


infoe

 Friends of
the Earth Bristol

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COUNCIL'S SUSTAINABLE ENERGY PHASE 1

At Bristol City Council's Cabinet meeting on 27.09.2010 a renewable energy strategy was announced for some council buildings. It was to include solar PV panels for up to 80 schools and up to 300 council homes, low energy street lighting, and 2 wind turbines at Avonmouth. Dependent on the new Renewable Heat Incentive (to be confirmed April 2011) up to 10 biomass boilers for selected schools and leisure centres would be included.

We are aware of the need to control any cumulative impacts of biomass boiler outputs especially within Air Quality Management Areas (i.e. zones where air pollution already exceeds acceptable levels).

We would welcome a whole renewable energy plan for the city not only so that the impacts of proposals can be better understood, but to identify areas where partners might potentially find mutual benefit in sharing the cost of installing a sustainable or renewable energy

facility. A proper plan could also help decision makers understand impacts better.

The report does say that at present the biomass fuel source isn't clearly defined, but it should be clean and free of contaminants. This is to eliminate risk of dioxins or other dangerous airborne chemical contaminants polluting the air.

This is an argument to plant more trees, and perhaps use less widely used alternatives to wood in the construction of new buildings. Straw bale construction (rendered with lime mortar). The option of Ground Source Heat Pumps may provide solutions on some sites, but may not yet attract the same subsidies as other renewable forms.

In April 2011 we expect to hear more about

- 1) Government plans to introduce a Renewable Heat Incentive payment for installation of a variety of on-site renewable heat generating technologies such as solar thermal panels, and air source heat pumps.
- 2) Phase 2 of the council's renewable energy investment strategy.

Core Strategy Update

Bristol's new Core Strategy was examined in Public in June 2010. The Inspector recommended 2 changes to protect green belt land from development to at least 2026, and to revise the housing target for Bristol to 26,400 from the previous figure of 30,000. His full Report is still awaited.

Bristol FoE's representation to see 20% sustainable energy as microgeneration on site, outlined originally in Dec 2006, and later supported by the council, appeared to be supported by the Inspector.

Developers weren't as contrary as had been expected, supportive in principle but having concerns about deliverability within economic constraints. Fortunately the Council and Centre for Sustainable Energy were represented and helpfully showed their support for 20% microgeneration aspirations.

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Clean Energy Cashback

Installation of solar PV panels on buildings is gathering momentum, driven by the Government announced Feed In Tariffs in February 2010 in which a Clean Energy Cashback incentive is payable (administered by Ofgem on behalf of energy suppliers). This is subject to the panels being fitted by approved installers under the Microgeneration Certification Scheme.

Barriers to installation of solar PV panels include the cost up front, and fear of the unknown or of choosing an installer who fails to deliver. While we've yet to hear horror stories, we'd be interested in your view of the idea for Bristol FoE to suggest to the Council's Trading Standards Department that it should provide guidance to help citizens pursue their enquiries independently on a more informed basis.

The Inspector accepted and agreed that Peak Oil is significant in planning. We understand that he intends to recommend it be dealt with at the first opportunity within any future review, but we are unaware of any new guidance on the subject at national level, save for the Peak Oil Task Force's 2nd report (2010) highlighting risks.

Meanwhile the Council's Peak Oil Report (2009) recommends further assessment of quantities of land required for some urban food production, advice which was released after the Core Strategy was published.

To be kept up to date with developments on the Core Strategy, contact the Council at: bdf@bristol.gov.uk

Helen Pillinger helen_pillinger@hotmail.com

Greener Homes

The Green Doors Open Day this summer was a great opportunity to visit various homes which volunteer owners opened to visitors who were inspired by the demonstration of the variety of ways of cutting carbon footprints and living greener lifestyles.

www.bristolgreendoors.org



Green house on Ashley Down Road using straw bales and used car tyres, with green roof

Which householder is costing the earth while warming the Universe?



BSS on 29/11/10

10:10 campaign



10:10 was launched just over a year ago to unite people, businesses, communities, schools, hospitals, sports clubs and everyone else around immediate, practical action on climate change. Sunday's Day of Doing on 10th October was a demonstration of just how powerful this action can be.

Thousands of events took place in more than 50 countries around the world. Of course, 10:10 isn't just about one day. It's about people and organisations cutting their carbon by 10% in a year. Some of the early sign ups (including the British Embassy in Argentina and London bank Investec) have already completed their first 10%, and lots more are getting close.

