

- Sustainable Development Commission
- Dalkeith Campaign Update
- Transport in Edinburgh
- Campaign Against Climate Change
- Peak Oil
- Environment in the News

## November Issue

### Scotland's Sustainable Development Commission

The need for the green movement to recognise people's aspirations for strong communities and economic security is the theme of our public meeting on 24th November. Hugh Raven, Scotland's Sustainable Development Commissioner, will lead the discussion. The Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) in Scotland is the Scottish Executive's independent advisory body on sustainable development. It reports to the First Minister on key policy areas including regeneration, sustainable buildings, local government, energy and food quality assurance. It also helps government departments, local authorities and businesses put sustainable development at the heart of what they do.

SDC works with a vast range of policy networks, such as the Scottish Sustainable Development Forum and the Sustainable Scotland Network. The Vice-Chair Commissioner for Scotland is currently vacant. Hugh Raven is the remaining Commissioner in Scotland with secretariat support provided by Jo Colwell. The SDC Scotland is currently funded for two years by the Scottish Executive.

For more information, see [www.sd-commission.org.uk/scotland/](http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/scotland/)

Hugh will also talk about the possibilities for Scotland's NGOs to try to find pilot areas to put their ideas into practice, and the importance of having fun !

Meet at: Thursday 24th November, Friend's Meeting House, Victoria Terrace at 7.30pm



*Sustainable energy generation - offshore windfarm in Denmark*

## Coordinator's Comments

Welcome to the final edition for 2005 of INFOE, the newsletter of Friends of the Earth Edinburgh (FoEE). We've had two excellent public meetings this autumn, as reported in this newsletter, the discussion on Peak Oil in October attracting around 50 people, so that's definitely a subject of interest at the moment. Our final public meeting of the year will be on Thursday 24th November, when Scotland's Sustainable Development Commissioner, Hugh Raven, will be telling us all about what his work entails.

We'll be back in 2006, and our first meeting on 26th January will also comprise our AGM. All members are invited to come for 6.30pm, with the public meeting starting at 8.00pm. The topic of this meeting will be permaculture. If anyone is interested in standing for the committee, you will need to be a member of FoE Edinburgh and also of FoE Scotland, so get in touch if you'd like more information about this. There are two places available on the committee at the moment, assuming everyone is happy to stand again next year.

The group is also holding its annual Strategy Day on Saturday 4th February in Lamb's House. On this occasion we are able to have longer discussions about the direction the group is going in, our strengths, weaknesses and challenges, and talk about how we could make improvements. It's not all hard work, however, and usually entails a trip to the pub afterwards, so again FoEE members are welcome to come along to give their input.

In the meantime, Saturday 3rd December is Climate Change Day, and Gavin Smith of the Edinburgh Campaign against Climate Change outlines on page 3 how you can help join in with a demonstration in Edinburgh. If taking to the streets in the middle of winter doesn't appeal, you can still campaign from your armchair by signing the e-petition raised by Scottish Environment LINK, of which FoE Scotland is a member, to ask for greater rights in planning, or the e-petition regarding



the Dalkeith bypass, or come along to one of FoE Scotland's fundraising events for the campaign against the M74. See inside the newsletter for details on all these items.

Hope to see you at one of the above events, and best wishes for the New Year from the FoE Edinburgh committee.

Helen Todd, Coordinator, FoE Edinburgh

## Dalkeith Campaign Update

The battle to stop the Dalkeith Northern Bypass, planned to be built through Dalkeith Park, continues. A public meeting on 27 September had a huge turn-out with around 300 people attending, the vast majority of whom opposed the planned road.

The Dalkeith Northern Bypass and two other roads were given the go-ahead following the Court of Session challenge to Glasgow's M74 motorway. Perhaps more a case of rushing to spend a budget than strategic decision making? The plans for the road are seriously flawed. They are based on traffic projections from the early 1990s that have proved to be inaccurate. They also do not take account of changes that have occurred since the plans were drawn up such as the dualling of the A1, the A7 Dalkeith Bypass or the prospect of a Borders rail link.

Speaking for the group Margaret Valvona said 'it is shocking that a road can be built based on such dated evidence. Sadly it was clear from Jim Muirhead's comments at our public meeting that this road is more to do with providing access for a 5,000 house development in the land behind the Park than alleviation of traffic congestion.'

