

Pembrokeshire Friends of the Earth Cyfeillion y Ddaear Sir Benfro

Newsletter October 2017



Pembrokeshire FOE 1987-2017



We celebrated Pembrokeshire FOE 30th Anniversary with a party at Canolfan Pentre Ifan on Saturday 8th July. It was a warm, sunny evening and we ate on tables outside with a feast provided by Transition Café Bro Gwaun. This was followed by a twmpath with music by Julie Murphy and Ceri Mathews.



The morning after, some of us stayed on to clear up and go for a walk

Egnedol planning application is reconsidered

October will see the re-opening of the planning process which was suspended by the inspector at the end of March this year. The consultation was re-opened briefly before the 8th September, but the Planning Inspectorate restricted consideration of comments to ones about local ecology impacts. This is despite the fact that the plant would be built inside two Control of Major Accident Hazard Zones and that its design contravenes European guidelines for biomass gasifiers, which were drawn up to reduce the risks of explosions and fires.

Pembrokeshire Friends of the Earth, The Environment Network for Pembrokeshire (TENP) and Biofuelwatch responded to the consultation and warned that the planners' handling of Egnedol's application could be putting lives at risk. We re-iterated our concerns over air pollution and risks of explosion of the plant, as well as greenhouse gas emissions. Our full press release is on our website, and we are waiting to hear from the Inspectorate whether there will be a public meeting discussing the updated application, as we requested.

Waste and biomass burning power stations continue to be subsidised

New subsidies for renewable energy were announced in September most awards have gone to offshore wind which produces genuinely low-carbon energy; however, one award has gone to what would become Scotland's largest biomass power station, and others to controversial "energy from waste" projects.

"We are dismayed to see yet more subsidies going to power stations that will burn biomass and waste – neither of which are remotely sustainable. We are particularly shocked to see money awarded to a large biomass power station in Grangemouth, one which we must assume will burn imported wood pellets or woodchips, in an already heavily polluted town. The UK already burns more wood in power stations than we can produce annually, which causes forest destruction in other parts of the world such as the southern US. Awarding more money to power stations to burn more wood is only going to make this problem worse." Almuth Ernsting, co-director of Biofuelwatch,



As part of the FOE Clean Air week in June Pembs. FOE had a stall with the help of Kevin Thompson of Transition Town Haverfordwest.

Air pollution is a major public health concern responsible for 40,000 premature deaths a year. In August the government announced it was phasing out diesel cars by 2040. This is too little too late. The UK government has been breaking the legal limits for deadly Nitrogen Oxide since 2010 and has lost in court twice.

Sign the petition: <https://act.foe.co.uk/ditchdiesel>

Health campaigners say the energy policies of the world's richest countries are inflicting a double burden on their citizens, not only using their taxes to pay fossil fuel subsidies, but also loading huge health costs on them.

A report by the Health and Environment Alliance, HEAL, says that although fossil fuel combustion causes deadly air pollution and climate change, virtually all governments spend vast sums of public money – their citizens' taxes – on supporting the oil, gas and coal industry in fossil fuel energy production. Every year air pollution from mostly fossil fuel combustion cuts short the lives of an estimated 6.5 million people worldwide through respiratory tract infections, strokes, heart attacks, lung cancer and chronic lung disease. The costs to health from the resulting air pollution, climate change and environmental degradation are not carried by the industry, HEAL says, but paid by society.

"It is time to seize the opportunity to improve the health of millions of people worldwide by abandoning subsidies to the deadly fossil fuel industry. They should walk the talk and end fossil fuel subsidies now."

Electric bus covers 1,100 miles on single charge

An electric bus has covered over 1,000 miles on a single charge to claim a world record for driving the longest distance by an electric vehicle on a single charge.

The creators of the bus hope their technology will have a disruptive impact on the transit market because of its low cost per mile compared to conventional fossil fuel-powered buses. According to Bloomberg New Energy Finance, lithium-ion battery prices have dropped by roughly 72 percent since 2010, and the economics for batteries continue to improve.

