

Nottingham
Friends of
the Earth

Welcome to Nottingham Friends of the Earth. We are one of over 200 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.

Red Alert: Bankrolling Climate Change



In 2022 we joined other groups protesting in front of the huge pile of coal at Uniper's Ratcliffe on Soar power station (see photo in last year's Down to Earth).

In 2023 we took the protest to the dirtiest High Street banks – HSBC, Santander and Barclays – which have invested most in fossil fuels. Supporters of Global Justice, Extinction Rebellion and the Climate Justice Coalition, as well as Friends of the Earth, staged a noisy protest followed by a silent die-in outside each of the three banks along Clumber Street.

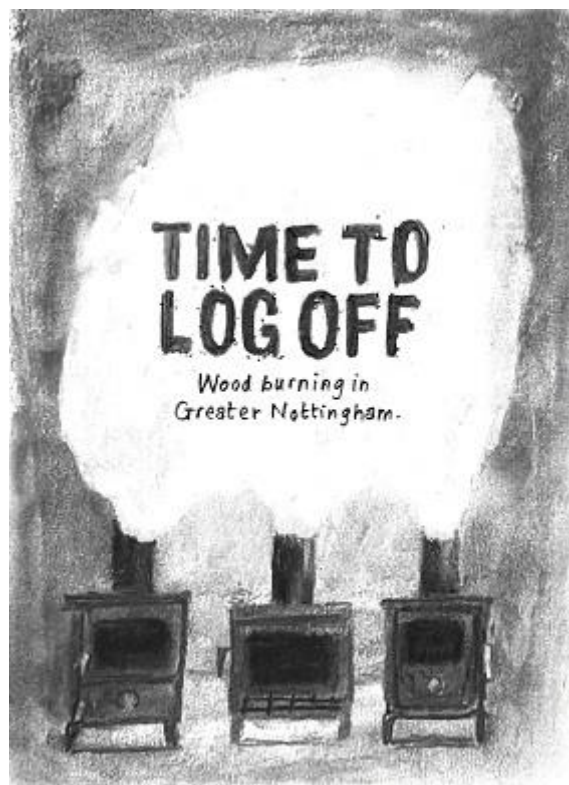
We were demanding that the UK government should be paying money into a UN “loss and damage fund” to compensate the least developed countries for damage caused by climate change. And taxes should be increased on oil and gas companies, and on the banks which have financed them, to pay for it.

We were also asking bank customers to move their accounts to better banks such as Nationwide or Co-operative.

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Clean Air Nottingham exposes polluting wood burning stoves



Wood burning stoves and fires are a major and growing contributor to air pollution, a cause of death and illness in Greater Nottingham. This is revealed in a report, *Time To Log Off*, by campaigning group Clean Air Nottingham.

This exhaustive report details the dangers of modern stoves. They can release 150 times more tiny particles than a modern HGV lorry, can emit ten times more deadly particles in real life than under test conditions and can triple air pollution inside the home.

Wood fires may look so comforting and warming yet they are the fastest growing source of deadly particle pollution known as PM2.5. These fine particles are linked to some 29,000 deaths each year in the UK. They are breathed deep into the lungs, enter the bloodstream allowing exposure to virtually all cells in our bodies. Harmful particles from wood burning increased by 124% between 2011 and 2021. More than 500 new stoves are sold each day and wood burning now causes almost double the fine particle pollution from traffic.

The report shows how present smoke control laws are useless in tackling this problem. What we have here is “Woodgate”, another national scandal similar to “Dieselgate”. People are told they are making green choices but the real health effects are hidden from them. They have been deceived and let down by the Government.

The report shows how in Nottingham city alone there are some 140 premature deaths each year from PM2.5 particles, many more people becoming slightly or severely ill. In the surrounding boroughs of Broxtowe, Erewash, Gedling and Rushcliffe PM2.5 particulates are linked to 60 to 70 premature deaths each year. Wood burning is a major and growing contributor.

