on Sept 26th outside Caffe Nero - Bromley High Street from 2.00 - 4.00 pm.

The animal rights group Compassion in World Farming (CiWF) have stated that now it is globally established that live stock production is responsible for at least 18 % of the global green house gas emissions from all human activities, they are concerned that agriculture is very far down the agenda when it comes to discussing climate change issues.

CiWF are worried about further intensification of current arable land and technical and genetic solutions to animal production. They believe that the only sustainable long term solution is to balance the global resources that already exist with the consumption patterns of the world's population. This will mean that Western societies will have to decrease overall intake of animal protein, releasing more land for crops.

With this in mind we have been asked by the animal rights group Viva to support their stall in at the lower end of the precinct - also near Caffe Nero on Sept 5th from 11.00 am - 3.00 pm. They will put our Food Chain cards on the stall and we can also wear our FoE tabards! This is an opportunity to link with another group, which national FoE are encouraging.

The whole issue is of course very pertinent when 200 of the world's countries meet in Copenhagen in

December to negotiate an agreement that could have a long term impact on our climate.

Vestas Factory Occupation

Workers have had to leave the site of the factory on the Isle of Wight after an 18-day occupation. This occupation has been supported by FoE and other green groups.

The campaign at Vestas began on July 20th when the multi-national wind turbine firm, despite increasing its profits by 70% in just the first 3 months of this year and awarding its directors a huge £9 million in bonuses - announced mass redundancies.

Bob Crow of the RMT union has praised the workers for their stand in fighting for green jobs. "They have turned a local fight over factory closure into a global battle for the future of manufacturing in the renewable energy sector and that is an extraordinary achievement."

It is particularly encouraging to see a union supporting jobs in the renewable sector, as some other unions are favouring nuclear power station employment.

Some greens have commented that because so many planning applications for wind turbines have been refused due to resident's objections, the whole process has been slowed down, however. This is why Vestas is opting to locate more factories away from the UK.

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Briefing from Andy Atkins, FoE Chief Executive

Andy Atkins has held a series of meetings around the country to speak to members of Local Groups about the financial challenges facing the organisation. There were two opportunities for people in the London area to attend, and five people from our group took this up.

The economic downturn has had a massive impact on the income of Friends of the Earth and all similar organisations who rely on donated income. Last year when the latest Strategic Plan was put together, 40% growth was anticipated. However, the recession has changed all that, and spending plans have had to be slashed and a new budget has been drawn up with reductions over the next three years.

Inevitably there will be staff redundancies and a general streamlining, plus a pay freeze for staff. Andy acknowledged that this will be a painful process and it is a very sensitive time for all concerned, but it is hoped things will have settled down by October. As the changed structure beds down, there will be further adjustments and tweakings.

Main emphasis over the next five years will be on the Food Chain, Get Serious about Climate Change and Biodiversity.

One of the principal aims is to boost national and local membership to bring in more funds, with a new unit being set up. The current high street and telephone canvassing will form a crucial part of the recruitment drive. We discussed how local groups might

encourage their members to join national FoE. A new membership leaflet will be produced (we'd then be able to promote this when we have stalls).

Sheila Brown adds: There will be further information at the Local Groups Conference in September, and we will have the chance to have further discussion with Andy Atkins when he comes to our December meeting.

Campaigns info - *continued*

There are concerns though according to a recent report that wind farms can pose a health risk. Noise and vibration coming from large turbines are behind an increase in heart disease, migraine, panic attacks and other health problems. If this is the case they should certainly be sited at sea or high up on hills away from people's homes.

A Big Thank You

To Marina and Ray for their great hospitality and an excellent Fun Day garden party social at their home Birch House near Biggin Hill on August 15th. The food was lovely and superbly prepared by Marina and we had an interesting tour of the grounds by Ray with wonderful views of the North Downs, and a walk through beautiful woods with plenty of mature trees, old farming equipment and an ancient railway carriage once occupied by gypsies!

There were plenty of games and activities for the children and raffle prizes donated by the members and friends who came. We also had some good Eco chats, and generally informed each other!

