Hull's environmental newsletter. Published by Hull Friends of the Earth

www.hfoe.org.uk

February 2012 Issue 36

DIARY DATES

Tues 7 February 7.30 pm

HFoE meeting. Recycling Unlimited 151 Newland Avenue

Sat 3 March 1-5pm

Local Action Day in Leeds (see ChitChat)

Tues 6 March 7.30 pm

HFoE meeting. Recycling Unlimited 151 Newland Avenue

Tues 3 April 7.30 pm

HFoe AGM. Recycling Unlimited 151 Newland Avenue. Bring ideas, and volunteer!

Tues 1 May 7.30 pm

HFoE meeting. Recycling Unlimited 151 Newland Avenue

Lots more activities inside!

Hull Transition

Meet 2nd & 4th Monday of each month at The Eagle, Coltman Street, 7.30. Contact 07816 141169, email: lausannet@yahoo. co.uk

Beverley FoE

Meet **1st** Thursday each month at **Hodgson's Pub**, Beverley, 7.30.

Email: shan@voice-international.net

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Neptune harnesses Humber's tidal power



In the midst of a recession our region is poised to be at the forefront of the UK's green energy and renewables sector.

The Proteus platform being towed to its working position near The Deep

We are all aware of engineering giant Siemens and their plan to make wind turbines in Hull but I wondered what was going on with our own home-grown renewables.

North Ferriby company Neptune Renewable Energy Ltd was founded in September 2005. Since then it has been developing the Neptune Proteus, a tidal energy generator.

The first Proteus Demonstrator was built at Wear Dock, Sunderland and was brought back to Hull in July 2010. After stringent testing, parliamentary approval was awarded by the Department of Energy and Climate Change which gave the green light for the project.

The Proteus was deployed on 18 January 2012 outside the Deep where it is hoped that it will produce around half of the Deep's entire electrical requirements.

Colin Brown, chief executive of The Deep, said: "One of the more dangerous effects of burning fossil fuels is the gradual acidification of the oceans. As an environmental charity I think it's really fitting that The Deep will soon be using the sea to protect the sea."

The Neptune Proteus weighs more than 150 tonnes, is 20m long by 14m wide and 6m high. It is basically a steel hull with a vertically mounted square turbine and

Continued on page 3

ECO Chit Chat

New Year greetings to all, and especially the new Hull FoE members who came along to our December social activities. We hope to have more informal get togethers, so keep in touch.



Hull FoE's campaigning focus for this year will be:

Bee Campaign

Really a campaign to raise biodiversity issues, focussing on bees as their decline is well known. We will be linking up with biodiversity activities already taking place in our area (as you'll see from this ECO, there's lots going on) and with food issues.

Final Demand

This starts with a petition to end the dominance of 'big 6' energy companies, and to bring MPs face to face with working examples of renewables. It builds up to action later in 2012.



Local Action Day in Leeds

The Yorkshire & the Humber Friends of the Earth Local Action & Networking Day in Leeds is always a really good way find out what other groups and networks in the region are working on locally, and get inspired. If you are new to FoE or have not got actively involved before, this is the event to go to, to find out what it's all about. This year it is at Heart Community Centre in Leeds, on Saturday 3 March 1-5pm. Speakers include Andy Gouldson, Professor of Sustainability Research at the Centre for Climate Change Economics & Policy. Contact Sue (see back of ECO) or better still come to one of our meetings first so that we can arrange to go together.



Hull Green Fair

So many people wanted stalls at November's Hull Green Fair that we were cramped for space. Should we move somewhere bigger? (Easier said than done, and the Spring Bank Community Centre are very helpful). Should we limit stalls to those more clearly 'green'? What do you think about having talks/films at the event? Let us know.



Clean that beach!

Beach clean up: Yorkshire Wildlife Trust are appealing for people willing to join a team of volunteers carrying out beach clean ups approximately 4 times a year. Equipment is provided. Also needed are people to promote the events, and to look after the kit. Call YWT on 01904 659570.



