

- **Wolves and Bears**
- **Edinburgh - Transition City?**

- **Glasgow Climate March**
- **Winter Events**

November Issue

Get Ready for Spring?

Greening your Backgreen

November's Public Meeting

Thursday, 29th November, 7.30pm

Talk by **Greig Robertson**, Initiative Director of Edinburgh Community Backgreens Initiative.

Edinburgh Community Backgreens Initiative is a community enterprise which works with tenement residents to regenerate backgreens into shared community greenspaces. They look to install facilities into the backgreens such as community composting, bike sheds and allotments and orchards.

Greig will describe the progress of the Initiative since its beginnings in 2004 and plans for the future. The talk will interest folk due to its roots in sustainable development, but also as a tale of the vagaries setting up a new community enterprise.

This talk will end around 9.00pm.

Location: Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2JL

Free admittance. All welcome.



FoE Edinburgh in a Spin

Our venture into share-owning capitalism seems to be coming up trumps. The Boynie Wind Farm Co-op, in which we own a share, have reported that their Banffshire wind farm will be able to pay out its first dividend earlier than expected. So us city slicker fat cats at FoE Edinburgh are looking forward to our first return on investment earlier than expected. (Actually, all funds will go back into our campaigning, so George Soros need not fear.)

Energy4All Ltd, with whom the Boyndie Co-op is linked, has now launched a share issue on a new development at Ben Aketil, near Dunvegan on the Isle of Skye. We are now considering whether to also purchase shares in this initiative. The share offer closes on 18th December, and investors in Boyndie have priority. If FoE Edinburgh members have any views on this proposal, then we'd love to hear your views in whether we should also invest in the Ben Aketil Wind Farm. <www.boyndie.coop> <www.skye.coop>

**Climate March - Glasgow
Dec. 8th - see back page**

FoEE Meetings

Annual General Meeting

FoE Edinburgh will be holding its Annual General Meeting on

**Thursday 31st January,
6.30pm - 7.30pm**

immediately before January's public talk. Open to all, but only members can vote!

Venue: **Quaker Meeting House**

See FoEE website

<www.foe-edinburgh.org.uk>

for details of public talk nearer the time.

Campaign Meetings

In addition to our monthly public meetings, for anyone interested in getting involved with our local campaigns, we hold separate FoEE Campaign Meetings

There will be no campaign meeting in December.

Next monthly campaign meeting:

**Thursday 17th January,
7.30pm**

Venue: **Rose Street**

For more information,

call 07733 118289 or email:

<htodd@foe-edinburgh.org.uk>

Coordinator's Comments



Welcome to the last edition for 2007 of INFOE, the newsletter for Friends of the Earth Edinburgh (FoEE). The autumn has so far been mainly sunny and balmy, but the days are getting shorter, reminding us that it really is winter and time for all those festive events.

We have had a great series of public meetings this autumn, and also had a regular presence on the street with stalls at the Edinburgh Farmers' Market and in Balerno market. Our campaigns group has been meeting

each month to plan our actions and how we can contribute to a greener Festival season in Edinburgh next year. We are delighted to have Greig Robertson as our speaker for November, to keep us up to date with his Edinburgh Community Backgreens Initiative. Greig has long been a supporter of FoEE and for some time was helping us to edit INFOE. Patrick Harvie MSP was our speaker in September, and as Convener of the Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee in Parliament, Patrick was able to give us insights into the preparation for next year's Climate Change Bill. In October, Bruce Whitehead explained why he has petitioned Parliament on behalf of South Queensferry residents against a Second Forth Road Bridge. Bruce is Chair of the ForthRight Alliance which is drawing attention to the lack of debate over the need for an additional crossing of the Forth, and FoEE has joined this alliance. Reports of these meetings can be found in these pages.

On 31st January, our AGM will be taking place at 6.30pm before our first public meeting of the year begins at 7.30pm. Our speaker is

going to be talking on the subject of Incineration and Waste. We still have a number of spaces on the committee for anyone who would like to get more involved in the group, so why not come along and see what it's all about? If committees are not your thing, but you're interested in more active environmental campaigning or simply contributing to the debate, we are holding our annual Strategy Day on Saturday 2nd February. This is a time set aside to look longer term at our group, and priorities and actions for the coming year. Everyone is welcome. See details on the back page for times and places of these events.

