

# North Herts Friends of the Earth

January 2009

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

## Climate Change Bill is Law

Parliament voted on 28th October for the world-beating legislation after a 3 and a half year campaign by Friends of the Earth.

The first of its kind in the world, the law is a huge step in the fight against climate change.

The law means:

- **Big cuts** - At least 80% cuts in greenhouse gases by 2050.
- **Monitoring** - Regular reporting to Parliament to check we're on track.
- **Policy** - Government will have to consider climate impacts in all of its policies.
- **Solutions** - Clear direction will give business the confidence to invest in solutions to climate change.

### People changed politics

Launched in 2005, Friends of the Earth's Big Ask campaign saw unprecedented numbers of people calling for a strong climate law.

Nearly 200,000 spoke to their MP directly - by letters, email, posting a video clip, or in person.

*"People often ask: 'Does anything change politics?' Well it has here." - Nick Robinson, BBC political editor*

The Government succumbed to Friends of the Earth's (and others) lobbying on our three main points:

- 1) They agreed in February to annual rather than four-yearly reviews of targets
- 2) They agreed in October to 80% emissions cuts rather than the 60% cuts as first specified in the EDM
- 3) On 27<sup>th</sup> October, they agreed to the inclusion of emissions from aviation and shipping that had been fought against tooth and nail.

This shows that effective, thought through and well reasoned campaigning by people like us, WORKS!

The public demanded a strong climate law and the Government has been forced to listen. In three years people power (THAT'S US!) has changed politics.

### Energy Bill gets royal assent

Friends of the Earth led the campaign, along with the Renewable Energy Association, for the Energy Bill to include a feed-in tariff - which will give a financial incentive to homes, businesses and communities for installing small-scale renewable energy systems, such as solar panels and water turbines.

Friends of the Earth's executive director, Andy Atkins, said:

"The Climate Change Bill is a world class piece of legislation that should make the UK an international leader in tackling climate change.

"Ministers must now rapidly develop a low-carbon economy - investing in green energy and cutting energy waste will also create exciting new business opportunities, many thousands of jobs and help lead Britain out of recession.

"Britain's renewable energy potential is enormous. The inclusion of a feed-in tariff in the Energy Bill will hopefully encourage homes, businesses and communities to install green energy systems and play a key role in cutting emissions. Ministers must ensure that payments are high enough to make this happen."

The Planning Bill also got Royal Assent in November.

Friends of the Earth's planning campaigner Dr. Hugh Ellis said:

"The Planning Bill is not strong enough to ensure that climate change is properly considered in decisions about major projects such as airports, roads and power stations.

"These decisions will be taken by an unelected, undemocratic body which excludes people from the

planning process and could lead to an increase in the type of direct action we saw during the 1980s road protests."

### 2008 is the tenth warmest year on record

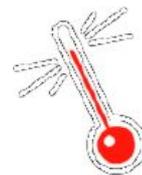
Responding to a recent preliminary report by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) which says that the global mean temperature for 2008 is the tenth warmest since records began in 1850, Friends of the Earth's climate campaigner, Robin Webster, said:

"Evidence that humans are changing the climate is indisputable.

"The industrialised world must cut its emissions by at least 40 per cent by 2020 if we are to avoid catastrophic climate change.

"We need bold political leadership - but last week Europe watered down its climate change strategy and little progress was made at the international climate talks.

"2009 is a critical year. The planet is heating up - the world mustn't go cold on the need for urgent action."



### 2008 NHFOE review

Our members contacted the **National Air Traffic Services** to object to plans to increase aviation. These proposals would increase the number of people suffering high noise levels around Luton airport from 3,000 in 2006 to 10,000 when the new routes are introduced. The latest news on this from Ladacan is: NATS has been meeting with some local authorities recently and given the impression that, with the economic situation weakening, there is little urgency to complete the exercise to revise flight paths which it started back in February. It is likely that there is now a 2-year breathing space before the need for more airspace capacity becomes pressing again. <http://www.ladacan.org/>

## Stansted expansion challenged



The recent decision by the Secretaries of State for Transport and for Communities and Local Government to approve the expansion of Stansted Airport from 25 million passengers per annum (mppa) to 35 mppa is to be challenged by Stop Stansted Expansion:

[www.stopstanstedexpansion.com](http://www.stopstanstedexpansion.com)

SSE's legal action will challenge three aspects of the Government's decision to approve the extra 10 million passengers a year and the related extra flights:

1. That the increase in carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and other greenhouse gas emissions, however substantial, can be disregarded in the decision to approve the extra flights;
2. That the economic impact on the UK trade deficit, however adverse, can be disregarded;
3. That the adverse noise impacts upon local residents and people living further afield cannot amount to a reason for refusal because to do so would frustrate Government policy.

