

# North Wilts. Friends of the Earth

## Newsletter

May/June 2010

By the time we have our next meeting we will have a new Government - whoever they are we must all be hoping they will put the environment near the front of issues to be addressed.

No doubt we will be spending at least part of our meeting discussing what may happen next.

In the meantime Stephen has been involved with various groups who are attempting to influence the council over their response to the Climate Change Act. Peter is arranging the sponsored cycle ride & is starting to investigate holding a public discussion on hydro-electric power.

As always we need new members so if you can think of a way we could boost our numbers - please let me know.

### Sponsored Bike ride

Peter & Nigel Lambden are getting ready to ride the 40 or so miles from Chippenham to Chepstow to raise much needed funds for the tree planting to be done across North Wiltshire. If anyone is interested in joining in or sponsoring them please contact Peter on 01249 652248

### Hydro-electric power: from Peter

The use of former cloth mills in North Wiltshire for hydro-electric generation was discussed briefly at our meeting in April, & it's hoped that we can find several suitable local speakers who are either currently (pardon the pun) developing plans for such a scheme, or who have already established a project of their own, to talk on the subject at our next 'open forum'.

A group of water mill owners on the River Frome in Somerset have installed the first in a series of hydro-electric projects. Tellisford Mill, near Frome, is the Mendip Power Group's first installation. It is on course to produce 300 kWh of electricity per year, providing power for approximately 67 homes & cutting carbon dioxide emissions by 100 tonnes annually. The capacity of the turbines is approximately 75 kW, & the project was part funded by EDF Energy's Green Fund. The group hope to power more than 400 homes in the area through their projects, by bringing old mills back into use. See [www.edfenergy.com](http://www.edfenergy.com) for more information.

Another project, at Bathampton Mill is likely to generate 50Kw daily (400 Megawatt Hours annually) & is expected to be up & running by August 2011. (Subject to planning permission).

The project has received a 75% grant for a Detailed Study, & involvement of the wider community is being promoted with the creation of a Community Company that will benefit from a small income when the scheme is up & running.

Hydro-electric power has the advantage of using former mills & other sites that don't have the visual impact like wind turbines have. However, it has been calculated that even if we harness the power from all the streams & rivers in the U.K. this would still only be enough to supply 3% of national demand.

### We Need You! : from David Levy

The power of the FOE Local Groups is not to be undervalued.

When it came to the Climate Change Act each group member writing to their MP meant the pressure was applied to support the bill before it became law. When Marinet (Marine

Information Network) asked for similar support for the amendment it was putting forward for the Marine & Coastal Access Act we also received that support & it was instrumental influencing MPs come the vote. Without a 3 line Whip we would have been even closer to achieving that amendment.

We should be proud because Marinet with your support gained credit for a strategy that nearly succeeded & where some MPs defied their own whip.

The state of our seas are in such decline that Marinet is moving onto the Review of the Common Fisheries Policy this will be played out in Europe & it will be here where we will need your support with the MEPs. Our old MEP Dr Caroline Jackson has retired so it is now up to us to get to know her replacement & to write to him with Marinet's call for the primacy in law over policy. The law already exists within the MSFD to protect the ecosystem & fish stocks & it is this which many countries are trying to abandon for their own self interests. We must have the principle of law & all precautions enshrined in the new Common Fisheries Policy & you can help by writing to your MEP at the right time. As Lord Kitchener once said "We need You" If you want more information about Marinet please contact:

[stephen.marinet@btinternet.com](mailto:stephen.marinet@btinternet.com) or go to

[www.marinet.org.uk](http://www.marinet.org.uk)

### Waste of Waste

Almost everyone is aware of the need to recycle, but this seems to give people the idea that they 'are doing their bit' & so don't need to do any more. Very few stop to think of the cost to them & the environment. All this extra packaging has to be produced & transported then recycled, sent to landfill or incinerated. Recycling could involve a lot more than a short journey - a large amount of our waste is transported across the world, where it just ends up in another landfill!!!

On top of this is the cost of the collection for disposal. A while ago I read an interesting article in the Ecologist that made me stop & think - The average bin lorry costs £160,000, it will travel on average 250 miles a week, using 25 gallons of diesel a day. Travelling at 3-5 miles per hour they pollute our streets with exhaust fumes & micro-particles from tyres that are taking such a hammering they have to be replaced every month or so. This isn't helped when the recycling lorries have to wait while the waste from the household boxes are sorted at the roadside.

This got me thinking about why other councils collect bags of mixed recycling (plastics & tins, paper & card etc) in small lorries -the collectors just throw the bags in the lorry back & take them back to the depot for sorting. Perhaps our council could think about collecting cardboard & plastics in this way & maybe they could even think about using converted old electric

Visit our Website:

[www.northwiltsfoe.org.uk](http://www.northwiltsfoe.org.uk)

we meet the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month at Marden House, Calne



milk floats!! This does go against the FoE recommendations to sort at the doorstep - perhaps an evaluation should be done.