Whether you support us by coming along to public meetings, reading our newsletter, signing the odd postcard at one of our stalls, or by joining our campaigns group or the committee, all levels of involvement in FoEE are very welcome. We look forward to seeing you throughout the winter, and FoEE would like to wish you a very festive new year!

Helen Todd
FoE Edinburgh Coordinator

FoE Edinburgh AGM and Strategy Day

Our AGM takes place on Thursday 31st January 2008 at 6.30pm in the Quaker Meeting House, Victoria Terrace. This is followed by our regular monthly public meeting at 7.30pm. Everyone is welcome to attend the AGM, but voting is restricted to those members of FoEE.

We are looking for more members of the committee to help us organise the group. If you would like to join us and become more involved, you will need to become a member of FoEE (£5 a year subscription) and also FoE Scotland. Membership details for FoES are available on <www.foe-scotland.org.uk/join/join_index.html>.

and you can join FoEE at any public meeting by handing your money over to a member of the committee!

We are also looking for a new **Coordinator**. The Coordinator's role is basically to make sure that things happen when they are supposed to! Expressions of interest are sought. Contact Helen Todd on <htodd@foe-edinburgh.org.uk> for more information.

We are holding our annual **Strategy Day** on the following Saturday 2nd February, 2-5pm. This is a great opportunity to look longer term at what the group has done over the past year and what campaign areas

we can focus on over the following year. All interested people are welcome to come along, but we would appreciate it if you could let us know in advance by emailing <info@foe-edinburgh.org.uk>.

Helen Todd
FoE Edinburgh Coordinator

Wolves and Bears set to be Trumped

What with the threat from wolves, bears, a millionaire golf course developer and a couple of rich landowners, readers of the Scottish press might feel that the landmark access legislation contained within the Land Reform Act 2003 was struggling to survive.

In fact, according to Ramblers Scotland, the legislation is working very well in almost all situations, with the only threats coming from a few maverick landowners. However, that sort of good news story is not always exciting material for the media.

Since the "right to roam" came into effect in 2005 with the publishing of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, the law has been swinging into effect. Local Access Forums have been set up in every local authority area and national park, access strategies have been produced and core paths plans are being drawn up. These plans have a deadline of February 2008 for submitting to the local authorities. Core paths are crucial in helping people to get out and about and using their access rights. We may have potentially the best legal framework for access in Europe, but Scotland also has one of the worst path densities. It's all very well having a right to walk from your front door to distant hills, but after scrambling over a few fences and taking lengthy detours around burns, it's clear that paths do have their uses. Scotland's woeful health and active travel levels surely stem in some part from the lack of safe, pleasant paths for us to walk or cycle around and between our communities. The process is also happening in Edinburgh - check out the draft core path plan before 31st December on

www.edinburghcorepaths.org

But what of those threats to the legislation? Firstly, up in the Alladale Wilderness Reserve, Sutherland, where MFI-heir Paul Lister has plans to reintroduce wild animals into his 23,000 acre estate. Mr Lister dreams of watching wolves, brown bears, lynx, boar and elk mingling with the deer and other animals already present, to recreate a Scottish landscape from a bygone

era. The only problem is that he also talks of "banning" walkers from this area - which will be enclosed by a high, electrified fence. Although he has not yet made any planning application to The Highland Council, it is feared that rather than a planned reintroduction, Mr Lister is really trying to create a safari park where visitors will have to pay a reported £50 per day - or up to £27,000 a week if they stay in Alladale Lodge. Stopping people from walking through this large estate would clearly be against the spirit of the legislation and would lead to an even worse access situation than before the Land Reform Act was passed.

