



**Feb 2022**

**No 409**



**friends of  
the earth  
Bromley**

*Our Next Meeting*

## **50 Glorious Years**

- Where we are
- What we have done
- Where we are going

Discussing and planning how best to mark our anniversary year  
with celebrations and new initiatives

*Plus* our AGM and review of the year.

The next monthly meeting is on Tuesday 1st February at **7.30pm**. It will be a virtual meeting once again and the Zoom link for this meeting is: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85084902666?pwd=NzlpMysvMlpJU0tJOHdnVUdmaEhkZz09>

Meeting ID: 850 8490 2666 Passcode: 973275 or dial 0208 080 6592

*Our usual meetings are at 7.30pm at The Friends Meeting House, Ravensbourne Road, Bromley*

**Everyone always welcome**

### **In this issue:**

Round-up of 2021	3	Never Demolish Another Building	7
January Meeting Report	3	Greenbelt Petition	8
Do Your Bit	5	Walnuts Development	9
Wish List Bromley FoE	6	Campaigns	10
Bromley Green Hub Job (Paid!)	6	Supplies	13
Requests	6	What We Did Back Then	14
Soap Box	7	List of Roles	15
Wicked Leeks Items	7		

[www.bromleyfoe.co.uk](http://www.bromleyfoe.co.uk)



# **NEWSLETTER**

## February Meeting Participation

If you would like to be involved in the next Monthly Meeting, then it will be a virtual Zoom meeting once more. Please let us know if you'd like to attend by either emailing [bromleyfoe@gmail.com](mailto:bromleyfoe@gmail.com) or leaving a message on 020 8289 1503, and we will then send you details of how to join in nearer the time (details on cover.)

You can either join using your computer (with video or without) or on a smart phone. There is usually a phone number to dial in with other types of phone. Meeting content details are below. First half will be our speaker and the second half BFoE business.

*If you can't attend this meeting, or just find yourself with some spare time, perhaps we can encourage you to become 'Armchair Activists'. Do your own bit of campaigning, perhaps inspired by something in our newsletters, and let us know what response you get. Or if any of the items in this newsletter make you angry, delight you, enthuse you or cause you any emotion other than apathy, then please jot down a line or two and send it to the newsletter editor (see contact details below.)*

## Diary Dates

*Please note that due to the Coronavirus, many events can no longer take place.*

**1<sup>st</sup> Feb (Tue) Friends of the Earth Bromley Monthly Meeting 7.30pm.** Looking at plans for this our 50 Anniversary Year – what we have achieved, things to celebrate, new initiatives and Wish List of campaigns. Plus Brief AGM, review of year, approval of accounts and election of officers.

**21<sup>st</sup> Feb - 6<sup>th</sup> Mar** Fairtrade Fortnight .

**1<sup>st</sup> Mar (Tue) Friends of the Earth Bromley Monthly Meeting 7.30pm.** Sarah Chant from Environmental Action Coney Hall (EACH) returns to update us on what has been achieved and difficulties encountered since she spoke to us in February 2020.

**28<sup>th</sup> May - 12<sup>th</sup> Jun** Great British Spring Clean. We plan to take part in the Spring Clean this year either individually or in groups.

This diary is correct at the time of going to press but may be updated in the next newsletter. If you need further information on any events, you can email us at [bromleyfoe@gmail.com](mailto:bromleyfoe@gmail.com)

**Disclaimer:** Please note that any opinions expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of Bromley Friends of the Earth or of Friends of the Earth.

## Next Newsletter Copy

Please send all your news, articles, poems, questions, views, articles for sale to the editor via one of the methods below to arrive not later than **midnight Friday 14th January**

**Post:** 17 Everard Avenue, Hayes, Kent BR2 7LR

**Email:** [robert.clark9@btinternet.com](mailto:robert.clark9@btinternet.com) (please write **'Newsletter'** in the subject line)

**Note that there are several internet links in this newsletter which may be impractical to type into a browser. If you would like access to any of them, then please let us know and we will send you an electronic copy of the newsletter where you can just click on the links.**

