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## April Issue

### A Vision for Edinburgh

How the council can improve Edinburgh's quality of life by 2011.  
Come to the Friends Meeting House, Saturday 29th April, 2-4pm.

Edinburgh is a vibrant and beautiful city which has seen significant regeneration and environmental improvements over recent years. Yet Edinburgh still faces the challenge of eliminating socially and environmentally destructive practices in order to maintain and improve the quality of life for its people.

The City of Edinburgh Council has a major impact on how the city evolves, and the local election in 2007 will be particularly interesting,

as it will be carried out using a Proportional Representational system of voting for the first time in the city's history. This presents new opportunities for candidates to show their commitment to Edinburgh and a future where the city has strong communities, low environmental impact, and a sustainable economy.

Friends of the Earth Edinburgh is setting out our own environmental manifesto to tell the politicians what we would like to see. We will be

launching our Vision for Edinburgh on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> April at a special event at the Friends Meeting House from 2-4pm, outlining five key topics where proactive action by the Council is needed. There will be a chance for networking and discussion so that people attending the meeting have the opportunity to add their own ideas on how to ensure that the next council delivers on the realistic and necessary goals we have outlined. Please come along and join us!



## Coordinator's Comments

Welcome to the April edition of INFOE, the newsletter of Friends of the Earth Edinburgh. Easter may be over, but let's hope that spring has truly arrived by the time you read this and temperatures are becoming a little less sub-arctic – where's global warming when you need it?!

We've had a very active few months as a group, and are gearing up for our biggest challenge for several years, the launch on 29<sup>th</sup> April of our environmental manifesto for the City of Edinburgh Council. The year running up to the first PR local elections in May 2007 should be a great opportunity to put across our own ideas of realistic, achievable actions to help make Edinburgh a greener city. At the same time, we hope to recruit some more activists to help us campaign on these issues. We have focussed on five topic areas: development, resources, energy, food and transport, and hope that we can set up campaign groups to put pressure on the council to deliver these actions. We are aiming to invite politicians along to a hustings event in the autumn so they can show us how green they really are.

Otherwise, we have had two very successful and interesting meetings where local politicians had a chance to discuss topics they are working on. In February, Sarah Boyack MSP outlined her plans for improving energy efficiency and the micro-generation of renewables contained within her member's bill currently going through the parliamentary system. Then in March, Mark Ballard MSP and his Green Party colleague, Abbie Marland, talked us through the complicated and disturbing plans to begin ship-to-ship transfers of oil in the Firth of Forth. See reports on these meetings in this newsletter.



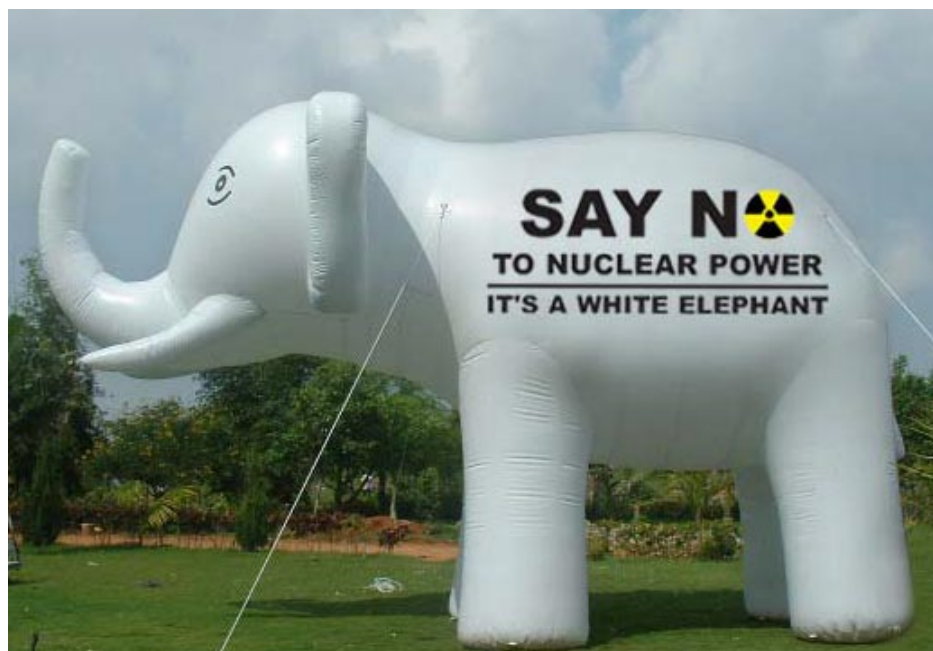
Finally, Lang Banks has had to step down (we hope temporarily) from the FoEE committee to concentrate on work commitments, so thanks to Lang for all his contributions to the group over the past years. This means there are now several potential places on the committee for co-opted members, so if you would like more information about becoming more involved in the group's activities, why not get in touch?