The Save Dalkeith Park Campaign Group has started an e-petition on the Scottish Parliament's website [http://epetitions.scottish.parliament.uk/list\\_petitions.asp](http://epetitions.scottish.parliament.uk/list_petitions.asp). A peaceful demonstration will be held outside the Scottish Parliament at 12 noon on Thursday 24 November 2005.

The group hold regular walking tours of the park showing the proposed route of the Dalkeith Northern Bypass.

For further details please see the campaign website [www.save-dalkeith-park.org.uk](http://www.save-dalkeith-park.org.uk).

Save Dalkeith Park Campaign Group

## Campaign against Climate Change

There will be a day of international climate change demonstrations on 3rd December. This will coincide with the Montreal climate talks: these are the follow up to the Kyoto Protocol. Demonstrations are expected in 28 countries across the world on this day including all of the G8 nations. In London the Campaign against Climate Change group is aiming to have the largest climate change march in Britain ever. This only needs to be about 5,000 people so there is a good chance they will do this. In Scotland we are aiming for the largest march in Scotland ever.

The intentions of our protest in Scotland are as follows:

To ask our politicians to take action on climate change and suggest that a strong international follow up to Kyoto is the best way to do this.

To highlight Tony Blair's current withdrawal from reduced emission targets.

To help create and strengthen connections with people across Scotland who wish to prevent climate change.

To show the world that Scotland cares about climate change.

The march will be meeting at East Market Street next to Waverley Station at 11 am on Saturday December 3rd. It will then progress along the march route finishing at the Scottish Parliament at 12.00, where speakers such as Duncan McLaren of Friends of the Earth and Green MSP Mark Ballard will call on the Scottish government to support reduced climate emissions.

If you would like to get involved or have any further questions please check out our web page at <http://climatechangecampaign.blogspot.com/>

Gavin Smith, Climate Change Campaign

Groups that support the action are as follows:

FoE Scotland.

FoE Edinburgh

Stop Climate Chaos Scotland

Greenpeace Scotland

Peace and Justice

Woodcraft folk

Sustrans

Dundee Trades Union

TRANSform Scotland

Scottish Young Greens

Scottish Green Party

People & Planet

Bulgarian Antarctic Institute.

Jubilee Scotland.

Scottish Socialist Party

World Development Movement  
Scotland

Campaign against Climate Change  
Scotland

*photo credit Colin Hattersley*



## Peak Oil

Max Oakes of Depletion Scotland was the speaker at our October public meeting. Below he explains the concept and consequences of Peak Oil.

Peak Oil is when global oil production reaches its all-time maximum. The decline that follows will leave the world with less and less oil to meet growing demands. Many experts now forecast that Peak Oil is imminent - before the end of this decade.

Worldwide demand for oil has grown seven-fold in the past 50 years. Yet global oil discoveries have been declining for 40 years. We now consume crude oil four times faster than we find new sources. Amazing new technology - from supercomputers to satellites - has failed in the quest to find enough oil.

UK North Sea oil production peaked in 1999. Within the next year the UK will become an oil-importing nation again. We will be competing on price with the rest of the world for limited supplies. China and India, along with many other developing nations, are importing a rapidly growing proportion of world oil.

Ninety-eight per cent of motorised transport runs on oil. Hydrogen cars are getting better but making the hydrogen for all the cars in the UK alone would require 100 new nuclear power stations or enough windmills to encircle the coast of Britain in a strip 6 miles wide.

Natural gas that heats our homes and gives one third of our electricity is also facing its own peak, and our local North Sea supplies are firmly in decline. Gas will not be available to replace oil. There is growing pressure to build more nuclear power stations and burn more coal to replace dwindling gas supplies.

The conclusion is that our lifestyles will have to change.

The changes we face can be positive. The car culture in the UK is a result of relatively cheap and easy motoring for many. As oil gets scarcer, prices will rise and driving



*photo credit Colin Hattersley*

### Building more motorways in Scotland will accelerate oil use. The M74 extension in Glasgow

will become a habit that more and more people simply cannot afford. This presents a huge opportunity to promote public transport, and encourage walking and cycling at a time when people will be demanding alternatives to cars. With fewer cars our towns and cities could become cleaner and more peaceful. Industrial agriculture with its GM crops and artificial fertilizer requires huge

amounts of oil and gas, so we will have to look to local organic food. These changes will not be quick or easy but the sooner we start the easier it will be.