BUT a positive thing we can & should all do is

Complain about over packaging to supermarkets & your MP

### From the Geographical 1

The first complete study of the balance between greenhouse sinks & sources in Europe has shown that emissions from agricultural land & drained peat land, as well as the emissions from livestock, nitrous emissions from fertilisers & other farming products effectively cancel out the carbon stored by forests & grassland.

### Peat Free Composts: From Which

For the First time ever, peat-free composts have outperformed peat rivals. The 3 best according to Which Gardening are: Vital Earth tub & basket compost, New Horizon multi-purpose compost & Vital Earth multi-purpose compost.

### Winter talk

Stephen has been liaising with Paul Imber of the NFU Mutal Group about speaking at their meeting in December. The talk will be along the lines of 'climate change & modern farming practise, help or hindrance' & should provide plenty of scope for discussion.

There are usually 20 or so local farmers who will have questions to ask after a 30-40 minute talk. We have been invited along, so it would nice if a group of us could get together to travel to Langley Burrell.

### From the Geographical 2

Soot produced in densely populated south Asian cities is causing as much, if not more, warming in the Himalayas as greenhouse gases according to 2 recent studies.

Soot - also known as black carbon - is produced by diesel engines, coal-fired power plants & outdoor cooking stoves. The particles dark colour absorbs solar radiation, creating a layer of warm air just above the surface of the Himalayan plateau.

### Wiltshire Words

Wiltshire Words is a celebration of stories & reading. It is happening between 27 May & 5 June 2010. Most events will take place in Wiltshire's libraries. There are walks, children's activities, workshops for budding writers, visits from authors, a competition & an exhibition of British illustration. A couple of events that may be of interest:

Brian Clegg- Ecologic: The Truth & Lies of Green Economics

The talk may prove provocative, but aims to be realistic about what is necessary & what's achievable.

Corsham Library Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> June 7:30 - £3:00

Andy Hamilton - The Self-sufficientish Bible

A book that I've just borrowed from the library - a really good read for people who are interested in starting a more sustainable life.

Devizes Library 11:00 £3.00 followed by a walk at 2:00pm

[www.wiltshire.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/libraries)

### Cheap Greens from the Edible Garden

Peas shoots are very trendy & tasty - grow your own in a small tray on a sunny windowsill. A large packet cost about 60p from the Co-op.

### Green Gas From Ecotricity

Ecotricity plan to make genuine green gas from renewable sources such as organic household waste & inject it into the national grid. When the system first starts there will be small amounts fed in, but as they get more customers they will be able to build more sources of green gas. See

[www.ecotricity.co.uk/green-gas](http://www.ecotricity.co.uk/green-gas)

### battery & light recycling: from Sheila

I was surprised on my last visit to Sainsburys in Chippenham to see that they had recycling bins for low energy lights & batteries. I haven't seen any publicity for this.

### Say No to Bluefin Tuna

As some of you will know the recent CITES convention in Qatar failed to halt the fishing of Bluefin tuna until the stocks have recovered. Jay Rayner of the Observer has suggested you check with any restaurants what kind of Tuna they are serving & if it's Bluefin complain. He would also like to know of any UK business that is serving it - contact him at

[jay.rayner@observer.co.uk](mailto:jay.rayner@observer.co.uk)

### Plastiki

At long last the Plastiki set of on its journey across the Pacific to highlight the problems of plastic in our environment on 20th March. See the website

<http://www.theplastiki.com/>

### Diary

6 <sup>th</sup> May	General Election
8 <sup>th</sup> May	World Fair Trade Day <a href="http://www.worldfairtradeday10.org">www.worldfairtradeday10.org</a>
15 <sup>th</sup> May	South West Regional Gathering, Taunton
18 <sup>th</sup> May	Monthly Meeting
17 <sup>th</sup> - 21 <sup>st</sup> May	Walk to School Week <a href="http://www.walktoschool.org.uk">www.walktoschool.org.uk</a>
1st June-7:30pm	Brian Clegg at Corsham Library
5 <sup>th</sup> June	World Environment Day <a href="http://www.unep.org/wed/2010/english">www.unep.org/wed/2010/english</a>
5 <sup>th</sup> June	Fund raising Bike ride from Chippenham to Chepstow
5 <sup>th</sup> June-11:00am	Andy Hamilton at Devizes Library
12 <sup>th</sup> - 20 <sup>th</sup> June	National Bike week <a href="http://www.bikeweek.org.uk">www.bikeweek.org.uk</a>
15 <sup>th</sup> June	Monthly Meeting
24 <sup>th</sup> - 30 <sup>th</sup> June	National Vegetarian Week <a href="http://www.nationalvegetarianweek.org">www.nationalvegetarianweek.org</a>
14 <sup>th</sup> December 7:30 tbc	NFU Mutal Group talk/discussion Langley Burrell, Chippenham

Please let Maureen know of any events/dates you think the group might be interested in

If you don't have internet access & there is anything you would like more information on give me a ring & I'll see what I can print off

### Don't Forget

According to Sustrans 75% of us are within 2 miles of a route on the National cycle network which covers 10,000 miles nationally.



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