Helen Todd  
FoE Edinburgh Co-ordinator

Our comedy night on 28<sup>th</sup> March was well attended, despite the fact that there were no buses due to a strike and it was raining! However, we managed to raise almost £900 for our campaigning funds throughout the coming year, so thank you to everyone who did make it and for buying all those raffle tickets! We hope to be holding our next comedy benefit in July 2007.

We continue our programme of public meetings on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> June when we will be returning to the theme of micro-generation of renewable energy by hearing about 'decentralised energy' from Sytze Dijkstra of the World Alliance for Decentralised Energy. Following this, on 29<sup>th</sup> June, we look at the topic of organic gardening when Mark McKay of Eden Garden Management will share his experience with us. I hope you will be able to join us.

## Nuclear White Elephant Tour



The House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee have said “no”. The government’s own sustainability advisers have said “no”. Despite this, according to most news reports, Tony Blair remains hell-bent on foisting a new nuclear power programme on Scotland and the rest of the UK.

Who can guess why Blair might be considering pushing the nuclear button. Perhaps it’s his failure to deliver on his promises to cut climate emissions? Despite all his big speeches, pollution levels have actually risen under his Premiership. However, opting to solve climate change through nuclear power would be like jumping out of the frying pan and into the nuclear fire.

Put simply, nuclear power cannot save the world from climate change and will not deliver security of supply. Instead, returning to nuclear will hamper real action to reduce energy demand, develop better alternatives and tackle climate chaos. Scotland

and the UK can meet our targets for tackling climate change and maintain fuel security by using clean, safe alternatives that are already available. But don’t simply take my word for it...

In March the government’s own Sustainable Development Commission found that, in the fight against climate change, on almost every count a new nuclear power programme cannot be justified. The Commission also wisely highlighted the risks of proliferation if nuclear technology is treated as an essential to tackle climate change. Something the ongoing nuclear ‘crisis’ with Iran clearly illustrates.

And just this month, the influential Environmental Audit Committee – on which Labour MPs are in the majority - similarly concluded that new nuclear power was the wrong route for the country to be heading in.

However, we cannot take for granted that Tony Blair will heed this advice. And in order to counter this new threat Friends of the Earth Scotland is once again mobilizing to resist the atomic menace.

Starting at the end of April and running throughout the summer, campaigners will be touring the country encouraging members of the public to take action to stop a nuclear revival. We will be visiting open air events, key political locations plus the odd nuclear facility or two. Joining us on tour will be our giant inflatable “nuclear white elephant”. There can be few better ways to symbolise the many problems with nuclear power: expensive, hard to maintain and pretty much useless in the fight against climate change.

The message we will be taking round the country is a simple one: that the Scottish Executive must make it clear to Tony Blair that a new nuclear build in Scotland remains unacceptable. Moreover, the Executive should warn Westminster that it will strongly oppose any attempts to impose new nuclear power stations on Scotland, reflecting the majority opinion in the Scottish electorate.

