

- **Planning Right not Planning Blight**
- **Comedy Night 20th July - Buy your tickets now: see rear page**

### Say Yes to Less Pollution

Edinburgh's traffic levels are a major problem for the environment, for public health, and for the economy. Road traffic, through air and noise pollution, is a major factor in damaging public health. Traffic levels also have a serious impact on the global environment, being a major causal factor in climate change. More locally, road traffic levels adversely affect the economy through congestion costs.

To tackle these problems, the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) plans to introduce a congestion charge in 2006, similar to the one successfully introduced in central London in February 2003. The Edinburgh congestion charge would be £2 to cross one or both of two cordons: one at

the City Bypass and one around the City Centre. The statutory consultation that ended in January followed five years of public consultation and around ten years of discussion. The congestion charge forms part of the Council's 'Integrated Transport Initiative' (see [iti.tiedinburgh.co.uk](http://iti.tiedinburgh.co.uk)). CEC has decided that a referendum will be held before it is implemented: this will be held in either January or February 2005.

It is very likely that if car drivers were to pay prices that reflected the external costs produced - toxic air pollution, noise pollution, climate change impacts, congestion costs, road fatalities and injuries, etc. - then a "full cost" charge for driving in Edinburgh would be considerably higher than the £2 a day envisaged. Nevertheless, it is welcome that private car users would begin to pay a

**Truck off! - FoE makes its view known at June's fuel protest**

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Photo by Lang Banks

### Coordinators' Comments

Welcome to another edition of INFOE. We have had a busy time since the last issue was published. In April, we held a Hustings event for our public meeting. We had representatives from six parties all vying for our votes! The debate was a lively one with many different opinions being aired.

On the Waste campaign front, Helen, Emma and Katriona attended the Scottish Global Awareness Conference to present a workshop on Waste. The waste campaign group also travelled to the Kingdom of Fife to visit the SmithAnderson Paper and Carton Recycling factory. Although we were made to wear very silly hats, we all had a great time and learned a lot. See Charlotte's report for more details.

The transport campaign group has also been active. They have been preparing Friends of the Earth Edinburgh's response to the Congestion Charging Public Local Enquiry and the Tram Bills. At a time when Edinburgh is attempting to change and improve upon its entire transport

infrastructure this campaign group is particularly important and we would welcome any help that supporters could offer.

Representatives from Friends of the Earth Edinburgh also attended an open day at Pishwanton Woods. The woods are owned by the Life Science Trust, who practice biodynamic farming and make jams, cordials and teas from their crops. They have constructed a building made entirely from ecologically sound materials found in the woods. It was very interesting to visit the Centre and see how it works and to taste some biodynamic elderflower juice and nettle soup. The weather left a lot to be desired, and we left thoroughly soaked through!

We are all looking forward to the summer months and hope to see lots of familiar faces at our annual comedy night, Thursday 20th July, at The Stand Comedy Club. Have a great summer!

*Jolin Warren and Katriona Harding  
Joint Co-ordinators, FoE Edinburgh*



Photo by Colin Hattersley

## Say Yes to Less Pollution

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price that better reflects the costs that they inflict on others.

Edinburgh's congestion charge will only be paid by those who drive private motor vehicles. The charge will not, by definition, be paid by the 42% of Edinburgh's households who have no access to a car: these households will predominantly be the City's lower income households.

The Public Local Inquiry into the proposal has been running since 27th April and is due to continue until July. The Edinburgh Evening News has been heavily critical of the proposals so its news coverage should be handled with care: much of it has been extremely one-sided.

Fife Council have been leading opponents as have Midlothian and West Lothian Councils. It is a pity that the residents that they purportedly represent don't pay Council Tax in Edinburgh and hence don't pay for the road use that they enjoy - or the pollution we suffer - in Edinburgh.

The other main opponents have been retailers. Jenners have claimed it could close down as a result of the congestion charge while John Lewis has also claimed that it will lose "10%" of its sales. Meanwhile, Edinburgh Tourism Action Group have claimed that tourists will avoid Edinburgh. Do tourists come to Edinburgh to drive cars?

It is hardly surprising to see the roads lobby group the Road Haulage Association in opposition. More surprising opponents of the congestion charge have included the University of Edinburgh, who are demanding exemptions, as are the Church of Scotland and NHS Lothian.

It is perplexing why political parties such as the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats have set themselves against congestion charging. The opposition of the Conservatives is particularly bizarre and perverse: it is remarkable that a party that has often styled itself as "the party of the market" should be so opposed to a market-based economic instrument. Attacks on Edinburgh's plans for congestion charging have been one of the few issues in the field of transport in which the Liberal Democrats have had any discernible impact - despite this being against the party's own national policy. Yet hypocrisy is not the sole reserve of the Tories and the Lib Dems: a group of Labour MSPs also intend to give evidence against the (Labour-led) City of Edinburgh Council.