Clean Air Nottingham is calling for urgent action. Government, local authorities and public health bodies are all asked to mount awareness campaigns dealing with wood burning health risks. Local authorities are called on to investigate and initiate a burn ban for certain days of the year, and to set up a monitoring system pinpointing local pollution hot spots.

The Government is called on to follow the advice of its Climate Change Committee and:

- set a date to stop home installation of wood burning stoves from 2025;
- ban use from 2027 of installed wood burners (with exceptions);
- prioritise the passing of the Clean Air (Human Rights) Bill;
- give local authorities power and resources to monitor and reduce air pollution in their areas.

The report has been sent to all five local Councils. A copy can be downloaded from <https://nottfoe.gn.apc.org/TimetoLogOff.html>

Roger Critchley

Will the new mayor pledge to tackle climate change?

In May 2024, people in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire will be able to vote for an “East Midlands Combined Authority” mayor for the first time. The new mayor will have significant powers over transport, housing, training, energy and environment.

Friends of the Earth has been working with local environmental groups to ensure that all candidates commit to tackling the climate and ecological emergencies. Similar campaigns in other “metro mayor” areas have been successful in getting commitments from elected mayors.

All candidates will be asked to sign the following pledge:

“I recognise the vital role I have in working with communities to meet our legally binding 2030 climate commitments. I pledge, if elected, to use my powers, funding and influence to deliver the actions necessary to tackle the climate and nature emergencies and build a fairer society for all in East Midlands - particularly those disproportionately impacted.”

In addition they will be asked to sign up to a ten point plan – see:

<https://nottfoe.gn.apc.org/metromayor.html>

Nigel Lee

United for Warm Homes!



Some say the public can't afford to care about climate change right now, but the truth is that these problems go hand in hand. The “cost of living” crisis and the climate crisis are all too intertwined, and United for Warm Homes aims to tackle this by addressing the governments' inaction on fuel poverty.

This is Climate Action Notts' new campaign, and it lobbies MPs to take action on the energy crisis. We are calling on MPs and General Election candidates to pledge their support for three asks: emergency funding for those forced to choose between heating and eating, an insulation scheme for those homes which are quite literally costing the Earth, and a move away from unreliable fossil fuels towards cheaper, greener renewable energy. Because ultimately, we really believe that it shouldn't

cost us the Earth, in either sense of the phrase, to have warm homes.

Many would question if this issue applies to all of us. Unfortunately, the research says it does. Friends of the Earth studied fuel poverty across the UK, and the results for our area are staggering. For those with the NG1 postcode alone, the average energy bill is £1,980 a year, and a whopping 15% of their bills could be lowered with solid wall insulation. Moreover, FoE determined the 100 coldest neighbourhoods in each region of the UK, and almost a third of the whole East Midlands list are in Nottingham. Sneinton was labelled the coldest neighbourhood in Nottingham, almost ranking in the coldest 10% of the whole country.

In the early days of the political phase of our campaign, we are pleased to have the formal support of Nadia Whittome MP (pictured), as well as a pledge of support from Broxtowe City Council. We are in discussions with Alex Norris MP and Lilian Greenwood MP, and from there we intend to tackle the 8 Nottinghamshire County MPs, or indeed their successors in this year's General Election.

So how can you support us? There are a variety of ways to get involved depending on your skills and time. If any of these pique your interest, don't hesitate to get in touch at climateactionnotts@gmail.com and share your thoughts!

Alice Bayes

Nottingham's Repair Cafés



A chair breaks. A garment rips. A toaster jams. A toy is trodden on. To most people the idea of repair, however desirable, seems impossibly unrealistic. 'It's cheaper to replace it,' so the expression goes. Is there some alternative?

