

In Contact

June 2011
ISSUE 29



www.harrowagenda21.org

Coming Events.....

HA21 is running a stall at Under One Sky at Kodak Recreation Ground, Zoom Leisure, Harrow View, HA2 6QQ from 12 noon on Sunday, 26 June. Harrow Fair Trade Forum will be joining us on our stall.

HA21 have joined RECOUP (ReCycling of Used Plastics) which aims to maximize plastic packaging recycling and to foster sustainable plastic waste management.

Look out for a member of HA21 dressed as a RECOUP bottle at Under One Sky!

HA21 is holding its Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, 6 July at 7 pm, Committee Rooms 1 & 2, Harrow Civic Centre and our guest speaker is Stuart Foster, Director of RECOUP. He will speaking on improving plastics recycling to make it more sustainable. Refreshments will be available from 6.30pm. Please let us know whether you are coming admin@harrowagenda21.org

Three Mills Island in Bromley-by Bow is a tidal flour mill, film set and studio and has potential for sustainable tidal power generation. On Sunday, 24 July 2011, HA21 will be visiting Three Mills Island and continuing along The Greenway to the View Tube overlooking the Olympic Site. We will be travelling by public transport, leaving Harrow during the morning (arrangements still to be finalised). If you are interested please contact Mick Oliver on 020 3114 6020, or email micksheila67@hotmail.com

Early Day Motions 644 and 1101

HA21 asked Harrow's 3 MPs to support these measures, which are strategies for back-bench MPs to canvass support for possible legislation.

EDM 644 recognises that both the previous and present governments have given public support to energy efficiency as a means of meeting our national limits on emissions, and questions current policy of increasing our energy infrastructure without considering this option.

EDM 1101 asks for a Waste Register to be created, to identify the actual destination that materials put out for recycling reach. (Current practice is satisfied if they are handled by a registered waste disposal company.) The intention is to increase the credibility of recycling, which can be undermined by press comment on malpractice.

Bob Blackman (Harrow East) responded that the Government is due to announce its Waste Strategy in June, and that he would decide his stance then.*

Gareth Thomas (Harrow West) referred our enquiry to the Department of Energy & Climate Change, who replied that the Government

- did conduct an evaluation of energy efficiency, but not in the form the EDM aspired to
- did not intend to regulate for an End Use Register, as it saw such action was best handled under its localism agenda, and was requiring all new contracts for waste disposal to be published in detail.

Many thanks to our MPs for their interest, and for identifying the action HA21 should take, and we start this now:

The Waste & Recycling Group will seek detailed information on the destination of the materials Harrow sends for recycling.

*By the time you read this Mick Campbell will have attended the Conference "The Future of UK Waste Policy", which will explain the strategy the Government is introducing.

Mick Oliver

TOWARDS FOOD SUSTAINABILITY AT KOL CHAI HATCH END JEWISH COMMUNITY

A recent adult education evening held at Kol Chai studied some Jewish texts on the environment, and then went on to make some suggestions for us as a community. Kol Chai has had a fair trade policy since 2003, which is promoted by a notice in the kitchen, but it is not easily implemented because we are a grass roots community, where everyone is entitled to an opinion and many different groups get involved with catering.

So we have come up with some suggestions, most of them fairly simple, which might be feasible:

FISH None of us were really sure which fish to buy—which are endangered and which are OK. We thought it would be a good idea to have some information on our website. The Greenpeace website has a useful list which could be linked in.

HONEY The movement is promoting the idea that communities could produce their own honey for the Jewish New Year. We thought it would be a good idea to find out if anyone keeps bees in the community, and if such an idea might be feasible.

EGGS We felt that as a community should ban battery eggs.

GARDENING All of those who have gardens grow some fruit and vegetables in their gardens. We discovered an amazing variety of produce grown. We could promote this and perhaps, as some communities do, have a gardening group, or even a community allotment.

ORGANIC VEG BOXES 40% of those who came to our discussion have organic vegetables and/or fruit delivered. This too could be advertised and promoted. The veg boxes use less food miles and packaging. We should provide information on local veg boxes and farmers' markets.

FOOD WASTE We realise that a lot of food gets wasted within the community because we tend to over cater. We need to estimate quantities more carefully, and take food home rather than leaving it in the fridge. Shared meals are much less wasteful because people bring a dish from home and take home the bowl with the remaining food. For this reason it seems eco-friendly to promote this style meals rather than catered whenever possible.

PAPER PLATES etc We could probably manage to avoid these more often, and we need to research which ones are more eco-friendly. We felt it important to try to cut the use of paper plates and cups.

WATER With a drought looming, we are all going to have to save water, and as a community we have to play our part.

OFFICE PAPER We felt that printing should be done double sided whenever possible. We are conscious of the huge amount of water required to produce each sheet of paper.

AGENDA 21 We value our links with Harrow Agenda 21. The chair, Mick Oliver, joined us for at the meeting. Harrow is fortunate in having this active environmental group which works closely with Harrow Council.

LINKS WITH LOCAL CHURCHES Congregants from a local church attended the meeting. They have been having similar discussions about what they can do. This seems to be an area of potential co-operation.

