

Hammersmith and Fulham Friends of the Earth Newsletter

March 2005



Editor: Sarah

Friends of the Earth

Scarecrows at Westminster

Campaigners descended on the House of Commons on 23rd February to call for the right to choose GM-free food, and urge their MPs to support this choice.

The mass lobby and rally in London, organised by Friends of the Earth, the Five Year Freeze, the National Federation of Women's Institutes and FARM proved a big success despite the freezing weather.



Paula and Eugene at Westminster

GM Nation, an independent steering group which carried out a major public consultation in 2003, revealed that nearly half never want to see GM crops grown in the UK under any circumstances. They also found little support for early commercialisation and widespread mistrust of government and multinational companies. However, future legal frameworks may allow widespread contamination. Whilst there are at present no GM crops being grown in the UK and commercial cultivation is

not expected for at least another three years, Defra considers a blanket ban on cultivation to be unnecessary and will assess safety on a case-by-case basis.

Speaking at the event, former Environment Minister Michael Meacher said Tony Blair and the environment secretary, Margaret Beckett, were supporting GM in defiance of their own policies. "Everyone except the Government is against GM. Public opinion is overwhelming against it and if anything it's hardening. The supermarkets aren't stocking it."

Many local authorities oppose the use of GM food. Last Friday, the South West Regional Assembly became the first region to take an official position on GM when it called on food and farming in the region to be protected from GM crops, and for strict liability on GM companies. Director of Friends of the Earth, Tony Juniper said the day was about "making sure that public opinion remains a key element in policymaking in the future."

FoE is now calling on MPs to:

- **sign** a parliamentary petition, Early Day Motion 406, calling for tough rules to prevent GM contamination

- **write** to Margaret Beckett, Secretary of State for DEFRA expressing their concerns
- **sign** the European GM-free zones petition calling for the right for local and regional authorities to decide whether GM crops are grown in their area
- **sign** the Bite Back citizen's objection, calling on the World Trade Organisation to throw out the US-led attempt to force GM into Europe.

Biteback update: over 125,000 people and more than 700 organisations representing 58 million people have now signed the Bite Back citizens' objection. 25,000 individual signatures and 166 organisations have signed up since the citizens' objections were handed in to the WTO in Geneva in May 2004.

You can still support this campaign by writing or visiting your MP and asking them to support the above.

 **Links**

http://www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/real_food/news/gm_lobby.html

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/gm/crops/>

Fairtrade

As Fairtrade fortnight gets underway, we now have the number of restaurants and cafés required to make Hammersmith and Fulham fairtrade.

A big thank you to everyone who hands contributed to the campaign, especially to Eugene, who has been an absolute star and worked away at this tirelessly.

On Valentine's Day, Paula, Eugene Ruth and Carolyn took part in a Fairtrade Love Day action and met the manager of Riverside Studios, who have started selling Fair Trade products.



We would however like to continue to encourage more places to stock fair trade and in

particular we would like to get the support of local independent restaurants that are in our local food guide. As well as helping do something wonderful to fight poverty, every business selling or using fair trade products will get free publicity in a local guide. We'd like to try and promote places that also sell organic, local and veggie food too.

Gr8 G8 Fair Trade Text Petition

New Consumer magazine has launched the first ever text petition to tackle poverty, urging world leaders at the next G8 Summit to include Fair



Trade on the agenda.

Help us reach the target of

1,000,000 names by spreading the word about The Gr8 G8 Text Petition.

World leaders are keen to expand the global economy through increased trade, fundamental changes to trade rules are needed for a real change in global poverty.

The leaders of Germany, Canada, the United States, France, Italy, Japan, the

United Kingdom and Russia will meet in Scotland this summer. In addition, the European Union participates and is represented by the president of the European Council and the President of the European Commission.

Text now to campaign for change: Text G8 to 83070, followed by your full name and country.

<http://tinyurl.com/59erk>

Sloane Rangers

Should drivers of gas-guzzling 4x4s pay a four-fold increase in the congestion charge? 85% of the 5,480 people polled in a Central London survey on 26th January believe a £20 congestion charge for such vehicles would be justified. The survey was carried out by teams from Alliance Against Urban 4x4s, Greenpeace, with support from Friends of the Earth, including HFFoE, and several other groups.

The survey results have been submitted to Transport for London (TfL), though a decision is not expected for several months at least. Vehicles liable for the increased charge under the proposed scheme vehicles do 25 miles per gallon or emit more than 250g of CO₂ per kilometre, including the Land Rover Discovery and the new Range Rover Sport. The Land Rover Discovery only does 12 miles per gallon in the city, compared to the European Car of the year, the Toyota Prius, which does over 55 miles per gallon.

Greenpeace article
<http://tinyurl.com/45s2c>

Planning

The 2000 Local Government Act requires local authorities to produce **Local Development Frameworks (LDFs)** which will replace **Unitary Development Plans (UDPs)** as the collection of local development documents setting out the long-term vision for the area. The overall plan for the local area incorporating all the

local development plans and a timetable for their implementation is called **the Local Development Scheme (LDS)**.

The council currently has no draft LDF, but will discuss its Local Development Scheme at the scrutiny panel on 14th March. Councils are also required to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which lays down standards local authorities have to adhere to in who and how it consults, how information is accessed and the process of reviewing local development documents. This is where we come in.

There are a number of stages in the LDF process for community engagement, with the first round of public consultation on LDF issues and options scheduled for September-November 2005. The Local Development Framework will be reviewed on an annual basis and revised every three years.