Transport info, from Ray Watson

Win for the airport

After a battle lasting several years, Biggin Hill Airport has finally received the approval of Bromley Council to build a 76-bed hotel – something opposed by residents who fear the continued expansion at the airport.

Previous applications for a larger hotel had been refused by the council and by Government inspectors, primarily on design grounds. Residents, however, saw the application as a means of allowing the airport to demand passenger flights to support the hotel. Passenger flights are banned under the lease that the airport management company has from the council.

What is troubling is that the council failed to include in its permission to build the hotel a specific condition that any attempt to allow passenger flights to bring in customers for the hotel would not be permitted. Efforts are being made to see if this point can still be added to the ruling.

Don't hold your breath...and ponder on this scenario in a year or two's time:

The airport sends a message to the council to the effect that the hotel is losing money and will close unless the council allows passenger flights. Then what will councillors do? Refuse the request and be blamed for closing the hotel? Or take the easy way out and allow 'limited' passenger flights, thus opening the door to large passenger jets and all the noise, extra traffic and air pollution that goes with them?

The council will also argue that airport expansion will bring jobs and more money to the area, quietly ignoring the suffering of the tens of thousands of Bromley people under the flight paths and the damage to the environment.

More aviation growth

In last month's Newsletter we reported expansion plans for London City Airport, sited in Docklands and just a few miles from Bromley. It doesn't stop there, with similar moves coming from towns from Bristol in the South to Edinburgh in the North.

The Bristol plan shows the impact on the environment in a few, stark numbers: it wants a 60 per cent increase in passengers by 2019, a 50 per cent rise in summer night flights, all of which will lead to an extra two million cars journeys a year and a 40 per cent increase in CO2 emissions.

Mixed story

The one thing the Brits won't give up easily is their annual holiday, primed by the desperate search for the sun. That is underlined by new figures showing that, recession or not, travel by air is on the increase again, after dipping over the last year.

Figures from BAA, owners of seven major airports including Heathrow and Gatwick, indicate that lower fares introduced by airlines to attract new customers, have made the difference. However, while passenger figures for July showed a strong recovery, they were still below the July 2008 level.

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August meeting report, from Graham Hemington

Bromley's development plans – presentation by Doug Black (Bromley Civic Society)

What do the following factors have in common? Local, regional and national land-use and building policies; Greater London Authority; tree prevention orders; statutory listing of buildings and English Heritage; Natural England; legislation and regulations; increasing competition from Croydon, Lewisham and Bluewater; development consultants; air and noise pollution; housing and car parking; open spaces; retail facilities; need for an attractive place to live, work and enjoy leisure time etc.

You've guessed it. They are just some of the factors which a Town Planner has to deal with. An almost impossible job? Or so it seemed after hearing Doug Black's views on the Bromley Town Centre Area Action Plan.

The proposal sites are:

- A – Bromley North station area
- B- Tweedy Road / London Road
- E – Pavilion Leisure Centre
- F – Civic Centre
- G – west of High Street
- L – former DHSS offices
- M – Queens Gardens

The Bromley Civic Society aims:

- (1) to provide an opportunity for informal discussion and increasing awareness of the principles and objectives for development and conservation within the area
- (2) to ensure that officials and members of government at all levels are aware of the

importance of Bromley Town Centre as an historic place and a living place

- (3) to secure the preservation or enhancement of those features that contribute to the special character of the area.

Consequently, Society volunteers have been providing detailed scrutiny and written representations on the Area Action Plan which at times is hard to understand. Even the three professional planners in the Society (Doug is one of them, formerly working for Bromley Council) have had difficulty.

Although the Society praises some aspects of the plan, it has become more and more concerned about others, e.g. the absence of evidence to support the plan, no demographic studies, the conversion of the mansion (Civic Centre) to residential use, compromising the High Street conservation area, the amount of open space at the Civic Centre, the fear that the tree silhouette would be lost by building retail units adjacent to Church House Gardens, Council says Queens Gardens underused, the Society says no, etc.