In Bristol, the Clean and Green section of the City Council suggested Moorhouse Lane in Hallen as a potential project, which had been plagued for many years by fly tipping but which they wanted to restore to an attractive bridleway. Volunteers, comprised of members of Bristol Greenpeace Group together with those involved in the Probation Service's Community Payback scheme, cleared away rubbish and planted over 1000 spring bulbs and bee-friendly wildflower seeds.

The journey to a safe climate isn't a sprint – it's a marathon. Cutting 10% in a year by itself won't get us a low-carbon society, but it does point us in the right direction. And what Sunday has shown us is that there's a lot to enjoy along the way.

I'm talking about making new friends, building stronger communities, learning new skills, saving money, getting active, making culinary discoveries, lobbying our MPs, getting our hands dirty in the garden and putting green ideas in our heads, just because we can.

There's always something else you can do. If you need some inspiration, take a look at the blogs and resources on the 10:10 website.

It would be great if you could also think about how to encourage your friends, colleagues and family to move towards a low-carbon lifestyle – it is much easier, and more fun, if we do this together!

For more information on 10:10, go to: www.1010global.org or email hello@1010uk.org

Fi Radford

UPDATE



STOP BRISTOL AIRPORT EXPANSION

After a long battle to make the planners and councillors in North Somerset see that expanding Bristol Airport made no sense environmentally or economically, the decision to approve was finally taken in June this year. This was on the same day that the owners of Heathrow finally gave up on the third runway after the new Government withdrew support for the project.

The decision was referred to the Secretary of State on grounds of car parking on greenbelt and climate change impacts, but despite major objections and 4000 letters the decision was allowed to stand.

The start of the development is delayed because the "section 106 agreement", has not yet been signed. This may be because its major element was for Bristol Airport to pay £5m towards the South Bristol Link Road, now threatened by the cuts in Government spending.

This may seem like a defeat for our campaign, but in fact we have scored many victories along the way, not least of which is a delay of years in the commencement of the expansion and hence avoidance of hundreds of thousands of tonnes of climate changing emissions.

The other major victory is that we firmly put climate change on the agenda, whereas in the first airport master plan document it was not even mentioned. This may still prove to be vital, because the decision makers decided to ignore this shift in climate change policy landscape

SBAE has used its own equipment to produce tracking maps which show not only many flights over built up areas, but also how easy it is to do

and this means their decision is faulty and open to challenge.

We are currently considering taking a legal challenge on this faulty decision. This is not a step we can take lightly due to the costs involved, but we feel it is necessary to continue the fight against reckless expansion at the time when we need to be cutting carbon emissions across the world.

We have also been helping the residents of Bath understand the impact of flight paths over the city, where Bristol Airport had previously implied that such flights would no longer happen. SBAE has used its own equipment to produce tracking maps which show not only many flights over built up areas, but also how easy it is to accurately map the flights over Bath and present that information to the public.

For up to date information on how you can help us, visit www.stopbia.com

Jeremy Birch email@stopbia.com

Quarter Century anniversary



It is almost 25 years since the Russian Nuclear Power reactor at Chernobyl exploded. The secretive Soviet regime made no announcement. An early intimation in Britain was the puzzlingly high background count on equipment at Charing Cross Hospital in West London, well over one thousand miles away.

The fallout of radioactive caesium 137 was worst over upland hills of Wales and Scotland. That isotope takes some 30 years to decay to one half. Some was washed out by rain. Restrictions on marketing of sheep lasted for decades and have only recently been dropped for Scotland.

“In North Wales, the worst-affected region, some 2 million sheep on 5,100 holdings were originally put on restrictions, meaning that they had to be tested for radioactivity before being sold for slaughter. The number of farms and sheep under restriction in Wales and Cumbria has since fallen sharply and the restrictions were lifted completely in Northern Ireland in 2000. Scottish sheep farms are finally free of Chernobyl fallout. But in north Wales, 330 farms remain restricted, along with eight in Cumbria.”*

*Kevin Rawlinson and Rachel Hovenden, The Independent, Wednesday 7 July 2010

The Government looks likely to celebrate the anniversary by granting permission for the construction of new nuclear reactors of untried designs

The Government looks likely to celebrate the anniversary by granting permission for the construction of new nuclear reactors of untried designs if Revised Draft National Policy Statement for Nuclear Power Generation (EN-6) is passed by Parliament.

