

- Your chance to grill the candidates
- Gearing up for G8: Push for climate justice

Friends of the Earth Edinburgh Election Hustings

Building on our past successes with hustings events, Friends of the Earth Edinburgh would like to invite you to our General Election Hustings on Wednesday 27th April at 7.30pm in the Friends Meeting House, Victoria Terrace. This event is being organised as part of the **everyone** campaign in which 26 of Scotland's leading environmental organisations have joined forces to put the environment on the political agenda for the election (www.everyonecan.org).

We are delighted that Iain McWhirter, chief political commentator for the Sunday Herald and presenter of the BBC shows Holyrood Live and Politics Scotland, has agreed to chair the event. We also have a strong line up from the political parties. The panellists so far committed to the event are as follows:

- Sheena Cleland, Scottish National Party, Candidate for Edinburgh West.

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FoEE Edinburgh's successful Scottish Election Hustings in April 2003

Co-ordinator's Comments

Welcome to April's *INFOE*, the newsletter of Friends of the Earth Edinburgh. It sometimes feels as if the election campaign has been running ever since Christmas, but all good things must come to an end eventually, and the election is on 5th May.

Still can't decide which way to vote? Can you trust Labour's propensity for taking us into an illegal war and their continued attacks on civil liberties? Can you trust the Lib-Dems to deliver on the environment when they campaigned vigorously against congestion charging in Edinburgh and for the M74 extension in Glasgow? What about the Tories and their ever more desperate attempts to appeal to the most small-minded and intolerant voters? Does the SNP offer an alternative in national elections? Will a vote for the SSP or Greens be a wasted vote?

For the answer to all of these questions, come and listen to the prospective MPs at our Hustings Event on 27th April, which is part of the **everyone** campaign, formed by a coalition of 26 environmental groups in Scotland. The focus of discussions will be on the environment, an issue which most politicians enjoy making expansive statements about, but unfortunately these rarely follow through into real action.

In this election season, FoEE is concentrating on climate change, through the **everyone** campaign, to get the government to make some real commitments to cut emissions. This is

particularly relevant with Scotland hosting the G8 summit in July. To give us some ammunition in the fight, we had an interesting presentation from Dr Richard Dixon of WWF at our March meeting on the science and politics of climate change, and we are busy planning our contribution to the G8 demonstrations. We'll keep you informed of what is happening.

In the meantime, don't forget to come along to the FoE Scotland AGM on 14th May, always an interesting mix of talks, workshops and networking possibilities. Hope to see you there.

Helen Todd
 Co-ordinator, FoE Edinburgh



Photo by Lang Banks

Election Hustings

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- Michael Crockart, Scottish Liberal Democrat, Candidate for Edinburgh North and Leith.

- Cara Gillespie, Scottish Green Party, Candidate for Edinburgh East.

- Mark Lazarowicz, Scottish Labour Party, Member of Parliament, Edinburgh North and Leith.

- Bill Scott, Scottish Socialist Party, Candidate for Edinburgh North and Leith.

The hustings debate will focus particularly on climate change, but there will be plenty of time to put the candidates on the spot about other environmental issues.

Please bear in mind that this is likely to be a busy event. If you plan to attend then why not send your question for the candidates in advance to: info@foe-edinburgh.org.uk This will increase the chance of it getting asked.

*Velda McCune
FoE Edinburgh*

M74 Madness

£500 million for just five miles of road? A misprint, surely - a nought too many. But no, the Scottish Executive plans to start work this Summer on Britain's most expensive motorway ever, blasting its way across Glasgow's Southside.

The M74 Northern extension will carve up one of Europe's most socially deprived areas for the sake of tidying up the map of Scotland's motorway network. And it will be in a city where 59% of households have no access to a car. A factory bottling gases for hospitals and a football pitch will stand in the way of the eight lane road on stilts.

An official inquiry has condemned the scheme, saying the road would ease Glasgow's traffic congestion only in the short term. And that the creation of new businesses on the M74 corridor would be an illusion, as existing firms would relocate from other parts of west central Scotland.

The Scot Exec's collective posterior sat on the report for a full eight months, releasing the dynamite document, so unfavourable

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M74 Madness

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to their pet project, just before the long Easter break. Perhaps they hoped nobody would notice.

Half a billion quid will dig very deeply into Scotland's transport budget, leaving little for urgently needed public transport schemes. A £500m wodge could buy an entire tram network for Edinburgh, or five complete Borders rail links to Carlisle. Or deliver a huge raft of cheaper but vitally useful transport schemes, such as bus stations, cycle tracks and footpath networks.

At £500 million, the M74 plan is the worst ever value-for-money road scheme. That's £100 million a mile, or £18,939 for each foot. Expect a summer of discontent, as campaigners are sure to make a stand to stop this waste-of-money, socially unjust and massively destructive scheme.

*Colin Hattersley
FoE Edinburgh*

*Jolin Warren
FoE Edinburgh*

Sub-standard

We were interested to read in the Liberal Democrats' Edinburgh South News (winter 2004/05) the claim that they had "launched a campaign" to re-open the Edinburgh South Suburban Railways to passenger services.

