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## September Issue

### Launch of our Environmental Manifesto for Edinburgh

Our next meeting on Thursday 28th September at 7.30pm sees Friends of the Earth Edinburgh's launch of our Environmental Vision for Edinburgh, a green manifesto for the City of Edinburgh Council. Facing local elections with a new proportional representation voting system in May 2007, all parties should be interested in engaging with their electorate. Councillors and other representatives from all the main parties have been invited to give their response to our asks, and order will be kept by David Spaven, Chair of TRANSform Scotland.

We have covered five topics, Development, Resources, Energy, Food and Transport, and have focussed on four different objectives

for each topic. All of these objectives are achievable between 2007-2011, and would help to maintain and improve the quality of life for people in Edinburgh, as well as reducing the city's own ecological footprint and leading to more sustainable, equitable communities.

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 at the Friends Meeting House.

*Helen Todd, FoE Edinburgh*



### Climate Chaos

Throughout October, The Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh, in association with Stop Climate Chaos (of which Friends of the Earth is a member), will be hosting a series of lectures on Climate Change, with speakers including Aubrey Meyer and George Monbiot. For details visit [www.stopclimatechaosscotland.org](http://www.stopclimatechaosscotland.org).



**STOP CLIMATE CHAOS**

## Coordinator's Comments

Welcome to INFOE, the newsletter of Friends of the Earth Edinburgh (FoEE). We've had our summer break and the annual FoEE summer barbecue, and are feeling duly refreshed. Now that the nights are drawing in, it's time to launch our autumn programme of meetings and other campaign activities.

Our first meeting on 28th September sees us leading the agenda ourselves, for a change. The next city council elections will take place in May, so we will be launching our environmental manifesto for Edinburgh at the meeting. Candidates from all parties have been invited to attend to give their thoughts on our objectives. It will be interesting to test the environmental credentials of our local politicians. We already have two campaign groups, on food issues and on development, who will be aiming to press for our ideas to be incorporated into local political manifestos. If you are interested in joining one of these groups, or starting another on one of the other topics, get in touch – see contact details on the back page.

Our last meeting in June was well attended, and we all enjoyed an informative and entertaining presentation from Mark McKay of Eden Garden Management. Along with his two brothers, Mark runs the only organic gardening company in Scotland, and he explained the philosophy behind the approach. He was also happy to share with us organic gardening tips, such as non-chemical, non-toxic ways of getting rid of slugs and other pests.



Many of our members have been out this summer working as volunteer elephant handlers for the Friends of the Earth Scotland Nuclear White Elephant Roadshow. Thanks to everyone who turned out at various festivals around Edinburgh and the Lothians, getting people to sign up to anti-nuclear postcards for their MSPs. Jenny Brochie, chief elephant handler, gives a round up of the tour in this newsletter.

Finally, our meeting on 26th October will be at a new venue, St Augustine's Church on George IV Bridge. Further meetings on 30th November, 25th January and 28th February will also be held here, and please check our website or other publicity for future meetings. Fortunately the new venue is not too far from our usual after-meeting pub, the Bow Bar!

*Helen Todd, FoE Edinburgh*

## Your Right to Know

Email your Minister today, demanding your "Right to Know" about toxic substances in products you buy everyday. Europe's governments and the European Parliament are about to finalise their negotiations on new laws concerning the use of chemical substances in everyday products (called "REACH" for "Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals").

The proposed laws aim at protecting our health and the environment from the impact of harmful chemicals. The proposal includes a "Right to Know" about chemicals present in products of everyday use, such as children's toys, cosmetics, clothing or TV set and frying pans. They all may contain hazardous chemicals, which contaminate our bodies and the environment.