Food poverty and waste

Fare Share is a charity tackling two urgent issues: food poverty and food waste. It collects surplus but 'fit for purpose' products from the food and drink industries

and redistributes them to organisations working with disadvantaged people in the community: homeless hostels, refuges, breakfast and lunch clubs etc. They also provide training in food preparation and nutrition and warehouse work. Their new depot in Malmo Road, Sutton Fields in Hull is looking for volunteer delivery drivers, depot assistants and office workers. All they ask is that you commit to at least one 4 hour shift every 2 weeks. More information from: Michael Howe, Project Manager, 01482 822641.



Bicycles for Africa

The Avenues Bicycle Project is based in the Avenues area of Hull. It collects unwanted bicycles, spare parts and bike tools and ships them to West Africa for distribution by the Village Bicycle Project: www.villagebicycleproject.org

The people receiving the bikes are also trained in maintenance and repair. I have given a bike that used to belong to Hull FoE member and cycle campaigner Carole Noreiko. I feel she would have been glad that it will be put to good use helping someone to reach school, market or health facilities. To donate a bicycle please email:

avenuesbicycleproject@gmail.com



Clothes Swap

This will reach you too late for the Clothes Swap on Saturday, 28 January 2012 12pm until 3pm at The Octagon Building, Walker Street, Hull. But no doubt there will be similar events in future. Bring no more than 15 items and make sure they are of wearable quality. Good food supplied by the Thinking Kitchen. Contact www.facebook/clothesswaphull



Seed Swap

Gardeners who have seeds they want to swap with others can visit the Newland Allotments. The event, called **Seedy Sunday**, will be held at the allotment shop, near the entrance to Sidmouth Primary School, on Sunday, 5 February, starting at noon. It is also a chance for allotment holders to meet each other, learn techniques and get advice.



Help in the Orchard

Pickering Road Community Orchard want help putting cardboard down around the trees to suppress weeds. Info from Sue Goddard on 010482 329369. Lots of people turned out to sing, dance and wassail on Sunday 8 January.



Carbon value

REDD+ is an effort to create a financial value for the carbon stored in forests, offering incentives for developing countries to reduce emissions from forested lands and invest in low-carbon paths to sustainable development. More info and a video from www.theredddesk.org.uk



Neptune harnesses Humber's tidal power

Continued from page 1

buoyancy chambers. It is positioned 60 metres from the sea wall, joined by the Neptune Jetty to the shore at Victoria Dock. The jetty, which is currently being installed, is a 59m steel bridge which will allow maintenance access and also carry the power cables that connect to the control room at The Deep Business Centre from where it will be supervised. It is a floating unit which means that it does not need all of the infrastructure required for an offshore installation and is optimised for shallow water.

There are 10 possible estuarine environments in the UK where this technology could possibly be used. The energy produced is clean, continuous and predictable.

The Proteus is actually an experimental demonstrator from which data will be collected and used to inform the final design of the commercial devices. The plan is that 15 will be deployed in an array comprising 3 pods of 5 devices and would have a total installed capacity of 6 megawatts. The output would be roughly equivalent to the power required annually by 3,000 homes with average power usage.

Glenn Aitken, NREL's financial director said: "We hope that the arrays will be manufactured locally, benefiting the community and strengthening the Humber's position within the renewable energy sector."

Last month, the Department of Energy and Climate Change announced new proposals for Renewable Obligation tariff levels in which the wave and tidal stream sectors receive a significant financial boost.

Neptune Renewable Energy Ltd is the only tidal energy company in the UK about to go into commercial production.

For more information the company's website is:

http://www.neptunerenewableenergy.org.uk

There are plans to release CCTV coverage and real time data via the website in the future.

Do you want to learn more about the Neptune Proteus?

Professor Hardisty is to give a talk at The Deep

Hull is home to world class tidal stream energy expertise. Professor Jack Hardisty from the Hull University Geography department has been studying the Humber and its potential as a marine power resource for many years.

For those with an interest in the engineering side of the project, Professor Hardisty will be giving an in-depth discussion of the analysis of the technology, description of construction and deployment and an explanation of the electrical and electronic control systems needed to align with the grid.

11 April, 7pm, at The Deep

For further information, please contact: Andrew Smith (Engineering Innovation Institute) on 01482 465654

An introduction to
Beekeeping and equipment
making, using reclaimed
materials

A FREE ONE DAY COURSE

(Sponsored by the Cooperative North)

This very popular course is now fullbut Chris is keeping a waiting list, so get in touch...

