



Diary Dates

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS

to help on all stalls. Ring or email Hilary or Sue (details back page).

WANT US AT AN EVENT NEAR YOU? Get some volunteers, then call to discuss.



Sat 15 May 10am onwards

Hull Carnival - City Centre. Parade and stall with Hull Transition. [Ring us for details].

Tues 1 June 7.30

HFOE meeting Recycling Unlimited café 151 Newland Avenue. Rep from Dong Energy [Biomass development] to be invited.

Sat 5 June

VISTA: Princes Avenue Traders' Fair, Hull. HFOE stall. [Ring us for details].

Sat 3 July

Cottingham Day Possible HFOE/Beverley FoE/Hull Transition stall [Ring us for details].

Sun 4 July and Sun 11 July, 1-5

Avenues Open Gardens HFOE stall Victoria Avenue.

Tues 6 July 7.30

HFOE meeting Recycling Unlimited café, 151 Newland Avenue.

Tues 3 August 7.30

HFOE meeting Recycling Unlimited café, 151 Newland Avenue.

Sat 21 August

'West Fest' in West Park Hull. [Ring for details]

Tues 7 Sept 7.30

HFOE meeting Recycling Unlimited café, 151 Newland Avenue

Sat 11 Sept

FoE National Conference.

Hull Transition

Meet 2nd Monday of each month at The Eagle, Coltman Street, 7.30. Contact 07816 141169, email: lausannet@yahoo.co.uk

Beverley FoE

3rd Thursday each month at White Horse (Nellies) Beverley, 7.30.

Email: shan@voice-international.net

Biofuels—the local implications

David Callaghan in his article (p4) gives a global view of the aggrofuel debate. But this is also of very relevant local interest to us in East Yorkshire and Lincolnshire.

Local Authorities, Hull Forward and Hull University are promoting the area as a world class research and distribution centre for biofuels. They expect the Humber area to be producing 50% of the UK's biofuel within the next 5 years. The deep water ports, market access to established petrochemical industries, liquid bulk storage facilities and agricultural surroundings are all cited as advantages. The Renewable Energy Directive requiring a 10% by energy contribution from renewable transport fuels by 2020 and a target for 6% reduced emissions from each litre of fuel by 2020, are a driving force.

Local firm Rix Fuels were one of the earliest companies to add vegetable oils to petrol. I can remember Hull FoE being told that waste chip fat was one of the sources.

Greenery established two biodiesel processing plants at Immingham in 2007 and 2008. The plants use a mix of rapeseed, soy and waste cooking oils. The rapeseed is sourced locally and the crushed seeds taken by barge from Cargill's plant in Hull.

Vivergo, a firm created by BP, British Sugar and DuPont, are currently advertising for staff for their development at Saltend which will produce bioethanol from wheat. Animal feed is also a product of the

process. They claim that the UK climate produces a surplus of lower grade wheat which is currently exported, much of it from the Humber region, and that the Saltend chemical complex offers energy for processing.

Vivergo's website (www.vivergofuels.com) under 'frequently asked questions' attempts to answer some of the objections to biofuels. They say that as the whole purpose of 'set-aside' was to take land out of production due to surpluses of cereals in the EU, so bringing it back into production now makes sense to meet increased demand. They claim that the biggest problems with world food supply are not shortage of land but political instability and lack of investment; that some experts believe that the additional markets provided by biofuels could help stimulate investment in infrastructure, boosting economies of poor countries; and that anyway the crops could be used for food in a crisis.

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ECO CHIT CHAT



As I write this, we are in the last week of leading to **General Election Day**. Seems to be more interest than I can remember for many years. Hull FoE, Hull Transition and Hull United Nations Association organised a hustings at Bricknell School on 9 April for the four Hull North Candidates who had declared their intention to stand by that date. Forty five people came and asked questions on a wide range of subjects from climate change to MPs' expenses. Dave Rodgers of Hull CVS was 'David Dimbleby' and the discussion was politer than Question Time!

Lee-ann and I had great trouble finding anywhere to put up posters about the hustings in Bransholme, Kingswood and Orchard Park, especially as Council and NHS staff were under instructions not to display anything 'political'. When people are accused of being apathetic, bear this in mind.