Consultation ends on 24th January next year. How will you mark the occasion?

www.energy-nps-consultation.decc.gov.uk

Energy NPS consultation

Department of Energy and Climate Change, 3rd floor A, 3 Whitehall Place, London, SW1A 2AW

nps.consultation@decc.gov.uk

Sure Flint gypsysue@virgin.net



A conspiracy of silence

Bristolians may soon be the meat in the Hinkley Oldbury nuclear sandwich if central government gets its way. Energy ministers have been persuaded that the way out of the energy crisis is to go for nuclear power. It looks so innocuous. A few ugly concrete lumps along the shoreline, no black smoke, a few more HT cables and everyone is happy (or are they?).

But there are problems at every stage: Uranium has to be mined – somewhere. Until recently out of sight in some under-developed country where the locals are ill-equipped to defend their land and environment. But in 1977 there was a planning application for mining in the Orkney Islands, hardly a pebble's throw from the famous Neolithic site of Skara Brae, now included in a World Heritage Site. There have been murmurs of mining in Dartmoor, too.

Mining and milling release much radioactivity into the environment and leave piles of tailings which remain a risk for millennia. Uranium is not a renewable resource. The richest ores have already been worked out and the poorer the ore the greater the ratio of harmful tailings to yield.

At the far end of the nuclear cycle is the problem of active waste. Recognised for over 60 years there is still no guaranteed safe method of disposal. Professor Gordon McKerron led a team to look for a solution. After years of work the best they could come up with was a suggestion of finding a willing host community and a suitable geological formation in Britain in which to construct an underground repository. These 2

features do not coexist. The former is assumed to be at Sellafield, but the rock there has been ruled out as unsuitable. Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) claim that they will resolve this dilemma – but what real chance?

Our leaders do not wish to know. They will allow only a sham consultation but their minds are made up. Last year former Energy Minister David Kidney said, with a smirk, "It will go ahead". The coalition government has not changed course. Local Councils remain silent. The media pays little attention. Only 100 people were allowed to attend DECC's 2½ hour consultation in Armada House on 29th November to consider all 6 energy policies. It was not reported in the Bristol Evening Post, whose reporter Mark Rath was unable to explain that omission.

Is DECC taking too much notice of George Monbiot who argues that nuclear power will kill fewer people than the climate change that could result if it is not implemented?

Is profligate use of energy forcing nuclear power upon us?

Stop Hinkley

Stawell House, Bridgwater, TA7 9AE

01278 732921

crispin@stophinkley.org

www.stophinkley.org

07796 447880

oldburynuclear@btinternet.com

Shepperdineagainstnuclearenergy.org.uk

Sure Flint gypsysue@virgin.net



Get growing in Bristol

The Bristol Food Network (BFN) is an umbrella group, made up of individuals, community projects, organisations and businesses who share a vision to transform Bristol into a sustainable food city.

The Network connects people working on diverse food-related issues - from getting more people growing, to developing healthy-eating projects; from tackling food waste, to making Bristol more self-sufficient.

For the past two years, the BFN has focused its efforts on putting together a bid for lottery funding of the "Dig Bristol" project which would see, amongst other things: a massive growth in the number of people involved in community gardening projects, with mentor gardeners employed to support people in growing their own fruit and veg; a local food trail which, like the open doors schemes, would throw open normally-closed gates, to show-off Bristol's productive spaces; and a website that would be a one-stop-shop for anyone wanting to get involved in growing their own food.

Meanwhile Bristol Friends of the Earth have been hosting the Bristol Food Network's publications on our Bristol Local Food website. "Bristol's local food update" e-newsletter is published every two months, with current and back-issues downloadable from our website. The newsletter

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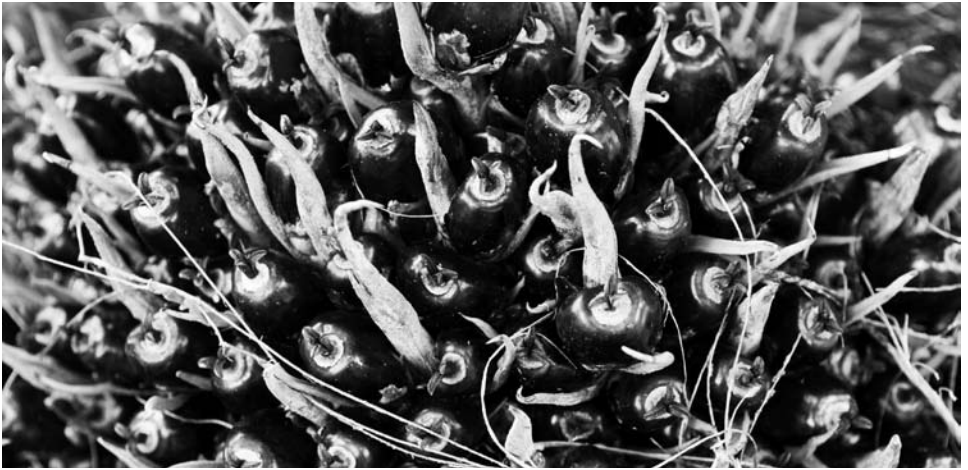
has recently been joined by the guide: "Get Going Growing in Bristol".