In approving the planning application, the Government deleted a planning condition which was recommended by its Planning Inspector which would have restricted the noise between 11 at night and 7 in the morning. One of the reasons given for this was a doubt that the condition, which is very similar to a condition imposed on Luton Airport in its current (1997) planning permission, would be enforceable.

The only good news in the Government's decision for residents around Stansted is that, for the first time, flights by small business jets are to be restricted.

*Adapted from LADACAN*  
<http://www.ladacan.org/>

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## Luton flights falling!

Some good news promising a sliver of peace on this part of earth: the number of flights at Luton fell by over 10 per cent in November compared with the same month last year and the number of passengers by over 8 per cent. It is a pity that this results from global recession rather than sensible and civilised regulation of aviation but let's be thankful for small (and probably temporary) mercies.

*Adapted from LADACAN*  
<http://www.ladacan.org/>

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## What's feeding our food?

Friends of the Earth launched its Food Chain campaign in Westminster on 9<sup>th</sup> December.

We are calling on Government to revolutionise the way we produce meat and dairy.

The launch of the campaign sees the publication of *What's feeding our food?* - a revealing new account of the environmental and social impacts of the intensive livestock system. See:

[www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/livestock\\_impacts\\_summary.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/livestock_impacts_summary.pdf)

Factory farming demands massive amounts of soy - a key ingredient in animal feed. Most of this comes from huge soy plantations in Latin America.

Vast swathes of land have to be cleared to grow the soy - causing deforestation, greenhouse gas emissions and the loss of valuable wildlife habitat.

Communities are often forced off their land and lose the ability to grow food for their families.

The food on our plates should not be the final link in this destructive chain.

## Breaking the chain

The Food Chain campaign aims to change the way that meat and dairy is produced in the UK. We want Government to support good food, thriving farms and a healthy planet.

They must stop using taxpayers' money to fund big business-led factory farms - and instead support homegrown animal feeds

and low-impact meat and dairy production.

## Read the report

We need as many people as possible to get behind this exciting new challenge - this launch is just the first step towards bigger things.

In 2009 please help us to put pressure on MPs to support the Food Chain campaign.



*Soybeans being harvested in Brazil*  
© Corbis

*Submitted by Ann*

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## Again GM! I thought we had made it clear we don't want it!

The GM industry claims that GM crops will help solve the global food crisis. And it looks like Government might believe their spin - even though there is no evidence for their claims.

**Take Action:** Contact your MP. Here is sample letter to send. You can also find it on [www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/real\\_food/press\\_for\\_change/mp\\_gm\\_hype\\_11309.html](http://www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/real_food/press_for_change/mp_gm_hype_11309.html)

"I am writing as one of your constituents to express my concerns over the Government's recent moves to find ways of growing GM crops in Britain.

The industry is touting GM crops as a solution to the global food crisis. Evidence shows that GM crops do not increase yields or tackle hunger and poverty. There are no GM drought- or salt-tolerant crops on the market, and most GM crops grown around the world are used for animal feed, not food.

The industry also claims GM crops do not harm the environment, yet Government-sponsored farm-scale trials in the UK found that two out of three GM crops grown were more

damaging to farmland wildlife than conventionally grown equivalents. I do not want to see the British countryside lose even more biodiversity through the inevitable intensification of agriculture that GM cultivation would bring.

Furthermore, I am just one of the many constituents who has consistently opposed the growing of GM crops in the UK - the GM Nation debate concluded that 85% of the public didn't want GM crops grown in this country and in 2006 95% rejected Government proposals on weak rules for growing GM crops in England. It is therefore imperative that Government looks at the true facts behind GM, and dismisses industry spin and not the wishes of the public.

Please would you raise my concerns in writing with the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Hilary Benn? Please ask that he does not allow the GM industry's hype over the food crisis to force GM crops upon a country that has consistently opposed them. Instead he should be encouraging a radical shift towards sustainable farming systems that genuinely benefit local farmers, communities and the environment worldwide, as called for in the International Agriculture Assessment which the UK has recently signed up to."