Many matters have to be considered, including some which are mutually exclusive, e.g. height of buildings and vistas. Taken with comments from the public, it is easy to see why the Area Action Plan has taken five years so far, but the end is in sight. It is due to be sent to the Secretary of State for approval in October 2009.

Anaerobic digestion – Graham Hemington writes to DEFRA – and gets a reply

Graham Hemington wrote to Dan Norris (Minister for Anaerobic Digestion) saying that he supported the minister's actions on anaerobic digestion but was the minister at the same time phasing out the funding of new incinerators? Why? Because incinerators contribute to climate change, even if they do generate electricity, by:

- Generating energy so inefficiently that their carbon dioxide emissions are worse than fossil fuel power stations
- Burning materials that could be recycled to save energy

Alternatives such as recycling and anaerobic digestion are much better for the climate than incineration. Please let me have your views on the above.

This is the reply Graham received:

Thank you for your letter of 9 July to Dan Norris about anaerobic digestion and the phasing out of incinerators. I have been asked to reply.

With the publication of Waste Strategy 2000 (WS2000) the Government outlined its strategy for sustainable waste management for the next twenty years. At the heart of this strategy is the waste hierarchy.

The waste hierarchy places waste minimisation (or reduction) at the top as this is the most desirable option. If you can't reduce waste, then reuse is

the next best option as this requires the least investment of further resources to put items back into circulation.

The third best option is recycling (including composting which could be said to be nature's recycling system) as both significant amounts of energy can be saved and the need for new raw materials is reduced by using recycled materials.

The fourth option is energy from waste (EfW), there are a number of technologies that allow energy to be recovered from those wastes with a calorific value that cannot for practical reasons be reused, recycled or composted. These options are considered to be recovery operations.

The last two options on the waste hierarchy are considered-disposal operations and include incineration (without energy recovery) and, least sustainable of all, landfill which is both wasteful of valuable natural resources as well as potentially polluting to the local environment.

Government policy on waste since WS2000 is designed to push the way we treat waste up the waste hierarchy and away from landfill. Local authorities are responsible for the collection and disposal of household waste and until 1999 most of them used landfill as the preferred choice for disposal; 90% of municipal waste was treated in this way.

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Food Campaign – an update from Peter Gandolfi

236 MPs have now signed Early Day Motion 845 and it approaches its target of 250. FoE are running a Food Chain Campaign fortnight of action for local groups from 5-18 October. The focus of the fortnight will be party manifestoes, with the aim to get MPs to include some of our key demands in their party's manifest. This will commit them to a policy position. Or in the case of the party in power, could commit them to introducing legislation. The fortnight of action ends around UN World Food Day (16 October).

There has been a worrying development in the fight against supermarket dominance. Proposals for a new set of planning rules could make it even easier for supermarkets to set up shop. The new proposals are called PPS 4: Planning for Prosperous Economies. The name hints at their short-sighted aims. They prioritise a narrow pursuit of economic growth over vibrant, environmentally-friendly communities.

How public money is propping up factory farms

In the UK, factory farming is propped up with vast amounts of public money - over £700 million each year. Factory farming for meat and dairy is at the heart of a hidden chain that links the food on our plates to rainforest destruction in South America. To make them grow quickly and produce high yields, animals in factory farms are being pumped full of imported soy crops – creating demand for vast plantations that are wiping out forests and forcing communities off their lands in South America.

Meanwhile the supermarkets, unchecked and unregulated by the Government, are abusing their buyer power and forcing farmers into ever more intensive farming methods by constantly driving down prices. Factory farming is thriving at the expense of the climate and Earth's critical life-support systems. The meat and dairy industry – the majority of it intensive – is responsible for more climate-changing emissions than all the world's transport.

Where is the money coming from?

The money propping up factory farming is spent through the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The CAP provides support and funding to the agricultural sector in the EU. It accounts for nearly half the EU's total budget and has a major influence on farming policy and practice. In 2005 changes to the CAP, known as decoupling, removed the direct link between payments and production of specific crops and livestock. However the CAP is still driving and supporting intensive factory farming.

How much money?