Twenty one people were up for the **dawn chorus** on 17 April, when Tony Martin of Yorkshire Wildlife Trust led a walk in Sculcoates cemetery, identifying the birds by their calls. The birds had to compete with background industrial noises, the wrens coping easily; such a lot of sound from a tiny bird! Thanks to near-by St Mary's Church members who gave us bacon butties to fortify us for the next stage which was planting wildflowers in the cemetery. The results of previous selective clearing and planting efforts can now be appreciated, improving access while gradually enriching the biodiversity.



Recent **Hull Transition** activities have included film shows at the Boulevard Village Hall, a talk on Organic Gardening and 'Scrappy Do'—craft activities using recycled scrap materials from Scrapstore. The results of this last activity might be seen at the **Hull Carnival on Saturday 15 May** from 10am onwards when there will be a parade through the City Centre. Hull Carnival has replaced the Lord Mayor's Parade—shorter route and all on foot, bike etc, and stalls in the city centre. **Come and join in with the Transition and HFoE activities.**



After the election there will be more activity by FoE on the Food Campaign trying to get a Private Members Bill, reducing the impact of the meat and dairy industries on climate change, sorting out farming subsidies and protecting farmers from supermarket bullying. We learnt about these and other campaigns for this year at the **Yorkshire Region FoE** event in Leeds in January. These events are a really good way to find out about Friends of the Earth and its activities. **The National**

Conference will be coming up in September. Let us know if you might be interested in going.



The Future of Urban Transport Discussion Document

was published by the Department for Transport on 3 March. This discussion paper seeks views on the future transport needs of cities and urban communities and the plans for a new urban challenge fund. Deadline for views is 4 June. Details on www.dft.gov.uk. Anyone's guess whether it will still be relevant after the election.

Are you involved in transport issues, cycling, public transport and/or walking? Could you send a short paragraph or two for Hull ECO on an occasional or regular basis? It's a while since we have had much in the newsletter on transport and travel issues, which affect us all.



The **One World Shop**, near British Home Stores in Hull remind us that they are still open while the new NHS centre is being built nearby. Though it's good that more supermarkets are stocking Fairtrade goods, we need to keep supporting the independent stockists, so that the supermarkets can't totally dictate the trade.



The **new waste recycling scheme** in Hull has resulted in a considerable reduction in usage of the bins we look after at Park Avenue Adult Education Centre. We don't mind really; it's very good that the new scheme is so successful, and it's less sweeping up for us. But our income from the bins will go down. Also, Doug Sharp told us that waste from these bins is recycled in this area rather than being shipped to Walsall, which is where the blue bin waste goes.

Hilary Byers

Water Walk brings benefits

Those members who went on our highly successful Water Walk some time ago (*see issue 22, July 2008, and follow-up report in issue 25, May 2009. Ed*) will recall that the money collected was divided, half to Samaritan's Purse and half to Practical Action since both deal with helping communities access clean water.

The latest issue of Practical Action has a story about Sri Lanka where a community water scheme to pump safe drinking water from the well in the remote village of Gurugoda has been possible due to the water pump being fuelled by bio diesel (liquid fuel derived from plant materials) They use only inedible plant oils, and the same are used for the bio oil lamp and bio oil cooking stove. Bio oil is safe due to the low risk of flammability and the stove saves energy as well as time. The bio oil lamp replaces the unsustainable kerosene lamp.

Haris Livas-Dawes

Hull Development Forum: news

The latest meeting of the Hull Development Forum took place on 19 March. I attend as an elected member or Chair of six community organizations and report back to each on items relevant.

The meeting of the forum on 19 March was to take a look at the Hull Core Strategy. This document was published in draft form in 2008 and I, along with many other people, sent in my comments as a part of the consultation exercise. The current 2010 document is up for consultation, and I have responded to this as well, as a private citizen.

The meeting itself was rather formless and consisted of members looking through the strategy and commenting or questioning items of interest. For example, under the Transport section, the head of the Civic Society wanted more said about parking and more parking places provided. He said this was the view of the Civic Society. I then said that as a member of the Civic Society I had not been asked my opinion of the matter, but I could now state that more parking places means more cars on the road. It is only when it becomes difficult to drive that people turn to public transport. Also on transport, officers said that Hull's development can go forward

up to 2021 without anything being done about Castle Street, but after that development would be slowed.

Under Housing the discussion centered on the affordability of housing. Hull is supposed to be providing almost 1000 new houses a year and at the same time reducing outmoded stock and building bigger houses. Problems like Orchard Park mean that even with demolition and new build the area will not end up with more houses. The long-term potential of the docks was discussed as was the City Centre Master Plan now being looked at by inspectors.

