



# Friends of the Earth Pembrokehire Cyfeillion y ddaear Sir Benfro

## Newsletter December 2018

### AGM and film - support needed for our core group!

We held our AGM on 29 November re-electing Rebecca as membership secretary and treasurer, and Eleanor and Bettina as co-ordinators. Jan Waite stepped down from the core groups, and Karina stepped down as co-ordinator but remains part of core group. We do urgently need more support, so please get in touch if you would like to come along to our core group meetings. We meet once a month and our meetings are friendly and involve teas and cakes!

We showed the film 'Blue Heart' about the hundreds of dam projects in the beautiful wild Balkan mountains threatening to destroy some of the wildest habitats left in Europe. On a positive note the film portrayed several successful campaigns that had managed to prevent dam projects by litigation and direct action.

We finished with a discussion on what future campaigns we should be involved, looking how we can support and get involved in the new Extinction Rebellion movement.

### Extinction Rebellion (XR for short)

<https://rebellion.earth>

XR is a rapidly expanding global movement using Non-Violent Direct Action (NVDA) to force the World leaders to take action against species extinction and climate change. It is supported by many internationally known figures such as Naomi Klein and Noam Chomsky. It has massively expanding support across 35 countries. Here in Pembrokehire we have fast growing groups based on Facebook and one in Cardigan and in Carmarthen. A mass international action is planned for April 2019. There will be continuous local actions in Wales and throughout the UK.

### Plastic Free Narberth

This is going strong, with monthly litter picks being really well attended. The next date is Sunday 27 January, from 9.30 am and the following last Sundays of each month. We will be showing the film 'Plastic

Ocean' on Friday 25 January 7 pm in the Bloomfield Centre in Narberth.

Take some time to reflect in the run-up to Christmas how you can reduce single use plastics. A prime time to cut down on consumption, give your time as a gift, go for tickets to cultural events, buy second hand, and if you must buy ethical from shops like the lovely Happy Planet Green Store in Narberth.



### TIPS FOR A PLASTIC-FREE CHRISTMAS

<https://friendsoftheearth.uk/plastics/christmas-plastic-free>

### Report back from the FoE Welsh National Gathering in Margam Park in September

#### Electric cars

For a long time I have been contemplating an electric car. I am aware that most of my journeys are under 30 miles, but I do also travel to Cardiff and Mid Wales. I also have family members who get anxious when the fuel gauge is below half, so like many I have suffered from what those in the business call range anxiety. I was therefore delighted when the opportunity to learn more came up at the FoE Cymru National Gathering.

The fascinating talk was given by an enthusiastic self-confessed ex-petrolhead. He began by comparing the two types of cars. The internal combustion engine has 1800 moving parts, it runs at 20% efficiency with constant emissions and no energy recovery. Over its lifetime it not only produces exhaust but also waste oil, brake fluid, radiator fluid and so on. Catalytic converters which frequently operate below optimum, are the main consumers of the rare metals and internal combustion engines are noisy.

By contrast an EV is 70% efficient and can run on 100% renewables, it has 22 moving parts, a low centre of gravity making it safer and regenerative braking which uses the engine to slow the vehicle at the same time putting energy back into the battery and increasing efficiency. Batteries require lithium (only

10%) and carbon. The lithium is easy and cost effective to recycle and they do not require rare metals.

All this means they are definitely way better for the environment. But what about range and battery life. We all know the batteries on our phones don't last but the difference is they are not actively cooled. It was great to hear that batteries are lasting for 10 -15 years or up to 500,000 miles, which would last me over 30 years! In that time a petrol car would have burned 20,000 gallons. As for range this does vary with the model and driving conditions and the way it is driven but the Renault Zoey has a range of about 150 miles. Enough that with some planning you are not going to be left high and dry.

Finally what about cost. Yes, they are more expensive to buy. The grant does help and then they are much cheaper to run. I knew the cost of fuel was less but I had not appreciated the savings on maintenance. No wonder the industry is not keen to sell them.