Martine Postma in Amsterdam had asked this question for several years. She was also amazed by the number of apparently good items left on the streets on rubbish collection day. As a journalist she'd written on waste reduction, so wrote a pamphlet advising on recycling appliances. In late 2009 she went further, by trying out in practice an idea she'd nursed for a time. It arose from the observation that many things are junked not because they're beyond repair, but because the needed skills may not be widespread. If the owners could be brought together with skilled volunteers, several things might be gained. Significant waste might be prevented, and resources, energy, carbon and money saved - and crucially, repair skills shared and spread. All in all, a practical challenge to the throwaway society ... if the idea caught people's imagination. Martine's first test session at a public venue showed that it did. More people turned up than anyone anticipated, and expressed appetite for a continuing scheme. The range of volunteer skills was soon widened. Repair Café

International Foundation was launched on 2 March 2010, its quoted aims:
'... to make repair a part of the local community once again. It aims to maintain and spread repair expertise, and to promote social cohesion by bringing together neighbours from all walks of life...'

In the years since, Repair Cafes have been started by local communities all over the world. An early Nottingham scheme began in 2010. Nottingham's first full Repair Cafe has run in Sherwood since 2017, and there are active groups also in West Bridgford, Beeston and Keyworth. New initiatives are being discussed in Carlton, Sneinton, St Anns and the Meadows, and also on the Nottingham University campus.

How does a Repair Cafe run? A Repair Cafe is non-commercial and its running expenses are generally funded by donation and sometimes by grant. Work is done free, but materials and parts are normally charged for. The general form is that at intervals an open session is held at a community venue. At various tables there are repair volunteers with different skills - the range of possible repairs naturally depends on people available, but generally includes garments, toys, furniture, electrical, digital and kitchen items, and sometimes others such as jewellery and timepieces. Bike repair and checkup is a busy category. Of the repair volunteers, some are working or retired professionals, but all have skills for work to commercial standard. Full safety practice is followed. Each repair is carried out and discussed with the owner alongside. A friendly atmosphere is central to the whole scheme, with refreshments and a chance to chat while waiting. Some of the Cafes invite the public to bring along anything on the day, while others ask people pre-book a time slot online (eg for electrical repairs) because of the level of demand. For the same reason, several schemes concentrate on repairs they estimate to be possible to complete within 30 minutes - a great proportion of damaged items come into this category.

Some repairs aren't possible or practical - perhaps a part is unavailable or costly, or the

task would take too long, or needs special skills. The owner is advised of commercial repairers where possible, but some items have simply reached the end of life. Many people believe products are purposely designed to have limited life and/or to be unrepairable. Hard to prove, but it can be said that most design is dictated by price competition. Purchase price of products lags general inflation - many household appliances are priced the same as a decade ago and some even below. This pressure towards ever-falling real cost acts negatively at the same time as technological progress acts positively. The net result is not always the sustainable ideal: for example, tech products with welded, unopenable cases which can only be junked when faulty. Long-lived repairable products exist, but occupy a frustratingly high-price niche of the present market. The interesting situation exists that older repaired items can actually be better than brand new replacements. All this suggests that establishing a 'repair culture' is a complex task with duties both on consumer and maker. But an important part of the task, encouraging people to mend, to gain the skills and pass them on is inspiring a growing number of people. Repair Cafes are attracting more attenders and their progress in Nottingham is impressive.

A note on Right to Repair

In 2023, the European Commission adopted a new set of rules that will add devices like smartphones and tablets to a list of goods that

must be built with repairability in mind. Makers of goods on the list must repair items for five to 10 years after sale. The provisions include rights for repairability outside legal guarantee periods ... but before the rules can enter law, the Commission will need to negotiate them with the European Parliament and member states. As for the UK, the Right To Repair law, active from July 2021, compels producers to make repair info and spare parts available for up to 10 years for certain 'white goods' and TVs. This aligned GB and Northern Ireland with the EU regulation at the time, but it doesn't so far include 'smart' devices.

