

- **The environment and the election**
- **Edinburgh Alliance Against Urban 4x4s**
- **Vote with Your Feet!**
- **SEStran**
- **New paths for Edinburgh...**
- **Climate Action Gathering**

September Issue

The environment and the election: is anybody listening?



**Public meeting
with Duncan
McLaren, Chief
Executive, Friends
of the Earth
Scotland**
**Thursday 22nd
February, 7.30pm**
**Free admittance.
All welcome.**

Politicians of all hues are talking more and more about the environment, and environmental issues are rising up the public's agenda. But so far there has been far more talk than action. Will the May 2007 election be any different?

As Chief Executive of one of Scotland's leading environmental NGOs, Duncan McLaren regularly meets with senior politicians and civil servants. At FoE's public meeting on Thursday 22nd February, he will discuss how important he feels the environment will be this time around, and which issues will really get the politicians on the run.

Duncan joined Friends of the Earth Scotland as Chief Executive in May 2003. He has been an environmental activist, researcher and campaigner for over 15 years, working for much of that time at Friends of the Earth (England, Wales and Northern Ireland). The birth of his first child in 2005 has encouraged him to campaign even harder for a sustainable future.

The talk will end around 9.00pm and will take place at St Augustine's Church, 41 George IV Bridge, Edinburgh (opposite the Elephant House café).

NEW! FoE Edinburgh Campaigns Group

Want to get more actively involved in FoE Edinburgh? Come along to our monthly campaigns meetings. The next one will be held on Thursday 12th April, 7.30pm, Lamb's House. For more information, call Helen Todd 0131 553 6869 or email htodd@foe-edinburgh.org.uk.



Coordinator's Comments



Welcome to the first 2007 issue of INFOE, the newsletter of Friends of the Earth Edinburgh (FoEE). Now that the nights are beginning to draw out slightly, we hope that winter feels like it's coming towards its end. However, if you're looking for interesting activities to keep you going through the remaining chilly evenings, please think about coming along to our public meetings at Augustine United Church (opposite Elephant House Café). We can promise a warm welcome, tea and biscuits and a thought-provoking discussion – and it's all FREE!

Our speaker for Thursday 22nd February is Duncan McLaren, Chief Executive of FoE Scotland. With elections looming in Scotland, he

will be discussing how he thinks environmental issues will feature in the May 2007 elections.

We are also launching a new Campaigns Group, meeting monthly. If you want to get more actively involved in FoE Edinburgh, then come along to the first campaigns meetings on Thursday 12th April, 7.30pm, Lamb's House. For more information, call me on 0131 553 6869 or email Htodd@foe-edinburgh.org.uk.

Our last meeting of 2006 was held on 30th November, with Alex Macaulay from SEStran as our speaker. Alex outlined the duties and objectives of the new South East of Scotland Regional Transport Partnership, and invited responses to its strategy consultation. On 25th January, our speaker was Ylva Haglund, Campaign Coordinator of the everyone campaign. The campaign is an initiative of Scottish Environment LINK, which is the umbrella body for all environmental NGOs in Scotland. Ylva urged us to "Vote with Your Feet" and tell Scottish politicians that they need to change the way we treat the planet. See reports of these meetings in this newsletter.

We also had our AGM on 25th January. I was pleased to be re-elected to continue as Coordinator, with Katriona Harding as Vice-Coordinator, Colin Howden as Secretary and Emma Margrett as Treasurer. Other members are Jolin Warren and Susan Warren, along with our two new members, Jenny Brotchie and Eleanor Ketley. Thanks to everyone for their hard work this year, and also to Lang Banks and Stuart Hay who had to step down during the year. We still have a number of places on the committee for new members to be co-opted during the year. In addition, our annual Strategy Day was held on 10th February, and we are all raring to go with new campaigning ideas for 2007.

I hope to see you at the next meeting!