To contact Chris Coulson

Email candp@coulson96.karoo.co.uk Tel 01482 343865

News from our Friends in Sierra Leone

Olatunde Johnson of Friends of the Earth Sierra Leone has sent us new year greetings.

FOESL have had to move out of their site in Freetown because of redevelopment and are now in Matindi, a remote rural community about 30miles from the city. The community is one of 5 settlements with a total population of about 1500. There is no electricity, no schools and no medical facilities. Olatunde says the roads are 'about 50% good'. The main occupations are gardening by the women, wood cutting for fuel or charcoal, and Palm Wine production.

FOESL occupy 26 acres of land where they are setting up the 'Seeds of Knowledge' Farm. He says they have plans to improve the community through 'Spinfarming' practice. Their plans include land for biodynamic preparations and cultivating vegetables and fruit trees. Later they plan to set up food processing and preservation. Education and training programmes will be in practice from time to time, and they intend to set up a community school.

Olatunde says that they now have to arrange to move the medical clinic (a shipping container to which Hull FoE and Kingston FoE have contributed) to the site where it will 'now serve and benefit the actual people in need'.

There are plans for lots of open days, workshops etc and visitors are very welcome.

I'm not sure whether we will always be able to communicate, but Hull FoE hope to keep in touch with progress.

Hilary Byers

Transition Hull — What's going on?



One of the areas most Transition groups are working in is Food—looking at how to reduce the distance our food travels by buying local, buying in season, growing our own, individually or communally, and exploring the potential for food coops and community supported agriculture schemes.

- ▶ In Hull we are pleased to note that Thornton Fresh Food Coop opened its doors this autumn, to serve the Thornton Street community in Hull, and we wish it every success. We are active in promoting this and other local outlets, as a means of encouraging people to reduce their reliance on supermarkets. We maintain a list of alternatives to supermarkets on our website.
- ▶ In 2011 we undertook our first practical project, growing food with local children on a small site on the Constable Street field. For more about any of this see our website http://www.transitionhull.co.uk/
- ▶ We did a couple of presentations about Transition in the autumn, speaking about the ideas behind Transition, and what we are doing locally. The dozen people in Nafferton who heard us took forward a discussion about the prospects for starting a group there. We also visited Winestead where the College for International Cooperation and Development invited us first to visit their site and then to return to give a session on Transition to students, which was well received.
- ▶ Transition Hull members supported a lot of activity in the autumn organised by other bodies, notably the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers Big Green Weekend at Western Cemetery, Raw Hull's Wild Exchange foraging and Green Exchange networking events, The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens one-day Networking Event for projects in the region, and of course Hull Friends of the Earth's wonderful Green Fair.
- Our regular activities continued to attract support, including a Barn Dance and two Scrappy Do workshops, one of which was for children to make Christmas cards and decorations.



There was a good turn out for the first of Hull Transition's new programme of films on Saturday 21 January. **The Economics of Happiness** was a thought-provoking consideration of the effect that the globalisation of a consumer-based economy has on people's minds and spirits. Also shown was the short animated film **I wish I went to Ecuador**, made by *Hull of a Rainforest* with Bricknell Primary School, which won an international award in 2011.

Coming soon are:

- ► Sat 25 Feb, 2.30pm **Growing Green**.
- ➤ Sat 24 March 2.30pm **Gasland** about the controversial process of extracting oil from shale known as 'fracking'.
- ► Sat 28 April 2.30pm **H20il** about oil extraction from Canadian tar sands.

The venue for the films is the Boulevard Village Hall on Boulevard, Hull (close to the fountain), admission **free** but donations welcome, with tea, homemade cakes and discussion after the films.

New members are always welcome

We meet twice a month in the Eagle on Anlaby Road/ Coltman Street on the 2nd and 4th Monday of the month, but you don't have to attend meetings to get involved in projects and activities.

Our AGM will take place on Mon 26 March 2012 (7.30pm at the Eagle), to review what we've done so far and plan for the coming year.

Contact Lausanne on 07816 141169 or email Vicky on zeetoria@msn.com to join our email circulation list.