I was interested in Section 7 on Environmental Resources, but found that the section on parks seemed to suggest that their use was only for sport and recreation. I reminded people that the main use of parks is for escape from the hassle and stress of everyday life, a place where one can sit and enjoy nature. That this has an effect on health is proven. It's interesting to note that the current deficit of open spaces in Hull is 21 hectares. If the population of today grows by even 5,000 the deficit will increase to 49 hectares.

I also commented on the Waste management section where I read "Construction of the energy from waste facility has yet to begin and if it does

not proceed we will need to identify an alternative site or sites to treat the waste it would have handled." I commented on the little word "if" which suggests that the incinerator is problematic. I suggested that since 27,000 citizens of Hull had signed a petition against an incinerator it would be best to scrap the incinerator and concentrate on other technologies like anaerobic digestion. At this point I was asked where I thought such a facility could be situated and I said I would let them know. As readers of the volume of emails from FoE will know, I put this question to our members and received a large number of suggestions which I forwarded to the HCC.

I would suggest that members get a copy of the Core Strategy and send in their own comments. The council is obliged to respond to each comment and their answers can be found on their website. The Core Strategy covers the city until 2026. When that date comes and people are not satisfied with what they see, they might regret they did not use the opportunity to respond to the consultation and thus help shape the future.

Haris Livas-Dawes

Traditional rites of spring at Pickering Road Orchard

Pickering Road Community Orchard was a mass of blossom on 3 May for the traditional celebration of spring, including dancing round the maypole.

Planted in 2003/4 on 2 acres of former allotments, the orchard now has 350 trees—mainly apples with some plums, pears and cherries. There are 26 types of apples, all Northern England varieties. Originally funded by West Hull NHS Primary Trust, Big Lottery and Hull City Council, the orchard is maintained by volunteers, and more volunteers are always needed; you don't have to live locally. You can learn to prune trees, and of course volunteers get the first

pick of the crop, which last year was excellent.

Happily, this community group don't mind sharing some of the fruit with the birds, and

attract a wide variety, from kestrels to wrens and woodpeckers to corncrakes. They also have 2 beehives which last year yielded 50 jars of honey.



For more information contact Sue Goddard on sue@wheelbarrow5.karoo.co.uk or 41 Boulevard HU3 2TS

Hilary Byers

'Aggrofuel': the burning question

Friends of the Earth prefers to use the term *agrofuels* rather than biofuels as the latter can give a misleading impression of its environmental performance. So do I, but I mentally add another 'g' to make it 'aggro-fuel', because of the aggressive way its raw material is obtained, the destruction of rainforests, replacing biodiversity with monoculture, and the violent removal of indigenous peoples from their traditional homelands.

An example of this occurred on 21 and 22 January this year, when indigenous communities living in two villages in the Lacandon Forest in Chiapas (Mexico) were violently evicted by federal police and army forces, in support of corporate plans for oil palm expansion, and had their homes, all their belongings, crops and trees destroyed.

Agrofuels are a wide range of fuels derived from biomass. The term covers solid biomass, liquid fuels and various biogases. Bioethanol is an alcohol made by fermenting the sugar components of plant materials and it is made mostly from sugar and starch crops. Biodiesel is made from vegetable oils, animal fats or recycled greases, oils or fats and is the most common biofuel in Europe.

The search for alternatives to fossil fuel has prompted a rush towards agrofuels. This is said to be contributing to rising food prices and increasing concern about our ability to grow enough food and fuel. Despite social and environmental concerns and unproven climate benefits of biofuels, the EU has set a target of 10 per cent of road transport fuel to come from biofuels by 2020.

Conversion of forests or savannahs into plantations to grow crops or trees for agrofuels negates the climate benefits from growing biomass. The removal of natural vegetation, draining of peatlands, or soil erosion caused by monoculture plantations leads to the release of soil carbon as CO₂ and other GHGs (greenhouse gases). This is particularly true in the destruction of tropical rainforests or the draining of peatlands—two major carbon sinks. For example, draining and deforesting peatlands in South-East Asia, predominantly to make way for palm plantations, accounts for a massive 8% of global annual CO₂ emissions.