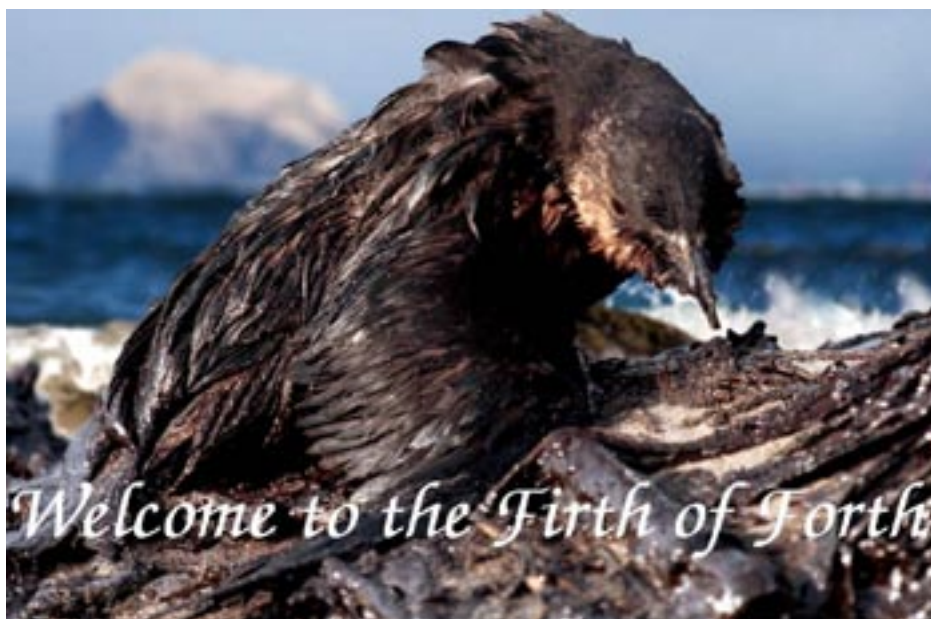
So if you’d like to help resist the atomic menace and/or join us on tour please visit: [www.foe-scotland.org.uk/no2nuclear](http://www.foe-scotland.org.uk/no2nuclear)

Lang Banks  
Friends of the Earth Scotland

## Ship to Ship Oil Transfers in the Forth - Stop The Oil Threat

*At our March meeting we had an interesting yet alarming presentation from Mark Ballard MSP (and FoE Edinburgh member) and Abbie Marland, Convenor of East Lothian Green Party, and also board member of FoE Scotland. Here they explain the issues behind the proposal for ship to ship transfers of oil in the Firth of Forth, and what action you can take to fight this plan.*

*Helen Todd*



There is a plan afoot to carry out very risky and unnecessary transfers of oil between tankers in the Firth of Forth. The oil to be transferred is the heaviest grade of crude; thick and viscous, extremely difficult to clean up and very persistent in the environment. Greens think that the threat of an oil spill during such an operation is too great and that our environment is worth protecting. The Green MSPs for Lothians, Borders and Fife have been campaigning hard to stop the oil threat.

The only reason it is being proposed for the Forth is to boost profits by cutting corners – to save oil companies time instead of using safe terminals such as Scapa Flow. All of the local authorities around the Forth agree with us, as do all coastal Community Councils, environmental organisations and even the Scottish Executive's own advisors, Scottish Natural Heritage.

The plan, cooked up by Forth Ports plc, the privately owned harbour authority, and Sunderland firm, Melbourne Marine Services will involve a fleet of small tankers shuttling up to 8 million tonnes of

heavy crude oil annually from the Russian Baltic to massive carriers at swinging anchorage just off the Fife coast at Methil.

There would be no direct financial or employment benefit to the Forth, set against unacceptable risk to the marine environment, fishing and tourism industries from accidental or routine oil pollution.

The Firth of Forth is a Special Protection Area, containing many sites of national and international importance. The Bass Rock and the Isle of May, world famous for their wildlife, are only a short distance from the proposed oil transfer anchorage and ironically, have just been identified by the UK government as Marine Environment High Risk Areas.

Following huge local concern, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) has recently opened a consultation exercise on this issue. The consultation is a sham however because its remit is limited to a discussion of the Oil Spill Contingency Plan (OSCP), not whether the project should go ahead at all.

### What can you do

The Scottish Executive has both the power and the responsibility under the EU Species and Habitats Directives to protect this area from damage. It is not acceptable for Westminster to promote short term corporate plans which may undermine the local economy and damage the environment. To ensure your government protects your environment, now and for the future, write to the Minister responsible, Rhona Brankin MSP, Deputy Minister for Environment & Rural Development, Pentland House, 47 Robb's Loan, Edinburgh EH14 1TY, email: [rhona.brankin.msp@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:rhona.brankin.msp@scottish.parliament.uk). Let MCA know what you think of the plan by sending a response to their consultation by following the link from the Scottish Green Party website: [www.scottishgreens.org.uk](http://www.scottishgreens.org.uk).