We believe citizens should have such a "Right to Know", which could oblige producers and importers to provide us with information about dangerous chemicals in their products. Please read the RTK leaflet at [www.foeeurope.org/publications/2006/right\\_to\\_know.pdf](http://www.foeeurope.org/publications/2006/right_to_know.pdf). See also [www.foeeurope.org/my\\_right\\_to\\_a\\_toxics\\_free\\_future](http://www.foeeurope.org/my_right_to_a_toxics_free_future)

But not everyone agrees. European governments have so far rejected such a "Right to Know" to become part of the new laws, protecting the interests of the industry rather than those of the citizens they should represent.

Know about toxic chemicals in products you buy and use: ask your Minister to grant you a Right to Know in the new chemicals legislation (REACH). For Further information on REACH Please contact: [jmackay@foe-scotland.org.uk](mailto:jmackay@foe-scotland.org.uk)

*Jeni Mackay, FoE Edinburgh*

### Change of venue

Our September meeting will be held as usual at the Friends Meeting House (FMH), but subsequent meetings will be held at St Augustine's Church, George IV Bridge, until further notice. We have been unable to book our room at the FMH over

the winter, but St Augustine's Church is equally central and we are looking forward to having a change of scene! For full details of our monthly meetings, as well as other information about the group, remember to check our website [www.foe-edinburgh.org.uk](http://www.foe-edinburgh.org.uk)

## Travels With a White Elephant..



It all began one sunny April afternoon on Leith Links with a road test of our new toy. As we lugged the big black sack across the grass some dog walkers took a passing interest.

What's that you've got there mate?

An elephant.

Naw...

Fifteen minutes later, our new 12 foot high elephant towering above us and a crowd of admiring children gathering we were able to bask a little in his disbelief.

The elephant had had the desired effect: people cannot help but be fascinated by it. It is the perfect crowd puller: small children are made ridiculously happy by it and adults beg to be allowed to have just one hug of a giant leg.

As a device to draw people in to have a chat about Friends of the Earth Scotland at our summer roadshows it could not have been better and as a campaigning tool it's the perfect canvas for our message: "Nuclear Power? No Thanks: it's a white elephant".

For those who are unsure: a white elephant is something that ultimately useless but extremely costly; and

as such an appropriate symbol for the many problems associated with nuclear power.

Our first outing a success, our tour could begin.

First stop was the Scottish Parliament on a blustery Wednesday. It was the 26th of April: the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl accident. Our elephant made its first official friends when a cross party group of MSPs, including Nicola Sturgeon and Jim Wallace gathered beneath the elephant to register their support.

Then came a flurry of dates in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, Aberdeen and Elgin. Here members of the Edinburgh, Tayside, Aberdeen and Moray local groups had their first chance to get acquainted with the white elephant and experience the magical effect of a 12 foot high inflatable with a message.

In June we began our tour of Summer fairs and festivals: including Treefest, The Midsummer Razzmatazz at Redhall Walled garden, The Big Tent, Hopetoun House, Vogrie Festival, Traquair fair, Edinburgh Mela and Craigencait Ecology Fair where the elephant became a minor celebrity "Are you

bringing your elephant?" "Oh look! My sister/brother/friend/neighbour spotted you at...".

We took our roadshow, for the first time, to T in the Park and Belladrum Tartanheart festival and plastered festival goers in white elephant badges and "Cumhachd Nioclach? Cha Ghabh Idr" (to those of you who are not Gaelic speakers that's: Nuclear Power? It's not agreeable at all or "Nuclear Power? No Thanks!") stickers.

The tour has been an amazing success. Over 2,500 white elephant postcards, urging MSPs to take a strong stance against nuclear power and support cleaner sources of energy and energy efficiency, have been signed at roadshow events across Scotland and sent off to Holyrood. A clear demonstration to our politicians that the nuclear power remains deeply unpopular here and the public have grave concerns about it's safety and ability to tackle climate change.

Our membership has swelled by almost 60 so far and we have recruited a ready team of activists, keen to get involved with our anti-nuclear campaign.