For general information on EV's go to <https://www.electraa.org.uk/> and for comparison of the models go to <https://ev-database.uk/>

### Benthyg

At the FoE Cymru gathering there was a workshop entitled Benthyg. I was intrigued. How many of us own a drill which we use 1-2 times a year? A Benthyg, which means borrow, is a place to borrow things you need and donate things you own but don't, or rarely, use. It is a library of things. The advantages are obvious: less stuff, a chance to share skills, access to equipment, which is only needed for a short time, particularly for those who can't afford to buy it.

So what do you need to set one up? A storage place or venue, volunteers with skills, a target audience and a means of communicating with them, items to lend and funds. Then there is the other practical stuff like forms insurance and a system of returns.

It all starts to sound difficult but there are other successful examples to draw on. For more information go to [www.benthyg.org](http://www.benthyg.org). If you are interested in helping to set one up do get in touch.

Tai chi in  
between talks



#NoNewM4 #DimM4Newydd



Here is the online action to write to your AM's re: M4.

<https://act.friendsoftheearth.uk/act/no-new-m4-dim-m4-newydd>

Please can you take the action and

- Share on your personal social media

Tell your Assembly Members to say NO to the M4 relief road.

- Act now to stop a road that will
- damage precious and endangered wildlife
- lead to more congestion and air pollution
- result in climate-changing emissions
- cost Welsh taxpayers around £2 billion

Tell your AM to say #NoNewM4 to #SaveTheGwentLevels. Together we can stop this expensive road. We must act to protect wildlife, to combat climate change, to invest in a sustainable Wales for future generations.

Reply from the Conservative AMs Angela Burns and Paul Davies:

'I note your concerns over the potential adverse impact of the proposed M4 relief road on the environment and on future generations.

While my Welsh Conservative colleagues and I recognise the need for a solution to address the congestion problems on the M4 we have been consistent in warning the Welsh Government that this solution cannot be at any price.

It is now essential that the Welsh Government publish the findings and conclusions of the public inquiry into its proposed black route so that all stakeholders are able to consider them in full prior to consideration of the matter in the National Assembly for Wales.

The Welsh Government are yet to confirm the date, nature or detail of any potential vote but you can rest

assured that the Welsh Conservatives will not support a solution which has an unacceptable cost to the taxpayer or the local environment.’

## Norway – bad guy or the global green leader

Norway is one of the world’s biggest oil producers. Almost all of its oil and gas is exported and this makes up more than half its exports. Norway takes the environment seriously and is proud of its green credentials: 50% of all new cars are electric. It can be argued that Norway’s production of natural gas exported to the UK has enabled Britain to wean itself off coal. Norwegian gas is cleaner with a lower carbon output than any other world sources. Norway provides fuel security; without its supply, Europe would be dependent on Russia for gas.

The wealth the gas has created for the country has given it the means to develop its renewables, mainly hydro- electric power, of which it has an excess capacity. A 720 kilometre cable is being laid to connect to NE. England and supply green electricity from one of the largest hydro-electric power stations. But there are tough choices to be made, if Norway is to meet the legally binding emissions reductions targets under the Paris Agreement.

North of the Arctic Circle in Norway climate change is causing massive changes in the ice formations: entire seal habitats are disappearing, reindeer are unable to graze because ice is replacing the snow which is too solid for them to scrape away. As the ice thaws the Barents Sea is opening up to oil and gas exploration, subsidised by its government Norway has 150 sites of exploration and another 150 proposed. It is competing with Russia in drilling for oil and gas. If they go on opening up the sites, they will be producing oil and Gas (mainly gas, oil production peaked in 2000) until 2070-80, but Europe is committed to zero gas emissions by 2050.

Norway could be using its wealth to switch to renewables and developing new technologies without gas. It has the money available in its sovereign funds which it invested its oil and gas revenues in. It needs to move its labour and investments into new areas such as wind and solar power, carbon storage and electrical ships (shipbuilding employs about 20,000 people).

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3cswkdr>

*The Svalbard Treaty, was signed in 1920. The Svalbard Treaty states that Norway not only has the right, but*

*also an international obligation, to ensure that the natural environment in Svalbard and associated areas is preserved and is not destroyed as a consequence of human pressures.*

## People’s Vote March

by Karina Russell

While 100,000 were expected to attend, over 700,000 turned up in London on October 30<sup>th</sup> to express their support for another referendum on our membership of the E.U. This included a bus load of Pembrokeshire protesters against the shambles of Brexit.

