

Pembrokeshire Friends of the Earth Cyfeillion y Ddaear Sir Benfro

Newsletter August 2011



All Change at the Top

Gordon James is certainly one of the most dedicated and inspiring environmentalists I have met.

As many will know he is retiring as director of FoE Cymru in September.



Gordon has been involved with Foe since its beginning 40 years ago. His interest in the environment began with his upbringing in Pembrokeshire.

As a child he spent a lot of time outdoors surrounded by wildlife and nature, living what, by today's standard, was a simple life enjoying good local food against the back drop of the post war years. Then 60's influences, such as Rachel Carson's book Silent Spring, about the effect on wildlife of agricultural pesticides, the impact of the Vietnam War with its huge human suffering and environmental degradation and the nuclear question, combined with this upbringing to draw him towards the early green movement.

In 1972 he first got involved with FoE starting our own local group in 1987. He worked for FoE Cymru as Head of Campaigns and Development becoming the director in 1995. In 2000 he left FoE to work as Director of the Pembrokeshire Energy Agency which had been set up by the West Wales Eco Centre, returning to FoE in 2007.

His measured well researched and informed opinions expressed at meetings and through both the Welsh and English media have contributed to many successful campaigns, including orimulsion and GM of which he is particularly proud. He has earned the respect of politicians and helped to ensure that Friends of the Earth Cymru is listened to.

The new director is Gareth Clubb. He comes to FoE

from the Snowdonia Society. He went to Bangor University and then studied marine biology in Maine going on to complete an MSc in marine resource development at Heriot-Watt University in 2000. He has worked on the environment and sustainability since then, both as



a senior research officer for the National Assembly of Wales and as a policy advisor for the Environment Agency Wales. Gareth is looking forward to the job immensely. "There is no more important role in Wales than that undertaken by Friends of the Earth Cymru," he says. "They've been a beacon of light over the past 25 years."

We are very glad to say that Gordon intends to continue campaigning with FoE Pembrokeshire but is looking forward to giving up the regular commute to Cardiff.

Pembroke Power Station 'unlawful'

In June, the Environment Agency announced that it was 'minded to' grant an environmental permit for the new gas-fired power station at Pembroke to operate but that it was allowing a period of four weeks for public consultation. Friends of the Earth Cymru has submitted a very critical response, written by environmental barrister Peter Roderick, calling the Agency's document "inadequate, incoherent and unlawful".

We have argued from the outset that the waste heat from the power station should be used productively to convert the imported Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) back into gas. This is what is happening at the new gas-fired power station at the Isle of Grain in Kent, cutting carbon dioxide emissions by 350,000 tonnes a year.

At Pembroke, the intention is to dump this waste heat – which is equivalent to 40 per cent of Wales' electricity demand – into the Milford Haven waterway. According to Countryside Council of Wales (CCW) documents, this water cooling system would result in the entrainment of up to 1.3 billion juvenile fish and almost three million crustaceans each year.

The Milford Haven waterway is, as part of the Pembrokeshire Marine Special Area of Conservation, one of Europe's most valuable marine environments. This is why the Welsh Government's environmental experts at the CCW have strongly opposed this application. If the Environment Agency had listened to these objections we would not be in this problematic situation today.

Industry can exist alongside Pembrokeshire's magnificent natural environment – but we must use the best technology and the highest standards. Friends of the Earth Cymru has asked Wales' Environment Minister to call-in the application and has also sent the European Commission, which is continuing to investigate it, this latest information. We await their response.

STOP PRESS: GOOD NEWS

WELSH GOVERNMENT HALTS NEW PEMBROKE POWER STATION

The Welsh Government has told the Environment Agency that it mustn't give permission to a controversial water cooling system at the new Pembrokeshire power station until a review into its impact on a fragile and highly protected marine wildlife site has been completed.

In a letter to the Environment Agency, the Government has criticised the report that was expected to give the damaging plant the go-ahead, saying there were "gaps in the analysis and logic to support the conclusions reached".

Newport Walk and visit to the Real Seed Company

Sunday 4th September 2pm

Meet Car Park for Pentre Evan grid ref O92383

We are planning to do a 2 hour circular walk in the Newport area on our way we will be visiting the fields of the Real Seed Company where we will have a guided tour to look at their work, and maybe pick up a few tips.

Everyone is welcome and bring your friends.

Please ring Karina 01437 563670 for details and lift sharing

Stop the slurry Lagoon Campaign

Hermon, Glogue and Llanfyrnach have started a petition asking the Welsh Assembly Government to support farming practices that are sustainable; and in particular to promote the adoption of anaerobic digesters instead of encouraging the development of slurry lagoons. To sign the petition go to : www.slurrycampaign.org.uk

40 years of Friends of the Earth

In the last 40 years the environment movement has come a long way, the challenges are growing but it is easy to forget what has been achieved along the way. Recycling is no longer a question of piling papers in the garage and then struggling to meet the FoE organised collection on the 3rd Friday in the month. Through concerted international effort the ozone layer has been restored. Climate sceptics still make noise but almost no serious politician doubts the existence of manmade global warming. FoE has prided itself on providing accurate balanced information on environmental issues. It has avoided simply jumping on bandwagons and where necessary it has spoken out against popularly held views and big business to act as the voice of the natural world and future generations. Of this we should be proud.