The white elephant roadshow has been fantastically successful in ways that are hard to express in numbers. Most especially for me, it has been a brilliant opportunity to get to know people I might not otherwise get to spend a lot of time with. It's also been a great chance to get out there and raise our profile with the public, especially with those who would not ordinarily come into contact with Friends of the Earth Scotland.

All this has been possible only with support and enthusiasm from all our volunteers so "Thank You" to everyone who has helped out. If you would like to get involved there are still opportunities!

Just get in touch with me at [jbrotchie@foe-scotland.org.uk](mailto:jbrotchie@foe-scotland.org.uk) or call 0131 554 9977 for more information.

*Jenny Brotchie, FoE Scotland*

## How Environmental is the Fringe?

*Could it be that environmental issues are finally entering the mainstream consciousness? A glance at this year's Fringe Festival would suggest – yes. Whilst festival organisers still have a long way to go in terms of lessening their environmental impact, it seems that performers are beginning to stand up and take note of environmental and ethical issues.*

The Fringe isn't all about laughs, you know. So we were informed by Tim Minchin, a likeable Australian with an improbable hair-do and slightly manic eyes. Having spent an agreeable hour listening to Minchin play very weird songs very accomplishedly on a gleaming white grand piano, in which he reveals his philosophy on love (where the perfect partners are like crackers and brie, and his loved one would let him film her standing up in the bath while she pees), the audience is not quite sure what to make of this. This song, Minchin goes on to inform us, is something of an environmental anthem, an issue close to his heart. The issue in question is recycling, and in a brilliantly theatrical final number Minchin urges us to "Take your canvas bags, take your canvas bags, take your canvas bags, to the supermarket". The noise boys backstage sample his vocals, layering them back over so that Minchin goes from solo to full-size

choir. There's something all rather Godspell-esque about it as Minchin unbuttons his shirt and spreads his arms wide centre-stage, whilst obliging techs wheel in a wind machine for added effect. Brilliant. The only thing more pleasing than this ridiculously grand finale is the fact that you can indeed buy Tim Minchin canvas bags after the show. And, yes, I did.

Simon Amstell knows all about going to the supermarket, and the many dilemmas with which one is confronted in these big and baffling places of corporate domination. Many an hour has been lost as he stands in the aisle, pondering the meaning of life and the ethical dilemma in choosing between Organic bananas and Fairtrade bananas. He's paralysed, he doesn't know what to do, so he does what any normal person would do – phones his agent. And the answer to this, one of life's great puzzles, you are wondering? The answer is – you shouldn't even be in a supermarket in the first place. Amstell looks suitably crushed, perhaps not quite cut out for this ethical living lark.

Similarly, Jeff Innocent recounts in his show Jeff Innocent: Eco Warrior, his attempts at leading an ethical lifestyle, bravely embarked upon in January this year. With a healthy amount of cynicism, he details the switch from Nescafé to Fairtrade, whilst worrying about such ethical trademarks being bought up by multinational corporations, and admits to flying to Hong Kong, an action which made him realise, he says, that his working class angst had been replaced by middle class guilt. Lucy Porter, lovely lady that she is, also attempts to lead the 'Good Life', the consequences of

which include her appearing onstage dressed as a giant carrot. Fighting back against corporate sponsorship, Porter chose an organic carrot company as her sponsors. Whilst her musings on sustainable living may be fluffily insubstantial, at least her concern for the world we live in is genuine and welcome. Taking a more hard-hitting approach to ethical issues was Brian Dykstra in Clean Alternatives, an intelligent show exploring the murky world of corporate America and our own individual failures to tackle the environmental problems that are so starkly evident in our world today.