We seem to recollect that it was a joint effort between the Cockburn Association, Capital Rail Action Group, TRANSform Scotland and ourselves that, in November, successfully lobbied the Council Executive to instruct its officers to recommence work on reopening the South Sub.

It is disappointing that the Edinburgh Lib Dems were unable to recognise our efforts in moving this issue forward again. But again, given the Lib Dems' recent duplicity over congestion charging, perhaps we should no longer be surprised at the doublespeak of the Edinburgh Lib Dems!

This earlier version of the M74 was stopped, can we stop the new extension?



Picture by Colin Hattersley

MAKE A STAND FOR A BETTER PLANET

Friends of the Earth Edinburgh
Comedy Benefit
9.00pm, Tuesday, 19th July 2005
Doors: 7:30pm
At the STAND Comedy Club,
York Place, Edinburgh

Tickets: £6 Call 0131 558 7272 or email:
comedy@foe-edinburgh.org.uk



Can G8 Stall Climate Chaos?

With the G8 Summit coming ever closer, Friends of the Earth is demanding a radical change of approach from world leaders. The G8 must take real action to address the growing threat of climate change and the profound unfairness of a situation in which those who contribute most to climate change are likely to suffer the least from its effects. FoE is calling for action and you can be a part of the campaign. Sign up at – www.foe-scotland.org.uk/g8 to be kept informed of FoE's plans. You can be part of the climate alarm, when people across Scotland and around the world will sound warning bells to wake up world leaders to the fact that time is running out to tackle climate injustice (www.climatealarm.org).

With climate change so high on the political agenda, Friends of the Earth Edinburgh were delighted that Richard Dixon, (head of policy at WWF and formerly head of research at FoE Scotland), was able to take time out from his busy schedule to speak at our public meeting on 24th March. I was sobered to hear that Scotland's average temperature has already increased 1% since 1961 and that global temperatures are starting to change

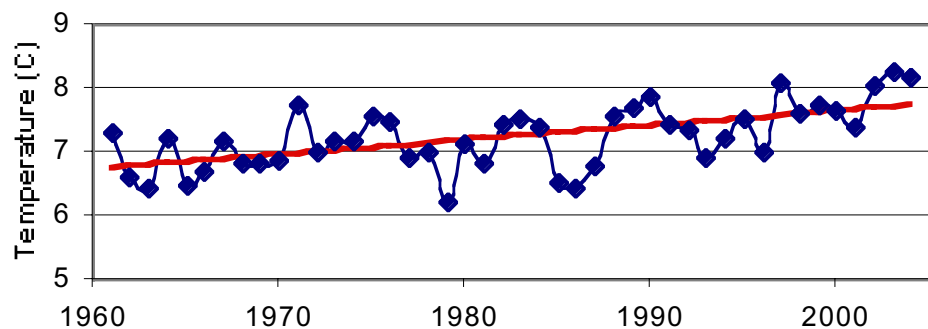
even faster than predicted. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change even the best case scenario, with good efforts to cut emissions world-wide, will mean a 2°C increase in temperature by 2100. The worst case scenario is a change of 6°C or more. Higher temperatures don't just mean devastating rises in sea levels, they mean more energy in weather systems leading to more extreme and unpredictable weather. And that means human suffering brought about by the inability of the most privileged people in the world to see beyond short term gain.

Against this background I was angry to hear that, while the UK is making some progress in cutting emissions, Scotland is likely to struggle to make the 12.5% reduction on 1990 levels of climate change gases by 2010, agreed in the Kyoto protocol. Much of the reduction which has occurred in Scotland's emissions has resulted from the closing of Ravenscraig. So Scottish ministers may claim to have had an impact on emissions but little of the improvement is really down to them.

Scotland is performing badly in many key areas relating to climate change, with failure to take effective action on emissions from transport being one of the most

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Scottish Annual Average Temperature 1961-2004



Graphic from WWF

Climate Chaos

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important concerns. It seems like folly, in this context, that congestion charging has been rejected in Edinburgh and that the M74 is likely to be built, against the recommendation of the public inquiry.

While climate change is unlikely to have marked effects in Scotland in the short term, unless the gulf stream changes, in the longer term the whole global economy will suffer, and that will affect everyone. Richard Dixon pointed out that the world may even be bankrupt by 2065, when natural disasters caused by climate change may make it impossible to meet the insurance losses. Scotland's huge response to the tsunami disaster shows us that the Scottish people care deeply about the wider world and can see beyond narrow self-interest. We need to turn that compassionate energy into action on climate justice.