## Round-up of 2021

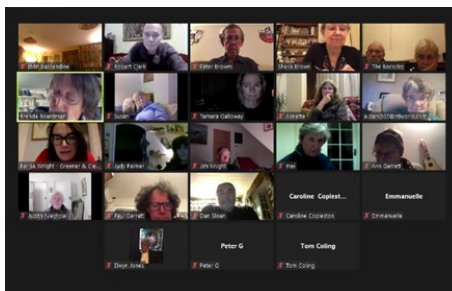
- 12 monthly meetings via Zoom
- 9 speakers
- GLA election candidates' forum
- 12 Monthly Newsletters
- 400<sup>th</sup> Monthly Newsletter
- 3 pre-COP26 Arts Events
- Pre-COP26 vigil outside Civic Centre
- Vigil outside Barclays Bank
- Hedgerow Walk for National Hedgerow Week
- Participated in Big Garden Birdwatch
- Working with Bromley Environmental Network (BEN)
- Working with Greener and Cleaner Bromley and Beyond
- Involvement in setting up local Net-Zero group and involvement of BFoE members
- Great British Spring Clean June 21 - litter picking by individuals and groups Working on Air Quality Action Plan
- Ongoing participation in Bromley Biodiversity Action Plan
- Involvement in London Borough of Bromley Open Space Strategy Consultation
- Campaigning re Bromley Town Centre Development
- Campaigning re Swanscombe Marshes
- Written questions to Bromley Environment Committee meeting
- Participation in London Co-ordinator Zoom meetings
- Great British September Clean – Litter picking in various locations
- Ongoing plastics campaigning
- Ongoing anti-fracking campaigning
- First online environmental musical event
- Increased following on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
- Campaigning on Deposit Return Scheme June 21

## January Meeting Report

Tom Coling

On Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2022, we were treated to a fascinating presentation by Dr Brenda Boardman entitled: *'How can I reduce my carbon footprint?'*

Dr Boardman, who is an Emeritus Fellow at the Environmental Change Institute (ECI) at the University of Oxford, was the former head of the Lower Carbon Futures team and a co-director of the UK Energy Research Centre. Her main research focus is on



how to achieve demand reduction in energy across the UK economy, but in particular, the built environment.

In 1998, Dr Boardman was awarded an MBE for her work on energy efficiency and received the Energy Institute's Melchett Medal in the same year. In 2010, Earthscan published one of Dr Boardman's most popular books: '*Fixing Fuel Poverty: Challenges and Solutions*', which examined why the number of households in fuel poverty was rising, despite the UK government's legal obligation to eradicate this issue.

At the start of her presentation, Dr Boardman explained that in the UK, carbon emissions were split roughly equally between personal (e.g. home energy, private vehicles, aviation, public transport etc.) and non-personal sources (e.g. commercial, services, industry, freight transport etc.).

Dr Boardman then produced a table (replicated below) showing the grams of carbon dioxide produced per kilowatt-hour of electricity generated ('gCO<sub>2</sub>e/kWh'):

	<b>gCO<sub>2</sub>e/kWh</b>
<b>Gas</b>	185
<b>LPG*</b>	214
<b>Oil</b>	265
<b>Coal</b>	290

\*LPG – Liquefied Petroleum Gas

Dr Boardman then discussed how important a role the electricity sector has in reducing its greenhouse gas

emissions. In a rare piece of good news, she explained that in 2012, the gCO<sub>2</sub>e/kWh for electricity production was 500, but by 2020, this had reduced to 233.

The presentation then moved on to explore the role that Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) have in making properties more energy-efficient. Here in the UK, an EPC is needed whenever a property is built, sold, or rented. An EPC contains information about a property's energy use and typical energy costs, along with recommendations about how to reduce energy and save money. An EPC is valid for 10 years and gives an energy efficiency rating from A (most efficient) to G (least efficient).

Dr Boardman explained how important it is that we all become better acquainted with our EPCs. She then addressed some of the ways we can make our homes more energy-efficient, such as by improving draught proofing, installing double/triple glazing, and insulating any loft spaces and cavity walls. She also spoke about updating any appliances within our homes to more energy efficient models.

In terms of our diet, Dr Boardman promoted the idea of eating local, seasonal, and organic produce, and of cutting down the amount of meat we consume. Regarding the clothes we wear, Dr Boardman advocated a more sustainable approach to fashion (i.e. repair, reuse, and recycle – and buy less) and mentioned the large amount of water that is used to produce cotton.

Dr Boardman concluded her presentation with a call to arms in the

fight against climate change and by highlighting the fact that every little thing we do in this regard helps the cause.

In the second half of the meeting we spent a lot of time discussing possible ways of marking our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year. Several people had responded to the request to submit ideas for a Wish List. We will be discussing this in more detail at our February meeting.

Ann reported on a meeting of environmental groups to form a new Net Zero group to convince Bromley Council to declare a climate emergency.