It is unfortunate that the opponents of congestion charging have been unable to offer any credible alternatives for controlling traffic growth. The simple fact is that is that the Edinburgh congestion charge gives the best opportunity we have to begin to deliver a genuinely sustainable transport system in Scotland. Until drivers begin to pay for the damage they inflict on others, transport policy will remain one of simply rearranging deckchairs on the Titanic. A 'no' vote in the forthcoming referendum will be one for more traffic and more pollution, a 'yes' vote will be for a better environment and improved public transport.

*FoE Edinburgh has made a written supporting statement to the Inquiry. TRANSform Scotland's supporting statement and witness statement is at [www.transformscotland.org.uk](http://www.transformscotland.org.uk).*

*An email news and action alerts list, 'YES2LESS' has been set up for congestion charging supporters. To join go to <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/YES2LESS/>*

*Colin Howden, TRANSform Scotland*

## Why Third Party Right of Appeal is needed in Edinburgh:

*Greenbelt pressure in Currie*

Cala Homes submitted three applications to develop at Currievale in 1994, 1998 and 2000. All three were turned down, the second after a public local inquiry. A further application for part of the site by Miller Homes in 2001 was also refused, although several applications on the same site caused confusion amongst local residents. Cala eventually lodged an appeal. The Balerno and Currie Community Councils objected to the development on a number of grounds, including that the proposed site is based in the Greenbelt, and therefore a departure from the development plan, and the extra traffic that would be generated. Cala's appeal was rejected and they have now lodged an appeal with the Court of Session. Developers can repeatedly make applications and communities get worn down by constant campaigns - TPRA will ensure greater pre-application consultations by developers which take into account the views of local residents, and stronger development plans.

*Road building in Midlothian:*

Midlothian Council's plans for a new dual carriageway for the A701 near Loanhead received 400 objections from local residents, yet it still received permission in 2000. The road will destroy a section of ancient woodland designated as an SSSI at Bilston and the route has been subject to subsidence due to old mineworkings. The Council, as both promoter and planning authority, clearly had an interest yet the Executive failed to call the proposal in for independent scrutiny. TPRA will ensure communities are able to initiate appeals themselves rather than waiting for the Executive to call-in decisions.

## Planning Right not Planning Blight

Scotland's planning system is legalistic, intimidating, unfair and heavily skewed in favour of developers. Companies have the right to appeal planning decisions while the public and others do not. Friends of the Earth Scotland believes that there needs to be *equality* in the planning system, and the introduction of a third party right of appeal (TPRA) is crucial to achieving this goal.

The government is now consulting on widening appeal rights. Concerted anti-TPRA lobbying efforts by powerful developers mean that we could easily lose this important opportunity to get TPRA into the new Planning Bill. The developers are spreading myths and misinformation that TPRA will result in delays, increased costs, and the loss of investment in Scotland. We deny this is the case. Other reforms in the planning system will free up resources while strict time limits and a restricted use of TPRA will ensure delays are kept at a minimum. In any case, debates around procedural impacts such as delays are secondary to the more fundamental issue of principle: is it acceptable to have absolute inequality between those proposing development and those that are affected by it? We don't think so!

We want a planning system we can all be proud of. TPRA already exists in the Republic of Ireland, Isle of Man, many other European countries and in Australasia. TPRA would give the community's voice more weight and act as an incentive to update local plans. TPRA ultimately affects a very small proportion of applications, but the introduction of these rights would show that the planning system is not entirely pro-development.

### What Friends of the Earth is asking for:

Communities must have the same rights of appeal which already exist for developers. Within the context of wider planning system reforms, we are calling for a limited third party right of appeal for applications:

1. which are a **departure from the development plan**;
2. where the **local authority has an interest in the planning application**;
3. where the **application is a 'major development'** requiring an EIA;
4. where the **planning officer has recommended refusal**.

Only original objectors to the application should have the right of appeal on payment of a small fee, and appeals should be made within 28 days.

**We urge you to respond to this consultation by 30<sup>th</sup> July**, pledging your support for TPRA to be introduced in line with Model 1 in the consultation document. For further information, links to the consultation documents and our own response, please see our website at: [www.foe-scotland.org.uk/nation/tpra.html](http://www.foe-scotland.org.uk/nation/tpra.html), or contact Helen Todd, Friends of the Earth Scotland, Lamb's House, Burgess Street, Edinburgh EH6 6RD. Tel: 0131 554 9977.