**Send it to your MP (Oliver Heald, Barbara Follett or Peter Lilley) at the Houses of Parliament, London SW1 OAA**

### **Climate change march**

The 6<sup>th</sup> of December 2008 was a fine sunny day. We took the train from Hitchin and reached Grosvenor Square in plenty of time to meet friends from Transition Town Letchworth and Green Party members from North Herts and Welwyn Garden City. The route took us through Berkeley Square (where we observed the Bentley showroom!) along Piccadilly (where a luxury Hummer limo was on display!)

Regent Street, Trafalgar Square and Whitehall to Parliament Square.

Here we assembled complete with musicians and banner wavers to listen to the speeches.

Unfortunately George Monbiot and Michael Meacher were unable to attend but Nick Clegg insisted that Britain should boost its economy by becoming a world leader in renewable energy technology. Caroline Lucas weighed in with

the accusation that the government were hardly backing their own Climate Change Bill by sanctioning such heavily carbon dioxide producing projects as the proposed third runway at Heathrow and a new coal-fired power station at Kingsnorth. She



also said that she would be reluctant to attend many more marches in years to come as this would signify that we had not gone beyond mere protesting to bringing real changes into effect.

So with cheers and the odd boo still ringing in our ears we dodged the London traffic and the Christmas shoppers to return to the sanity of our own homes refreshed in the knowledge that we were not the only ones fighting for a sustainable world.

*By Chris Honey*

### **2008 NHFOE review**

NHFOE members regularly attend **Green Drinks** at the Millstream pub in Hitchin on the first Tuesday of the month. Dan Gomm gave a presentation on North Herts Friends of the Earth at one meeting and Chris Honey introduced Transition Towns.

### **National climate march**

A bright sunny December day in central London, a scene filled with a colourful and noisy throng of protesters in creative costumes, with banners and props. This was how we brought our climate message to the very doorstep of government. The chanting at the front of the march was followed by assorted samba bands and other sounds down the long trail of demonstrators. Indeed, many marchers danced right from Grosvenor Square to Parliament Square. A notable creation which drew many comments were the '4 horsemen of the apocalypse'. Earlier in the day, hundreds of cyclists had gathered at Lincoln's Inn Fields and progressed via the offices of Greenergy for an agrofuels protest, the offices of EON for a protest against New Coal, and the Department of Transport to call for sustainable transport.

This climate march on Parliament had four main themes - ~

1. YES to a renewable energy revolution and green jobs.
2. NO to a third runway at Heathrow and the runaway expansion in aviation.
3. NO new coal - no new coal-fired power stations.
4. NO to the expansion of agrofuels - with negative impacts on forests, the climate and world food supply.

'Seize the Day' entertained protesters to some fantastic music and were followed by some impassioned speakers, including Nick Clegg, leader of the Liberal Democrats, who promised that his party would not neglect the need to tackle climate change in the face of the global recession. Caroline Lucas, leader of the Green Party, spoke with her usual

eloquence on the need for a New Green Deal, while John McDonnell, the Labour MP, spoke passionately about the building alliance between climate campaigners and his constituents who were resisting Heathrow's expansion.

*Submitted by Jill*

#### **2008 NHFOE review**

Members contacted their councils to opt into the **Sustainable Communities Act** so that local people can have more say in the sustainability of their area.

Both NHDC and Stevenage still have not opted into this, yet. So, keep writing! For more info see:

<http://www.localworks.org/>

#### **The Story of Stuff!**

From its extraction through sale, use and disposal, all the stuff in our lives affects communities at home and abroad, yet most of this is hidden from view. **The Story of Stuff** is a 20-minute, fast-paced, fact-filled look at the underside of our production and consumption patterns. **The Story of Stuff** exposes the connections between a huge number of environmental and social issues, and calls us together to create a more sustainable and just world. It'll teach you something, it'll make you laugh, and it just may change the way you look at all the stuff in your life forever.

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

*Submitted by Adrian Denning*

#### **2008 NHFOE review**

Three members of our group joined 1000 people to listen to the three main **political parties' climate change spokesmen debate climate change** and the climate change bill. Interestingly, the further away from power they were, the better their position was on climate change measures! In the end though, once the bill reached parliament in October the government backed down on all the positions their spokesman took that night in the spring.

