

# Pembrokeshire Friends of the Earth

## Cyfeillion y Ddaear Sir Benfro

Newsletter November 2011



### Pembroke Power Station



Pictured is the almost completed Pembroke power station with the Valero (formerly Chevron) oil refinery in the background.

According to a report submitted by the Countryside Council for Wales, the water-cooling system at the power station would entrain (suck through the cooling system) around 1,000 million juvenile fish each year. The US Environmental Protection Agency assumes 100% mortality during entrainment and is critical of this type of cooling system for coastal locations. Shamefully, the Environment Agency in Wales has approved it for Pembrokeshire. Following the intervention of the Welsh Government, the Environment Agency is now having to conduct a review of its environmental assessment.

### Another Campaign Success

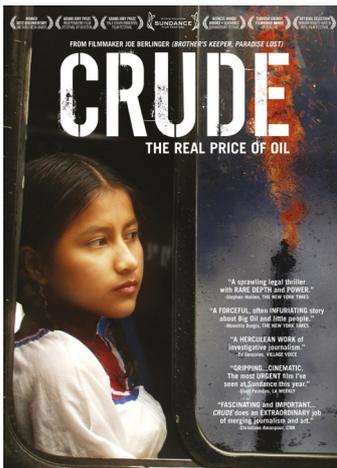
**Proposals to build a huge waste incinerator in Merthyr Tydfil have been scrapped.**

This FoE Cymru campaign has been supported by Pembrokeshire FoE with many of our members sending emails or letters of objection. This is a tremendous victory which, once again, demonstrates the effectiveness of campaigning at a local level with support from the FoE Cymru team and more specialised support from FoE staff in London.

### Pembrokeshires Friends of the Earth AGM and Jane Davidson talk

**This year's AGM will take place at the Seminar Room at the Bloomfield Community Centre, Narberth at 6.45pm on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December.**

**It will be followed at 7.30 by a presentation by Wales' former Environment Minister, Jane Davidson, on 'A Sustainable Future for West Wales'.**



### FilmOnSunday

**Narberth Film Club  
20<sup>TH</sup> November at  
7.30pm**

Our slot in the Narberth Film Society programme this year will be a screening of the award-winning 'Crude the Real Price of Oil'.

## Final Demand

**FoE's new energy campaign has just been launched.** UK households could face extra costs of around £300 a year as the cost of using gas and coal to generate our electricity spirals. A FoE report says the only way to end energy bill pain in the long run is to cut energy waste and invest in clean power. Final Demand will press for affordable energy and a public inquiry into the Big Six energy companies. To support the campaign go to:

[http://www.foe.co.uk/news/final\\_demand\\_32947.html](http://www.foe.co.uk/news/final_demand_32947.html)

**Friends of the Earth has warned that it may start legal action against the government by the end of this week unless plans are scrapped to cut the level of subsidies paid to homeowners installing solar panels.**

In its formal consultation on the future feed-in tariff, the government said it would halve the level of payments for any installations completed after 12 December this year. The environmental charity says this cut-off point – two weeks before consultation ends – is unlawful and will lead to unfinished or planned projects being abandoned. "The government is breaking the law with its plans to fast-track a solar industry kill-off – as well as jeopardising thousands of jobs and countless clean energy projects across the country," said Craig Bennett, policy and campaigns director at FoE. *Guardian Monday 7th November*



Slashing solar power subsidies for homeowners will kill the fledgling UK industry "stone dead" and cost tens of thousands of jobs, say major solar businesses in response to government proposals published on Monday.

The businesses accepted that the falling cost of solar photovoltaic panels should be reflected in falling subsidies, but the industry said cutting support by over 50% in the next six weeks would devastate the number of installations on homes, schools and small businesses. Renewable industry experts and campaigners blamed the Treasury for failing to recognise the economic growth that green energy investments could deliver, and said the proposed solar cuts – the third such change in less than a year – undermined confidence across the green energy industry. There were also warnings that, at a time of soaring energy bills, the fuel poor would be hardest hit by the changes.

"The renewables industry is really not confident at all. These changes undermine confidence across all energy-related investments, even CCS [carbon capture and storage] and nuclear, as we need to be confident that the government will honour their commitments and not chop and change."