This guide lists over 40 community growing projects, gardens and orchards, all within the Bristol area, and shown on a Google map, enabling easy identification of projects that are up-and-running nearby. There are a diversity of projects, so that there should be something to suit everyone.

To keep the Directory information as up-to-date as possible we would really welcome your input into both the guide to "Get Going Growing", and to updating entries within the Local Food Directory.

To send us your Directory entries, see the new Guide, and to sign-up to the newsletter go to:

Jane Stevenson www.bristollocalfood.co.uk



Bioliqid Power Station in Bristol?

FoE strongly supports true renewable energy projects, but bioliqids today drive environmental destruction and cause much more climate change emissions than the technologies they replace.

A company called W4B submitted plans last year for a bioliqid power station more than twice the size of the largest one applied for before. They want to build a 50 MW power station at Avonmouth Docks in Bristol, which would burn 90,000 tonnes of vegetable oil, most likely palm oil, every year.

More than 22,000 hectares of oil palm plantations would be required to feed this one power station, and even more land if other feedstock was used. W4B have mentioned *Jatropha* as well as palm oil, but *Jatropha* is not yet commercially available, many plantings are failing, while thousands of people have already lost their land and livelihood for *Jatropha* plantations to feed Europe's biofuel market.

FoE and other local groups and members of the public opposed this application, and it was rejected by the planning committee on 24 Feb 2010, on the grounds of damage to the natural environment and in accordance with Bristol's Local Plan. However since potential subsidies

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(ROCs) make this a lucrative (though extremely risky) venture for the investors they contested the interpretation of the local plan at a public inquiry.

The inquiry was held by a Government Planning Inspector, Mr Trevor Cookson, from 10-13 Aug 2010. He heard legal arguments why evidence on the sustainability of the fuel should be heard, but nevertheless refused to accept this evidence or to provide a written copy of his ruling giving reasons.

Since the main problem and the council's reason for rejection of the planning application was sustainability, the rest of the inquiry passed quite quickly and W4B's barrister was able to make a strong case that the application should not be refused.



W4B protest at Portland, September 2010

Sustainable renewable energy on a large scale must be captured directly from sun, wind and water - destroying rainforests to produce a small energy contribution is unacceptable

Mr Cookson has now reported to Eric Pickles (Con), Secretary of State, Communities and Local Government who will decide whether the power station should be allowed. He can be contacted at:

eric.pickles@communities.gsi.gov.uk
www.ericpickles.com

Chris Huhne (LD), minister responsible for Energy and Climate Change, who will ultimately make the decision on awarding renewable energy subsidies for the plant, can be contacted on chris.huhne@decc.gsi.gov.uk
www.chrishuhne.org.uk



Petition against the biofuel power station from the residents of Hallen

Sustainable renewable energy on a large scale must be captured directly from sun, wind and water - destroying rainforests to produce a small energy contribution is unacceptable and allowing renewables subsidies to be spent on this would be a travesty. The government is expected to clarify its policy soon - in the mean time we need to ensure Bristol is not heading in the wrong direction.



Stop Sainsbury's

Bristol City Council is considering an application from Sainsbury's to build a superstore at Ashton Gate Stadium, having previously rejected a similar application in July. The changes in the revised application do little to mitigate fears by local residents that the store will lead to more traffic, more pollution and the destruction of small businesses in the area.

The new superstore would cover 12,852 square metres, making it bigger than the Taj Mahal and double the size of the existing store in Ashton Vale. It would be the biggest Sainsbury's supermarket in the South West. Sainsbury's boasts that the store will be a "regional destination", attracting traffic from all over Bristol and perhaps further afield. This is precisely why the Council rejected the previous application, citing increased greenhouse emissions, congestion on nearby Winterstoke Road and risk to businesses on North and East Streets in Bedminster as factors. Sainsbury's responded with a few token concessions, such as the provision of shoppers' buses to relieve traffic congestion, but the revised application remains substantially the same. Sainsbury's argues that the development of the site as a retail superstore is the only way that BCFC

is able to finance its new stadium. Residents believe that this should not result in long term damage to the area.

A group of residents has come together to oppose this second planning application. You can register your support for the campaign at their website: www.stopsainsburys.co.uk

In addition, be sure to let Bristol City Council know your opposition to the plans. The decision is expected to be made in mid-January, so objections must be received before then.