Links

FoE have produced a useful guide to the planning system:

http://community.foe.co.uk/resource/visual_guides/planning_system_diagram.pdf

Further information is available at the Planning Portal:

<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/>

You can send an email to the council asking to be kept informed about the LDF via the FoE website:

<http://tinyurl.com/55n7d>

Hammersmith Broadway is "traffic hotspot"

The Hammersmith gyratory is among the top ten worst London traffic hotspots, according to business campaign group London First. Chiswick High Road is another culprit.

Two of the ten of the hotspots are in the congestion charging zone, but none of the others are in the proposed western extension. London First is calling on TfL to take action to tackle the severe congestion at the hotspots, with traffic delays costing the capital nearly £900 million a year.

The UK has the most extensive traffic congestion in Europe (in terms of the proportion of links congested) and its roads are the second most heavily used after Spain (in terms of vehicle kilometres per kilometre of road).

Hammersmith Today website

<http://tinyurl.com/6wc6j>

London First press release

<http://tinyurl.com/57uhg>

Government launches sustainability strategy

The Government launched its new Sustainable Development Strategy on Monday 7 March. The strategy is intended to set out a joined-up government approach to the linked environmental, social and economic challenges.

Whilst FoE believes such a plan is crucial, Friends of the Earth's Executive Director, Tony Juniper, said *"too often Ministerial interest goes little further than making speeches. We can't wait any longer for serious policies to tackle the issues we face."* FoE is calling for greater government action to ensure that sustainability is at the heart of government practices and activities.

Links

FoE press release

<http://tinyurl.com/4vmhy>

UK sustainable development strategy

<http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/>

Save Cash, Save the Planet

Looking for ways to save money and help the environment at the same time?



Save Cash, Save the Planet has just been published and details simple steps you can take – such as taking your own packed lunch to work, growing your own herbs and vegetables and insulating your home – which will benefit the health of both your pocket and the planet.

Forest protection

Brazil. Forests.org, an international ancient forest conservation group, are trying to increase the pressure on the Brazilian government to make lasting changes to the Amazon that will put the environment first. This from the recent tragic murder of Sister Dorothy Stang, an environmental and social activist in the Para region.

Just go to this link:

 <http://forests.org/action/brazil>

and fill in your name, email and country, then click "submit".

Canada. Greenpeace Canada is calling on Kimberly-Clark to halt the logging of ancient forests to create Kleenex brand tissue products. You can help convince Kimberly-Clark to stop destroying ancient and endangered forests and to start using more recycled fibre in their products by sending an e-mail to the CEO of Kimberly-Clark, Mr Thomas Falk, via their website:

 <http://www.kleercut.net>

Regional Gathering

Following the success of the last local groups meeting in January, a second

local groups meeting is being held on Saturday 7th May for groups across London and the southeast to get meet up and exchange ideas. The main hall of Conway Hall in London, which has a capacity of 500, has been booked.

Why will this event be important?


In January, Tony Juniper set out why tackling Climate Change was Friends of the Earth's priority for 2005 and beyond. By 7th May, FoE will be ready to launch its new Climate Change Bill campaign, and will offer new resources, crucial information, key skills, such as lobbying MPs and getting media coverage, action planning time and networking.

Please contact Paula if you're interested in going.

Useful websites

Fed up with long URLs that don't work in emails or are too difficult to type out? Two useful sites will convert them into something more useable:

 **Tiny URL**
<http://tinyurl.com>

 **Make a Shorter Link**
<http://www.masl.to>

For example, you can convert http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/press_releases/government_to_launch_susta_04032005.html into the more user-friendly <http://tinyurl.com/4vmhy>. Just type this into your browser and you'll get the site you require. Both sites are free and the links generated never expire.

No web access?

If you do not have web access and would like information about campaigning from the web, please contact national FoE on 020 7490 1555 and ask for any documents you need to be downloaded or for print-outs of web actions.

Diary Dates

Monday 14 March, Monday 11 April 7.15 for 7.30pm

General meeting, Hammersmith Information Centre, Hammersmith Broadway. New members always welcome.

Saturday 2nd April

Wormwood Scrubs Celebration of the third year of its Local Nature Reserve status.

Sunday 9th April

Hammersmith Community Spirit Festival

Monday 14th March

Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel <http://tinyurl.com/6rffc>

Saturday 16th April, 11-4.30pm

FoE training day: media skills for local campaigners

✉ davidb@foe.co.uk

Saturday 26th March, 11am – 4.30pm

Local groups and Climate Change Event: Review and Re-launch
karinep@foe.co.uk

Contacts

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Scrutiny panel

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If you have any friends or colleagues who live locally and are concerned about the environment why not ask them to become a Friend of the Earth. If they join now they will receive a free year's subscription to Earth Matters. Just ask them to fill out the form below, cut it from the newsletter and send it back to us.



Yes, I'd like to join my local group

Name

.....

Address

.....

.....Postcode.....

Phone (day).....(eve).....

Email.....

£6 for individual/family membership, £3 for concessions.) Plus a donation of £_____ payable to "H&F FOE"

- Yes, I'd like to receive EarthMatters. (free for one-year introductory offer)
- Please do not contact me about national campaigns or fundraising.
- Please do not pass my details to other organisations.

For more information **Telephone Pam on 020 89941239 or email info@hffoe.org.uk**

Please return to: Carolyn Dyer, 50 Overstone Road, Hammersmith, W6