The electric bus is not a new idea. There was a time when many British towns and cities hummed with the sound of the trolleybus.

Bridging the gap between trams and diesel buses, the benefits of the electric trolleybus include zero emissions on the street, very little noise, and powerful, smooth acceleration. And from the perspective of the operator, trolleybuses offer lower maintenance costs. Given their strengths, it's a wonder we gave them up in favour of diesel-powered buses. Especially when you consider the damage caused to the environment and our health by diesel emissions. Different from an electric or hybrid bus that carries its own source of power, a trolleybus draws electricity from two overhead wires using spring-loaded trolley poles (trams require only one wire and pole) <https://www.eta.co.uk/2017/09/20/electric-bus-covers-1100-miles-on-single-charge/>



<https://www.eta.co.uk/2017/09/19/bicycle-pop-up-card> Inspiring short film about a man who makes cardboard bicycles

Migrating birds might not be able to fly home fast enough to meet shifts in springtime in Europe driven by climate change, new research suggests.

Flying back too early or too late for spring is costly for birds. Their arrival must coincide with the emergence of food sources, such as caterpillars, in order to enable them to feed and successfully rear their young.

Birds that overwinter in warmer climes, including willow warblers, tree pipits and barn swallows, will be unable to cut their migrations short as climate change causes spring to arrive earlier in many parts of Europe, researchers find.

This new evidence suggests that birds are much less adaptable to climate change than previously hoped

[https://www.carbonbrief.org/migrating-birds-cant-keep-earlier-spring-changing-climate?ct=t\(Carbon_Brief_Weekly_11_08_2017\)](https://www.carbonbrief.org/migrating-birds-cant-keep-earlier-spring-changing-climate?ct=t(Carbon_Brief_Weekly_11_08_2017))



Male swallow in flight feeding fledged chicks Minsmere RSPB reserve

Who is footing the Bill

Communities in coastal Texas and Louisiana, the Caribbean, Puerto Rico and Florida are confronting the damage wrought by Hurricane Harvey and Irma, fuelled by abnormally warm waters,

The costs of these hurricanes will be enormous and climate change by enhancing their destructive power will have made the costs far larger. The question is, how much larger? Careful studies will take time but the evidence that climate change is warming ocean waters, increasing both sea level and the risk of extreme precipitation in these regions is well established.

Who should pay these costs? In the United States, the default assumption is that costs of climate damages and adaptation should be borne by taxpayers, through flood insurance programs, federal disaster relief funds and the like, as well as by affected individuals, families and private businesses. This assumption is now being challenged in the courts. Lawsuits filed in July by three coastal California communities against ExxonMobil, Chevron, BP and other large fossil fuel companies argue that the companies, not taxpayers and residents, should bear the cost of damages from rising seas.

They draw on extensive evidence that fossil fuel companies, knowing that their products contributed substantially to climate change, engaged for decades in a coordinated campaign to publicly disparage climate science to avoid limits on emissions.

Using a simple, well-established climate model, a study in a peer-reviewed paper in the journal *Climatic Change* for the first time quantifies the amount of sea level rise and increase in global surface temperatures that can be traced to the emissions from specific fossil fuel companies.

Strikingly, nearly 30% of the rise in global sea level between 1880 and 2010 resulted from emissions traced to the 90 largest carbon producers. Emissions traced to the 20 companies named in California communities' lawsuits contributed 10% of global sea level rise over the same period. More than 6% of the rise in global sea level resulted from emissions traced to ExxonMobil, Chevron and BP, the three largest contributors.

We have the data needed to link the emissions traced to products sold by a fossil fuel company to a specific share of changes in temperature and sea level rise. Determining who should pay what for climate damages is a social and political question. But this kind of scientific work can help inform public and policy debate over the issue and potentially offers an approach that can help juries and judges to monetise damages in cases like the California communities' lawsuits.

Many, even within the fossil fuel industry itself, are arguing they can still change course, but it is hard to justify the immediate cost to shareholders when just using the atmosphere as a waste dump and leaving impacted communities, taxpayers and

future generations to deal with the consequences appears to be a risk-free alternative. But, as we found in the 2008 financial crisis, allowing companies to make private profits while society at large underwrites the risk ends badly for everyone.