Was your New Year's resolution to get more exercise outdoors? **Yorkshire Wildlife Trust** has some great activities planned which will also teach skills and improve the environment. Locations include Noddle Hill and Fordyke Green in Bransholme and Loglands in Longhill.

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust EVENTS

The activities have tantalising titles, such as: Hedge-laying, Spring Clean (practical conservation), Easter Egg Hunt, Fairy Storytelling and Crafts, Dawn Chorus, Bees and Blossom...

so find out more on www.ywt.org.uk/whats-on

Please note: Booking is essential for all these activities. You can find out more, and book places by calling: 01482 441013 or email fiona.weir@ywt.org or helen.holford@ywt.org

Harriet Linfoot, **Community and Wildlife Officer**, **Yorkshire Wildlife Trust** Tel: 01904 659570 (York) 01482 441013 (Hull)

Marinet update

The campaign for the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) is getting into its stride, and you can read what is going on in detail at http://www.marinet.org.uk/rocfp.html However, it is important to note that we are homing in on a simple issue to make the campaign understandable, not only to the general public but also to Euro Parliamentarians (MEPs) who have little time to grasp detail.

We want the reformed CFP to restore fisheries in Europe to a state where there is no need to buy fish from outside European waters in order to feed ourselves. At the moment, over half of our fish diet comes from non-EU waters. In other words, each year, we run out of our own fish by mid-June, and have to eat other people's fish for the rest of the year.

This is both unfair on other states, as we are, in effect robbing them of their food, and unsafe because it threatens our "food security". The disturbing thing is that the date when we 'run out' gets earlier each year (research from the New Economics Foundation confirms this).

The Campaign therefore calls for a new CFP which manages the fish stock back to levels of a generation ago when we had plenty not only to feed ourselves but also to sell to others. This is good for the environment, good for the economy, and simple common sense.

But there is another issue, which Hull FoE campaigner Haris Livas has pointed out. Why do we need to eat so much fish in the first place? UK and Europe generally indulge in eating far too much protein, with impacts on both the seas and the land. We need a place in our thinking for addressing this issue, that of the thoughtless greed of the rich countries.

Bill Rigby

Please sign and get others to sign the e-petition to UK Fisheries Minister: CFP reform must restore "food security" and historic levels of fish stocks http://www.marinet.org. uk/latestnews.html#maet

Beverley FoE news

The play's the thing!

People may remember that Beverley FoE commissioned 2 playlets from local Act The Facts scriptwriter Kate Brennan. These are now being trialled in a few local secondary schools, on the issues of GM and Carbon Footprint. The plays will be discussed at the Leeds FoE event on 3 March.

Let pigs eat swill!

I have been reading Tristram Stuart's book, 'Waste' (Penguin 2009) and it's convinced me we should be running a campaign on this (and East Riding is a very piggy area). It would address the related issues of mountains of waste food, expensive US GM grain and soy, and rainforest destruction for grain and soy. Also, pigs much prefer an interesting variety of food. This applies to chickens too as both species are omnivores like humans. Cattle are a different matter as they are veggie. I know that there are EU regulations – but it's time these were reviewed, and there are others already pushing for change. The Japanese, for example, think we are mad, and I agree with them. Any ideas welcome - probably an email to our MEPs is a start, and discussions with local pig farmers and Bishop Burton College.

Local food in local shops

The other thing I feel we **must** do is to persevere in finding some way of helping small local food shops – particularly by promoting local food through these outlets. Many are on the verge of folding and have little in the way of local food on their shelves. This, of course, is a central Transition issue. It seems to me that it's a coordination issue as they tend not to be in direct competition with each other. Any new ideas? Should those interested form a group to focus on this?

Beverley Green Fair

The Green Fair group is finally stirring- after a rest of a few years – like the proverbial phoenix from the ashes. Suggested dates so far are June 9th or 30th. A venue hasn't been confirmed yet. We are aiming to have lots of workshops to learn useful stuff (eg bike maintenance, wood turning, knitting, cooking, free foods etc) as well as stalls, music, and maybe films. We want to promote local and ethical trade, food, skills and ideas. We would love to hear from anyone who would like to help.