*Helen Todd,
Coordinator, FoE Edinburgh*

Update on Edinburgh Alliance Against Urban 4x4s

As reported in the last newsletter, on November 25th 2006 a new pressure group was launched on the streets of Edinburgh, dedicated to combating the spread of gas-guzzling 4x4s in town: the Edinburgh Alliance Against Urban 4x4s, the first branch in Scotland of the National Alliance Against Urban 4x4s. Dariush Bazazi gives an update on their work.

The latest IPCC report, the most comprehensive scientific study into climate change, has now been published. The report, which involved over 600 researchers from 40 countries over the last six years, predicts that global temperatures will rise 1.4-4°C by 2100, with a worst case scenario predicting +6.4°C, bringing an end to most of planet Earth's life.

The report requires that we all take radical action to tackle the root causes of climate change by reducing our carbon footprints. One significant way to do this is by reducing our transport emissions. UK emissions from transport rose 48.4% from 1990 to 2003. With the climate bill setting a modest target of a 60% reduction of CO₂ emissions by 2050 relative to 1990 levels, a significant reduction in transport emissions must be part of the solution.

In a small city such as Edinburgh, does anybody really need a 4x4? Whilst there are people such as farmers that genuinely need to use them, the majority of their owners are buying into their status appeal. That's why last November an Edinburgh branch of the National Alliance Against Urban 4x4s was set up. Since then, volunteers have regularly been pacing the streets of Edinburgh issuing spoof climate change parking tickets to gas

guzzling 4x4s. These tickets inform drivers of the government's figures for different vehicles' emissions, as well as the dangers to other motorists involved in accidents. On one end of the scale, a Toyota Prius will emit 104g CO₂/km compared to nearly four times that number for a Toyota Landcruiser, with emissions of 387g CO₂/km, and indeed even more when compared to the latest Hybrid models. With the IPCC's latest report we must all make urgent radical changes to ways we live our lives if we want to take climate change seriously: by trading in our cars altogether or at least using the least damaging models on the market.

The European Commission last month announced that gas-guzzling



4x4s, sports cars and people carriers could be priced off the roads within five years as part of a crackdown on carbon emissions. The average new car in 2012 will have to emit no more than 120 g CO₂/km, under proposals to be announced by Stavros Dimas, the European Environment Commissioner. The rule change could add more than £3,300 to the cost of a vehicle. A previous voluntary agreement to reduce vehicle emissions 25% by 2008 is set to fail, as only 13% has yet been achieved.

Sales of UK 4x4s have dramatically fallen in recent years. The first ten months of 2006 saw sales decrease by 5.5% and by 15.2% in November alone, through a combination of increasing public awareness of their damage, changing models on the market and increasing taxes. In the last budget, Chancellor Gordon Brown increased both fuel and vehicle excise duty. This included a new vehicle excise duty top rate of £215 for the most polluting cars.

Local councils throughout the UK have already begun to charge parking permits related to car type. Richmond upon Thames council in South-West London is now piloting a scheme, which for the first time will actively penalise the most polluting cars with higher permits, whilst issuing free permits to the least polluting vehicles.

This month, People & Planet - the UK's largest student campaigning network - has got involved in the campaign in Edinburgh, helping to increase the number of volunteers issuing tickets, but more volunteers are always needed. Please get in touch if you wish to take action: you can either issue tickets individually by keeping a supply in your bag for the next time you happen to be passing a 4x4, or organise a group outing.

Dariush Bazazi, Edinburgh Alliance Against Urban 4x4s

For more information or to get hold of some spoof tickets for your own use visit the Edinburgh blog at <http://stopedinburgh4x4s.blogspot.com> or contact Gregory Norminton of The National Alliance Against Urban 4x4s at gdrn@totalise.co.uk

www.stopurban4x4s.org.uk

Report of January Meeting: Vote with Your Feet!

On 25th January, our speaker was Ylva Haglund, Campaign Coordinator of the **everyone** campaign. The campaign is an initiative of Scottish Environment LINK, which is the umbrella body for all environmental NGOs in Scotland. Ylva urged us to "Vote with Your Feet" and tell Scottish politicians that they need to change the way we treat the planet. Here she explains the campaign.