It may take tens to hundreds of billions of dollars to support disaster relief and recovery among Gulf coast communities affected by Hurricane Harvey. ExxonMobil, Chevron and BP have collectively pledged only \$2.75m.

Peter C Frumhoff is the Director of Science and Policy at the Union of Concerned Scientists. Myles R Allen is Professor of Geosystem Science in the School of Geography and the Environment, University of Oxford

The cost of subsidies for new offshore wind farms has halved since the last 2015 auction for clean energy projects

The price of energy from bottom-standing offshore wind farms has plummeted 32% since 2012 - far faster than anyone predicted.

The price is now four years ahead of the government's expected target, and another big price drop is expected, taking offshore wind to a much lower price than new nuclear power.

Two firms said they were willing to build offshore wind farms for a guaranteed price of £57.50 per megawatt hour for 2022-23. This compares with the new Hinkley Point C nuclear plant securing subsidies of £92.50 per megawatt hour.

Caroline Lucas, co-leader of the Green Party, said: "This massive price drop for offshore wind is a huge boost for the renewables industry and should be the nail in the coffin for new nuclear.

"The government's undying commitment to new nuclear risks locking us into sky high prices for years to come. Put simply, this news should be the death knell for Hinkley C nuclear station."

Plastic fibres found in tap water around the world, study reveals

Tests show billions of people globally are drinking water contaminated by plastic particles, with 83% of samples found to be polluted

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/sep/06/plastic-fibres-found-tap-water-around-world-study-reveals>

The world's first full-scale floating wind farm has started to take shape off the north-east coast of Scotland.

The revolutionary technology will allow wind power to be harvested in waters too deep for the current conventional bottom-standing turbines.

The Peterhead wind farm, known as Hywind, is a trial which will bring power to 20,000 homes. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-40699979>

Jordan seeks to become an oasis of water-saving technology

Jordan could face double the number of droughts by 2100 as a result of climate change, if emissions are unchecked. As strains on the desert nation's supply increase, scientists are collaborating on projects to keep water flowing.

In August, Hassan Fahad al-Rhaibeh, the mayor of the Jordanian town of Umm el-Jimal, was re-elected after pledging to restore reservoirs built by Arabs as early as AD 90. Winter rains and run-off from mountains in Syria — 10 kilometres to the North — once streamed through canals and into basalt-block reservoirs, which stored the water throughout parched summers. People maintained the system for 800 years, through the Roman, Byzantine and Islamic eras, until the town was abandoned around AD 900. <http://www.nature.com/news/jordan-seeks-to-become-an-oasis-of-water-saving-technology-1.22598>



This ancient canal system was recently excavated near Umm el-Jimal, Jordan



SPAN Arts' **SAVE THE BEES** was a wonderful display for the Narberth carnival. They organised workshops throughout the summer all around Pembrokeshire to make the costumes. The Queen bees quilted cloak and the giant pollinating insects were works of art. They won 2 well deserved trophies for their efforts.



Pembs FoE bees Karina Eleanor & Bettina

Al Gore's 'Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power' at Theatre Mwldan, Cardigan, 25 September

Having seen this recently, I couldn't express the message of the film better: 'This sequel to An Inconvenient Truth arrives post Trump and gives a shot in the arm to the climate change cause. Al Gore's winning, impassioned and stirring film is a wide-ranging, visually graphic exploration of the state of the planet, with Gore as our scientist, preacher and tour guide through everything from surreal weather patterns and the world political stage to the moving issue of photographing the Earth from space. It finds plenty to say, both in cementing the urgency of Gore's message and in finding cause for hope.'

<http://www.mwldan.co.uk>

Getting away from Glyphosate

During our 30th birthday celebrations, Gerald Miles gave an entertaining presentation of his work at his family farm close to St David's where he has set up Caerhys Organic Community Agriculture. He also talked about his latest campaign against the widespread use of glyphosate.