Contact Shan and Bill: (T) 01482 862085 (E) shan@voice-international.net



This major fund raising event for Friends of the Earth - a cycle tour from London to Edinburgh over six days - is passing through our area on **Tuesday** and Wednesday 8 and 9 May. They will be spending the Tuesday night under canvas in Beverley, before travelling up to North Yorkshire.

Look at the web:

http://www.foe.co.uk/big_green_bike_ride/bike_ride_about_30647.html or get in touch with Bill & Shan on 01482 862085 for local action and events in support of the ride. We hope that local people will join the ride for all or part of the journey on those days.

Green drinks

Come for a relaxed conversation 6-8 pm at the Green Dragon, Saturday Market, Beverley. Meetings have now got into a rhythm, and we plan to meet on 13th of each month, starting on Monday 13 February.

This arrangement is an experiment, so it will be best to check on the web site www.greendrinks.org/yorkshire/beverley which will always be kept up to date.

Wildlife notes A new vision

You win some, you lose some...

A copy of "The Wild Side of Town" by Chris Baines came my way recently. Published in 1986 (I'm a slow reader) each page of the book contains some useful comment on developing wildlife areas in the urban landscape, based on practical experience. Over the years these ideas have reached me from TV programmes, my own experience and mainly the guiding hand of Ann Rayner, ideas which are still slow to spread through the wider population.

The Newland Community Orchard is an example—recently taken over by a new team with a 'new' management plan. The bramble patch has been reduced to a slim hedge with straight sides, the leaf litter and twigs have been burnt and the rough grass has received a trim with regular mowing to follow. Other regulated changes have been mentioned.

I see this as a step backwards into a style of management which has passed its time. Questions like "Why not leave some leaf litter for cover? What about dense hedging for nesting, rough grassland as a source of grubs, wildflowers as host plants for butterflies?" do not register. There's a long way to go to get acceptance of 'untidiness' in the garden!

Meanwhile, year 6 pupils from Stepney Lane School had a go at planting native trees and shrubs on the disused railway embankment alongside Barmston Drain. The day, 25 November 2011, almost fitted in with 'National Tree Week' and was the 9th planting along the drain. The trees came from the YWT nursery, Newland.

The target was two each, along with an old woollen sock. The 'soil' on part of the site consists mainly of aggregate, clinker and crushed chalk. Birch, hazel and buckthorn have coped well with such poor soils on this embankment.

The youngsters enjoyed planting the trees and even a couple of sharp showers did not distract them from the job. I was grateful for the help of Lorna, Louise, Fiona and Harriet; I'm lucky they didn't plant me as well.

David Longthorn

for Hornsea

Paul Hanson sends us this news; you may receive your ECO too late to attend the launch, but I'm sure Paul will be pleased to bring people up to date with developments:

Community group Home Grown Hornsea are to host a major conference "Hornsea 2032" on Sunday 15 January from 3.00-6.00pm in the new Town Hall on Newbegin.

After an introduction from the Mayor of Hornsea and a showing of the film "The Power of Community", the group will launch its Community Orchard scheme set to begin in February on spare land behind the new Tesco's site. It will also introduce some innovative and inspirational ideas for meeting the major challenges of the coming years and will encourage participants to develop a communal vision of how they would like to see the town develop by 2032.

Free local food and refreshments will be available as well as children's activities will be available and everyone in the town and surrounding area is welcome to attend.

The group are being supported by The Co-op Community Fund, HARP, The Lions, Let's Go Hornsea, and Children and Family Action.

For further information contact:

Paul Hanson, Project Manager Densholme Community Care Farm Hull Road, Great Hatfield, East Yorkshire HU11 4UX Tel: 0797 444 0706

Are garden ponds a refuge for frogs?

A new spring survey for us all to join in with!

Here, from Gareth Parkinson, Secretary of the North, East and West Yorkshire Amphibian and Reptile Group is a call to get out there and count your local frogs!

Pond Conservation's 'Big Pond Dip' and 'Big Pond Thaw' surveys have discovered a lot of new information about garden ponds, and we are now trying to find out more about the breeding success of our frogs and toads in garden ponds nationally (and to test the theory that garden ponds are an important 'refuge' for frogs). So, we've set up a joint project with Pond Conservation and Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (ARC) to find out more about the numbers of frogs breeding in garden ponds.