#### **Luton Northern Bypass**

A Luton Northern Bypass would pass through the Chilterns, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty north of Luton. Luton really suffers from a lack of good buses and cycling facilities. We are delighted that, as a result of the previous consultation (and focussed campaigning by Friends of the Earth) on the route options, Bedfordshire County Council and Luton Borough Council have commissioned a full report on sustainable transport alternatives to building a road (ie a package of really serious improvements to bus services, walking, cycling etc). They are the first councils in the country to undertake such a full examination of alternatives to road building.

The councils have to decide whether they will support a road option or a sustainable transport alternative, so on 31st Jan they are holding a morning workshop from 10.00 am to 1.00 pm at the University of Bedford, Park Square, Luton.

Stephen Joseph, the Director of the Campaign for Better Transport, will be talking about transport in the regional and national context. The road options, will be presented by Halcrow, while the sustainable transport alternatives, will be presented by Peter Brett Associates

It would be wonderful if you could come. It is such beautiful countryside and we need to save it. I do apologise that it is short notice. If you could forward this message to any of your friends and colleagues it would be wonderful. We really need as many people as possible who care about it.

It has taken a lot of persuasion to get the council to undertake such a full consultation and to get such good speakers, so we desperately need people. A huge road would completely ruin this beautiful area. This is a crucial time as the council will make a decision on the issue in March, so views of the public are critical.

#### **Take action:**

**Please write and let them know that you are planning to attend:**

**Stephen Sleight,**  
**Transport Officer,**  
**Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity,**  
**The Old School,**  
**Cardington,**  
**Bedford,**  
**MK44 3SX.**

**Fax: 01234 838149**

**E-mail: [stephens@bedsrcc.org.uk](mailto:stephens@bedsrcc.org.uk)**

**Please return by Tuesday 27th January**

**Submitted by: Victoria Harvey**

#### **2008 NHFOE review**

We have agreed **funding** to help Datchworth Climate Change group. We have also agreed to help fund a report on the Hitchin Urban Transport Plan if a bypass looks likely to be the outcome. If you know of a project that would help meet our aims, then we may be able to find some money to help. Come along to a meeting and ask.

**DEFRA statistics** show incinerators are not needed

Commenting on new DEFRA figures showing that 90% of local authorities are meeting or exceeding household recycling targets, Friends of the Earth's senior resource use campaigner Michael Warhurst said:

"These figures provide further evidence that new incinerators are not needed - local authorities are already diverting waste from landfill by boosting recycling and composting.

"Proposals for dozens of new polluting and expensive incinerators have been justified on the grounds that we will continue to produce more and more waste, but these figures show that total waste is decreasing.

"Recycling resources is a win-win for the environment and councils' budgets. Recycling targets must be increased and plans to build new incinerators that will divert finite and valuable resources away from recycling must be scrapped."

New DEFRA figures reveal that the total amount of municipal waste collected in 2007/2008 decreased by 2.2% compared to the previous year. The average annual change in municipal waste over the five years to 2007/08 was a decrease of 0.6 per cent.

For more information on the climate impacts of incineration see 'Dirty Truths', Friends of the Earth briefing, May 2007. View online:

[www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/dirty\\_truths.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/dirty_truths.pdf)

Friends of the Earth's general briefing on incineration, Up in Smoke:

[www.foe.co.uk/resource/media\\_briefing/up\\_in\\_smoke.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/media_briefing/up_in_smoke.pdf)

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#### **2008 NHFOE review**

A new regular feature for NHFOE is our **film night**. Several entertaining and illuminating evenings have been spent watching and discussing films on different subjects relevant to Friends of the Earth. These will continue this year, please see emails for latest film nights.

#### **2008 NHFOE review**

Harvey Ward and Dan attended seminars at the Herts University's conference on **The Future for Hertfordshire** and were able to feed into discussions on the sustainability (or not) of various development scenarios. The main question raised was: "Do we really want the proposed level of development in this area?" and the answer seemed to be: "It is just not sustainable in terms of water, transport, biodiversity, carbon emissions etc". The conference report will be submitted to the East of England Regional assembly.

#### **MARINET marine reserves campaign**

The Marine and Coastal Access Bill is on its way through parliament. MARINET, the Friends of the Earth marine information network of local groups, is campaigning for improvements.

MARINET thinks the bill contains very serious flaws. We are discussing with senior politicians and key environmental campaign groups a series of amendments to be tabled during the parliamentary process.