This is written in the hope that these simple guidelines will provide food for thought as to what we can all do in community organisations with which we are involved. If we use caterers, we should be choosing not just on the basis of cost, but on environmental awareness. Consumer pressure can lead to sustainable food policies in local restaurants as well.

Rabbi Michael Hilton, Kol Chai Hatch End Jewish Community RabbiM@kolchai.org

HA21 agrees—the environment is an area of potential co-operation for all. HA21 have already endorsed the Earth Charter and we will take steps to follow the important lead Rabbi Michael Hilton has given

Anticipate and avoid – HA21 ahead of the game again!

London has a problem with its air quality, fails to meet European requirements, and could face censure for this. Its failures are traffic-related, and one strategy to improve this situation is to promote the use of electric cars (which produce no emissions at the point of use – these being experienced at a distance at the power station producing the electricity). London boroughs are taking steps to provide charging points for electric cars, and Harrow has points in the Civic centre car park.

But what happens at home? If the charging point is alongside the car being charged then well and good.

If it is not, there will be an electric lead across the front of the owner's house, putting the owner or his visitors at risk of tripping. If the property is terraced and the car is on the road, then the lead will be across the pavement, and any passer-by will be at risk of tripping. Charging is most likely to take place at night – increasing the hazard.

Accident statistics from slips, trips and falls are collated together – we are very vigilant about slip accidents – we need to be as vigilant about the possibility of trip accidents from electric car charging leads.

Preferably, having identified **or anticipated** the problem, we should make changes in the fabric of our buildings so we can **avoid** it and charge cars safely – position points close to the car so that there are no trailing leads – or position the lead in a chase if it has to cross a pathway.

HA21's comments to Harrow's Climate Change Strategy commented on this problem and identified the way to avoid it and charge electric cars safely.

Mick Oliver

Improvement in Recycling for Plastics

Mick Oliver writes.....

Biffa commissioned a new mrf (material reclamation facility) at Redcar. I attended the launch of this innovative plant, which is capable of separating the different plastics in mixed plastic waste, by colour and by composition. Current practice only separates the bottle plastics, PET and HDPE and ignores the other plastics with recycling codes 3 – 9 (which Harrow collects but which do not get separated with current arrangements).

Biffa have ambitions to build other plants, and the technology is available to other operators.

Its benefits are that:

the materials separated can be used to replace new materials that would otherwise need to be created from virgin raw materials – a saving on resources

- it hence increases the value of the waste and totally undermines the case for waste plastics to be used as the fuel for "energy from waste" incineration.

Harrow's Performance on Fuel Poverty

Harrow's performance on national indicators 187 on fuel poverty is poor, which may be because the questionnaire used to investigate it is difficult to answer (but it won't be any easier elsewhere). Taken at face value, Harrow has a problem – the problem being that poorly insulated homes are difficult and expensive to heat – those who are least able to do so are required to heat the universe.

A cost to them, and a demand for fuel – which explains the demand that oil companies make such efforts to meet.

A situation that needs improving – for several reasons!!

Richard Maylan writes.....

I was recently at UK Aware and came across freegle, see <http://freegle.org.uk>. There are freegle groups in Ealing and Hillingdon, what about Harrow?

<http://www.streetbank.com/>

Richard Maylan, 020 8427 6086

USEFUL CONTACTS.....

Mick Oliver – Chairman & Waste Chair

chair@harrowagenda21.org or

micksheila67@hotmail.com

Mick Campbell – Vice Chair

emcampbell@talktalk.net

Marilyn Raymond – Education Chair

marilyn.raymond@tiscali.co.uk

Marion Garner-Patel – Planning Chair

mariongarnerpatel@gmail.com



HA21's office is open
Mondays, 10.30am–1pm
Room 3, Community Premises,
27 Northolt Road,
South Harrow, HA2 0LH
020 3114 6020

"In Contact" Editor

Eve Swabe

admin@harrowagenda21.org

One year on..... *Mick Oliver Waste Group Chair writes*

During May BP ran a large advertising campaign in the national press to describe their response to the 2010 Deepwater Horizon disaster in the Gulf of Mexico. The text included:

“Learning and sharing the lessons

This was a tragedy that should not have happened. Our responsibility is to learn from it and share with competitors, partners, governments and regulators to help ensure that it never happens again.”

Just about every day we hear on our news bulletins “lessons will be learned” in response to some medical, social, environmental or technical disaster.

The Health and Safety at Work Act of 1974 (yes it was that long ago!) requires companies to conduct an assessment of the hazards their operations present; if the information to do this does not exist, then they are required to conduct research to fill the gap, all this before any process or technology is introduced.

CONDAM (the charmingly named legislation that controls safety on large construction sites) requires companies to cooperate with each other before and during any work, to promote safety on site.

Two examples of legislation requiring companies to consider their operations, anticipate hazards and problems, jointly if appropriate, and to take steps to minimise or avoid them. **Anticipate and avoid** – surely preferable to learning the lesson?