We are also keen to find out more about our common toad. Although, toads are less associated with garden ponds, there is some indication that the use of gardens is becoming more frequent due to loss of traditional breeding habitat.

You can take part 🗬 in the **Big Spawn** Count by going to your pond and counting the number of spawn clumps present.

For more information about this, and to enter your results online, go to the Big Spawn Count pages (which are on the Pond Conservation website):

http://www.pondconservation.org. uk/bigponddip/BigSpawncount

Why external insulation might not be such a Green Deal

We all want to reduce fuel consumption in our homes to reduce our bills and CO2 emissions, and improving insulation is generally a good way to do it. But Conservation organisations are concerned that the Department for Energy and Climate Change's Green Deal, published for consultation on 23 November 2011, pays too little attention to the way solid-walled houses behave.

Cavity wall insulation is a well established method of insulating modern houses, and providing the walls are dry with no problems caused by leaking gutters or rising damp it should be effective. However, 25% of us live in houses built with solid walls and no cavity. For these houses insulation has to be applied either to the inside or outside of the building. As insulating the inside will tend to create more disruption, many people are likely to opt for external insulation. But this could cause more problems than it solves.

Trouble ahead?

Solid brick or stone walls have to 'breathe', that is they absorb moisture into the outer few millimetres in damp weather and release it in dry weather. Applying an impervious coating to the outside could trap moisture within the structure. With nowhere else to go it is likely to try to escape into the house resulting in

damp patches on internal walls and an unhealthy living environment.

"Expert" advice

The Green Deal proposes to inject a further £200m to boost the insulation of homes and businesses by enabling householders to carry out work to be paid for later from energy savings. However, the Conference on Training in Architectural Conservation (COTAC) and other conservation organisations are concerned that firms carrying out the work might not have the expertise to give householders the advice they need to make sound decisions.

"What we want to avoid is property owners being urged by inexperienced Government-sponsored advisers and installers, to carry out works that could significantly damage, not improve their traditionally constructed properties. There are serious medium to long-term implications in terms of creating the need for consequential remedial repairs with resulting increased costs substantially offsetting claimed benefits," said Ingval Maxwell OBE, Trustee of COTAC.

Their further concerns include

- Current Government SAP energy and 'U' value heat loss calculations significantly underestimate the existing performance of traditional solid-walled buildings.
- Calculations of improved building energy performance overlook the energy and resource costs of the 'upgrading' works.
- External insulation involves applying a render which will drastically alter the appearance of most traditional houses, and seriously affect the character of conservation areas.

Hilary Byers

NEWSFLASH BASF GM Division to quit Europe

BASF is moving its GM division out of Europe. The press release on BASF's website states that "there is still a lack of acceptance for this technology in many parts of Europe – from the majority of consumers, farmers and politicians."

The Plant Science Division is heading to the US and BASF says development and commercialization of all GM crops targeted solely at cultivation in the European market will also be halted. These include genetically modified starch potatoes - Amflora, Amadea and Modena, a potato resistant to the disease late blight called Fortuna, as well as a late blight resistant starch potato and a wheat variety resistant to fungal disease.

Unfortunately, BASF Plant Science will continue the regulatory approval processes for the products already started. They want to 'maintain all options' for the potato products.

This will have special meaning for everyone who helped campaign against BASF's plan to plant GM potatoes in Hedon, East Yorkshire and anyone who has ever campaigned against GM. **Well done to us all**.

For the full article: BASF to concentrate plant biotechnology activities on main markets in North and South America. BASF, 16 January 2012, go to: http://www.basf.com/group/pressrelease/P-12-109

Lee-Ann Williams

HUMBER ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK (HEN)

The Humber Environmental Network works with businesses in the Humber area to help them make sense of the green agenda and access support to reduce their environmental impacts.

Future gatherings may be noteworthy:

7 February 2012 Renewable Energy

at Water's Edge, Barton on Humber

For further information about the Humber Environmental Network and the services available or to book for one of the events please contact Emma Davies:

emma.davies@energypartnership.org.uk

please pay to Hull Friends of the Earth,

mentioning the reference.

Signed

Date

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