Across in Aberdeenshire, Donald Trump has a vision of building a championship golf course amongst the dunes north of Aberdeen - and also a 450-bedroom hotel, 500 houses, 36 golf villas, 950 holiday homes, accommodation for 400 staff, a golf academy, driving range, clubhouse - oh, and a second golf course too. This small new town drives a tank through national and local planning policy and is likely to damage a Site of Special Scientific Interest, a designated area which aims to protect the dune system. Although the proposals appear to accept that access rights will apply throughout the area, there is likely to be a security fence around the whole development with security gates - and reports have already appeared in the press of local walkers being harassed by security guards. Ramblers Scotland has previously campaigned against golf courses being developed too close to the coast, and the threat to access that can occur, as in the Archerfield development at Dirliton, East Lothian. We would like to see a coastal zone created with a presumption against new development to allow protection for nature conservation, recreational access and to alleviate coastal erosion. Such zones already exist in many European countries.

The first court case under the Land Reform Act was decided in June this year, when Mrs Ann Gloag of Stagecoach fame succeeded in



getting a "declarator" that statutory rights of access did not apply to the 12 acres of her estate at Kinfauns Castle, Perth. This land had been enclosed in a 6-foot high fence, originally erected without planning permission. Perth & Kinross Council and the Ramblers' Association had opposed this case claiming that four acres of woodland within the fence, which were distant from and mostly out of sight of the castle, were an area on which access rights applied. Unfortunately the sheriff agreed with Mrs Gloag and she is now claiming over £150,000 in costs from the Council and the Ramblers.

Despite all the above, the majority of stakeholders are supportive of the access legislation and committed to making it work. For walkers, cyclists, horseriders and canoeists, as well as for farmers, foresters and other land managers, the access rights and responsibilities have made little difference to their activities previous to the Act, except for to give a greater confidence that they are acting responsibly and in accordance with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. However, vigilance is still required to make sure that certain individual landowners do not manage to create their own private kingdoms across Scotland.

Helen Todd, Ramblers Scotland
www.ramblers.org.uk/scotland

Edinburgh - Scotland's First Transition City?

Climate Change and Peak Oil are currently the most urgent issues to be faced by our planet. Worryingly, current strategies are not working: while every new prediction on climate change tells us it's coming faster and harder than the one before, greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise; Peak Oil is hardly scratching the surface of public awareness, but new research suggests it may well already have happened. The consequences for our way of life will be devastating unless we find more effective ways of dealing with these issues. The Transition Town movement is one effective model which aims to do just that, and it is sweeping across the UK (and increasingly the rest of the world). This meeting will explore the concept of 'Transition Towns' as a solution to the problems of Climate Change and Peak Oil, and look practically at the possibility of Edinburgh becoming Scotland's first 'Transition City'.

The 'Transition Town' model offers a practical, long-term, strategy for communities to address the urgent need to

reduce CO2 emissions and dependence on oil. Communities across the UK are organising themselves to re-localise, collaborate and innovate with the aim of making a practical impact on these issues - including one in Edinburgh itself: Portobello become Scotland's first Transition Town earlier this year.

Instigated and organised by local people, local government workers, people in business and the voluntary sector, academics and many others, Edinburgh as a Transition City would develop its own strategy to reverse the continuing trend of raised CO2 emissions and oil dependency. We believe that Edinburgh can take up the challenges of Climate Change and Peak Oil, and provide leadership and inspiration.

This is a key time. We still have a window of opportunity to meaningfully address the implications of Peak Oil and stabilise global warming below 2 degrees (the threshold after which efforts to mitigate it will be increasingly less likely to

Public Talk and workshop on a practical response to Climate Change and Peak Oil

**Sunday 9th of December
2pm – 4.30pm**

**The Melting Pot, 5 Rose Street,
Edinburgh**

**email Eva directly if
you plan to attend**

[<evaschonveld@yahoo.co.uk>](mailto:evaschonveld@yahoo.co.uk)

succeed). This gathering offers a unique opportunity for Edinburgh to take the lead in this imaginative yet pragmatic scheme, which is already being considered by a wave of communities across Scotland.

Please let me know if you will be able to attend.

