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Nottingham
Friends of
the Earth

NOTTINGHAM FRIENDS OF THE EARTH

Down to Earth

Welcome to Nottingham Friends of the Earth. We are one of around 250 local Friends of the Earth groups campaigning for a better environment locally as well as nationally and internationally. **Friends of the Earth** has a reputation for effective campaigns backed up by authoritative research.



Multiple 'Gordon Browns' outside East Midlands airport in April 2008

Welcome to this year's Nottingham FoE newsletter!

2008 was another busy year for FoE – climate change issues dominated. More Big Ask campaigning, and other campaigns focused around elements of the European Union Renewable Energy Directive - Biofuel targets and renewable energy – and the Government's own Renewables Energy Strategy, more on that over the page.

What has happened, and what must be seen as a major success, is that Parliament has passed a Climate Change Bill, accepting and including FoE's chief criticisms of the original draft Bill that was published in March 2007 – the 80% targeted cut in CO2 emissions by 2050; and the inclusion of aviation and shipping emissions. For a detailed summary, see page 4.

As we go to print, we are expecting the results of the public enquiry into the proposed Eastcroft Incinerator expansion. See the article on page 4 for an update on Eastcroft, and other proposed incinerators in the region.

Nottingham City Council and Nottingham County Council are working on strategies to reduce CO2 emissions in their area – but each has a very different approach, which you can read about on page 5.

There has been much debate in the media of late about the future of capitalism and free market economics following the economic downturn and the threat of rising unemployment. See page 6 for some policy ideas and principles that put the environment first in a new economic strategy!

Finally, see page 7 for the latest on FoE campaigns for 2009. -Roger Steele

2008 Campaigning Round-up



Vernon Coaker MP signs a postcard to himself!

2008's campaigning kicked off with – a gig. Following the success of rock band Ash's support for the Big Ask, and the subsequent Big Ask Live gigs, James Blunt followed the example and invited FoE to canvass support from his fans during his January UK tour. Local groups across the country were at the gigs, and Nottingham FoE were at the Royal Concert Hall gig, canvassing support from fans arriving at the venue – we were sporting cool Big Ask T shirts, with an eye-catching stall emblazoned with Big Ask posters, and armed with hundreds of postcards to be signed! Support was absolutely brilliant, and by the end of the evening we got over 400 postcards signed. A very different experience to standing by the left lion on a Saturday morning, when trying to distract a shopper aiming for the next retail destination!

At this time indications were starting to filter through that the Government had recognised that the 60% target cut in the draft Bill was insufficient (it was based on old science) and 80% would be written into the Bill in its final form. The attention of the campaign shifted to the issue of aviation and shipping. Government figures published in January 2008 showed that aviation accounts for 6.4 per cent of UK carbon emissions. The impact of aviation emissions is double that of carbon dioxide alone because of other gases that planes pump out at altitude.

On 5th April local FoE groups across the country, including Nottingham FoE together with WDM (World Development Movement), took part in a

Day of Action, calling on Gordon Brown to include aviation and shipping emissions in the Bill. The action packs sent out from Underwood Street included cardboard Gordon Brown masks(!), and self-assembly model aeroplanes(!). A carefully rehearsed theatrical routine took place in the market square that Saturday, with the unfortunate 'Gordon' being harassed by FoE / WDM activists 'piloting' their 'planes'. 'Gordon' was doing his best at ignoring what was going on around him (to symbolise the real Gordon ignoring aviation emissions – get it?). A tourist wanted to have his photograph taken with his political hero, and the bizarre event caught the attention of plenty of Saturday shoppers. The Evening Post came down to photograph us and we had an article in Monday's paper.

The following weekend, tens of clones of the PM descended on East Midlands airport, for the most high-profile demo of the year that involved a number of East Midlands FoE groups and other climate campaigners. Local Derbyshire MPs visited, there were TV news interviews with ITV and BBC – and it made the evening news! The event coincided with others staged at regional and international airports across the country as part of a Day of Action.