There were several planning issues giving concern, in St Mary Cray and in both Bromley and Orpington town centres.

Looking forward to a time when we might once again be able to plan walks and outings, Sue and John mentioned that the grounds of the Bethlem Hospital were well worth visiting.

## **Do Your Bit**

Judy Palmer

One of the interesting points which happen at the end of a year, is generally a round-up of events which occurred over the course of that year. 2021 stands out to climate scientists as a year when climate-induced extreme weather events wreaked havoc with people's lives and countries' economies.

The two main world weather events for 2021 were Hurricane Ida and the extreme flooding in Europe. The hurricane caused 95 deaths and

economic losses estimated at \$654bn. The extreme flooding in Europe led to 240 deaths and reported damages at around \$43bn. And then in less developed countries, we saw flooding and cyclone related impacts, which displaced more than 1,000,000 people.

Will governments act? Well even after COP26 we had no declaration of the world coming together to create emergency funding for these disasters. Global leaders may have agreed to take some steps to curb emissions, but in reality, how many countries will meet their targets? How many more catastrophes will it take for governments to stick to their promises? It can be disheartening sometimes.

But volunteering within a local Friends of the Earth group has many benefits; being a grass-roots organisation with scientific facts behind us to utilise, we can, and do, make a difference. So, for another year, let us go onwards and upwards! And one of those small steps can be undertaken in your garden.

Many gardeners are seeing how the changing climate is having an impact on their plots, be it flowers or vegetables. Plants and trees are blooming at different times, which affects the insect life and then the bird population. So let's try and help nature in any small way we can, by adapting our gardens to the local climate. And to paraphrase – we cannot do everything, but we can all do a little thing, ergo, lots of small changes can lead to big changes. What will yours be?

## Wish List, Bromley FoE

(In no particular order)

1 Continue working on single use plastics / widen scope to better education on waste / monitor Council's recycling uptake

2 Continue working on climate issues / urge Council to declare a climate emergency / have more charging points / better monitoring of air pollution in borough / more cycle lanes / no more airport expansion

3 Continue working on promoting preserving peat bogs / ban personal peat use

4 Plant a tree(s)? in memorium / continuing to advise how beneficial trees are to home owners / continue working on promoting hedge growing / banning pesticide use / more green verges / more wildflower meadows, where applicable

5 Promote there is no need for factory farming

6 Establish links with local organisations to suggest small steps that their members can take to decrease their carbon footprint and improve the environment / contribute to newsletters

7 Continue to persuade Council and banks not to invest in fossil fuels

8 Continue and expand working on promotion of green belt and conservation areas / monitoring planning applications

9 Actively try to attract new members / reach out to more ethnic communities / community groups / schools

10 Continue to see if we can work with the Council, not against, when applicable

11 Urge the Council to support local companies creating sustainable local economy / 'circular' economy and not linear

12 Support national FoE campaigns - new one in 2022 on home heating

13 50th birthday celebrations / promotions

## Bromley Green Hub Job

Clare Searle

I am super excited to let you know our paid part time Green Hub Coordinator vacancy has gone live on our website <https://www.greenerandcleaner.co.uk/vacancies/>. Please share this vacancy with your friends and networks or go ahead and apply yourself. The deadline is 28th January.

And thank you to those who have responded to our Green Hub volunteer survey. We will be in touch soon with next steps. If you still haven't got around to filling in the survey, it is not too late (just). We will need a wonderful volunteer army to support the Hub - we'd love you to be part of it! <https://docs.google.com/.../1FAIpQLSf-psoW.../viewform>

## Requests

Does anyone know of a local knife/scissor sharpening service?

Does anyone know someone who could re-string a bead necklace?

If you have suggestions for either of the

above, then please either email the editor on:  
robert.clark9@btinternet.com or call and leave a message on 020 8289 1503.

## **Soap Box**

Robert Clark

I enjoyed the Soap Box item in last month newsletter and had a few thoughts to add.

Mainly, I think that battery powered cars are a developing technology, and the efficiency of batteries will certainly improve over time. Whether electric batteries remain the best option or whether alternative power sources are developed remains to be seen. I would perhaps compare current electric cars to early petrol cars. How efficient were they? I dread to think. Obviously, we need to consider things with a much more critical eye now with the urgent need to limit emissions and consumption; I just think we need to give the industry time to develop. Consumers will push for improved efficiency.