The **everyone** election campaign, campaigning for a better

environment and quality of life in Scotland, is calling for people to take action NOW ahead of the Scottish elections in May.

The campaign is asking politicians to sign up to four campaign demands which if implemented would significantly help cut the size of Scotland's 'ecological footprint'.

As a symbol of their vote and their support for the campaign, everyone is asking people to send in their green footprints. These footprints will then be collected and form a 'petition of feet', to be presented to MSPs and candidates just before the elections.

Whether you have two minutes or two hours to spare, taking action is easy.

On the website, www.everyonecan.org, you will find information and advice on the actions you can take, such as:

- Adding YOUR footprint in support of the campaign, or
- Leaving a 'virtual footprint' on our website
- Downloading and displaying a campaign poster in your car or window
- Writing to your local MSP or candidate
- Visiting your local MSP surgery
- Attending a local event

Local question time events, or hustings, are being organised across Scotland. A schedule is available on the website. From the middle of February, you will also be able to email your local MSP to ask them about their commitment to the environment and issues in your area.

The **everyone** campaign will also be hosting Everyone's Big Green Debate, this year's main election debate on the environment. This event will take place on Tuesday 17th April, at the Hub in Edinburgh. Chaired by Lesley Riddoch, it will feature top politicians, instant voting by the audience and entertainment.

Ylva Haglund

Campaign Coordinator of the **everyone** campaign



Climate Action Gathering

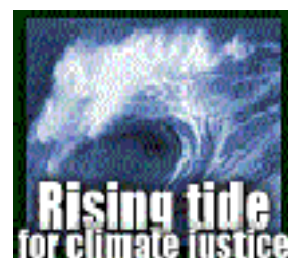
On Saturday 17th March, Rising Tide Scotland will be hosting the Climate Action Gathering in Edinburgh. Garry Glass explains the aims for the day.

Our planet is in crisis and now is the time to act. We have very little time to switch to a low carbon economy to stop catastrophic climate change.

The Climate Action Gathering will see people from across the country who are at the forefront of action against climate change share their knowledge and experience with concerned people from all walks of life. There will be opportunities to discuss the policies of government and issues of social justice, and look at the current movement for change. Come and learn about climate science and how the modern world has created this problem. A dedicated cinema will show documentaries and short films relating to climate change and the fossil fuel industry.

This will be a great opportunity to meet others who are active in Scotland, explore alternatives together and build the movement to tackle the root causes of climate change. We look forward to welcoming you on the day.

Garry Glass, Rising Tide Scotland



Report of November meeting: SEStran

For the first time in Scotland, strategic transport planning is happening at a regional level. The seven statutory Regional Transport Partnerships have now been set up and Alex Macaulay, Partnership Director of SEStran, the South East of Scotland Transport Partnership, came to speak at our public meeting on 30th November.

SEStran's consultation on its Regional Transport Strategy has recently ended, and it remains to be seen how much benefit the residents of Edinburgh, the Lothians, Clackmannanshire, Fife, Falkirk and the Borders will notice over the next 10-15 years as a result of this strategy.

Alex outlined six key trends and issues which were framing the discussion on regional transport:

- problems of car use (e.g. congestion, environmental problems, safety, sedentary lifestyles)

- lack of access to employment, training and services (especially health)
- climate change
- security of energy supply
- rapidly increasing car ownership
- dramatic increase in car use



Added to this is an increasing population in the partnership area, which is projected to rise by 10% by 2024, and a 22% rise in the number of households by 2024, both of which will generate more need to travel. Interestingly, 80-90% of people in Edinburgh, Fife and the Borders live and work in the same authority area, but throughout the region as a whole, the private

car dominates travel at 80-90% of journeys, except in Edinburgh itself.

SEStran's vision recognises the importance of the environment, health and social justice and its objectives include reducing the need to travel, and reducing dependency on the private car, while promoting sustainable travel. The latter encompasses plans to increase walking and cycling levels and reduce the number of single occupancy cars.