Abbie Marland, Convenor, East Lothian Green Party

## Down on Edinburgh's Own Farm: News From Gorgie

With Easter upon us we are amidst the lambing time for our Ryeland ewes. We have nine ewes in our maternity wards of which two have so far lambed, yielding three healthy ewe lambs between them. Several more have significantly enlarged milk bags suggesting that more will be on the way very, very shortly! Ryeland lambs are one of the cutest varieties going, all white and delicately built - for a while anyway - with little fluffy sideburns and really fleecy legs. In fact just like miniature adult Ryelands, which are best described as stout and woolly all over, sometimes to the extent that I don't know how they see out!

Bunty, our Jersey cow is expecting a calf in August to the bulls in a test tube, our fingers are tightly crossed as she has miscarried at this stage in the past, but so far everything is looking hunky dory and she's as fit as ever, eating for two being her speciality! Dexter, the Dexter (a miniature breed, about three

foot high at its adult size) who was fostered onto her when she last visited the bull for real is doing well and will be moved on shortly to allow her a chance to rest as he is still stealing the odd milk snack from her.

We have been incubating chicken eggs and hope to have a variety of chicks hatched shortly. The hens in general have been laying with a vengeance with sales to the public only just catching up with production.

We are monitoring the bird flu situation and are continuing good hygiene practices and health observation in the meantime to any instructions to house the poultry indoors should there be cases closer to hand.

### *Gardens*

Planting is well underway for the summer growing season, including early varieties of potatoes in our spanking new polytunnel, and other standard fare for our gardens such as runner beans and cabbages. We will also be experimenting with raspberries, strawberries and more unusual fare such as peppers. Around the farm our various garden areas are greening up nicely, the daffodils are the main feature at the moment. Our wildlife pond is stuffed with frogspawn so I expect the wildlife garden to be hopping with frogs by the summer.

A multicultural gardening group meets on Thursday afternoons, for more information call Helen the horticultural project manager on 337 4202 or on her direct line 0131 623 7058. The garden volunteers have also started doing gardening tasks in the North Merchiston and Dalry cemeteries. Their duties will include raking leaves and clearing branches from paths and around the stones to make compost heaps and log piles for wildlife, picking up litter, planting wildflower bulbs and seeds and putting up bat and bird boxes. This should improve the look of these spaces and hopefully provide some cheering distractions.

### *Education Activities*

Bookings for tours are flooding in, mainly from local primary schools and nurseries and playgroups in particular, although we did have a group from Braga International School in Portugal visiting us at the beginning of the month. We were fully booked for our hands on children's holiday workshops during the first week of the holidays, and similar workshops on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> full weeks of July are already nearly 50% booked. If you know any 8-12 year olds who are animal mad and keen to be involved at the Farm then contact Malcolm the Education Officer on 0131 623 7031 for more details and to book. At the Pet Lodge, cuddle corners and workshops are also being offered during National Pet Week, which is from 29<sup>th</sup> April – 7<sup>th</sup> May. For times and other details call Jenny or Steve on 0131 337 4202.

Ros,  
Gorgie City Farm

## Energy Efficiency and Micro Generation Bill

At our February public meeting Sarah Boyack, MSP for Edinburgh Central, presented her 'Energy Efficiency and Micro-generation Bill' which was in consultation at the time and is expected to be lodged in the Scottish Parliament by June 2006. A sister bill to Mark Lazarowicz's Westminster bill, it addresses our need to act now in order to reduce climate change emissions in Scotland, thus helping us to meet our share of the UK targets for emission reduction.

In Scotland, energy efficiency measures could save 40% of our carbon emissions and reach half of the 60% CO2 reduction (by 2050) target if it is used both in new-build projects and retrofitted into existing homes and buildings. We have all the technologies needed in Scotland to meet our renewables target of 40% by 2020 - yet this needs government backing through the Scottish Energy Strategy if we are going to reach our targets in time.

Setting out a route map for government, both central and local, for business, and for individuals, the Bill sets out a plan which is then supported by challenging targets to drive real change and have something to measure progress against. Public education and awareness raising will also play a vital role in the bill – ensuring people know what they can do, why they need to do it and how to get started.

The Bill's plan includes incentives for both householders and businesses to install micro-generation and energy efficiency measures. All new buildings will be required to include

micro-generation capacity and there will be a strong backing for retrofitting micro generation onto existing buildings. Additionally, it is hoped a one-off £100 reduction on Council Tax (or Business Rates) would be available if certified micro-renewables and/or energy efficiency measures are incorporated into buildings.