This year also saw the continuation of the Tap Water Awards, launched in 2001 after performers at the Bongo Club decided to boycott the Perrier Awards. Why? Because Perrier is owned by Nestlé, a company with a worrying record in the developing world, where they are accused of unethical marketing of breast milk substitutes. The Tap Water Awards aim to highlight the irresponsibility of Nestlé and to promote the worldwide struggle against water depletion, aggravated by such companies, and water privatization. As Green MSP Mark Ballard says, "The Perrier Awards now symbolise the corporate fringe - dominated by big players and sponsored by some fairly dodgy corporations. Nestlé can't be allowed to laugh off their appalling record in the third world by sponsoring a comedy award."

Interestingly, in 2005 the Perrier Awards' Best Newcomer was won by none other than Tim Minchin. It's a shame that his ethical consciousness does not yet seem to extend beyond canvas shopping bags, but at least it's a start. Let's hope that this year's Fringe did not just represent a mere nod to environmental concerns, but instead heralds a new and wide-spread grasp of the very real issues that each and every one of us needs to confront.

*Juliette Daigre, FoE Edinburgh*



## Greening Edinburgh University

### Edinburgh Book Festival 2006

This year the Book Festival showed signs of taking the lead environmentally amongst Edinburgh's many different festivals.

- 52 wheelie bins of glass and cans were recycled via Viridor
- Educational labels were placed under the lids of wheelie bins to help promote recycling
- People were encouraged to reuse festival programmes by replacing unwanted ones on special stands
- Plastic bottles (etc) were collected by LEEP who worked with Festival organisers.

However, there's still a long way to go, for all of the festivals.

*Edinburgh University Court first adopted an Energy Strategy in 1989, which has evolved in line with government policy. This year, the Students' Association (EUSA) is getting on board to help ensure the university takes its biggest environmental steps yet. Incoming Vice President Services Tim Gee explains how.*

The university is making great progress in the area of environmental sustainability, with the full support of Principal Tim O'Shea and Rector Mark Ballard (Green MSP). This June, they launched the Switch and Save Energy Reduction Campaign, part of a drive to cut 1990 levels of CO2 emissions by 40% by 2010. As well as the obvious environmental benefits, this could save the university as much as £250,000 a year, which would go towards academic services.

The university is also committed to improving 1990 levels of energy efficiency by 20% by 2010, and reducing 2000 water consumption by 20% by 2010. It uses recycled paper across the board and monitors itself under the ISO 14001 scheme.



*Tim Gee*

EUSA also plays an active role in encouraging environmentally friendly practices. Thanks to successful campaigning by student activists, since 2001 EUSA has sourced all electricity in union buildings from renewable sources. This year, EUSA is going even further.

At the last AGM of the Students' Association, a motion by FoE activist Adam Ramsay was passed which established the target of a reduction of Students' Association waste to landfill (currently 80 tonnes a year) by 50% every five years, eventually converging on zero. Adam says 'I am hopeful that not only will these waste reduction targets be reached, but also that recycling rates will rise. By the end of this year, I want to ensure that 100% of recyclable waste is being recycled'.

Accommodation Services is also taking action, making recycling facilities available for all students in university housing, along with signs on bins raising awareness about landfill. Both Accommodation Services and EUSA will be running energy efficiency training for staff, and writing sustainability issues into all job descriptions.

Stop Climate Chaos Scotland co-ordinator Ruth Cameron (a former Students' Association president), said, "From a social responsibility perspective, adopting energy efficiency measures is one of the main ways we can tackle climate change, and I welcome the measures that the university and EUSA have adopted."

*Tim Gee, EUSA Vice-President Services*

## Ship to Ship Oil Transfer: the Firth of Forth

On 1st September it was announced that Forth Ports have been granted permission to transfer millions of tonnes of crude oil from ship to ship in the Firth of Forth. This oil project could place the local economy and the environment in serious jeopardy. The long term interest of the Forth's coastal economy and environment must be protected against damage inflicted in pursuit of short term profit. It is clear that the risks posed far outweigh any possible benefit to the region.

Fife and East Lothian councils are exploring legal avenues to stop the risky transfers, and Forth Ports are in the process of assessing the impacts of the transfers on protected species such as dolphins, and will have to apply to the Executive for a licence if there could be a negative impact

on such species. This could give ministers an opportunity to stop the transfers going ahead.