Already, an MP has tabled an Early Day Motion (EDM 337), at our request, which supports our campaigning stance.

**In the meantime, we would like you to consider taking some or all of the following actions.**

- Sign up to receive information and materials on the campaign through the website [www.marinereserves.org.uk](http://www.marinereserves.org.uk)

- Lobby your MP by visiting her or him, or by writing a letter asking for the MP to sign the EDM 337, and give support to the amendments when they are tabled.

- Distribute campaign material which we can send you with a view to encouraging others to contact the local MP individually.

- Hear a presentation on the Campaign and its background.

from a campaign member. If someone cannot be found in your locality, we are preparing a PowerPoint summary for local groups to use.

- Join MARINET, and receive information about other issues affecting our marine environment. Visit [www.marinet.org.uk](http://www.marinet.org.uk).

View the full picture of the campaign, its aim and progress on the Marine Reserves Campaign. here: [www.marinereserves.org.uk](http://www.marinereserves.org.uk)

This matter is **urgent** because the legislation will be enacted by the summer of this year, and the Lords have already reached the Committee stage.

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#### **2008 NHFOE review**

Dan was invited to take part in a **North Herts District Council review of local economies**. As a result of this, the report produced includes recommendations for local loyalty cards to encourage people to shop in locally owned businesses; encouragement for social firms; advocacy of bulk community purchase of domestic renewables; a request to examine the opportunity for localised currency and a proposal to look into local food sources.

#### **Good news from the USA.**

Three new marine national monuments are to be created in the Pacific Ocean.

Together, these designated areas will span 195,280 square miles - an area larger than California -- and protect some of the most ecologically rich areas of the world's oceans.

The three new protected areas will be called Marianas Marine National Monument, Pacific Remote Islands National Monument, and Rose Atoll National Monument.

Home to hundreds of species of fish, pristine corals, endangered sea turtles, and marine mammals, including many found nowhere else, these areas are almost untouched by humans. Scientists tell us that visiting these places is like going back in time hundreds of years.

The monuments include nine distinct tropical coral islands and their surrounding waters, ranging from Wake Island in the west to Palmyra Atoll in the east. An estimated 14 million seabirds congregate and breed on these tiny islands, and they rely on the surrounding oceans for their food. Also, new marine species are documented with every research expedition in these areas. The Mariana Trench includes the deepest point on Earth, some 36,000 feet below the surface of the Pacific. It is home to a treasure trove of known and untapped scientific discoveries. Read more about these remarkable marine treasures by visiting:

<http://action.edf.org>

### 2008 NHFOE review

Over the summer we helped generate 458 letters of support for **Renewable energy in Benington**. NHFOE members attended local meetings and had letters published in the local press in support of wind turbines in Benington. We also helped National Friends of the Earth put up a web page where people could submit their support to East Herts District Council.

We also generated letters of support for Weston wind farm and helped National Friends of the Earth put up another web page in support of these plans.

### It's all about you ...

... reducing your personal carbon footprint - here are some new year resolutions we can implement right now:

- Cut down on flying, probably the biggest single thing you can do to cut your carbon footprint, especially if it's a long-haul flight.
- Switch your home electricity to a renewable energy supplier. Spend your money on the solution, not the problem.
- Eat local, seasonal and organic whenever possible. Run your body on clean, healthy and low carbon energy.
- Eat less meat. Producing meat creates lots of emissions, even when rain forests aren't being chopped down for land to graze the cattle.
- Turn down your heating. Boring maybe, but it's so easy and the only thing you'll notice is a lower energy bill.
- Get campaigning. We can change our own habits, but we need society to change, too. Get involved with Friends of the Earth campaigns.
- Buy nothing new. There's more than enough stuff out there already. Try it.

[www.carboncoach.com](http://www.carboncoach.com)

### 2008 NHFOE review

A lot of hard work was done (especially by Jill and Chris) on developing a **new membership leaflet** for our group. Jim has updated the **website**, which now has regular bulletins as well as access to our newsletters [www.nhertsfoe.co.uk](http://www.nhertsfoe.co.uk) Dan worked with Community Volunteer services to get more active members.

### Do you fancy planting an orchard?



At Church

Farm we are planting an orchard with old and local varieties on 14/2/09 from 10.30 am. to 2.30 pm. Everybody is welcome.