Eva Schonveld
Portobello Transition Town
[<evaschonveld@yahoo.co.uk>](mailto:evaschonveld@yahoo.co.uk)
[<www.pedal-party.org.uk>](http://www.pedal-party.org.uk)

[<www.transitiontowns.org>](http://www.transitiontowns.org)

Update on FoEE Campaigns Group

The FoEE Campaigns Group has been meeting regularly every month for some time now. We decided to focus our current work on greening the Edinburgh Festivals over the next year. This was prompted by our own observations of the Festivals' woeful environmental strategies this summer and before, and the work of Forth Valley FoE member, Les Wallace, at the Edinburgh International Book Festival, reported in previous issues of INFOE. After a letter sent to the leader of Edinburgh Council, Cllr Jenny Dawe, in July, the group succeeded in getting minimal paper recycling facilities placed on

the Royal Mile. We have now been invited to meet with the new Festivals Edinburgh organisation, to discuss environmental issues.

If you would prefer to do campaigning work that is a bit more active, why not join Alan Carter and others at the Farmers' Market and help out with our stall? Alan has recently been getting signatures for the FoE "Big Ask" Campaign, regarding the forthcoming Climate Change Bill. However, the market is a great chance to meet like-minded people and have a chat about environmental issues in Edinburgh

and beyond. If you'd like to be kept in touch about future stalls, contact Alan directly on [<acarter@foe-edinburgh.org.uk>](mailto:acarter@foe-edinburgh.org.uk).

The next campaigns meeting will be after Christmas, so keep an eye on our website for the date, [<www.foe-edinburgh.org.uk>](http://www.foe-edinburgh.org.uk).

We meet at the 5 Rose Street at 7.30pm, usually on the second Thursday of each month.

Note: there will be no December campaign meeting - next meeting January 17th.

Reports from recent Meetings

September 2007

The Green Party may have taken a bit of a hit in May's parliamentary elections, but the appointment of Patrick Harvie MSP as Convener of the Parliament's new Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee shows that environmental views may still get an airing in this most important area of policy.

Patrick came along to talk to FoEE on 27th September, his talk kicking off our own new series of public meetings at a very well-attended gathering. His topic was Scotland's Climate Change Bill, which will be steered through Parliament by his own committee, although not until autumn 2008. Consensus may have been reached on climate change, but there is as yet no consensus on what to do about it. While Westminster is going to deal with its own Climate Change Bill this year, Patrick argued that by delaying in Scotland for a year, the government had an opportunity for focussing their mind and showing leadership at all levels. For the committee, the pre-legislative

work would begin early next year, and Patrick proposed that they would go around Scotland seeking views from as many people as possible, as well as bringing others into Parliament to give their ideas.

Commercial offsetting of carbon emissions currently appears to be the main activity proposed by the government, which is not exactly what most environmentalists would be seeking. Nevertheless, Patrick was clear that the debate that happens around the bill will be as important as what goes into it, helping to move public and political opinion along in the right direction for future action that will be required.

The SNP government has already pledged to reduce CO2 emissions by 80% by 2050, as compared to 1990 levels, somewhat more ambitious than Westminster's 60%. Most of us will be hoping that the Climate Change Bill will help to achieve a realistic framework to deliver this target.

David Atiyah
FoE Edinburgh

October 2007

A decision about a second crossing of the Forth, either a bridge or tunnel, is promised by the Scottish Government by the end of the year.

Bruce Whitehead, of ForthRight Alliance, gave a talk on October 25th updating FoEE on the latest issues.

In particular he was calling for any final decision about a second bridge to be delayed, at least until the full report looking into whether the existing bridge cables could be repaired.

The bandwagon in the media for a second bridge might seem to be a juggernaut that no one can now stop. Bruce is keen to keep the debate alive, and is asking for FoEE members to do what they can to help.

www.forthrightalliance.org

David Atiyah
FoE Edinburgh

Web pointers

The latest report from the IPCC has now been released.
www.ipcc.ch

FoE Scotland are running short courses in 2008 to improve your community action skills

www.foe-scotland.org.uk/trainingforchange/index.html

A petition was submitted recently to the UK Government:

"We the undersigned petition the Prime Minister to Adopt Carbon Rationing and Contraction and Convergence."