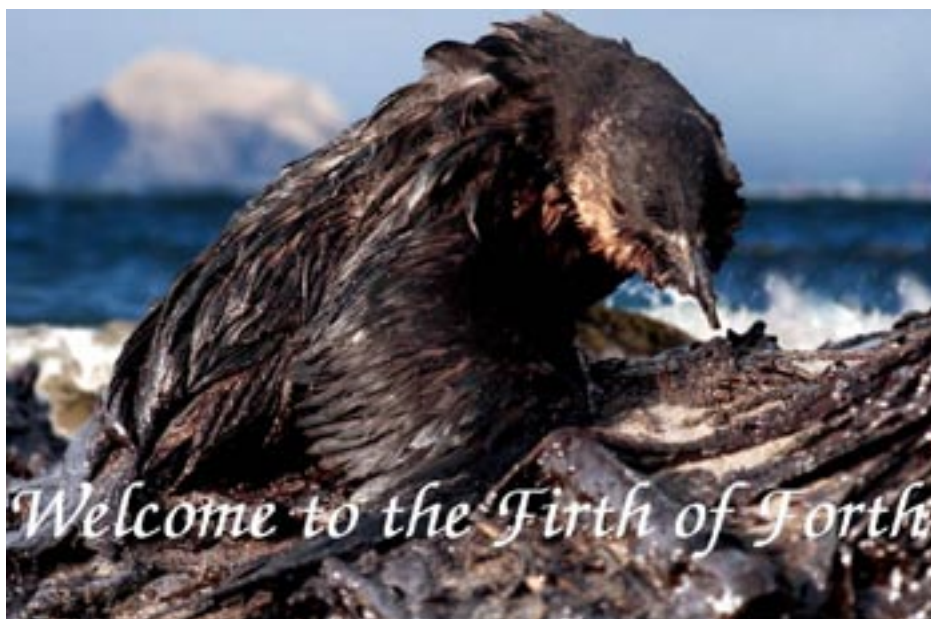
As the "competent authority" Forth Ports must uphold the European Habitats Directive. The company and the UK are responsible for protection of internationally protected sites and species, especially cetaceans. Forth Ports is also set to gain substantially if the transfers go ahead. This conflict of interest raises serious concerns about the nature and scope of the company's powers and responsibilities. Breach of the Directive risks a substantial fine from European courts.

The consultation run by the government's Maritime and Coastguard Agency has been strongly criticised as it did not consult the public on whether the transfers should go ahead, only on the Forth Oil Spill Contingency Plan

(OSCP). All the local authorities, communities and environmental agencies including the Executive's advisers Scottish Natural Heritage opposed the proposal for the transfers and rejected the OSCP, on the grounds that the plan would adversely affect the integrity of the relevant nature conservation sites.

Consultees (even major stakeholders such as the local authorities) have not been privy to new data and reports prepared by Forth Ports. These include a revised Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and risk assessment. Since the MCA will be taking the new EIA into account, this breaks the consultation criteria. Forth Ports have claimed that they are not covered by Freedom Of Information or Environmental Regulations legislation, and are thus not obliged to provide data. Greens have appealed this to the FoI Commissioner Kevin Dunion. There is a marked lack of regulation on ship-to-ship oil transfers - the MCA cannot reject a plan, it must either approve it or suggest changes.

*Juliette Daigre, FoE Edinburgh*



*Picture Courtesy Edinburgh Green Party*

## Edinburgh's Local Transport Strategy

On the 2nd July, Friends of the Earth Edinburgh attended a seminar on the second stage of Edinburgh's Local Transport Strategy Consultation. The seminar sought to let those who had taken part in the first stage of the consultation process hear and comment on interim results.