This herbicide came into the news 2 years ago when the WHO declared that it was a probable human carcinogen and more recently the EU has been deciding on relicensing its use for the next 10 years. Although there have been concerns about its use for more than 15 years, it is the world's most overused herbicide being a major ingredient in Monsanto's product Roundup where it is combined with other chemicals making it potentially even more toxic.

Gerald pointed out that while this chemical has been used for very many years, the amounts being used have increased dramatically over the last decade or so. It is now used not only for the control of problematic weeds like Japanese knotweed but also prior to planting and reseedling, to control weeds with GM crops and prior to harvest as a drying agent. 30% of bread in the UK contains traces of glyphosate.

There has been no adequate monitoring of the impact of this widespread use, in particular while it is said to be inactivated by contact with soil it can leach out into water and thus threatens to pollute water courses.

There is also evidence of harmful impacts on micro-organisms and in particular fungi in soils, and hedgerows and field margins are damaged by spraying drift.

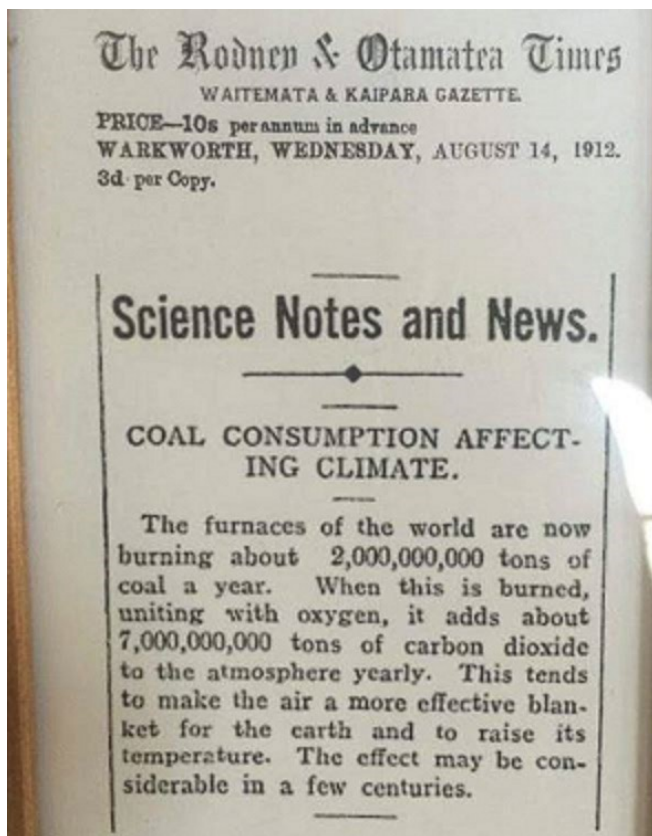
The NFU has argued that its use has enabled farmers to use conservation tillage and Friends of the Earth acknowledge that an immediate ban would be problematic for many farmers, including those who are more progressive and environmentally conscious. Both the soil association and Friends of the Earth are demanding that more research and monitoring is carried out. FoE has also called for an immediate end to its use in parks, schools and public gardens and its use prior to crop harvest.

The Government should support agricultural research into alternative methods of controlling weeds which do not harm our waters, soils and wild species, and which do not pose a threat to human health.

https://www.foe.co.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/impact-s_glyphosate.pdf

<http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/glyphosate-debate>

<https://www.soilassociation.org/media/7229/glyphosate-and-soil-health-a-summary1.docx.pdf> <https://www.nfuonline.com/assets/93815>



COWSPIRACY: The Sustainability Secret is a groundbreaking feature-length environmental documentary following an intrepid filmmaker as he uncovers the most destructive industry facing the planet today and investigates why the world's leading environmental organisations are too afraid to talk about it. As eye-opening as *Blackfish* and as inspiring as *An Inconvenient Truth*, this shocking yet humorous documentary reveals the absolutely devastating environmental impact large-scale factory farming has on our planet.

Delicious low-carbon organic grass-fed local lamb, delivered to your door. Email Bettina for details: bettinab@dsl.pipex.com

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