## **‘Wicked Leeks’ Items**

There are many benefits that can be gained from allotments, and this article shows many of them including food productivity, biodiversity and improvements in mental health. It's from the Wicked Leeks publication produced by Riverford Organics.

[https://wickedleeks.riverford.co.uk/news/grow-your-own-farming-biodiversity-cities/allotments-could-be-productive-farms?](https://wickedleeks.riverford.co.uk/news/grow-your-own-farming-biodiversity-cities/allotments-could-be-productive-farms?utm_campaign=Wicked%20Leeks%20Newsletter%2019%2012%202021&utm_medium=email&utm_source=DOI%20confirmed%20Wicked%20Leeks%20group)

[utm\\_campaign=Wicked%20Leeks%20Newsletter%2019%2012%202021&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=DOI%20confirmed%20Wicked%20Leeks%20group](https://wickedleeks.riverford.co.uk/news/grow-your-own-farming-biodiversity-cities/allotments-could-be-productive-farms?utm_campaign=Wicked%20Leeks%20Newsletter%2019%2012%202021&utm_medium=email&utm_source=DOI%20confirmed%20Wicked%20Leeks%20group)

The 'Right to Repair' article in the Wicked Leeks newsletter might also be of interest. It talks about the white goods legislation that was brought in in 2021 to try and stop the built in obsolescence of products.

[https://wickedleeks.riverford.co.uk/lifestyle/recycling-technology-environment-ethics/our-right-repair?utm\\_campaign=Wicked+Leeks+Newsletter+09+01+2022&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=DOI+confirmed+Wicked+Leeks+group](https://wickedleeks.riverford.co.uk/lifestyle/recycling-technology-environment-ethics/our-right-repair?utm_campaign=Wicked+Leeks+Newsletter+09+01+2022&utm_medium=email&utm_source=DOI+confirmed+Wicked+Leeks+group)

## **The case for... never demolishing another building**

So much waste and CO2 emissions are created when buildings are demolished to make way for yet another new building. This article from The Guardian asks if new buildings can be adapted or reused in future, or built using existing materials.

I have noticed the increase of concrete reuse on building sites over the past years. It seems that it is usual for sites to crush all concrete from the demolition process to use on the new building. This is a move in the right direction but there is still a very long way to go.

<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2020/jan/13/the-case-for-never-demolishing-another-building>

## Greenbelt Petition

Here is the Government's reply to the emails submitted to Parliament re the Green Belt. I think this one originally came from the Friends Forum.

The Government has responded to the petition you signed – “Ban developments on Green belt and Greenfield sites across the country”.

Government response:

This Government is committed to Green Belt protection, we have strong protection for other greenfield land and furthermore are promoting the efficient use of brownfield for new development.

This Government is committed to protecting and enhancing the Green Belt, in line with our manifesto. Our strong protections for the Green Belt remain firmly in place. The National Planning Policy Framework states that a Green Belt boundary may be altered only in exceptional circumstances through the local plan process. A local authority should consider releasing land from Green Belt only if it can fully evidence that it has explored all other reasonable options for meeting its development needs. The authority should be able to show that it has been using brownfield land as much as possible, optimising the density of development, and discussing with neighbouring authorities whether they could accommodate some of the development required.

The Framework recognises that green infrastructure and accessible green space are beneficial to our health and well-being. Protections exist for differing types of green infrastructure. Where appropriate, communities can also use their Local or Neighbourhood Plans to designate areas as ‘Local Green Space’ to protect it from inappropriate development.

In addition, the National Planning Policy

Framework expects local authorities to protect and enhance valued landscapes, soils and sites of biodiversity value, including trees and woodland. This involves recognising the character and beauty of the countryside. Poorer quality farmland should also be preferred if significant development on agricultural land is essential.

The Framework makes clear that planning policies and decisions should minimise the impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains. The Environment Act that will protect and enhance our environment for future generations has now passed into UK law. Through the Act, we will clean up the country's air, restore natural habitats, increase biodiversity, reduce waste and make better use of our resources.

These changes will be driven by new legally binding environmental targets, and enforced by a new, independent Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) which will hold government and public bodies to account on their environmental obligations.

Finally, this Government is committed to making the most of brownfield land. The Framework strongly encourages regeneration and re-use of brownfield, especially for housing, to help levelling up and relieve some of the pressure to consider greenfield land. However, brownfield sites vary greatly; it is for local authorities, in consultation with local people, to decide if land is suitable to redevelop. Every local authority is now required by law to publish a register of local brownfield land suitable for housing.