During the summer, FoE's Climate campaigning centred on biofuels. This has been brought about because of the EU Renewables Directive which includes a target that all road fuels used in the EU should contain 10% biofuels by 2020. There has been much in the media recently about biofuel crops. FoE are opposed to biofuels for a number of reasons. There is not enough land in the world to replace our fuel consumption with biofuels, and it will not be possible to source enough biofuels to meet the 10% EU target from domestic biofuels. The increase in the amount of land and water used to grow crops for the production of these fuels inevitably leads to competition with food crops, leading to increases in food prices. The EU 10% targets will fuel the expansion of large scale monocultures of crops like palm oil, sugar cane and soya in countries of South East Asia, Africa, and South America. Existing demands for such monoculture crops for biofuels, paper and other products for Northern Hemisphere demands have already resulted in the destruction of ancient rainforests and lands, together with the wildlife and ecosystems that

they support. The Indonesian Government has directly referred to EU biofuel targets as the main motivation to earmark millions of hectares of land for further palm oil expansion. Land-grabs by big corporations have led to the physical eviction from their traditional homelands of indigenous peoples. The nitrates used in fertilisers that are required for biofuels contribute to climate emissions, as do the fuels burnt in growing, tending, harvesting and converting crops into biofuels.

Our campaigning during the summer followed the usual market square canvassing, including getting postcards signed; and direct lobbying of regional MEPs. In June, Nottingham FoE and Oxfam met Liberal Democrat MEP Bill Newton-Dunn and then in August we met Labour's Glenis Willmott, where we voiced our concerns about biofuels and urged both MEPs to vote against the target when the vote came up in the EU Parliament. Although both were sympathetic to our cause, neither agreed to vote against biofuels at the EU Parliament. In September, The European Parliament Industry, Research & Energy Committee voted for a new target of 5% by 2015, whereupon the target would be reviewed with regard to new biofuel technology. Included in the vote was a clause for a review of the social impacts of biofuels before there are any further increases, and targets to promote the use of alternatives to first generation biofuels. The feeling amongst green Non - Governmental Organisations is that whilst the result of the vote is an improvement to what was on offer in January 2008, it does not go far enough.

FoE have consistently argued for legislation that would invest in improved fuel efficiency of motor vehicles and investment into public transport generally, to reduce our demands on fossil fuels.

In July last year, the UK Government-backed Renewable Fuel Agency (RFA) conducted an investigation into the indirect effects of biofuel use, which claimed that use of biofuels should be slowed until controls can be put in place to limit the impact on land-use and increasing food prices. Led by the RFA's chairman, professor Ed Gallagher, the so-called Gallagher Review also concluded that if policies on biofuels were continued, they could result in a reduction in biodiversity and an even an overall increase in greenhouse gas emissions.

In August we presented Glenis Willmot with over 200 postcards signed by the public opposing the biofuel targets.

Currently we are campaigning on Renewable Energy – this is the 'Join the Energy Revolution' campaign, characterised by the stencil type and graffiti street art on the posters, leaflets and postcards.

In October, we kicked off with another national Day of Action – postcards at the market square left lion, and a huge 'Graffiti Wall' poster for people to sign with personal messages to their MP to support investment in renewables. Conditions on that Saturday morning in Nottingham weren't ideal: blowing a gale (hence graffiti wall and pasting table randomly taking off, leaflets and cards blown down the road towards Primark), frostbite temperatures, egotistic Council House 'security' guard, and finally rain. Nevertheless we got 91 postcards signed in 3 hours, and these had to be shoved into an envelope and posted to HQ the same today! The highlight of the day was a visit by the Labour MP for Gedling Vernon Coaker! We had sent out invites to all the Nottingham MPs and as the invites were sent out at short notice, we were not too hopeful of anyone showing up. Vernon spent some time at our stall, signed the Graffiti Wall, and signed a postcard...to post to himself! For me at least, this made the day, and made it all worthwhile.