Traditional Food and Farming, Church Farm, Ardeley, SG2 7AH

For more info contact Ann at [ann@churchfarmardeley.co.uk](mailto:ann@churchfarmardeley.co.uk) or 07507890245

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

*Submitted by Ann De Bock*

### 2008 NHFOE review

An eye has also been kept on **Hertfordshire's plans for an incinerator**. This looks likely to be near Hatfield at New Barnfield and we will work with Welwyn and Hatfield Friends of the Earth to oppose any such plans. For more info on incineration see: [http://www.foe.org.uk/campaigns/waste/issues/incineration\\_and\\_landfill\\_index.html](http://www.foe.org.uk/campaigns/waste/issues/incineration_and_landfill_index.html)

### GM chocs at Tesco

Hershey's Nutrageous chocolate bars have been spotted in Tesco stores. The items are clearly labelled as containing GM soya, sugar and corn. It would be good to get Tesco to stop selling these items and any others that also contain GM ingredients.

Tesco is still influenced by their customers, so if you'd like to remind them you don't want to eat GM food, you could write to your local Tesco manager and Tesco HQ telling them you do not want to see GM ingredients on their shelves. (Tesco Chief Executive,

New Tesco House, Delamare Road, Cheshunt, Herts EN8 9SL). If you're feeling more demonstrative, how about taking lots of the bars to the check-out and refusing to buy them, explaining why to the store manager. Or, you could consider leaving a card in the on-shelf display alerting other shoppers to the fact that the bars contain GM ingredients. Happy hunting!

*Submitted by: Jill*

### Measure your energy use

Save up to 25% off your electricity bills. We have an electricity monitor to loan to members. It helps you work out where you are wasting electricity and which appliances are using it most, so you can control your electricity use more efficiently. Contact Dan if you'd like to borrow it.

### 2008 NHFOE review

NHFOE took part in the **Big Ask day of action** asking for the government to include aviation emissions in the Climate Change Bill. We had stalls in Stevenage and Hitchin and got just under 100 cards signed. We were also interviewed on the subject by local radio and the interview was broadcast throughout the weekend's news bulletins. This demand was finally agreed to by the government just before the climate change bill became law.



### 2008 NHFOE review

NHFOE members attended the **Climate Change march**. See Chris's report on page 3.

### 2008 NHFOE review

We held a total of five **campaigning stalls** over the year, two on the same day asking for aviation to be included in the climate change bill, one over two days on biofuels and Transition Towns (also supported by Hitchin Parents' Action on Climate Change) at Rhythms of the World, and one on Apple Day to support renewable energy.



Thank you to all the people who helped. These can't be run without volunteers and this year saw more people coming to help than we've had for a long time. I reckon, in total, around 12 people helped on stalls this year.

### **Ban the plastic bag**

Every year 17 billion carrier bags are given away free in the UK. But in 2007, Modbury in Devon made history by becoming Britain's first plastic-bag-free town. This book tells the story, and highlights the struggles and successes of other campaigns. Ban the Plastic Bag by Rebecca Hoskins - £4.99 (less 30% discount for Local Groups).

### **EMails**

I send out occasional action bulletins and invites to events such as film showings on this list. If you'd like to be on it and are not, then please contact me at [dangomm@yahoo.com](mailto:dangomm@yahoo.com)

### 2008 NHFOE review

We've been working to avoid the possibility of a **Hitchin bypass** which could be an outcome of the Hitchin Urban Transport Plan. **Alasdair Massie from North Herts Cycling Touring Club** ([www.northhertsctc.org.uk](http://www.northhertsctc.org.uk)) has done excellent work on this.

The Hitchin Urban Transport Plan could possibly lead to a bypass, meaning more traffic and more greenfield development. There will be a workshop organised by the planning consultants (for the Hitchin Urban Transport Plan) on **Wednesday 11 February at Hitchin Town Hall from 9.45am to 2.30pm**. This will include a presentation by the consultants followed by group discussions. If you would like to attend, you can find out more and register by contacting [Sukhjeet.Moreno@fabermaunsell.com](mailto:Sukhjeet.Moreno@fabermaunsell.com) by **Friday 23 January**. It is very important that someone from North Herts Friends of the Earth goes along and advocates alternatives to a bypass. Unfortunately, it is in the week during the working day; if anyone would like to go but needs more background information let Dan know.