Some useful contact addresses:

Nottingham Fixers (meet in Sherwood)

www.facebook.com/NottinghamFixers/

Beeston Repair Cafe

beestonrepaircafe@gmail.com

Victoria Repair Cafe (meet in West Bridgford)

<https://www.facebook.com/victoriarepaircafe/>

Keyworth Repair Cafe

<https://www.facebook.com/RepairshopinKeyworth/>

Repair Cafe International homepage

<https://www.repaircafe.org/en/>

Find a Repair Cafe near you

<https://www.repaircafe.org/en/visit/>

Repair Cafe Starter kit

<https://www.repaircafe.org/en/start>

Jeremy Jago

Creativity Workshops based on Native Amerindian traditions

'Creative Connection' workshops, inspired by Native Amerindian wisdom from Kenneth Meadows' Earth Medicine books, are designed to unlock creativity, invite innovative thinking and inspire solutions for personal, planetary, community and work-place challenges. Accessing the joy in crafting new narratives, they aim to tap into an innate love for live story-building.

They offer an enriching experience that stimulates the mind and provides time to playfully explore new possibilities.

These workshops are currently being developed. If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Dan:

allartsforearth@gmail.com

Dan Swinton

COP 28 – Now We Rise!



Activists from the multitude of organisations that are involved with the Climate Justice Coalition demonstrating in Trinity Square, Nottingham on 9th December 2023.



Every year since 1995 governments have come together to make empty promises about tackling climate change. And global temperatures continue to rise. As do corporate profits.

In November 2023 the 28th UN climate talks (COP28) were held in the fossil fuel state of UAE. Civil society groups came together under the banner of NOW WE RISE! - with ten demands (in more detail at <https://climatejustice.uk/our-demands/>):

1. Immediate ceasefire, a stop to the blockade and occupation of Palestine
2. Rapid, just and equitable phase out of all fossil fuels
3. New non-debt creating, conditionality-free climate finance
4. Cancellation of unsustainable and illegitimate debt
5. Immediate end to greenwashing and false, harmful and unproven “solutions”

6. Just, resilient and sustainable food systems
7. Respect for and protection of human rights
8. Gender justice as an integral part of climate justice
9. Defund and divest from the destructive and heavily polluting military industrial complex
10. Equitable and just transition from a capitalist and extractivist economic system

COP28 did establish a “loss and damage fund” to compensate countries which have done little to cause climate change – but far less than what is needed. There were also targets for renewable energy – but no funding to phase out fossil fuels.

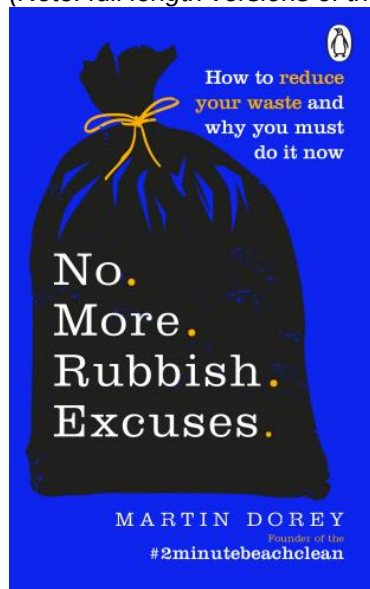
Friends of the Earth International commented that the outcome was “weak on equity” with too much emphasis on “dangerous distractions that will prevent a just and equitable energy transition” such as carbon capture, hydrogen, nuclear, and carbon removal technologies that commodify nature. (See <https://www.foei.org/cop28-outcome-press-release/>)

Climate Justice Coalition Nottingham held a rally in Trinity Square.

Nigel Lee

Environmental book reviews

(Note: full length versions of these reviews can be found on our website – see page 8)



Book Review - No. More. Rubbish. Excuses.

(Martin Dorey)

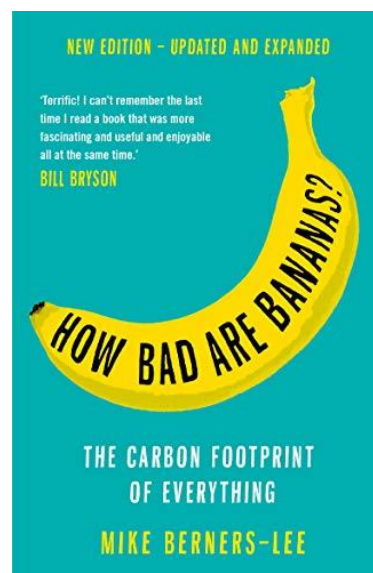
Published by Penguin £3 from branches of Oxfam) For those interested in making a contribution to saving the planet this is a starter-level manual to help you appreciate