*Helen Todd and Charlotte MacKinnon,  
FoE Edinburgh*

## Recycling Buildings

Our public meeting presentation - on Thursday June 24<sup>th</sup> at 7.30pm - will be given by Richard Atkins from SEDA, the Scottish Ecological Design Association. SEDA aims to promote a design approach to development and production which will protect and encourage biodiversity and resource conservation. Richard's talk will focus on the environmental considerations

taken into account in the repair, conversion and subsequent monitoring in use of Norton Park School, Edinburgh for which he was the project architect from inception through to completion.

By the early 1990s Norton Park School had ceased after nearly a century to be used for its original function, indeed the limited use to which it had been put (workshops and storage) was insufficient to justify the increasingly onerous maintenance and heating costs. At the same time a need was identified to provide city centre accommodation for the voluntary and charitable sectors in Edinburgh. This new use justified the repair and conversion of the building. Prior to the start of construction work a detailed survey was undertaken, which not only identified areas (fortunately minimal) of fabric degradation but critically informed the design decisions taken with regard to repairs and alterations. On the completion of the project the BRE monitored the building for approximately 18 months, culminating in their Energy Efficiency Guide No 127, which showed that energy consumption within Norton Park meets the levels normally only achieved by new "best practice" buildings.

## Paper chase

During a recent visit to the Smith Anderson papermill in Leslie in Fife, FoEE members learned that the papermill is the only one in the UK which currently recycles drinks cartons. The paper, sandwiched between the plastic outer, and aluminium inner, layers of the cartons, is valuable virgin quality and contains the long fibres necessary for making strong paper products.

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## Paper chase

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Approximately 70% of the cartons come from pre-consumer industrial sources (arising mainly from production waste), the main post-consumer source comes from the Republic of Ireland, where local councils are including the beverage cartons in their household collection of dry recyclables. Smith Anderson are working with local councils throughout Scotland to try and increase the amount of cartons recycled locally. Smith Anderson said the move towards unsegregated paper collection by local councils must be carefully managed. It is essential that the waste produced has a market, preferably as local as possible. Smith Anderson can provide an economically viable service for paper, if it is segregated, or if the price paid allows them to segregate it prior to use.

However, whilst it is a step forward to recycle the single-use cartons, it should be remembered that the best use of resources is to use glass or strong plastic containers, which can be reused up to 20-30 times. There is also the issue of whether the woodpulp used to make the cartons is sourced from sustainable forests; a concern which came to the fore when Tetrapak were recently forced to resign from the WWF 95+ group due to the sourcing of their timber from non-accredited suppliers, and they are now working towards remedying this.

*Individuals can send cleaned and flattened liquid food cartons for recycling for to:  
Beverage Carton Recycling  
Smith Anderson & Co Ltd  
FREEPOST SEA13953  
Leslie, Glenrothes, KY6 3BR  
For more information see -  
[www.smithanderson.com](http://www.smithanderson.com)*

*Charlotte MacKinnon, FoE Edinburgh*



Photo by Lang Banks

## Parlez Vous L'Environnement?

So how would you cope if asked to explain in a foreign language why the environment was important? Perhaps it's not something you're often called upon to do, but for the prospective MEPs at the Friends of the Earth Edinburgh's EU Election Hustings on 21<sup>st</sup> April, it was a fair task. After all, most MEPs from other European nations can converse quite happily in at least one foreign language. And how did the candidates manage? Well, SSP was top of the class, Lib Dems not far behind, followed by the Greens and SNP, woeful Tories and, as for Labour, *nul points*. Labour's candidate had had to miss two French elementary classes to attend the hustings; she probably shouldn't miss any more, but at least she's trying. As to whether they actually spoke any sense, unfortunately this reviewer is unable to comment.

Other questions were slightly more conventional, and the candidates were able to show off how much they knew about environmental matters, although there was

perhaps a tendency to digress on to more local issues for some political point-scoring rather than sticking to the European agenda. *Quelle surprise!* The evening kicked off with a question asking candidates to identify their three top environmental priorities, and while there were few surprises there was also a fair range of topics (see table below):

With up to 90% of environmental legislation in Scotland originating in the European Parliament, the EU has made a huge contribution towards environmental protection and regulation, and increased rights of public participation. However, the EU is seen by some parties as being too much pro-big business. For example, while Germany has introduced a law requiring 70% of drinks containers to be returnable bottles, the EU is fighting this ruling on the grounds that it is a barrier to free trade. The candidates were asked whether they would put climate change before free trade, by imposing a tariff on countries which have not signed up to the Kyoto Protocol. The Tories and Lib Dems rejected the idea, Labour wasn't sure, SNP thought it might be worth looking at, while the Greens and SSP voted yes to the tariff. The Greens suggested the EU should be reformed from within, while the SSP wanted to scrap it and start all over again.