Fertilisers—often used on intensively grown crops—also contribute to climate change. Their production consumes energy and, crucially, they release nitrous oxide, a GHG nearly 300 times more powerful than CO₂. Finally, transportation of agrofuels from their source also produces emissions. The greater the distance, the more unfavourable the GHG balance becomes.

Second generation biofuels—hope or hype?

The current crops being used to produce agrofuels are called first-generation fuels. Second generation agrofuels will use chemical processes to break down the woody part of plants into liquid fuels, thereby allowing a wider range of materials to be used to produce fuel, eg crop and forestry residue wastes and straw. There are also developments to use algae

to produce biodiesel. Second generation agrofuels are still under development and are not yet commercially available, but they have been predicted by some to further reduce GHG emissions. They are also claimed not to compete with food for land use. A recent report by the OECD raises serious doubt about the potential of second generation fuels and questions whether transporting biomass material on a large scale will be economically feasible. They called for more research into the assumptions regarding their cost and long-term availability.

The GM threat

Proponents of genetic engineering promote agrofuels in an attempt to break worldwide opposition to genetically modified (GM) foods, even though current GM crops provide no advantage when producing agrofuels. GM crops raise unacceptable health and environmental concerns, as well as leading to the further intensification of agriculture and increasing corporate control of agriculture. In addition, crops engineered with traits specifically intended for industrial aggrofuel use will inevitably contaminate food supplies. The use of GM crops and trees should not be permitted in the production of agrofuels. In addition, the biotechnology industry is developing genetically modified (GM) trees with reduced lignin content to be used as second generation agrofuels. Friends of the Earth and many other organisations oppose the release of GM crops or trees into the environment because of their inherent risks.

What about Jatropha?

Jatropha (*Jatropha curcas*) has been promoted by UK biofuel company D1 Oils as a wonder crop because of the plant's supposed ability to grow on marginal and semi-arid land, saying "it will not compete with food crops for good agricultural land".

A FoE report looks at D1 Oils' activities in Swaziland, one of the countries where the company is leading the development of jatropha plantations. The report is based on first-hand evidence from farmers involved with D1 Oils and desk research on the impacts of jatropha.

A key D1 Oils claim about the benefit of jatropha is that it grows well on "marginal" or "waste" land and so does not compete with food production. Swazi NGOs, however, have documented cases of farmers turning good quality land over to jatropha cultivation under contract by D1 Oils, instead of that land being used to grow food crops for people who lack food security. Without regulation there is nothing to prevent crops like jatropha from being grown on high-quality arable land.

Linked to the marginal land issue, a second supposed key benefit of jatropha is that it yields a high oils content even on poor quality soil. However, farmers complain that jatropha isn't growing well in drought conditions. The

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high yields needed to make jatropha commercially viable as a agrofuel crop are far more likely to be obtained when it is planted on fertile irrigated land. The experience from Swaziland, backed up by various scientific studies, implies that policy makers in the EU and UK need to treat jatropha with the same degree of rigour as other agrofuel crops.

Pyrolysis DRE

(Destruction & Removal Efficiency)

Pyrolysis works by heating organic material to extreme temperatures in the absence of oxygen. The process breaks down the material to create either a gas or oil that can then be used to create biofuel.

The Carbon Trust calculates that pyrolysis-based biofuels will have a carbon footprint that is 95 per cent lower than fossil fuels and significantly lower than conventional agrofuels, such as corn-based ethanol or biodiesel. The E4Tech report, which was commissioned by the Trust last year, indicated that wheat bioethanol has a carbon footprint between 30 and 70 per cent lower than fossil fuels, while Brazilian sugar cane ethanol produces around 70 per cent fewer emissions. It is claimed that emissions from the process meet all the latest European standards, but like many in the green movement I am not too impressed with EU standards when that same EU is attempting to redefine oil palm plantations as forest.

Of course, it depends on how the necessary heat for the process is created. If it is raised by electricity generated by conventional coal-fired power stations, the process is far from carbon neutral. We never get something for nothing.

The food v fuel debate

"It takes the same amount of grain to fill an SUV with ethanol as it does to feed a person. We don't want any more subsidies for biofuels. This rush to biofuels is absolutely dreadful." (Barbara Stocking, Oxfam).

I did pretty much accept the argument that the large scale exploitation of land needed to grow agrofuel crops would encroach on fertile food crop growing

land, thereby reducing food production and increasing the price of food. However, a little research reveals that the issue is somewhat more complex. Experts disagree on how much of global food price increases are caused by biofuel production, from 2% to 30%.