This a quick introduction to Peak Oil. If you want to know more then log on to [www.depletion-scotland.org.uk](http://www.depletion-scotland.org.uk)

## The Environment in the News

How does the environment get into the news, and how do journalists find the stories? At our September public meeting, James Reynolds, the Environment Correspondent for the Scotsman, gave a very interesting talk on the publication process for environmental articles and the influence of the press, especially with respect to more controversial theories which are contrary to the scientific establishment's general viewpoint.

Paul Riddell, Senior Assistant Editor of the Scotsman, first gave an overview of the newspaper and how its format and content are affected by its need to compete with around 20 other Scottish newspapers, not to mention other forms of media.

James Reynolds then described how he typically picks environmental stories, predominantly from those published in scientific journals (e.g., Nature, New Scientist) but also from his contacts and networks in the environmental field. His role is to make academic articles more understandable but without losing their meaning.

He described the typical selection procedure for scientific papers by the journals and how their selection for publication is typically subject to peer review by fellow scientists. He argued that this current process suppresses the publication of more controversial viewpoints such as those proposed by Bjorn Lomborg, who wrote the controversial book, *The Skeptical Environmentalist*, querying the importance of environmental issues like climate change, and Dr Arpad Pusztai, who tried to demonstrate the risks of feeding GM potatoes to rats.

James argued that a publication system which encouraged freedom to publish a wide spectrum of viewpoints is more beneficial, leaving the public to work out the truth for themselves from all the information available. He questioned whether it should really be the role of bodies such as the Royal Society to restrict what is printed. Researchers have various pressures, e.g. financial, political, etc, influencing the direction of their studies and this may reflect how they react to other research viewpoints.

The Scotsman has limited resources to investigate the validity of more controversial articles and James sometimes relies upon the experience and advice of NGOs such as Friends of the Earth Scotland, to assess the validity of a story before it is published. He tends to select those stories which will have relevance to his readers but does not have any control over what headlines are given to them, which is the role of the editorial team who may tend to pick out the more sensationalist aspect of the story when giving it a title!

Questions from the audience led to some interesting discussion: Does the public have the time or inclination to make up its own mind on environmental issues or does it have a tendency to just accept what it reads? Should the press and media perform a role in educating the public as to the relevance of environmental issues in their lives? Does the press have a responsibility to investigate the hidden interest behind a report?

One way to get your own comments in print is to write to the letters page. James suggested that around 50% of letters received are published, so it is well worth writing in to make your own point of view heard.

Charlotte Mackinnon, FoE Edinburgh

## Planning Update

Stand up for real rights in planning: Have you signed the petition yet?

As reported in our last issue, the government has unveiled its Planning Bill to a mixed response. Proposals relating to community rights have been welcomed by the developers and booed by environmentalists. The Executive has ignored the results of its own consultation held last year, when 86% of respondents gave support to a third party right of appeal. With this right, individuals and communities would be able to appeal certain planning decisions a right which developers already have. Please take a minute now to sign the petition lodged by Scottish Environment LINK, the umbrella body for environmental groups in Scotland, and the Association of Scottish Community Councils. For more details on the campaign and how to sign the petition, log on to [www.everyonecan.org](http://www.everyonecan.org) or contact LINK on 0131 225 4345 / 01738 630804.

Helen Todd, FoE Edinburgh

## Bluffer's guide to transport in Edinburgh

Lost track of new rail projects? All clogged up with traffic management schemes? It's all happening in the Council's and the Executive's transport divisions these days, and the letters pages of the Evening News are full of rants against the Council, but sometimes it's hard to keep up with what's going on. Below is a handy guide to transport in Edinburgh and beyond. Although our transport campaign group is dormant at the moment, the group is nevertheless keeping watch on various transport developments and getting ready to have an input when required.