With planning regulations currently presenting a large barrier to the uptake of micro-generation technologies, especially in urban settings, the Bill would ensure these would become 'permitted developments', making installation easier. It would also require a review of building standards to ensure more effective monitoring, implementation of sellers' surveys and validated energy certificates.

Finally, on a government level, the Scottish Executive will be required to report each year on how we are progressing as a country with microgeneration and energy efficiency targets, in order that everyone can keep track of the progress we are making in Scotland. But the Bill will also require action of local government, with local authorities being required to consider the role of micro generation as well as set their own targets.

While the consultation on the bill has closed, you can still read the Bill by downloading it from: [www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/bills/pdfs/mbconsultations/microgeneration.pdf](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/bills/pdfs/mbconsultations/microgeneration.pdf)

Or read more about the Bill from Sarah's website at: [www.sarahboyack.net/newsitem\\_EnergySavingsBill.htm](http://www.sarahboyack.net/newsitem_EnergySavingsBill.htm)

Susan Warren,  
FoEE Committee

Many thanks to all of you who took part in FoE Scotland's cyber-actions in support of the 'Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Bill' being promoted at Westminster by Mark Lazarowicz, MP for Edinburgh North & Leith. Your support helped to generate over 1,000 emails to MPs in support of this Bill, and despite deliberate blocking attempts by two Conservative backbenchers, the Bill passed its crucial report stage, so your support really worked! The Bill now goes back to parliament on Friday 12th May, and provided it gets continued support from MPs, may become law as early as this August. More info: [www.marklazarowicz.org.uk](http://www.marklazarowicz.org.uk)

Chas Booth,  
FoE Scotland

## Musselburgh Race Course Expansion

Objectors to the expansion of Musselburgh racecourse are pleased that the Scottish Executive has called in the proposals for public inquiry. The plans include the creation of an all-weather track within its perimeter. This would irretrievably alter – to its detriment – the Old Course, the world's oldest golf course still in use, and one which hosted six Open Championships. It would also restrict the playing of golf – a right granted by Court of Session in 1859 and 1889 to the residents of the town.

In addition, the erection of 46 lighting pylons between 75 and 95 feet high would entail illumination from twilight to 10 pm, creating a visually impenetrable 'wall of light'. The impact would be substantial not only on residents, but also on the Special Projection Areas of bird reserves on the opposite side of the course. SNH still have major concerns and RSPB's objections have not been addressed.

For more information, see the campaign's website at [www.hool.org.uk](http://www.hool.org.uk)

Roger Knox,  
Chair, Hands Off Our Links (HOOL)

## The destruction of trees at Dalkeith to prepare for the new A68 bypass.



For up-to-date information, see [www.save-dalkeith-park.org.uk](http://www.save-dalkeith-park.org.uk)

## 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.

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

*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 five times a year, and would involve around five hours' work each time. FoE Edinburgh committee members would give support. Contact Helen Todd for more information on 0131 553 6869 or email [HTodd@foe-edinburgh.org.uk](mailto:HTodd@foe-edinburgh.org.uk)

## Dates for Diaries

### Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> April

#### **Friends of the Earth Edinburgh Public Meeting**

2.00-4.00pm, all welcome

Topic: A Vision for Edinburgh

Friends Meeting House, Victoria Terrace

### Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> May

#### **Friends of the Earth Scotland Members' Day and AGM**

10.30am-4.00pm

Lamb's House, Burgess Street, Edinburgh

Register online at [www.foe-scotland.org.uk](http://www.foe-scotland.org.uk). or call 0131 554 9977

### Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> June

#### **Friends of the Earth Edinburgh Public Meeting**

7.30-9.00pm, all welcome

Topic: Decentralised Energy, with speaker Sytze Dijkstra, Research Executive, World Alliance for Decentralised Energy (WADE)

Friends Meeting House, Victoria Terrace

### Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> June

#### **Friends of the Earth Edinburgh Public Meeting**

7.30-9.00pm, all welcome

Topic: Organic Gardening, with speaker Mark McKay, Managing Director, Eden Garden Management Ltd

Friends Meeting House, Victoria Terrace

### Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> July

#### **Friends of the Earth Edinburgh Public Meeting**

7.30-9.00pm, all welcome

Topic: TBA

Friends Meeting House, Victoria Terrace