All of the parties gave the thumbs up to plans supporting the regulation of chemicals although the Tories were cautious about the definition of a toxic chemical. While many candidates called for a sustainable transport policy, only the Lib Dems, Greens, SNP and SSP would publicly support the imposition of a fuel tax on air transport despite an effective £9.2 billion subsidy the aviation industry receives in the UK each year. Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy was on the agenda for the Greens, Lib Dems and Labour but the SNP, SSP and Tories wanted to go further and opt out altogether, with regional stakeholder groups including fishermen making the decisions. There was more agreement on whether to fight to scrap the Euratom Treaty, promoting nuclear power in Europe, with only the Tories proposing nuclear to be kept as a long term option.

The final part of the event focussed on how to engage people and get them to vote, especially the 78% of the electorate who claim they are not planning to vote. There was no easy answer to this, though lowering the voting age to 16 was one idea discussed. The overall message of the evening was that Europe is both interesting and relevant to Scottish politics.

*Helen Todd, FoE Edinburgh*

### Priority Issues for Each Candidate

Party/Candidate	Priority Issue 1	Priority Issue 2	Priority Issue 3
Conservatives Paul Nelson	Waste/recycling	Renewable energy	Biofuels
Greens Chas Booth	Food industry	Fishing in du stry	Fairtrade
Labour Gemma Doyle	Climate change	CAP reform	Public participation
Lib Dems Robert Aldridge	El A on all EU policies	Renewable energy	Air transport pollution
SNP Alyn Smith	Sustainable transport	Renewable energy	Waste/recycling
SSP Felicity Garvie	Aarhus Convention	Waste/recycling	Nuclear free Scotland

### Down on the (GM) farm

In the March/April edition we included a report on genetic engineering by Colin Holden of LABB. Colin was going to talk on this subject at our April public meeting but unfortunately was unwell that week. In stepped Carey Coombs, an organic farmer who is also a council member of the Soil Association.

Carey told us that the big question facing the organics industry today is: Where is food and farming going? He reminded us that the natural ecosystems on this planet are finely tuned to work in balance with each other. Carey fears that by introducing GMOs these systems may be permanently damaged. Given that we do not have a complete understanding of these complex systems we cannot be certain what might happen if we change them in such a drastic way. At present consumers are leading the way in the GM fight, and in Scotland there are no immediate plans to grow GM plants in Scotland. They may still, however, enter our diet through products brought in from overseas or indirectly via animal feed.

Unlike other FoEE meetings, where the majority of the people in attendance had similar perspectives, there was a wide range of theories, views and ideas expressed in the debate following Carey's talk. Many people supported the precautionary principle, and would prefer to know about any adverse effects before unleashing GMOs into our environment. Others felt that excessive caution could stifle development. Overall the debate was the most interesting, energetic and animated one that I have been a part of so far.

*Katriona Harding, FoE Edinburgh*

### Make Contact

If you'd like to get involved in the work of Friends of the Earth Edinburgh then please email us - [info@foe-edinburgh.org.uk](mailto:info@foe-edinburgh.org.uk) or see [www.foe-edinburgh.org.uk](http://www.foe-edinburgh.org.uk). For those without access to the internet you can call Jolin Warren on 0131 466 8329.

We'd also be keen to hear any ideas or comments you have about the events and campaigns organised by the group.

### Dates for Diaries

**Sunday 20th June, 12.00-5.00**  
**Bikefest on the Meadows**  
[www.bikefest.org.uk](http://www.bikefest.org.uk)

**Thursday 24th June, 7.30**  
**FoEE Public Talk**  
Richard Atkins, SEDA (see page 5)  
Friends Meeting House, Victoria Terrace

**Tuesday 29th June, 6.00-8.00**  
**everyone public meeting - justice in the planning process**  
Augustine Church, George IV Bridge

**Tuesday 20th July, doors 7.30**  
**FoEE Comedy Fundraiser**  
The Stand Comedy Club, York Place  
This event always sells out, so book your tickets now by contacting:  
[comedy@foe-edinburgh.org.uk](mailto:comedy@foe-edinburgh.org.uk)

**Thursday 23rd September, 7.30**  
**FoEE Public Talk**, topic tbc  
Friends Meeting House, Victoria Terrace

**Thursday 7th October, 7.00**  
**FoEE AGM**  
Friends Meeting House, Victoria Terrace

**Wednesday 27th October, 7.30**  
**FoEE Public Talk**, topic tbc  
Friends Meeting House, Victoria Terrace