### Central Edinburgh Traffic Management scheme

The Evening News has launched a campaign against the council's new traffic management scheme. While it has to be said some of the aspects of the scheme are rather difficult to support (such as the over-engineered response to pedestrian safety at the George St/Hanover St junction), FoE Edinburgh supports the scheme as a response to growing congestion in the city centre and an attempt to improve the pedestrian experience

of walking around the area. Since the congestion charge was rejected, the Council has no option but to close certain streets in the city centre in order to comply with statutory air quality targets, so we are not supportive of the stance taken by the EEN. Why not write a letter yourself? Email them to: letters\_en@edinburghnews.com

### Trams

The Bills for tramlines 1 and 2 continue to make their way through Parliament amid much negative publicity in the Evening News. When the Evening News opposed the congestion charge they said that this was because the Council should put in place new public transport schemes first. So what happens? When the Council promotes major new public transport investment in the form of trams, the Evening News opposes them. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Evening News is only interested in car drivers, and the car-related adverts that make up a significant chunk of its income.

Will the trams get through? The Parliamentary process is thought

to be going OK, but there is a worrying shortfall of funding from the Executive. The Executive is operating a double standard whereby it will agree to fund 100% of new road projects but is very happy to leave public transport projects in limbo if there is any increase in the costs. This is an issue that the Executive will have to address in its new National Transport Strategy.

### Second Forth Road Bridge?

FETA, the Forth Estuary Transport Agency, voted to promote the building of a second Forth road bridge, although the Executive has so far refused to pledge any funding for this. As part of the ForthRight Alliance, FoE Edinburgh is against a new bridge since we believe it should be a last resort after many other options have been explored, such as improved rail links, a high speed ferry across the Forth, encouragement for car sharing and road charging schemes. There are other improvements already underway, like the upgrade to the A8000 approach to the bridge. Transport Minister Tavish Scott has recently called for a study to look into corrosion



Traffic management, not more capacity - a second Forth road bridge is not a sustainable answer to congestion

of the bridge's cables. Until this is completed, it is irresponsible for politicians to be promoting a scheme that was kicked out in the 1990s as being unsustainable.

### Edinburgh Airport Rail Link (EARL)

This project is continuing to make progress, but we do not support the EARL plans as outlined, which include a highly expensive tunnel built under the airport. Rather, we have proposed that rail access be provided by construction of a rail station at Turnhouse, and the construction of a short rail spur to the north of the airport (Dalmeny Chord). This would allow high-quality rail access in to the airport in a much shorter timescale than proposed, and at a more reasonable cost. The current proposals would also necessitate replacing most of ScotRail's fleet of Turbostar (class 170) trains, as these will not be able to use the tunnel. If there is one rail project in Scotland that is a white elephant then this is it.

### Other rail projects

Waverley Station has been a pinchpoint on the rail network for many years and an obstacle to further rail expansion. The Executive has pledged to upgrade the station, and work will start in January. Network Rail are managing the work and are very exact about when the work will be completed: 19th November 2007, at 4.00am! The works will provide extra train capacity in the station, two new platforms and others lengthened, and escalators and lifts at the Waverley Steps: something that has apparently been called for since the 1920s. At least some campaigns succeed'.

A parliamentary bill for reopening of the Waverley Line from Edinburgh, through Midlothian, to Galashiels in the Borders, is currently going through Parliament. This railway was closed in the 1960s as part of the Beeching cuts. Barring any further increases in the cost of this project, the likelihood of this project happening looks bright - although

the Parliamentary process is taking an inordinate amount of time to complete.

There has however been little progress on reopening the Edinburgh South Suburban Railway (the 'South Sub') to passenger services. The price of this project is small compared to the other rail projects mentioned here, and the benefit-cost ratio excellent, but the Council's officials seem to be perversely opposed to reopening this rail line. The railway is there and services could be reopened in a relatively short space of time: why the Council fails to prioritise this 'quick win' is frankly beyond us.

### Dalkeith Northern Bypass

The proposal to resurrect a road building plan from the early 1990s without carrying out any multi-modal study into the current traffic situation has angered many people in and around Dalkeith, and a campaign group has formed. See page 2 for the latest news.

### M74

Having convinced the reporter at the Public Local Inquiry that there was no justification for the 5-mile, £500m extension of the M74 motorway in Glasgow, whether on social, economic or environmental grounds, local campaigners including Friends of the Earth were astounded when the Executive ignored the result. There seemed no option but to take the Executive to court, to challenge their decision in the Court of Session, Scotland's highest civil court. It is not an issue that only affects Glasgow, as money spent on the M74 will mean fewer funds available for other projects around Scotland. For just 3 miles of the M74, the Executive could develop Safe Route to Schools for all children in Scotland. Fundraising is underway for this case, which is going to cost at least £30,000, but is crucial to upholding local democracy. See [www.foe-scotland.org.uk](http://www.foe-scotland.org.uk) for details of how to contribute to the campaign.

### Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route

Things are not much better in Aberdeen where a Public Local Inquiry seems the likely outcome of the latest road-building project. The bypass will not so much reduce congestion in Aberdeen as open up green belt areas to the west of the city to tin-shed development. Read more about this case on [www.foe-scotland.org.uk](http://www.foe-scotland.org.uk).

### National Transport Strategy and other Executive developments

The government is consulting stakeholders around the country with a view to drawing up its draft National Transport Strategy (NTS) before the end of the year. This strategy will be consulted upon and we will all have a chance to give our input. It will outline overall transport objectives but not include budgets or specific projects. From the NTS flow several Regional Transport Strategies, which will be implemented by Regional Transport Partnerships. SESTRANS is the relevant group for South East Scotland, which comprises the various local authorities and transport bodies for the area. In addition, a transport agency (Transport Scotland) is being set up to deliver large infrastructure projects. Although the transport budget is swinging over to comprise more spending on public transport than roads, we are concerned that the agency will become a delivery vehicle for unsustainable transport options, especially new road projects. We are also worried that the transport sector's contribution to climate changing emissions is not being fully considered.

Various environmental NGOs will be responding to the consultation, but if you are interested in giving input to the NTS on walking and cycling, why not come along to an activists' strategy day on Saturday 26th November in Lamb's House? More details on [www.transformsotland.org.uk](http://www.transformsotland.org.uk)

Helen Todd, FoE Edinburgh

## Notices

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 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.

Would you like to help us out with the next newsletter?

FoE Edinburgh is looking for a volunteer newsletter editor. Duties would entail commissioning articles, chasing up and editing copy, publishing and distributing the newsletter. Editions go out 5 times a year, and would involve around 5 hours' work each time. FoE Edinburgh committee members would give support. Applicants would ideally have media training and some experience of using PageMaker or similar. Contact Helen Todd for more information on 0131 553 6869 or email [HTodd@foe-edinburgh.org](mailto:HTodd@foe-edinburgh.org).

## Dates for Diaries

2006

### Thursday 26th January

Friends of the Earth Edinburgh

AGM 6.30-7.30, all members welcome

Public Meeting, 8.00-9.15pm

Topic: Permaculture

Friends Meeting House, Victoria Terrace, NB Public Meeting starts 8.00pm

### Saturday 4th February

Friends of the Earth Edinburgh

Strategy Day

Lamb's House, Burgess Street, Leith, 1.00pm

### Thursday 23rd February

Friends of the Earth Edinburgh

Public Meeting

Topic: TBC

Friends Meeting House, Victoria Terrace

### Thursday 24th November

Friends of the Earth Edinburgh

Public Meeting

Topic: The Sustainable Development Commission in Scotland, by its commissioner, Hugh Raven.

Friends Meeting House, Victoria Terrace, 7.30pm

### Saturday 26th November

National Transport Strategy Seminar

CTC and TRANSform Scotland

Lamb's House, Burgess Street, Leith, 11.00am-4.00pm

<http://www.ctcscotland.org.uk/RtR/NMUCConf.php>

### Saturday 26th November

Friends of the Earth Scotland

Concert: Green Tuberia, Tickets £9/£5

Lamb's House, Burgess Street, Leith, 7pm to 2am

For more info see [www.foe-scotland.org.uk](http://www.foe-scotland.org.uk)

Tickets at <http://www.thequeenshall.net>

### Saturday 3rd December

Climate Change Coalition

Demonstration, Edinburgh 11.00am, East Market Street see article, page 3

### Friday 9th December

Friends of the Earth Scotland

Concert: Folk Roots Concert featuring Celter Schmelter, Tickets £10/£6

Lamb's House, Burgess Street, Leith, 7pm to 1am

For more info see [www.foe-scotland.org.uk](http://www.foe-scotland.org.uk) Tickets at <http://www.thequeenshall.net>

This newsletter is printed on 100% post-consumer waste. Editors: Helen Todd, Colin Howden, Colin Hattersley and Greig Robertson.