Energy and climate change minister Greg Barker defended the cuts as unavoidable if the whole system of feed-in tariffs for low-carbon and sustainable energy was not to be undermined by ballooning budgets. "My priority is to put the solar industry on a firm footing so that it can remain a successful and prosperous part of the green economy, and so that it doesn't fall victim to boom and bust," he said.

The tariff paid to householders falls from 43.3p per kWh of solar electricity to just 21p under the proposals. Decc admitted that there had been three times more solar installations than it predicted since the scheme began on April 2010, during which time it said the cost of an average home installation had fallen by at least 30%. It said the proposed cuts would reduce the estimated cost of the solar Fit scheme in 2014-15 by three-quarters, to £250m a year, adding about £3 a year to electricity bills.

There was also controversy over when the proposed new Fits would come into force. That date is 12 December – 11 days before the consultation ends, with the date itself open to change as part of the consultation.

The row over solar subsidies is the latest manifestation of a long and fierce battle within the government between Chris Huhne's Decc and George Osborne's Treasury over the role of green growth in the UK's economic recovery, made especially pointed by soaring home energy bills. "We may be out of touch with the solar lobby, but we are not out of touch with energy bills," Barker told parliament on Monday.

The row spilled into the public domain when Osborne told the Conservative party conference earlier in October: "We're not going to save the planet by putting our country out of business." Huhne hit back in a speech deliberately echoing Osborne's own: "Yes, the UK is only 2% of global carbon emissions. But if we grasp the opportunity now our businesses and economy can be much more than 2% of the solution."

Reacting to the solar Fit proposal, Juliet Davenport, chief executive of Good Energy, said: "Due to pressure from George Osborne and the Treasury, Decc has had to cut the one scheme that gives households control over their rising energy bills ... showing the Treasury doesn't have a real grip on the economics of the energy market. Some of Britain's poorest households will miss out as a result of these changes."

Solar installers argue their panels have helped curb rising fuel poverty by providing free electricity to homes. But companies say the cuts will mean they can no longer offer to install panels for free for poorer households, in return for keeping the subsidies.

*Article from the Guardian.co.uk October 31st*



## Fundraising Gig

Many thanks to 'A Certain Trio' (Jim Edwards, Shelley Morris and Alan Wilkinson), Louis Edwards, 'Partyzans' and Eddie Parslow for providing the music for an extremely enjoyable night at the Dingle Club recently. Thanks also to Declan Connolly for lots of behind the scenes help. The gig raised £145 for the group.

## FoE Conference for England, Wales & N Ireland – September 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup>

This was one of the best conferences ever with four Pembs FoE members attending. As it was a celebration of 40 years of FoE in the UK, previous directors Tom Burke, Jonathon Porritt, Charles Secrett and Tony Juniper were invited to join Andy Atkins for an evening of humorous reminiscences and thoughts about the future direction of FoE. We also enjoyed inspiring presentations from Nimmo Bassey, chair of FoE International, the head of FoE Serbia and Kate Pickett, Co-author of the Spirit Level. Gordon was given a special presentation and a standing ovation for his contribution to FoE for almost 40 years. There were loads of interesting workshops, some films, and a great party.

## TRECWN

We are looking into an application to site diesel generators at Trecwn to provide back-up power for the national grid. A planning application has been submitted by Renewable Developments Wales for 11 generators to produce 20MW of power.

## Hermon Slurry Lagoon

The Stop the Slurry Lagoon campaign group in Hermon is opposing plans for a large slurry lagoon on high ground overlooking the village and the Taf River.

Large lagoons are often an indication of over-intensive farming where production is exceeding the 'carrying capacity' of the land, i.e. herd size is greater than the pasture can tolerate in terms of both slurry spreading and feed for the cows. In Hermon, the proposal is for a 600+ herd on 350 acres. The result will be excess slurry waste stored in a 2 acre, 2.7m gals lagoon. As more excess slurry is produced the lagoon will fill up (a process accelerated by rainfall) and will either overflow, have to be put on the land at a level in excess of good practice guidelines, or have to be disposed of elsewhere.

Intensive dairy farming at this scale with result in lower quality pasture (which is less healthy for cattle), the soil will have a diminished 'carbon sink' capacity, and any excess slurry put on the land will risk threatening water-courses and biodiversity, as will any overflow from the lagoon.

FoE is very concerned about these trends and is supporting the campaign. A petition set up by the group calls for WAG to provide grants for farmers to build or purchase Anaerobic Digesters.