Friends of the Earth has calculated that an estimated £700 million of English taxpayers' money was spent on propping up factory farming through the CAP in 2008. Despite the scale of the CAP payments, information is not available on the type and intensity of the farms being supported by this money. This figure is therefore based on the best available information.

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Food Campaign update - *continued*

What needs to change?

The CAP disproportionately rewards damaging farming practices and is failing to reduce climate-changing emissions and protect wildlife. It is also not supporting the UK, Europe and the rest of the world to feed itself in the long term. Despite changes to the CAP that were designed to remove the link between funding and artificially high production levels, it continues to maintain and support an intensive system. The market forces - particularly through supermarkets - that are driving further concentration in the meat and dairy sector are not countered by the CAP, so small farms are increasingly losing out to big businesses.

The CAP is essential in delivering a thriving farming system in the UK and EU, but it must deliver support for farming that is in the long-term public interest. Achieving a sustainable and secure future for food production in the UK and around the world will require a complete rethink of the CAP's purpose and instruments. Funds must urgently be re-directed away from the most damaging, intensive producers to support sustainable, low input, meat and dairy farming.

Long-term solutions

The CAP will go through a full reform in 2013. The UK Government should use this opportunity to push for change that completely transforms agriculture in the UK and Europe. Planet-friendly farming must be supported through the promotion of agricultural benefits that the market is not rewarding such as food security, climate and biodiversity protection, rural employment, animal

welfare and human health. It must also ensure equitable use of land and natural resources across the globe so that UK and EU production and consumption does not damage the environment and communities overseas. A new CAP must be the engine for change in the meat and dairy industry

What else need to change?

While the CAP has a central role to play in revolutionising the way that meat and dairy is produced in the UK, the Government must also tackle the impact of the meat and dairy industry by, among other points:

- Introducing new legislation to ensure public money is not spent on environmentally damaging, unhealthy food for schools, hospitals, care homes, the armed forces and prisons.
- Making UK companies, including supermarkets, accountable for the impact on people and the environment abroad.
- Addressing the climate change impacts of livestock production, including the worldwide impacts of the global food chain

This is a précis of a complex subject. More information can be found on the FoE website.

Campaign Against Climate Change info

Climate Emergency Copenhagen - Public Meetings

It is becoming increasingly clear that the effects of climate change are even more rapid and dangerous than was predicted by the IPCC 2007 report (see http://www.campaigncc.org/climate_emergency and <http://www.climatesafety.org>). The UK government needs to go to the negotiations in Copenhagen prepared for urgent and effective action - and match that with domestic measures that are appropriate for this Climate Emergency.

This autumn, the Campaign against Climate Change will be raising awareness of the Climate Emergency through a series of public meetings around the country. These will help move the political agenda forwards by discussing what concrete emergency measures are needed. They will also encourage local mobilisation for the demonstrations in London on 5 December and in Copenhagen itself.

The meetings are expected to take place in October and early November. If you are interested in finding out more about organising one, requesting speakers etc., email info@campaigncc.org for more information (this doesn't commit you to anything!).

DEFRA on anaerobic digestion – continued

Landfill is the least preferred option for waste treatment because of its environmental impacts.

The Government does not generally have a preference for one EfW technology over another, with the exception of anaerobic digestion. This has significant carbon and energy advantages for treating food waste, one of the Government's priority waste streams. It is also effective for managing, livestock manures, slurries and sewage sludge.

The Government is therefore encouraging local authorities and businesses to consider whether anaerobic digestion has a role to play in meeting their waste management objectives. It is particularly keen to encourage greater energy recovery from food waste (via anaerobic digestion) and waste wood (via combustion) to capitalise on their potentially significant energy and carbon benefits.

Transport info – continued

Heathrow was the biggest gainer with 6.47 million passengers passing through its terminals. But Stansted was London's worst performing airport with a 5.7 per cent fall in passenger numbers.

Interestingly, BAA reported that although there was a rise in passengers against last year, they were carried on fewer planes due to airlines cutting out some services. Good news, at least in part, for the environment.

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 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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