To support the take-up of brownfield, Government has set up the £4.35 billion Housing Infrastructure Fund; the £4.95 billion Home Building Fund; the £400 million Brownfield Housing Fund; and the £75 million Brownfield Land Release Fund. At Autumn Budget the Chancellor



announced a further £300 million of locally-led grant funding for Mayoral Combined Authorities and local authorities to unlock smaller brownfield sites for housing. There is tax relief on work to decontaminate land, and we have reformed permitted development rules so that yet more homes can be created on brownfield.

Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

Click this link to view the response online: [https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/600577?reveal\\_response=yes](https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/600577?reveal_response=yes)

The Petitions Committee will take a look at this petition and its response. They can press the government for action and gather evidence. If this petition reaches 100,000 signatures, the Committee will consider it for a debate.

The Committee is made up of 11 MPs, from political parties in government and in opposition. It is entirely independent of the Government. Find out more about the Committee: <https://petition.parliament.uk/help#petitions-committee>

Thanks,  
The Petitions team  
UK Government and Parliament

## Walnuts Development

We now have over 2,000 signatures on this petition <https://tinyurl.com/u43945vj> thanks to your wonderful efforts.

Please continue to share the petition and refer to its text. As updates will be added to the text at the end. We intend to download the petition and submit it to Bromley Council.

Please follow our Facebook page <https://facebook.com/AreliWalnuts> for more detailed information ABOUT OBJECTIONS to Areli's Plan.

Our sister campaign Nuts To The Walnuts on <https://facebook.com/groups/nutstothewalnuts> now has more than 1000 members. If you are not a member, then please do join this Facebook Group. We need to show Bromley Council how very serious our opposition to these plans is.

However, we fear Bromley Council has already decided to demolish the Walnuts Leisure Centre.

Please sign and share this petition to save our Leisure Centre: <https://tinyurl.com/mrx93w6v>

Ojays Swimming Club have their own campaign as well. <http://www.keeporpingtonswimming.com/>

Areli's Plans were submitted on 17th Dec 21 and are expected to become public on the Council's website (on the link below) in the next 2 weeks after validation is completed. Once the plans become public, we only have 3 WEEKS TO OBJECT. We all need to object individually. It is essential we cite legitimate grounds for objection in our letters/emails.

You can register with Bromley Council's website and track this link: <https://searchapplications.bromley.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=QNA9WKBTORH00&activeTab=summary> planning reference 21/00089/

EIA. Thank you for your support

## **Campaigns**

### ***Climate***

#### **COP27 is in Egypt this Year**

Concern is growing over plans to hold the conference in Egypt, in what will be a crucial summit if the world is to limit global heating to 1.5C.

Several green experts and human rights activists have expressed they fear that civil rights groups will not have the ability to protest, owing to Egypt's authoritarian regime. This will reduce the pressure that can be brought to bear on leaders and ministers from the nearly 200 countries that are expected to take part.

The Cop26 conference in Glasgow produced substantial progress on cutting greenhouse gas emissions, but the national carbon targets laid out there fell far short of the near-halving of emissions to stay within the 1.5C increase on pre-industrial levels. Recognising that, nations agreed to review their targets before the next 'Conference of Parties', scheduled for November.

Egypt will host COP27 with the expectation that COP28 will be in Africa, where the issues of climate finance, adaptation and loss and damage due to climate change are of particular importance.

Ann Garrett

### **Energy**

Plans to build a £40 million solar farm to power 26,000 homes hang in the balance. Residents near Sittingbourne, Kent, say siting Raspberry Solar Park on 290 acres of farmland will be a 'blot on the

landscape'. Developers, however, say it will be a valuable community asset.

What do our readers think ?

In early December environmentalists asked the high court to rule that the government's fossil fuel strategy is unlawful, in a case that could undermine the UK's claims to be leading the fight against climate change.

The campaigners argued that the government is effectively subsidising oil and gas production with billions of pounds in handouts. This conflicts with its legal duty to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

Pressure group 'Paid to Pollute' says that gas and oil companies received billions of pounds in tax relief for new gas and oil exploration, and billions more for decommissioning costs. The group says this amounts to fossil fuel subsidy.

A government spokesperson said that the UK didn't pay any fossil fuel subsidies: 'While we are backing the UK's transition to green energy, there will be ongoing but diminishing need for oil over the coming years, as recognised by the independent Climate Change Commission'.