The first stage of the consultation had 1,215 respondents. The top priorities to come out of this consultation were:

- Additional maintenance of pavements (75%)
- Additional maintenance of roads (73%)
- Better bus services to other areas (ie other than the city centre) (68%)
- Reduce air pollution (61%)

Interestingly, the topics considered important by the fewest respondents were:

- Increased city centre parking (26%)
- More road space for cars (26%)

Other issues that arose from the consultation:

- Better public transport integration, including combined ticketing
- The impacts of trams on the city, both positive and negative
- Need for more priority for wheelchairs and prams on buses

- Improved enforcement in respect of various types of traffic infringement
- Making streets safer for all users
- Maintaining streets, footways and cycleways to ensure they can be used safely and comfortably
- Supporting the city's economy by ensuring that people and goods can move around as easily as possible
- Recognising the many roles that streets have for the community as places that people live and work, as areas that people meet, shop and relax, as well as routes for movement whether by car, bus, bicycle or on foot

During the seminar there was a great deal of discussion about the above, but also improving the walking and cycling environment in Edinburgh. Additionally, the lack of attention and commitment to action concerning the impacts of transport on climate change emissions was raised by TRANSform Scotland. Friends of the Earth Edinburgh strongly supported this as well and hope that this will be addressed in the final report due out in November. Stay tuned...

*Susan Warren, 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.

This newsletter is printed on 100% post-consumer waste. Edited by Juliette Daigre, Helen Todd, Greig Robertson & Colin Howden

*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

### Thursday 28th September

#### **An Environmental Vision for Edinburgh**

7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, Victoria Terrace

Friends of the Earth Edinburgh: Public meeting

### Monday 2nd October

#### **Edinburgh Faslane Planning 7pm, Potterrow Chaplaincy**

A chance for all groups planning to take part in Faslane 365, commencing October 1st, to co-ordinate their efforts.

### Monday 9th October

#### **A look at local issues**

7pm, Potterrow Chaplaincy

Edinburgh People & Planet take a look at current issues in the area, including Bilston Glen, M74 expansion, Ship to Ship transfer and Dalkeith Park.

### Monday 16th October

#### **Trade Justice**

7pm, Potterrow Chaplaincy

With Kirstie Shirra, Director World Development Movement. Hosted by Edinburgh People & Planet.

### Thursday 26th October

#### **Friends of the Earth Edinburgh**

7.30pm, St Augustine's Church, George IV Bridge

Public meeting

### Monday 30th October

#### **Arms Control**

7pm, Potterrow Chaplaincy

With Rosemary Burnett, Director Amnesty Scotland. Hosted by Edinburgh People & Planet and Edinburgh University Amnesty Society.

### Monday 13th November

#### **Communities & Environmental Justice**

7pm, Potterrow Chaplaincy

With Kevin Dunion, Freedom of Information Commissioner, former Director Friends of the Earth International. Hosted by Edinburgh People & Planet.

### Thursday 16th November

#### **The role of cycling in transport policy**

7.30pm (coffee from 6.45), St Augustine's Church, George IV Bridge

Spokes hold a hustings for the 2007 Holyrood elections, with panellists including Cllr Donald Anderson, Edinburgh South Labour candidate and former leader of Edinburgh City Council, Mark Ballard, Green MSP for the Lothians list, Fergus Ewing, SNP MSP for Inverness East and Mike Pringle, Lib Dem MSP for Edinburgh South.

### Monday 20th November

#### **Stopping AIDS**

7pm, Potterrow Chaplaincy

With Steve Cockburn, Campaigns Co-ordinator Stop AIDS. Hosted by Edinburgh People & Planet and Edinburgh University Stop Aids Society.

### 30th November

#### **Friends of the Earth Edinburgh**

7.30pm, St Augustine's Church, George IV Bridge

Public meeting

### 25th January 2007

#### **Friends of the Earth Edinburgh**

7.30pm, St Augustine's Church, George IV Bridge

AGM & Public meeting