Read the Government's response

www.pm.gov.uk/output/Page13691.asp

The fate of the controversial £300 million Caltongate development will now be decided at a single hearing of the planning committee on February 6th, 2008

news.scotsman.com/topics.cfm?tid=885

The Railways Mean Business

Transform Scotland have published *The Railways Mean Business*. The report analyses the productivity benefits for business travellers of switching from air to rail for journeys from Glasgow/Edinburgh to London.

The report finds that the existing benefits of rail travel - reliability, better use of working day, comfort, and low stress - far outweigh the assumption that shorter travel time equates to greater productivity.

www.transformscotland.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> or see <www.foe-edinburgh.org.uk>

For those without access to the internet you can call Helen Todd on **07733 118289**

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, David Atiyah

On the move

Friends of the Earth Scotland moved offices early in September.

Their new address is :

Friends of the Earth Scotland
5 Rose Street
Edinburgh
EH2 2PR

Tel: 0131 243 2700
Fax: 0131 243 2725

The door to the office is on the north side of Rose Street, between the Abbotsford pub and Fopp records.

FoE Edinburgh Committee

Helen Todd - Coordinator
Colin Howden - Secretary
Emma Margrett - Treasurer
David Atiyah
Jenny Brothie
Alan Carter
Alice Searle
Jolin Warren

Diary of Events

Thursday 29th November

FoEE public meeting

Speaker: Greig Robertson
Edinburgh Community Backgreens Initiative
7.30-9.00pm
Quaker Meeting House

Saturday 8th December

Climate March - Glasgow

12:30pm
<www.sccsvolunteers.org.uk/?p=422>

Sunday 9th December

Transition City Edinburgh

The Melting Pot, Rose Street
2pm - 4.30pm
<evasschonveld@yahoo.co.uk>

Friday 21st December

FoEE Festive Meal

Please send us an email by Dec. 6th if you would like to attend.
<info@foe-edinburgh.org.uk>

2008

Thursday 17th January

FoEE campaign meeting

7.30pm
Rose Street

Thursday 31st January

FoEE AGM

6:30-7:30pm
Quaker Meeting House

FoEE public meeting

Speaker: tbc
7.30-9.00pm
Quaker Meeting House,

Saturday 2nd February

FoEE Strategy Day 2008

time and location: tbc
Please send us an email if you would like to attend.
<info@foe-edinburgh.org.uk>

Thursday 28th February

FoEE public meeting

Speaker: tbc
7.30-9.00pm
Quaker Meeting House

Thursday 27th March

FoEE public meeting

Speaker: tbc
7.30-9.00pm
Quaker Meeting House

Glasgow Climate March

Saturday, December 8th, 2007

Scotland has joined over 70 other nations in standing up to shout about the effects of Climate Change on Saturday 8th December. Concerned citizens will converge in Glasgow hoping to initiate a tidal wave of pressure for change on politicians. The march will start at the "Ski Jump" ramps at 12.30pm (nearest subway: West Street) or join the march at George Square at 2pm.

The march will finish at the amphitheatre on the river where speakers will include Duncan McLaren of Friends of the Earth Scotland and Ben Brangwyn of Transition Towns. The starting point has been chosen to highlight how a high carbon lifestyle has consequences which already impact upon us all, such as the development of the M74.

Political pressure is key at this time because 8 December is midway through the UN Climate Change Conference taking place in Bali. The Conference is designed to bring together representatives of over 180 nations, as well as NGOs and the world's media. Decision-makers capable of instigating the rapid, radical and resolute co-ordinated government action necessary to halt climate change will meet and decide future actions designed to safeguard our future on the planet.

Protestors in Scotland are optimistic as it seems the message may be getting through to Scottish politicians quicker than in other parts. Scotland's Climate Change bill proposes cuts in carbon emissions of 80% by 2050- a serious response to the problem, especially when compared to the 60% cut proposed south of the border. Climate change experts, however, stress that this is no time for complacency and urge the Scottish public to take to the streets to ensure that politicians understand the seriousness of the situation.

<www.sccsvolunteers.org.uk/?p=422>