There is good news in that Shell has pulled out of the controversial new oilfield off Shetland, plunging the future of oil into serious doubt. The firm cited a weak economic case as its reason for deciding not to go ahead. Industry sources says Shell's project partner, the privately –equity-based fossil fuel explorer Siccac Point, would struggle to find another partner to take on Shell's

30% stake in the field.

Ann Garrett

### **Transport**

Transport for London has warned that unless there is more investment, the capital will be 'staring into the abyss' as it struggles with the impact that the pandemic has had on its finances.

Ageing trains will break down, signalling upgrades will be delayed and bus networks will be cut. The need for more money, will also affect plans to support walking and cycling schemes. Cash-strapped local authorities will struggle to make up the shortfall. Ultimately, this will have an impact as people will continue to rely on car use as their confidence in public transport declines.

Ann Garrett

### **Consumption**

#### **Ban on Plastic Packaging in France Comes into Force**

This new law came into force on New Years Day. It bans the use of single use packaging on a range of fruit and vegetables including carrots and bananas. France is also aiming to phase out all single use plastics by 2040.

In Spain, a similar ban from 2023 is starting. 30 types of fruit and vegetables will be included including bananas, pears, lemons, kiwis and oranges.

Camilla Zerr, the plastics campaigner at FOE, urges the UK to do the same. She notes that often fruit and vegetables covered in plastic is cheaper than unwrapped, which is problematic. She says if corner stores can do it, the supermarkets can too.

I have noticed in my own Sainsbury's shopping that bananas wrapped in plastic are considerably cheaper than those held together with a plastic strip. I don't know why the consumer needs to be given that choice when the paper strip works well.

Annette Rose

### **Nature**

#### **The Blackthorn Tree**

I've written in the past that owls do not seem to be very common in the Chelsfield area, at least based on being able to hear them call. But during November, I have heard repeated tawny owl calls with one owl call coming from the conifers that surround the set of cottages I live in. Other times, I have heard calls coming from the grounds of the hospital and Bucks Cross Farm. So, seems we now have a local owl to brighten the dark winter nights.

Last month, in the Nature section of Campaigns I gave you my recipe for sloe gin. I also mentioned that I have a favourite place to collect sloes from their parent blackthorn trees and just a few weeks ago I revisited that location to find that there were absolutely no sloes left. I wondered if others were collecting the sloes for their own gin but even the sloes at the top of the trees were missing so I had to conclude that they must have been taken by birds. Clearly they must be very popular to have been completely removed so soon after becoming ripe. So, following my sloe gin recipe I thought that the blackthorn tree would be a good subject for the Village Voice: so here it is.

The blackthorn tree/bush (*Prunus spinosa*) is perceived to have a nature that is often mixed and has been described as both the 'Mother of the Woods' and the 'Dark Crone of the Woods' but we'll get on to that a little later. Its name alludes to its bark, branches and twigs all being very dark, if not black in colour – and it's clearly thorny! Its spiny, impenetrable nature makes it a great refuge for wildlife and gives protection from grazing animals. Thrushes and waxwings in particular seem to enjoy the blackthorn's fruit. It can either be described as a small tree, or a large bush reaching a height of about 4m which makes it perfect for agricultural hedging material. It could be mistaken for the hawthorn tree but in addition to its colour the distinguishing feature between the two is that the blackthorn flowers in early March with a riot of white blossom (see photo) before its leaves appear while the hawthorn's leaves appear first and then its flowers. This happens in May giving it the unofficial name of the 'Mayflower tree'. Due to the blackthorn's early spring flowering an especially cold spring was traditionally known as a 'blackthorn winter'.

I've mentioned my recipe for sloe gin but



the blackthorn tree can also be used to make almond flavoured syrup using sugar, water and the white flowers of the blackthorn tree; the more flowers used the stronger the almond flavour. In a publication dated 1839, an author called Cowell wrote in 'A Floral Guide for East Kent' that the French pickle unripe sloes as a substitute for olives. Pushing the raw sloes through a sieve seems to change the flavour of the fruit: the resulting puree being slightly sweet and making a pleasant accompaniment to cheese. It was the great herbalist Culpeper, in 'The Complete Herbal' published in 1653, who described the sloe as "when ripe, of a fine purplish black colour, of a sour austere taste, and not fit to be eaten until mellowed by frost". It is thought that a cross between the sloe and the cherry plum may have been the source of all domestic plums, damsons and greengages. Man's relationship with sloes also seems to be a long one as the berries seem to have been used by man since before the iron age with sloe pips having been found on many ancient archaeological sites.