Brazil's tropical climate allows the country to efficiently grow sugarcane for ethanol production, which now provides 40% of the country's transport fuel and, emits between 80%-90% less carbon than petrol. *(But how much rainforest/carbon sink/biodiversity has been destroyed to make way for sugarcane plantations?)*

Corn in the US is a different matter, produced in a system that uses more fuel and fertiliser. When the crop is converted, lots of the energy comes from fossil fuels. Corn-based ethanol does reduce GHG emissions, but only by 10%-30% less than fossil fuels.

A limited local role for biofuels

As part of a new energy model, it is essential that only biofuels meeting strict social and environmental criteria are produced. They should:

- ▶ Empower communities to sustainably develop their resources in the local production of agrofuels to eliminate long-distance commerce in agrofuels. The origin of biomass must be transparent and traceable.
- ▶ Not conflict with food production and food sovereignty.
- ▶ Contribute to significant GHG emissions reductions of 60% across the full lifecycle of production.
- ▶ Be based on the sustainable use of local resources and improve rather than erode biological diversity, by being grown in areas that are not themselves high-biodiversity or sensitive ecosystems; building soil structure and fertility and conserving water quantity and quality; maximizing the use of waste products that would otherwise have to be disposed of.
- ▶ Not result in the displacement of local communities or Indigenous Peoples, or encroach into any of their traditional territories, including those where these communities' land ownership has not yet been

recognized in its entirety by the government in their country.

- ▶ Aid communities, especially those that are socially or economically marginalized. Local farmers and communities should have ownership and control over biomass production and processing facilities, generating income for local communities. Human rights must be respected.
- ▶ Eliminate the use of agrochemicals and artificial fertilizers. Switching to non-intensive production will also be key to reducing emissions of nitrous oxide.
- ▶ Ensure that the development of any further bioenergy technologies does not involve the development or release of GM crops or trees into the environment.
- ▶ Be based on sustainable local biomass standards, certification or labelling systems, that have been developed, administered and supported by a democratic process that includes local and affected communities.

An energy efficiency revolution for the electricity generation sector

What is really needed is a new production and consumption energy model that leads to a reduction in the consumption of energy and significantly increased investment in energy-efficient technologies and renewables based on sun, wind, wave, tides, small-scale hydropower and small-scale local biomass production. These feasible alternatives to agrofuels are essential, especially given that urban centres around the world will continue to have reduced but significant energy demands that still need to be met.

David Callaghan

Wildlife Notes

The harsh winter conditions brought tree planting to a halt but the recent thaw produced a flood of orders for the nursery

I was even looking forward to some more frost. The mild spell brought out the bees and butterflies. A Brimstone did a fly past on 19 March on the Newland site and the bumble bees have been busy on the willow catkins. The snowdrops are already gone and the blackthorn is showing signs of blooming. New shoots are pushing through, Japanese Knotweed included, and last year's planting of wildflowers is on the move. **Spring is here!**

Meanwhile, the Hull Development Framework has been producing data showing a lack of almost 21 hectares of green-space in the city. A detailed breakdown is given in section 7, the Environmental Resources chapter, and reference is made to other studies which stress the value of green-space for recreation, well-being and biodiversity in the city. Standards are given for access to certain types of open areas, eg parks and allotments and the importance of trees and green-spaces for mitigating the effects of flooding and climate change is noted. The value of green corridors is recognised.

All this is to be covered by an Open Space strategy. "It is likely that improving the quality of existing sites is a more realistic alternative given the constraints of limited land and resources." What does "quality" mean?

Anyway, there was a chance to dig some more holes in Sculcoates Cemetery on Saturday 17 April, starting at 6.00 am with the dawn chorus and 10.00 am with trowels.

Come and have a look at how this green-space is progressing.

David Longthorn

Hull FoE 2009: progress report

It's been a busy year for Hull FoE, from the highlight of David winning the "Earth Mover Award" for his tree and wildflower planting activities, to our successful annual Green Fair, we have covered lots of campaigns. Thanks to all the volunteers who have come along to our many events—we can always use more! The Hull ECO continues to flourish and attracts compliments. We accept articles from any of our members or readers, so if you feel strongly about something or have some interesting information to share please contact Hilary or Chrys.