Good news for FoE Edinburgh was Alex's statement that new road building would not be "normally supported". However, he did suggest a new Forth Road Bridge was likely to happen, but he would only support it if it allowed for future tram and possibly rail use. Let's hope SEStran can manage to hold out for this multi-modal new bridge.

*Helen Todd,
FoE Edinburgh*

New paths for Edinburgh...

Are you happy with your options for walking, cycling, horse-riding and canoeing in Edinburgh, whether for leisure or for commuting? Would you be more inclined to cycle to the supermarket if there were better off-road routes near your house? If so, now is your chance to give input to the council's "core path plan".

Edinburgh, along with all other local authorities, has to produce a core paths plan by February 2008, as part of its duties under land reform legislation. These paths will form a framework for access throughout the city area, linking in to other local path networks and, ultimately, the network as a whole will provide reasonable access for all users and all abilities.

A second wave of consultation sessions is getting underway in March, for dates see below. This is a great opportunity to lobby for extensive safe, pleasant, off-road routes on a city-wide basis, and everyone is welcome to go along.

For more information, see www.edinburghcorepaths.org

Helen Todd, FoE Edinburgh



Community Drop In Sessions (4.00-7.30pm)

21st March,	Central Library, George IV Bridge
22nd March,	Portobello Library
28th March,	Oxgangs Library
29th March,	Leith Library
11th April,	Newington Library
12th April,	Blackhall Library

Outdoor Access Festival, Princes Street Gardens

28th April Stand in Princes St Gardens

Treefest, Inverleith Park

9th & 10th June Stand in Inverleith Park

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 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.

This newsletter is printed on 100% post-consumer waste. Editors: Helen Todd, Juliette Daigre 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

Diary of Events

Thursday 22nd February,

Bin the Bomb Roadshow Edinburgh

7.30pm, St John's Church, Princes Street

With speakers Cardinal Keith O'Brien and Bruce Kent. For more information contact john.ainslie@banthebomb.org

Don't let Trident be Blair's 'legacy' to Scotland

BIN THE BOMB

NO TRIDENT REPLACEMENT

SCOTLAND'S FOR PEACE, 15 BARRLAND ST GLASGOW G41 1QH
0141 433 2821 www.scotland4peace.org

Saturday 24th February,

Bin the Bomb Roadshow Rally

11:30am, Assemble George Square, Glasgow

A major march and rally to show the strength of opposition to plans to replace Trident. Speakers include Cardinal Keith Patrick O'Brien, Rev Alan McDonald (Moderator, Church of Scotland), Matt Smith (UNISON), Alex Salmond MP, Katy Clark MP, Malcolm Chisholm MSP, Chris Ballance MSP, Rosie Kane MSP, Tommy Sheridan MSP and Pat Smith (Stop the War).

Organised by Scotland's for Peace. For more information see www.banthebomb.org

Saturday 17th March,

Climate Action Gathering

9am-6pm, 3 Bristo Place (next to the Forest Café), Edinburgh

Organised by Rising Tide Scotland to provide an opportunity for climate change activists to come together

to discuss government policy, social justice and the current movement for change.

Thursday 22nd March,

7.30 pm, City Of Edinburgh Election Hustings

Augustine United Church, George IV Bridge

Organised by Spokes to quiz candidates on issues of Cycling and Transport Policy.

Thursday 29th March,

FoE Edinburgh Public Meeting (Topic TBA)

7.30-9.00pm, Augustine United Church, George IV Bridge

Thursday 12th April,

FoE Edinburgh Campaigns Meeting

7.30pm, Lamb's House, Burgess Street, Leith

If you would like to get more actively involved in FoE Edinburgh, please come along to this, the first of our new monthly campaigns meetings.

Tuesday 17th April

Everyone's Big Green Debate

The Hub, Edinburgh

Hosted by the everyone campaign, this environmental election debate will be chaired by Lesley Riddoch and will feature top politicians, instant voting by the audience and entertainment.

Thursday 26th April,

FoE Edinburgh public meeting

7.30-9.00pm, Augustine United Church, George IV Bridge.

(Topic TBC)