The Renewables campaign continues: the focus has changed to getting the support of local groups, organisations and businesses. This seems to be a new strategy for FoE. The postcard, to be completed by the group / business / organisation, calls upon the local MP to write to the Prime Minister asking him to ensuring the Renewable Energy Strategy, which will be published in March, commits to 15% of our energy from renewables by 2020. The campaign is continuing up until March so if there is one near you who would support the campaign then please contact us for details. – *Roger Steele*

The Climate Change Act - A Means to an end

The Climate Change Act has now become law. It will require the UK to cut its greenhouse gas emissions by 80 per cent (from 1990 levels) by 2050.

The new legislation is the first of its kind anywhere in the world - and should put Britain at the forefront of international efforts to tackle climate change. FoE has led the calls for this legislation with its 'Big Ask' campaign since 2005. A series of five year interim 'targets' will also be set - which will take into account the UK's share of international aviation and shipping emissions. These targets are to ensure that the 2050 target is kept on track.

The initial targets are appropriately severe. In its current report, the Committee on Climate Change states that UK greenhouse gas emissions must be slashed by 42 per cent by 2020 (a bare 11 years away!) if we are to play our part in avoiding catastrophic global warming. Reacting to the report, FoE Executive Director Andy Atkins applauded the advice and warned against delaying tactics ... actually achieving this 42% reduction mustn't be conditional on reaching an international deal!

One task of the Committee, which is headed by Government adviser Lord Adair Turner, is to recommend the first five year 'budget' periods.

It also advises from which sectors these emissions cuts should come, and what level of emissions reductions should be made in the UK and how much can be 'bought in' from overseas - in the form of carbon credits (themselves, of course, controversial: current examples being of wildly varying value).

The Government will examine this advice and set the 'budgets' in March 2009 - at the same time as the financial Budget.

Commending Adair Turner's strong backing for urgent investment in green energy and cutting energy waste, FoE's Andy Atkins foresaw also 'new jobs and a safe, clean and prosperous future for us all.' But amid the praise he sounded a stark note of caution:

'The Committee clearly acknowledges the major threats that aviation and coal pose to our climate change targets - but it has fudged the question of what the Government must do. Ministers must scrap plans to allow UK airports to expand and not allow any coal-fired power stations to be built without carbon capture and storage. The Government must now get on with the urgent task of making the UK a low-carbon economy'.

A detailed Friends of the Earth briefing on the Climate Change Committee is available at: http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/ccc_advice.pdf - *Jeremy Jago & Judith Dare*

Anti-incinerator campaigns

Last September we had a public inquiry into whether the Eastcroft Incinerator should be allowed to expand. Nottingham FOE supported the campaign group Nottingham Against Incineration and Landfill (NAIL). A decision has been promised by 19 February.

The incinerator operator WRG claimed that they could burn an extra 100,000 tonnes p.a. commercial and industrial waste. But they failed to show that the Environment Agency would change the permit to allow this. They also failed to show the need to import residual mixed waste from surrounding counties.

WRG claimed the district heating scheme which takes steam from the current incinerator was a good reason to expand incineration in Nottingham. But they refused to invest the £600,000 needed to expand district heating into surrounding regeneration areas, even though the Council had committed £1m to this. That means no more than 22% of heat from the proposed new line would be recovered for electricity - causing more CO₂ emissions than

a coal-fired power station.

And of course WRG failed to persuade local communities that they will be protected from toxic emissions.

Meanwhile, incinerators are also being pursued in Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and Derbyshire.

In Notts, the County has supported an incinerator on the edge of Sherwood Forest at Rainworth even though Newark & Sherwood District Council opposed it. The campaign group PAIN (People Against Incineration) is hoping it will be called in for a public inquiry. In Lincolnshire, the local authorities have refused to consider separate food waste collections, instead preferring to go ahead with consultation on an incinerator at North Hykeham next to a nursery school.

In Leicestershire and Derbyshire, proposals have not yet been put forward for planning permission, but both are likely to end up with incinerators as the only options being pursued. Local Friends of the Earth groups are supporting anti-incinerator campaigns in all of these areas. - *Nigel Lee*

Local climate change strategies

Both the City and County Councils have signed up to a target to reduce carbon dioxide emissions in their area. Both are working on carbon reduction strategies, but in very different ways.