We have an e-list for people who prefer an electronic version of the newsletter in full colour. After an initial flurry of interest, I haven't received many new converts and there remain a number of people who prefer to receive a paper copy.

Our membership is steady with 68 members paying subs including eight new (2008 was 66 and six). This is an increase of two. These figures hide the fact that about another thirty people pay on alternate years—this isn't satisfactory as they are effectively getting a reduced rate but there doesn't seem much we can do about it. (If you are one, would you like to pay twice as much for two years at a time?)

If you have difficulty remembering to pay, don't forget you can take out a standing order.

The email discussion group continues to be very busy. Are people aware that there are two lists?—the discussion group with only a few names on and the BCC comprehensive list, which has over 60 addresses. The latter list receives only 2 to 3 emails a week eg agendas, meeting minutes and topics of general interest. When asked, no one on the BCC list wanted to join the discussion list.

Some group members regularly attend various meetings, forums etc on green issues on behalf of Hull FoE. It's good that "the powers that be" get to hear our views. Just one point for clarity: where a formal written response is required please will the writer either:

(1) Circulate input prior to submission so the rest of us can review and then submit in the group's name

or

(2) If a personal opinion is being expressed, please use words along the lines of **"This is a personal opinion and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of Hull FoE"** to avoid any ambiguity.

Here's to our next successful year!

Sue Jolliffe, Coordinator

Biofuels—the local implications *continued from page 1*

In answer to the claim that the industry should wait for the second generation of biofuels created from waste, which will provide better carbon savings, they say that huge investment and research is needed and the first generation biofuels will establish the crucial infrastructure and markets. Vivergo participates in Heywoods, the project to create more woodland around Hull.

And now...Biomass

This April has seen the submission of a planning application by Dong Energy, to build a wood-burning power station near Queen Elizabeth Dock. Woodchip would be imported via a new deep water terminal, but it was not stated where it would be imported from. One news bulletin reported that natural by-products from agricultural, timber and forestry industries including bark, sawdust and shavings would be burnt at the plant. The plant would generate

enough power to meet the needs of 500,000 homes. Again, government targets are cited as a driving force, this time for 15% of the country's national energy requirement to be generated by using renewables by 2020.

The planning application will be dealt with by the Infrastructure Planning Commission, the centralised method for large applications introduced last year. Dong are required to consult local people and submit a Statement of Community Consultation. They will then consult again on their preferred option.

Dong Energy, a state-owned Danish firm, was criticised by the Guardian's Fred Pierce last year for trading on its green image while planning to build a coal fired power station in Scotland.

Hull FoE is likely to be asking questions about the source of the fuel used and the methods of dealing with emissions.

Hilary Byers

Mend the roof while the sun is shining

On 24 April 2010, at 'Arc' Architecture Centre, Blanket Row, Hull, I attended an Exhibition and Presentation:

Facing up to rising sea levels: The future of our coastal estuarine cities

Most of the material presented concerned sea and river flooding, mostly in other places, and what the organisations represented had done about it. There was hardly anything about practical, domestic-scale measures we can take in Hull.

However, the second presenter, Granville Davies, Principal Engineer at Royal Haskoning gave a PowerPoint presentation in which, among other things, he showed domestic rain retention in tanks sited, for instance, under raised flower beds. I asked him about the significance of the contribution he thought this might make to the reduction of flood caused by heavy rain and he was clearly enthusiastic about such measures on the basis that, 'every little helps'. Other presenters, Steve Wragg (Flood Risk Planning Manager at Hull City Council) and Robert Barker (Architect at BACA Architects) were in strong agreement. When Davies used the term, 'intelligent water butt', though this, as he seemed to expect, caused some amusement, it was suddenly clear that the whole business of high

tech water management has arrived and is thriving. A few minutes googling confirms this beyond doubt. Smoothing nature's erratic supply services is basic to being civilised and avoiding having to resort to raiding neighbours who might have been more provident.

In other words, in this area of concern as in others there is much we can do for ourselves to improve things. Even simple cheap low tech measures (like boring old draught-proofing) can improve our quality of life, save money and help to save the eco system. We know all this but it is easy to be complacent and not take simple precautions. I am uncomfortably aware that I have not done as much as I could about, say, insulation. But, as a result of writing this article, I feel renewed impetus to get on with it!