Pembrokeshire FoE wants to mark this anniversary by planting 40 trees.

I have enclosed a form for members to complete and send back to me. We are asking members to get involved by hosting or sponsoring a tree or both. So if you have space in your garden or community please let us know. You may want a fruit tree or a mighty oak, you can state your preference. You can also sponsor a tree for £5.00, which will cover the cost of the tree, rabbit guards and supports as required. We currently have over 60 members and we would like as many as possible to get involved. Please return the forms to me as soon as possible, planting will take place over the winter

Stunning, spectacular Skomer

Over 20 supporters enjoyed an inspiring guided tour of Skomer Island by wildlife expert, Mick Brown.

It was a bracing, sunny May day with carpets of blue bells and campions in their full glory.

As we walked and picnicked we were treated to enchanting displays from puffins, peregrine falcons and seals as well as the wide variety of birds that nest in Skomer every year.

We are so lucky to have this wildlife treasure on our doorstep in Pembrokeshire.

Karina Russell



Friends of the Earth National Conference the route to 2050: the next forty years Nottingham, September 9th - 11th

This year we are celebrating FoE's 40th anniversary. The speakers include Jonathon Porritt, Tony Juniper, Charles Secret, Nnimmo Bassey, Chairman of FoE International and Kate Pickett author of "Spirit Level".

Eleanor Clegg will be representing Pembrokeshire FoE.

For more information go to: www.foe.co.uk/conference

Narberth Area Renewable Energy Group – NAREG

There have now been several meetings of this group. Its aim is to look at ways of promoting and developing renewable energy in Narberth to benefit the community and the environment. Group activities could range from awareness raising, encouraging energy users to change to green energy suppliers or tariffs, to community based renewable energy projects and maybe our own wind turbine.

NAREG is a small group of busy people who are determined that they do not want to be another talking shop. Planed has done a fantastic job providing information and at the present time we do not have the resources to tackle a project as large as a wind turbine, so the group is hoping to carry forward 2 renewable energy projects for Bloomfield and the Queens Hall, at the same time as encouraging the Rugby Club to look at the potential for renewable energy for themselves.

The aims of these projects are to provide solar hot water for Bloomfields, and electricity through photovoltaics for the Queens Hall and Bloomfields. These projects will not only benefit the environment by lowering our community carbon foot print they will also reduce costs and provide a source of income through the feed in tariffs. Both of these projects have already been proposed so all we really need is the money!

The cost of the 2 projects is around £50,000. The group is considering a 'buy a panel scheme' similar to 'buy a brick'. We will also explore mounting an appeal to charitable trusts.

It feels good to get involved in a real project and by doing so we hope to raise awareness throughout the community.

If you would like to get involved you can contact NAREG via [Transitionarberth](mailto:Transitionarberth@doctors.org.uk) or rccadbury@doctors.org.uk

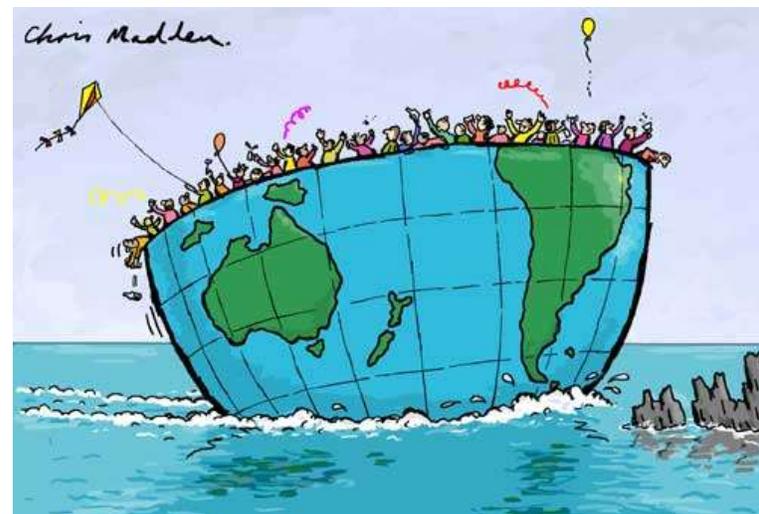
Pembrokeshire FoE has a stall at the Narberth Food Festival on 24TH and 25th September
Your help would be welcome

Our Energy Future: Plug us in to what you think.

During the summer Pembs FoE will be finding out how much support there is for renewable energy in the community and looking at case studies of local energy projects. The information fed in by FoE groups throughout the UK during the summer will be used to shape and prepare for the new energy campaign coming out in September.

The UK Government plans to redesign our electricity system over the next 2 years. They will decide how billions of pounds will be spent on new energy systems: gas and nuclear or a revolution in renewable. They will decide how much will communities will be involved in generating energy, or whether we will be tied to big energy companies and even bigger bills

In September FoE will be launching a new campaign for our energy future. FoE needs to change the way people think about energy, to show another way is possible.



THE SHIP OF FOOLS AND THE ROCKS OF SHORT-TERM ECONOMIC PLANNING

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