In mythology, the blackthorn's spiny nature has given it deep associations with witchcraft and bad fortune. It has, perhaps, the most sinister reputation in Celtic tree lore and was known as

‘Strai’ in ancient Ireland, the word being thought to be the origin of the modern word ‘strife’. Both the blackthorn and its sister tree the hawthorn are said to have formed Christ’s crown of thorns and this was the reason Christian monks considered both to be unlucky. Witches’ wands and staffs were said to be made from the hard-wearing wood and were known as the ‘black rod’ which could dispatch a curse if pointed at a victim. This belief may stem from the ability of the thorns to easily turn simple scratches septic. It’s hard-wearing wood does, however, make for good walking sticks and is also the traditional wood used for Irish cudgels called Shillelaghs due to being a heavy, dense wood.

Despite the dark associations with witchcraft, Rudyard Kipling looked more favourably upon this tree, and in his 1906 poem ‘Puck of Pook’s Hill’ wrote that “Of all the trees that grow so fair, old England to adore, greater are none beneath the sun, than oak and ash and thorn”.

Steve Fuller

## Supplies That Don’t Cost the Earth

*This is a regular reference point for useful and practical resources, helping us to sustain the greenest lifestyles we can. These are not recommendations from Bromley or National FoE, but are just suggested by BFoE members. Any suggestions or reviews gratefully received. [bromleyfoe@gmail.com](mailto:bromleyfoe@gmail.com)*

### No/Low Waste or Refill Shops

*The Green Room, Station Approach, Hayes.*

**Shop is now closed.** See article earlier in this newsletter about the new online refill service.  
<https://www.javaandchai.com>

Alexander Stores 61 Beckenham Rd,  
Beckenham BR3 4PR  
<https://www.alexanderstores.com>

Laura’s Larder, Fairway, Petts Wood  
Herbivore, Southborough Lane, Bromley

**IT & Phone Repair** Orpington IT Centre, 92  
High St, Orpington BR6 0JY  
(Opposite Aynscombe Angle)  
[www.orpingtonitcentre.co.uk](http://www.orpingtonitcentre.co.uk)

### Donate Your Tech

Clearcommunityweb  
<https://clearcommunityweb.co.uk/donate-your-tech/>

### Internet

Greener & Cleaner Bromley (& Beyond)  
Consumer action! <https://www.greenerandcleaner.co.uk>

Peep Eyewear revitalise vintage frames or recycle those that can’t be reused.  
<https://www.peepeyewear.co.uk/peep-donation-address>

If You Care products including recycled tin foil and sandwich bags: <https://buyifyoucare.com>

Peace With the Wild - Household products:  
<https://www.peacewiththewild.co.uk>

My Green Pod - Wide range of biodegradable and natural products: <https://www.mygreenpod.com>

Ethical Superstore - ‘Ethical’ products news and advice: <https://www.ethicalsuperstore.com>

Green Finder - a useful directory of environmental companies for all kinds of things  
<http://www.greenfinder.co.uk>



14 (No Yarnish Times, February 28, 1994)

NATALIE IDE meets a convert to the green revolution

# The more you use the less there is!

**COLLECTING potato peelings and giving your neighbour a lift to work is what the Green Life is all about but are you cut out for it?**

This is the challenge of Bromley Friends of the Earth who are encouraging people to "Get Back to Basics" and join in their latest initiative.

Dan Sloan is a true convert. He has been a member of Bromley Friends of the Earth for 10 years.

Consistent with just taking bottles to his bottle bank, he cycles just about everywhere.

He folds up his bike to briefcase size and stores it in the luggage rack on the train.

He even has an environmentally friendly job - he designs energy conserving shops.

The recycling policies in this borough are never good enough.

"When it comes to recycling banks, people use more cans foil getting to them in their cars than bottles and paper than is actually used."

What you should do is go to the recycling bank if you were going to go past it anyway.

To achieve any form of tangible long term policy the

authority should be looking at separating of recyclable goods at source.

"The individual households would collect the various materials in different bins and they would be collected along with the household rubbish."

But before you think about recycling, you should cut down on the amount of packaging that you use and avoid buying things you don't need according to Dan.

He added: "You should choose things in reusable packaging or material which is easily and cheaply recycled, such as glass, paper and aluminium."

One of the biggest obstacles the group faces is persuading people to use public transport.

Dan said: "Until money is diverted away from road building schemes and into public transport people will continue to use their cars. We urge people to write to the local council, the Department of Transport and British Rail to express their complaints about the service."