### **Events**

(If you want to go to any of these events please let us know and we can reimburse travel costs):

### **6 billion ways to solve to global meltdown**

**WHEN: Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> Feb**

**WHERE: London.**

Every day seems to bring a new global crisis: climate change, violent conflicts, energy and food price rises, and financial markets in turmoil.

This is a day of ideas, discussion, creativity and action to explore the causes and solutions to these interlinked global crises. Come along to be inspired, hear from global activists like former Friends of the Earth International Chair Meena Raman, and make connections with others who want to find solutions. See [www.6billionways.org.uk](http://www.6billionways.org.uk)

### **Regional meeting and renewables training**

**WHEN: Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March (TBC)**

**WHERE: Venue TBC**

This is likely to be at the Centre at St. Paul's, Hills Road, Cambridge on Saturday 14 March (to be confirmed asap) with coffee from 10.00 and farewells at 16.30.

The majority of the day will be a workshop on renewables and associated energy efficiency. This will cover technologies, planning, funding and local actions to support projects. Nick Rau from the climate team will be one of the presenters.

The rest of the day will be spent on issues that local groups are concerned with, including how to improve networking between groups and how to provide information to support campaigns. Suggestions for discussion are welcome.

For more information contact: **Mary Edwards**, East of England Campaigns Coordinator - [mary.edwards@foe.co.uk](mailto:mary.edwards@foe.co.uk) or 01353 861763

### **Eastern Regional Friends of the Earth Gathering**

**WHEN: Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> January**

**WHERE: Conway Hall, London**

Take part in skills workshops, learn about our campaigns, meet your fellow activists and take action for Friends of the Earth.

This will include: Choice of interactive workshops covering five skills areas:

- Finding and keeping group members
  - Being the coordinator (tbc)
  - Putting on a great event (and making some money)
  - Working as a team
  - Welcome to Friends of the Earth (suitable for new people)
  - What's happening in local government?
  - The new planning system
  - Campaigning on livestock in 2009
  - Engaging community groups with the renewables campaign
- Book your place by contacting Matt at [matt.sellwood@foe.co.uk](mailto:matt.sellwood@foe.co.uk).

### 2008 NHFOE review

Chris Honey has done sterling work on **Transition Towns**, giving presentations, working towards Transition Town Hitchin and informing the public at NHFOE stalls. NHFOE funded Chris to attend the Transition Network Conference last April.

Some of our members are also involved in Transition Town Letchworth, and NHFOE continues to be here to help LTT.

### 2008 NHFOE review

Tim and Dan spent two intensive, inspiring, enjoyable days at the **Friends of the Earth Local Groups Conference** in Loughborough learning about FOE's campaigns, meeting other campaigners and dancing to a silent disco! This conference is well worth going to - watch out for this year's event on September 12-14th.

### **LOCAL GROUP MEETINGS**

**Please come along and get involved**

**Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> February**

**Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March**

**Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April**

**Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May**

**All 7:30pm-9:15pm**

**Friends' Meeting House**

**1 Paynes Park, Hitchin**

**Come to the pub afterwards!**

### **GREEN DRINKS**

Join us for Green Drinks on the first Tuesday of the month at 8:30pm. We meet at:  
The Millstream Pub  
Cambridge Road  
Hitchin  
SG4 0JH

### **North Herts Friends of the Earth CONTACTS:**

**Coordinator:** Dan Gomm  
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### **Please help with the newsletter**

Please send your letters or articles to Tracy at: 84 Jackmans Place, Letchworth SG6 1RQ, or [tracy@tracypez.co.uk](mailto:tracy@tracypez.co.uk)

**Deadline for the next newsletter: 8<sup>th</sup> May 2009**

### **Environmental book bank**

**If you'd like to read up on some of the issues we have a bank of books to borrow:**

- Calculate your carbon footprint  
- Collin's Gem

- How to save cash and save the planet

- Don't throw it all away - FOE's guide to reducing waste

- Funny Weather - Kate Evans' cartoon guide to climate change

- Air Madness - runways and the blighting of Britain - Cedric Pulford

- How to win campaigns against incinerators - FOE

- Hope in the Dark - The untold history of people power -Rebecca Solnit

- How we can save the planet - Mayer Hillman

- No Logo - Naomi Klein

- Toxic Childhood - how the modern world is damaging our children and what we can do about it - Sue Palmer

- The tipping point. How little things can make a big difference - Malcolm Gladwell

**Contact Dan - 01462 632479**

[dangomm@yahoo.com](mailto:dangomm@yahoo.com)