The County set up a Climate Change Partnership last May, involving District Councils as well as a number of other agencies. For the County as a whole the aim is to reduce the baseline of 7.4 tonnes CO₂ per person by 5.2% in 2009-10 and by 7.95% in 2010-11.

A number of task groups have been formed to set out the action needed. They should report shortly. Their groups include:

- influencing local partnerships, such as community strategies and local transport plans;
- public sector CO₂ reductions;
- alternative fuel sources (such as the County's wood heat programme);
- smarter travel;
- food – waste reduction and local production;
- environmentally friendly procurement;
- work with businesses, schools, etc.

The County has an informative page on climate change initiatives on their website, unlike the City which doesn't even seem to have a link to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change.

The City adopted a climate change resolution in 2006, but still does not have a clear strategy. Instead they have got bogged down in developing an environmental management system (EMAS) which may not be fully implemented until 2011. They have listed seven commitments for action 'to consolidate the City Council's leadership role...in respect of climate change':

1. '...we need to develop a plan that outlines how the city is to meet its [carbon reduction] targets...'
2. To participate in local and regional networks – including East Midlands Climate Change Group, Local Authority Energy Partnership for Notts and Derbys, and a Health and Environment Partnership.
3. 'Within the next two years develop plans with our partners and local communities to progressively address the causes and impacts of climate change.' 'EMAS will require us to produce an annual public statement regarding our environmental impacts and progress on delivery. This will include information on how we have reduced carbon emissions.'
4. 'We need to be developing and actioning a climate change adaptation plan.' The first stage of a local climate impacts profile has been completed, looking at the consequences of past severe weather events and impact on services.
5. 'We aim to develop a more high profile campaign with partners specifically centred on climate change...'
6. 'Monitor the progress of our plans against the actions needed and publish the results.'

Both City and County should be producing detailed carbon reduction strategies by April. We wait with interest. – *Nigel Lee*



Domestic Rain Water Collection. This system supplies the toilet cistern.

Crunch time?

With all the talk about the credit crunch, recession and the banking crisis this could be an ideal time to think about remodelling of the economy with the future of the planet in mind. It is an opportunity to push for measures that will move us towards saving rather than destroying the environment.

- Value nature - We are currently in a situation where clearing rainforests, extracting fossil fuels and increasing CO₂ in the atmosphere are recorded positively on the balance sheet of the country, this could be replaced by a system which instead estimates a value for natural systems e.g. soil formation, crop pollination, biodiversity, flood protection and climate regulation.

- Quality of life or GDP? - There has been the assumption that the economic system should function to make people richer, that more money will make us happier. The evidence shows that, beyond a level of material comfort, extra money does no such thing. Rather than using Gross Domestic Product as a measure of a successful society we could measure life expectancy and levels of satisfaction both of which depend on the continued viability of the planet.
- Tax reform - We already have a landfill levy and a climate change levy, let's call for the introduction of similar schemes to tackle the overuse of pesticides and non-organic fertilizer, to promote home insulation or to encourage people to think twice about how many flights they take, all as part of ecologically-minded tax reforms which would not require overall higher levels of tax.
- Utility price structure - Why should those of us who don't waste energy and water pay the same price per unit as those who waste them? If, as a nation, we are serious about the conservation of water and power then we should have a price structure for utilities that reflects this – the more you use, the higher the rate you pay.
- Spend taxpayer's money in ways that benefit the environment – Huge amounts of money are spent by the Government and councils, both directly and through schools, hospitals, the armed forces etc and while getting value for money is very important it is also necessary to ensure that the ways that this money is spent do not damage the planet. Unsustainably produced tropical timber should not be purchased, while local food and low energy products should be bought. – *Jill Gross*

For details on these measures and many more ideas see *How Many Light Bulbs Does it Take to Change a Planet?* By Tony Juniper (Quercus, £12)

Campaigns for 2009:

The renewables campaign remains the priority until April 2009, with the focus on local groups engaging community groups, businesses and organisations. For more information see:

http://www.foe.co.uk/community/campaign/climate/renewables_index.html

From May onwards we'll be launching two new campaigns, and then a third that will become more prominent towards the end of the summer, building up to the Copenhagen negotiations in December. The following summarises these:

1. Low Carbon Communities

This campaign – launched in May – follows on from The Big Ask and focuses on local action, initially aiming to secure local commitments to be bold carbon reductions in 50 places in England and Wales. By supporting local groups to campaign where the opportunities are greatest, FOE hope to demonstrate what can be done to cut emissions and build support amongst local councils for new powers and funding to cut emissions even further. The campaign will give local groups the scope to run proactive campaigns within a nationally-supported network through which they can learn and develop ideas from each other and drive towards a big national outcome. The campaign will achieve big steps in tackling climate change in the UK, so that the public start to see change and how it will make their life better.

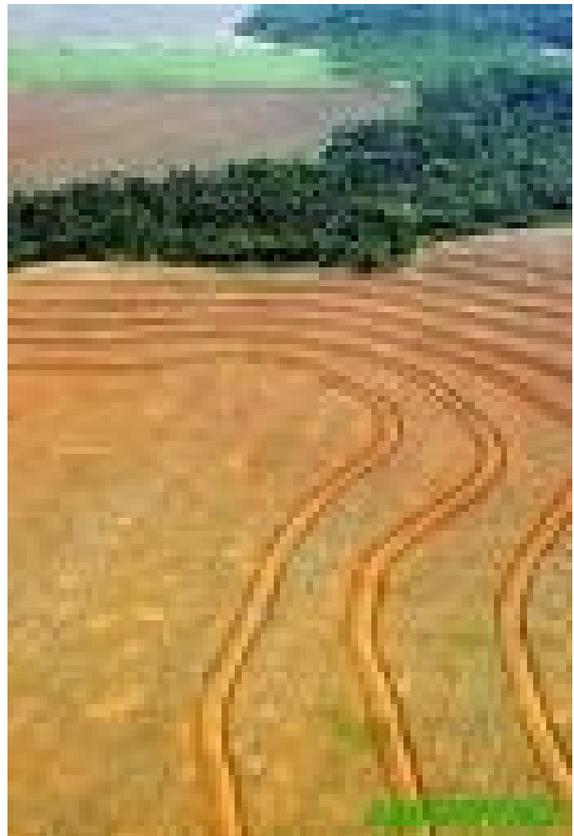
2. Food Chain

The Food Chain campaign aims to revolutionise the way we produce and consume meat and dairy products. Through a parliamentary bill, it will raise awareness and press for action on the global impacts of intensive meat and dairy farming. It focuses on the impacts of soy farming for animal feed on places like the Atlantic forests of Brazil and Paraguay. Land clearance for soy is the major driver of deforestation in South America. Individual activism will start in March – and a suite of exciting actions for local groups will be offered from May and over the summer.

3. Countdown to Copenhagen

Finally, from late summer onwards, we will start to focus attention on the Copenhagen climate summit and the need for an international agreement to drastically cut the emissions causing climate change. Our campaign will give groups and individual activists the opportunity to do something at home on a major global issue that will dominate public attention. We will work alongside Stop Climate Chaos and Friends of the Earth International on events here in the UK and in Copenhagen itself.

- Roger Steele



Illegal Soy Farming in Brazil

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For general information, please write with an SAE to Nottingham Friends of the Earth, c/o Sumac Centre, 245 Gladstone Street, Nottingham NG7 6HX.

For information about joining the group, please mark the envelope "Membership".

Our website is <http://nottfoe.gn.apc.org/>

National Friends of the Earth is at 26-28 Underwood Street, London N1 7JQ (020 7490 1555), or email info@foe.co.uk
See national website www.foe.co.uk for easy online actions – or link from <http://nottfoe.gn.apc.org/diary.htm>.

We meet on the first Tuesday of the month (except August) at the Friends Meeting House, Clarendon St, Nottingham NG1 4EZ, between 7.30pm and 9.30pm. Please come and join us. You would be very welcome.

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AGM announcement

Our next Annual General Meeting will be on Tuesday, 3rd March 2009 (7.30pm, Friends Meeting House – see above for address)