In many areas we have become dependent on central providers for basic necessities such as food, energy, transport, and clothing. It makes sense to take advantage of these opportunities but, associated with relief from having always to 'do' for ourselves, is a tendency to slide into becoming deskilled, dumbed down and disempowered. We have become dependent on the 'just in time' distribution system which delivers, we trust, food, fuel and other necessities (remember road salt, Catch 22?). It is said that there is only 48 hours

food supply on hand and after that, if the supply chain is broken, it's riots and escalating breakdown of civil order. The recent volcanic eruption in Iceland and the consequent suspending of air travel over much of Europe is an example of how even anticipated difficulties can happen suddenly without notice and cause great inconvenience to thousands of people. We need only two or three of these events such as some deadly infectious 'flu', a financial system collapse, or a strong solar flare to coincide and, without a rather higher degree of self-sufficiency than we appear to have now, rapid recovery could be difficult.

When few others seem to be prepared for hiccups in the supply of survival needs it can feel eccentric to do even simple things like have a small stockpile of food. We see the shops with shelves full and imagine it will always be like that. It's when the shelves are full that is the time to buy reserves, when it is easy, and relatively cheap. The same logic applies to organising your own water storage. Plus, water butts are very visible. The more there are, the more normal they will seem; and we need to normalise economy and self-sufficiency measures so that waverers will feel comfortable about joining in.

Alan Worsley

Bio-degradable kitchen aids

Members who come to meetings will recall that I showed two new products that I had purchased, leaf plates and luffa scourers.

The leaf plates are made in India from 100% sal and siali leaves, and although not good for hot food, (and liquids tend to leak through. Ed) they are useful for salads and the like and wonderful for parties when they save you washing a mountain of dishes. They can be composted after use and are

Fair Trade as are the luffas, used in the Philippines to wash dishes instead of plastic scourers.

They are biodegradable and ethically and sustainably grown on a farm in the Philippines.

"If everyone used Michael's Original Scouring Luffas, it is estimated we would avoid the equivalent of 150 double-decker buses of non-biodegradable landfill a year."

Haris Livas-Dawes

Thanks to everyone who paid their subs in 2009

Subs are now due for 2010

You will have a "Subs Due" on your address label if you haven't yet paid, or a "Subs Due X2" in red if you didn't pay last year either!

If you need a helping hand remembering, why not fill in a standing order mandate?

Thanks for all your support.

Sue Jolliffe



Hull Friends of the Earth

M E M B E R S H I P

To renew membership or to join/support Hull Friends of the Earth, please fill in the following form:		Payment	
Name (Mr/Mrs/Ms)		I enclose:	
Address		Membership fee (£5 waged, £2 unwaged)	£
		Donation	£
Postcode		Total	£
Telephone		<i>Please make cheques payable to Hull Friends of the Earth</i>	
Email			

Standing Order Mandate		Happy to help?
<p>Hull Friends of the Earth Standing Order Mandate OR (delete one or the other as appropriate) Amendment cancelling any previous instructions to pay money to Hull Friends of the Earth. (Please fill in the details of your own account and the bank where it is held.)</p>		<p>Volunteers are always needed. If you might be able to help, please underline what you would be able to help with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Stalls ▶ Letter writing ▶ Delivering newsletters ▶ Other ways (please specify)
Your account name		
Your account number		
Your bank		
Bank branch		
Bank address		
Bank postcode		
<p>Upon receipt of this order and then every year following on or about the _____ day of _____ (month) until otherwise instructed, please pay to Hull Friends of the Earth Yorkshire Bank plc, 38 Prince's Avenue, Hull HU5 3QQ Account number: 27534801 Branch sort code: 05 05 25 the sum of TWO POUNDS (unwaged) or FIVE POUNDS (waged) or _____ (delete and/or fill in as required - donations over the minimum amount are welcome) mentioning the reference _____ (your own name or something short we can identify you by on the bank statements!)</p> <p>Signed _____ Date _____</p> <p><i>Please return to the Membership Secretary, Sue Jolliffe, 47 Kingsway, Cottingham, HU16 5BB</i></p>		<p>Newsletter by email</p> <p>If you would like to receive the newsletter as a full colour pdf attachment, please send your email address to sue@jolliffe.karoo.co.uk stating whether you would like to receive it instead of or as well as a paper copy</p> <p>We will use the contact details you have provided to keep you up to date on our campaigns and how you can help us. If you'd rather NOT receive this information from us, please tick here <input type="checkbox"/></p>

Hull Friends of the Earth: CONTACTS		
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