WRITE TO:

Development Management

City Development
Bristol City Council
Brunel House
St George's Road
Bristol BS1 5UY

development.management@bristol.gov.uk

Be sure to include your name and address in all correspondence and quote planning reference 10/04777/P

Bristol FoE is heavily involved in the Stop Sainsbury's campaign. We hope you will support us.

Pip Sheard stopsainsburyashtongate@gmail.com

More planning changes on the way – localism rules?

Change is in the air once more for the planning system and local governance in England. In Friends of the Earth we're doing our best to follow the changes, and here are some thumbnail sketches of what has happened or may be about to happen:

Regions are Dead – or are they?

One of Eric Pickles' first acts as Communities Secretary was to throw out the previous government's Regional Strategies, the means for forcing huge increases in housing numbers on reluctant local authorities, so there were few tears shed. With the strategies however went years of work building a picture of how housing, jobs and broader infrastructure should fit together, some good strong statements of how

The most radical changes of all are the proposals to make planning much more localised

sustainable development was to be achieved in practice, and positive targets for things like renewable energy – none of which are likely to be replaced in so comprehensive a form. Developers challenged Pickles in the courts, and he was found to have acted prematurely in tearing up the strategies. So they live on for a while, but the South West's was only ever in draft so this may have little practical effect.

Local Enterprise Rules

The Regional Development Agencies, (RDAs), are also to be wound up by next April. However, the Coalition Government continues to push

Expect some world-class rhetoric on bringing power closer to people

the role of local government as boosting economic growth above all else. We now have Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs), to be led by businesses with council partners, across whatever areas seem to them to make most sense. Although the role of these partnerships was grandly talked up at first – they would be able to take on some of the strategic planning that the old regional bodies used to do – in practice they have few resources for such a task. In the South West only two bids to form LEPs were successful, meaning that 70 per cent of the region's people do not have one. We in the West of England are in the 30 per cent that do.

Power shift in Planning

The most radical changes of all are the proposals to make planning much more localised. National policy guidance is to be dramatically slimmed down, and locally decided plans to be given a much greater role in settling development priorities. Expect some world-class rhetoric on bringing power closer to people, but given the problems that even most small to medium sized councils have in dealing with the likes of Tesco, actual power for neighbourhoods to shape development may be hard to realise in practice.

For more detail and updates, see the Power Shift briefings at:

www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefing_notes/englands_powershift.pdf

About Bristol Friends of the Earth

Bristol Friends of the Earth is an active local group of the international environmental organisation Friends of the Earth. We currently run campaigns on local climate change, Bristol airport expansion, food, waste, local transport and sustainable housing. We hold a monthly group meeting (visit www.bristolfoe.org.uk for details) plus separate campaign meetings.

If you would like to know more about us, to help us by campaigning or raising money, or want to come to a meeting to see what we do then please get in touch. You can help by volunteering and giving your time, or by joining Bristol Friends of the Earth and helping us financially.

How do I join?

Membership of Bristol FoE includes a free subscription to InFoE. To join us, just complete

the form below, and return it to the Membership Secretary. Please pay by standing order if you can – it really helps to cut time spend on admin. Subscription rates are:

- Ordinary £15 Unwaged £5 Joint / Family £25

Contact us

Bristol Friends of the Earth
10–12 Picton Street, Montpelier, Bristol BS6 5QA
email: info@bristolfoe.org.uk
voicemail: 0117 911 4084

To join the Bristol Environment email list, which circulates local news of environmental events and campaigns, please email your name and email address to: bristol_environment@bristolfoe.org.uk

To find out about future events or our next monthly meeting visit www.bristolfoe.org.uk

Yes, I'd like to join my local group

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

I enclose £_____ membership and
£_____ donation

TOTAL £_____

cheques payable to Bristol Friends of the Earth OR:

I'd like to pay by standing order: _____

My bank _____

My bank's address _____

Postcode _____

My account no. _____

Sort code _____

Account name _____

Standing Order Instruction

Please pay the sum of £_____

on _____ / _____ / 20_____

and thereafter the same amount on the same day
each month/year*

(*Delete as appropriate. Please make first payment date at least
one month from when you fill in this form)

To Co-operative Bank plc, sort code: 08-90-02
Bristol Friends of the Earth, account no: 50296440

Signature _____

Date _____

Please return to: The Membership Secretary,
Bristol Friends of the Earth, 10–12 Picton Street,
Montpelier, Bristol BS6 5QA

Your records will be stored on our computer. If you have any
objections to this, please contact us.