Further details and contact information regarding the community campaign group can be found on [www.slurrycampaign.org.uk](http://www.slurrycampaign.org.uk). To sign the on line petition people are asked to visit [www.petitionbuzz.com/petitions/slurrycampaign](http://www.petitionbuzz.com/petitions/slurrycampaign)



## Atlantic Array Windfarm

We have issued a media release supporting this proposed windfarm which would be sited 13kms south of the Pembrokeshire coast in the Bristol Channel and would generate enough electricity for over a million homes. If it goes ahead, construction will begin in 2015 and will take around 6 years. We are also campaigning to try to ensure that Pembrokeshire reaps economic benefits from it.

## UN Climate Talks

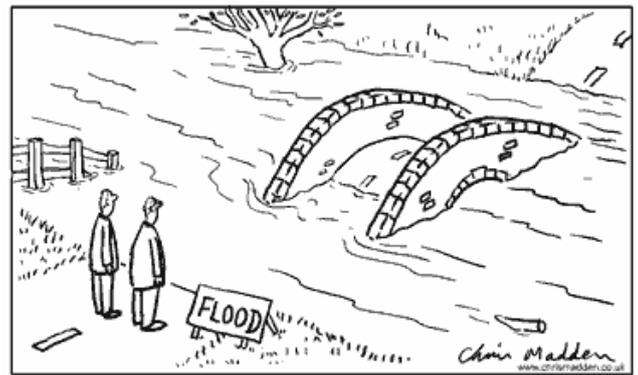
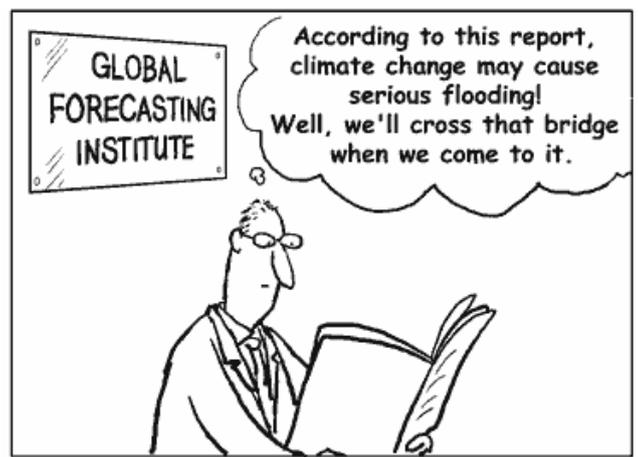
During the UN climate talks in Durban, South Africa this November, grassroots groups will connect with each other and with the climate talks at African-themed events around the UK.

**Stop Climate Chaos Cymry**  
**An evening of films, African food and music at the Balcony Room, Queens Hall, Narberth on Wednesday 30th November at 7.30pm.**  
**Organised by FoE Pembs. and Oxfam**

The Campaign Against Climate Change will hold an event in London on the same week. More information on [www.campaignccc.org](http://www.campaignccc.org)  
Oxfam is setting up a group in Pembrokeshire. If you are interested, please contact Emma Cartmill at [emmacartmill@msn.com](mailto:emmacartmill@msn.com)

## Narberth Food Festival

Again this was very successful as there was much interest, many helpers and nearly 250 signatures to support the food campaign.



Cartoon by Chris Madden: [www.chrismadden.co.uk](http://www.chrismadden.co.uk)

## RAIN...RAIN...AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The 32mm (1.25ins) of rain that fell on Llanfyrnach in north Pembrokeshire in just a few hours on 24<sup>th</sup> Oct is an example of the downpours that caused widespread flooding in west Wales recently. Although individual events like this cannot be attributed solely to climate change, heavy rainfall has been increasing in intensity in most parts of the world. According to a recent climate change report in the New Scientist: *“Warm air holds more moisture: about 5% more for each 1°C temperature increase. This means more rain or snow overall, and more intense rain or snowfall on average. This trend is already evident and is stronger than models predict.”*

Meanwhile, a major new study set up by a US scientific group has concluded that the Earth's surface is warming as stated by climate scientists.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-15373071>

You might be interested in viewing the Guardian's interactive guide to climate change

[http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/interactive/2011/aug/15/everything-know-climate-change?CMP=tw\\_t\\_gu](http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/interactive/2011/aug/15/everything-know-climate-change?CMP=tw_t_gu)

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