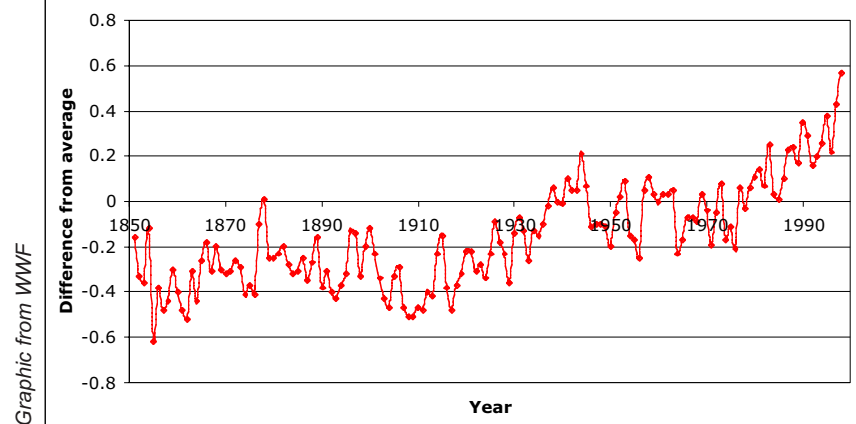
*Velda McCune,
FoE Edinburgh*

The Truth About Windfarms?

Windfarms: are they saviours in the fight against climate change or simply destroyers of the landscape, pouring huge profits into the pockets of developers? In our February meeting, Davie Black, wildland campaign officer with the Ramblers Scotland, gave us a provocative and interesting view of the wind energy market.

Davie's claim is that market mechanisms introduced by the government, in the form of Renewable Obligation Certificates, have skewed the renewable energy market to make investing in onshore windfarms highly profitable, at the cost of other, less-developed forms of renewable energy. In addition, the sheer volume of these projects could cause the planning system to go into meltdown, with 211 proposals in Scotland currently going through the planning system, 97% of which are for onshore wind turbines. So far, 60 of these projects have received consent, 13 have been rejected, and queuing up are yet another 268 proposals, preparing to enter the planning process.

Global Temperatures



Graphic from WWF



The opening of the Airtricity Windfarm in West Kilbride, North Ayrshire

Like many environmentalists, I have always found windfarms to be graceful and aspirational developments, signs that the nuclear threat was receding, never to return, and a positive step forward from fossil fuelled energy generation. While no form of electricity is truly benign, they seemed like the best possible option, and surely all these opponents writing letters to the newspapers were mostly NIMBYs, annoyed about having the view from their highland holiday cottage "spoiled"?

However, I am now willing to concede that things are not quite so simple. According to the Ramblers, the windfarms we have grown used to over recent years are relatively small in scale compared to what is in the pipeline now. Turbines of around 50m to blade tip don't cause too many problems in fitting in with the landscape. But compare that with the new generation of wind turbines being planned for Lewis, at 140m to blade tip. To give some idea of their scale, that's about the same height as the towers on the Forth Road Bridge. Now imagine 234 of these along a 56-km

corridor along the windswept peat bogs of Lewis, all needing undersea connectors to similarly-sized pylons transmitting the electricity along to the national grid, through some of the wildest lands in Scotland, and you begin to wonder whether things are amiss.

Is wind power suited to industrialisation? In trying to respond to climate change, are we in danger of throwing the baby out with the bathwater?

The presence of a number of developers in the audience guaranteed a lively exchange of views, and this was another well-attended meeting. Most people at the meeting agreed that much more work needed to be done by the government to reduce electricity demand and improve energy efficiency, rather than simply focusing on Kyoto targets. The talk certainly generated plenty of food for thought, rather than just hot air.

*Helen Todd
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 or see www.foe-edinburgh.org.uk. For those without access to the internet you can call Helen Todd on 0131 553 6869.

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

Monday 25th April

Peak Oil UK - Entering the Age of Oil Depletion
www.depletion-scotland.org.uk

Wednesday 27th April, 7.30pm

FoEE Election Hustings
Friends Meeting House,
Victoria Terrace

Wed 5th May

General Election Day

Saturday 14th May FoE Scotland AGM

Book online at:
www.foe-scotland.org.uk
Edinburgh

Thursday 26th May, 7.30pm

FoEE Public Meeting
Food and Organic Agriculture
Speaker: Danny Lowe
Friends Meeting House,
Victoria Terrace

Thursday 23rd June, 7.30pm

FoEE Public Meeting
Topic tba
Friends Meeting House.

Saturday 2nd July

Make Poverty History March
Edinburgh
For information see:
www.makepovertyhistory.org/

Sunday 3rd July

G8 Alternatives Summit
Edinburgh
For information see:
www.g8alternatives.org.uk

Tuesday 5th July

FoE Day of Action on Climate Change and Global Warming 8 Conference
Dynamic Earth
Edinburgh
For information see:
www.foe-scotland.org.uk/g8

Wednesday 6th July

G8 Summit begins
Gleneagles

Wednesday 6th July, 12pm

G8 Alternatives Demonstration
Assemble at Gleneagles Station

Tuesday 19th July, doors 7.30pm

FoEE Comedy Benefit
The Stand Comedy Club
York Place, Edinburgh
Tickets £6
Call: 0131 558 7272 or
Email: comedy@foe-edinburgh.org.uk

Transport Campaign Group Meetings

For information contact:
JWarren@FoE-Edinburgh.org.uk.

Waste Campaign Group Meetings

For information contact:
KHarding@FoE-Edinburgh.org.uk