"In the meantime, if you know someone else who is travelling in the same direction, share a car."

"Our back to basics meeting is designed to explain our policies to people. Bromley's Unitary Development Plan and policies can get very confusing. We want to explain to people what we can save energy. A lot of people do not even understand why you recycle to save money but it is not to save money but to save the energy used in producing the

energy used in producing the

energy used in producing the

energy used in producing the

energy used in producing the

energy used in producing the



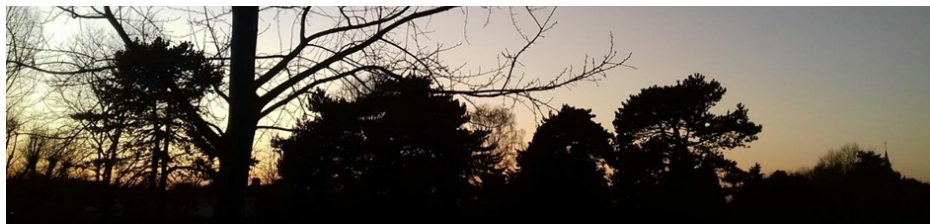
EC906222

**SAVING GRACE: Dan Sloan demonstrates his fold-away bicycle.**

energy they use in their homes. The Friends Meeting House, Ravensbourne Road, Bromley, at 7.30pm on March 1 and every one is welcome.

where mining takes place and but the most important thing is that you are saving the world's resources.

"If people cut down on the



## List Of Roles

Everyone can be contacted via the groups email address: **bromleyfoe@gmail.com**

### **Acting Co-ordinators/Mentors:**

Sheila Brown 01689 851605

Ann Garrett 020 8460 1295

### **Treasurer:**

Sheila Brown

### **Press Team:**

Ann Garrett, Annette Rose

### **Programme Organiser:**

Sheila Brown

### **Outings Organisers:**

John & Sue Bocock 0208 290 0485

### **Merchandising:**

Anne Clark

### **Membership Secretary:**

Dan Sloan 07414 920920

### **Instagram and Twitter Admin:**

Emmanuelle Coetzee

### **Admin Team:**

Judy Palmer, Rob Clark, Annette Rose

### **Bromley Environmental Network BEN Reps:**

John Pavitt, Judy Palmer

### **Web Site & Technical Support:**

Peter Gandolfi

### **Meeting Reporters:**

John & Sue Bocock, Anne Clark, Annette Rose, Peter Gandolfi, Sheila Brown, Tom Coling, Ruth Fabricant, Michael Hall, Liam Redmond - further volunteers for this team always welcome.

### **Refreshments**

Pending due to no live meetings

### **Newsletter Production:** Dan Sloan

### **Newsletter Editor:**

Rob Clark 020 8289 1503

robert.clark9@btinternet.com

**Campaigns:** You can join one of the campaign teams at any point if you are interested. Just contact us via our main email address or speak to one of us at a meeting.

*Campaign leads in bold - specialisms bracketed*

### **Campaigns Administrator:** Judy Palmer

### **Climate:**

#### **Ann Garrett**

Sheila Brown

Ruth Fabricant

Paul Garratt

### **Nature:**

#### **Diana Hurd** (trees)

Paul Garratt

Judy Palmer

### **System Change:**

#### **Tamara Galloway** (Planning)

Ruth Fabricant (Anti racism)

Ann Garratt (Planning)

John Pavitt

### **Consumption:**

#### **Annette Rose**

John Pavitt (Food)

Emmanuelle Coetzee (Food)

Sheila Brown (Plastics)



## Non-members Section

If you are not a member of Bromley Friends of the Earth (BFoE) then hello to you. 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 acting co-ordinators Sheila Brown or Ann Garrett (their details are inside the back page of this newsletter.) Alternatively you can come along to one of our 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, on the right going down. If you would like to join us then please fill in and send us the form below.

---

## Membership Application/Renewal\* Form (\*delete as appropriate)

I would like to support Bromley Friends of the Earth and enclose my annual subscription (£8 single/£15 couple/family.) I also enclose a donation (optional) of £..... to help towards the work of our local group.

Name: .....

Address: .....

Post Code: ..... Phone No: .....

Email address: .....

Do you have any hobbies or interests that may be of use to the group?

.....

**Bank Details:** Name - Bromley Friends of the Earth A/C - 06342260 S/C - 77 91 48

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 [bromleyfoe@gmail.com](mailto:bromleyfoe@gmail.com) or contact one of our co-ordinators via their details inside.