the challenges we face when creating or disposing of waste. Beginning as a surfer and beach lover, he got involved in cleaning beaches before turning his attention to what we can do as ordinary consumers. In a short book he explains about plastics, food waste, fashion textiles and electronic equipment, helping you to minimise consumption, and to dispose of everyday items in the most environmentally-friendly manner, including reusing or upcycling. He discusses methods of home composting, etc. which reduce waste the local council has to deal with. Your local council is happy to take waste and incinerate it as an 'environmentally-friendly' or 'low carbon' source of community heating, leading to a low level of ambition to tackle climate change. This book steers you in the right direction to make the right decisions.

The author devotes a lot of space to discussing plastics so you appreciate where it is found (virtually everything!) and help you avoid buying it. However, the alternatives such as compostable cups and bioplastics are not straightforward, so you need to be aware of the 'end of life' issues for all the different products. We don't want to simply replace one problem with another.

He concludes with a section on choosing environmentally-friendly products and a table to help identify the different grades of plastic from the codes and symbols printed on them.

Book Review – **How Bad Are Bananas?**
(Mike Berners-Lee Published by Profile Books, widely available)



about it.

The author steers us towards a 5 tonne lifestyle, a level of annual CO2 emissions per individual he has reduced from 10 tonnes in the 2009 edition.

Examples include leaving the lights on; 15kg CO2e (CO2 "equivalent") a year for a 5-watt low-energy bulb, 300 kg CO2e for a 100W incandescent bulb. Take a typical pack of asparagus; 270g CO2e local and seasonal pack, 4.7kg CO2e the same pack airfreighted from Peru. In answer to the headline question 'How Bad Are Bananas?' the answer is that you can eat them with a clear conscience because although they travel a huge distance they arrive in bulk by sea.

Mike Berners-Lee writes in a most enjoyable good-humoured style, participates in on-line webinars and replies to emails. In addition to writing books he has a consultancy advising businesses and organisations on their carbon footprints. This experience in drilling down in to many industrial processes puts him in a very good position to calculate the maths behind this book.

The later part of the book summarises the individual actions we can take before going on to explain how we must push for change in businesses and organisations. In no particular order, we should try to influence family, friends and social contacts, work, school, college or university. Engage supermarkets by complaining about excess packaging and wastage. Question election candidates and use your vote to support people who can and will make a difference.

Richard Lumb

See our website for more of Richard's book reviews

Contacts

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Membership Officer: Nigel Lee, 0115 9788059; Jeremy Jago
Newsletter Editor: Roger Steele, 07474 257029
Website Editor: Nigel Lee, 0115 9788059

Campaigns:

Nottm ProWA: Roger Steele, 07474 257029 & Richard Lumb
Clean Air: Nigel Lee (liaising with Clean Air Nottingham), 0115 9788059
Waste & Resources: Nigel Lee, 0115 9788059
Fossil Fuel Divestment: Jon Simons
Warm Homes: Jon Simons (liaising with Climate Action Notts)

For general information, please visit our website (see below), or 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".

For latest campaign news and contact details, visit
<https://nottfoe.gn.apc.org>

National Friends of the Earth: The Printworks, 131-143 Clapham Road, London SW9 0HP (020 7490 1555), or email info@foe.co.uk.

See national website <https://friendsoftheearth.uk> for easy online actions.

We meet online on the second Tuesday of each month, between 7.30pm and 9.30pm. Please email nottinghamfoe@hotmail.com for details. You would be very welcome.

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If you would like to receive future editions of this newsletter electronically to save paper, please let us know your email address. You can contact us by email: nottinghamfoe@hotmail.com. Please note that the file size can be over 1MB.

AGM Announcement

Our next Annual General Meeting will be held online on Tuesday 12 March 2024 at 7:30pm. Email nottinghamfoe@hotmail.com for details.

We look forward to seeing you there.