I arrived bleary-eyed at Penblewin with my sister and her husband who were visiting from France and are amazed that Britain voted to leave the world’s largest trading block. I was motivated to go as most of our environmental legislation, including clean air and clean seas, has emanated from the European Union. Before joining we were known as the “dirty man of Europe”. I am concerned that our climate change policies will be weakened as right-wing Brexiteers are often opposed to these policies.

There was a carnival atmosphere in warm sunshine and we were all pleased we’d made the effort to travel to London and back in one day to be part of this major statement for a People’s Vote.



## Minor Action Changes Policy

After many years of bringing my (Karina) own plate with cover to order my lunch at the Withybus hospital canteen and take it back to the clinic where I work, I was astounded to be told that I was no longer allowed to do so. I had chosen to do this rather than use the polystyrene containers that end up in landfill. I was told that people were being stopped from supplying their own plates because of risk of the catering service being accused of food poisoning!! I spoke to the manager and expressed my amazement that somebody should think this up at a time when there is a huge plastics campaign where we are being encouraged to re-use and re-cycle to reduce landfill and waste. I then wrote to the catering manager expressing my concern at this action within the NHS

and he agreed to have discussions with the Infection Control and Environmental Health Departments. He eventually came back to me with an assurance that we could bring our own containers with sealable tops and they intended to supply bio degradable containers for purchase. This little victory for the environment was later announced on the Three Counties NHS messaging service.

### “Wilding” by Isabella Tree – a review

This is a story of the miracle of nature, how it thrives with abundance, if left to its own devices. It gives us hope we can halt the unravelling of our eco-systems.

After the near bankruptcy of their 3500 acres of intensively farmed land, Knepp Farm, in Sussex, Isabella and her husband decided to turn their land back to nature in 2000. They introduced old breeds of animals such as Tamworth pigs, long horned cattle and deer and left them to roam. Despite the huge opposition from neighbouring farms at the sight of thistle and ragwort growing in what they saw as neglected landscape the project has become a leading light for conservation in the UK.

Nightingales, turtle doves and the purple Emperor butterfly are among the many species thriving and multiplying in Knepp Farm. I don't know if I have ever heard or seen any of these and I certainly didn't realise these birds migrate from Africa. I have learnt the horse manure I have been liberally loading into my compost heap probably contains anti-worming drugs that kill off earth worms.

There are some long discussions about the fauna of ancient Britain and evidence that it was as much pasture and scrubland as wood land, but it's worth persisting for the fascinating gems such as the rewilding project in the Netherlands where the government has given 5000 hectares to nature and where sea eagles nest now.

### SING A SONG OF CARBON

Tune: “Sing a song of sixpence”

By Christopher Jessop

Sing a song of carbon, and hear the fools deny  
That many folk are starving, and lots are going to die:  
Politicians at each conference, they gravely shake  
their heads –

Then nod through extra oil wells before they go to bed!

Deserts all expanding, heatwaves getting worse:  
Staple crops start failing, livestock dies of thirst.  
And elsewhere there's overgrazing, and topsoil in decay:

How can the “First World” blame them when the locals move away?

A wine of wrath fermenting from crops of bitter grapes:

The flavours of this vintage are murder, theft, and rape.

See pestilence and plague go romping 'cross the land,  
Whipped along with greed-mad songs by profiteering Man.

Lucky Britain, still, so green and pleasant stands:  
How can you blame those migrants, why won't you understand

That the lifestyle we're pursuing which has wrecked  
their native lands –

They've seen it on the TV, and they think that it looks grand!

That person in your mirror is the cause of all our woes:

Ever more long-distance holidays, big cars, and pointless clothes.

So selfishly consuming the resources of the world,  
Thus worsening the outlook for our little boys and girls.

Of course there'll be a future, a future of some sort;  
But it might not be pleasant, indeed it might be fraught.

We used to have a planet which was beautiful and charmed...

But every year that we're still here, it suffers so much harm!

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*(Leave a message and I will get back to you)*