When the oilfields in the North Sea were beginning production, BP produced a game **BP Offshore Oil Strike** which included hazard cards “Blow-out! Rig damaged. Oil slick clean-up costs. Pay \$1 million.”

At 1970s prices. The game is in the collection of the House on the Hill Toy Museum at Stanstead in Essex.

BP had thus anticipated the very accident they experienced, in the shallow conditions of the North Sea. Their improvised response to the accident in the Gulf of Mexico showed they had not paid adequate attention to the possibility of a blow-out at the much greater depths they were drilling at there.

What prompted BP to be taking these risks?

North Sea oil – we were encouraged to think of this as a bonanza. But it’s becoming increasingly difficult to extract it, and yields are decreasing. It is finite, but we have been using it as though it was infinite. Just one aspect of **Peak Oil**. The consequence is that exploration is being considered in other areas which are both difficult and environmentally sensitive.

What BP and the other oil companies are doing is in response to **our** energy use – they are responding to **our** demand and **our** patterns of consumption. Maybe we should pay more attention to these!!

EDUCATION GROUP UPDATE.....*Marilyn Raymond, Education Group Chair writes*

There is a Mid-Summer afternoon walk on Roxbourne Rough and maybe alongside the Yeading Brook on **Tuesday, 21 June at 4pm**. Teachers and interested people do come and join us. The walk will be led by Steve Bolsover, Chairman of Harrow Nature Conservation Forum. Contact Marilyn for details.

Our Spring Event at Veolia was a great success, with raised beds, bird boxes and mini beast hotels constructed; all also went home with plants and seeds.

We are still trying to persuade your local schools to enter this years’ £500 Ann Swaine Award for an environmental achievement or proposal. Strangely with money so tight there is little take up!

If you would like an e-copy of our termly Education Newsletter please get in touch.

Marilyn Raymond
020 8954 3329

marilyn.raymond@tiscali.co.uk

HA21 Ahead of the Game!

The Sun reported on 20 May 2011 -

“Baby and make-up wipes are blocking more than 300 drains and sewers every day, water firms have warned.

They said that despite being labelled ‘flushable’ they do not break down like toilet paper and have become the main cause of blocked drains.

The companies claim manufacturers are misleading customers on their disposal. Water firm *United Utilities* said ‘Customers should put used items in the bin’.”

- Ted Casey had already shown HA21 his work that proved the same thing during the Education Group’s visit to the Veolia Environmental Centre in March.
- *United Utilities’* approach is rather blinkered – it solves their problem of blockage but introduces someone else’s problem of waste disposal.

Real Nappies

Another aspect of the same problem, and a large problem for waste disposal.

Harrow once supported the Real Nappy scheme. What became of this campaign?

It is still very much alive - West London Waste’s Waste Prevention Strategy for West London for 2011–15 *

- distinguishes between disposable, compostable and washable nappies,
- supports the Real Nappy scheme,
- aims to run 5 events in each borough every year,
- aims to give parents of all children born in West London information on real nappies by 2015

* much more in this strategy than this topic – the Waste & Recycling group will be looking at it in detail.

Mick Oliver

WATER FACTS

Without water none of us would be here. It is one of the fundamental essentials for life. Here are just a few facts about water to maybe make us think a little about this wonderful resource.

97% of all water on Earth is not suitable for use as it is too salty. A further 2% is locked away as ice. Of the remaining 1%, more than 0.7% is used by nature leaving less than 0.3% available for direct human use. Even with this amount less than half is available at any given time. The bulk of our water is in the sea or in the air above us. We owe our very existence to the closed loop of evaporation over the sea, condensation over land and eventual return to the sea.

More locally Harrow gets its water from a company called Veolia Water Central who serve us with 870 million litres (174 million gallons) per day. The average person uses about 150 litres (30 gallons) of water in a day. Veolia not only deliver this water to us but are also responsible for taking it and what we have added to it away. They must then remove all contaminants we have added as it passed through our homes and us before sending it on the next leg of its recycling journey.

One last fact for which we in this country should be grateful. One person in five on Earth does not have access to enough water for even basic needs. Let us be thankful that we in this country do not fall into that category.

Mick Campbell

CONSUMER NEWS.....

New EU Legislation Requiring the Mandatory Labelling of Animal Fur

This new legislation will stipulate that clothing manufacturers must clearly indicate the presence of animal-derived products, such as fur, leather or feathers, in textile products using the phrase “contains non-textile parts of animal origin”. Manufacturers will be given 2.5 years to adapt to the new law.

Many consumers cannot tell the difference between fake and real animal fur and therefore assume an inexpensive item of clothing is so cheap it cannot possibly include an animal’s fur. They presume that animal fur will be automatically listed on a garment’s label, but up until now there has been no legal obligation in the EU for manufacturers to do this. The mandatory labelling of animal-derived products in textiles will give consumers the information they need to make informed decisions about what they buy.

Source: Humane Society International http://www.hsi.org/world/europe/news/releases/2011/05/eu_fur_labeling_051111.html

Planning Group Report on Two Meetings on the Redevelopment of the Kodak Site

The meetings covered employment, leisure and housing and place making (the facilities needed in Harrow and the role of Headstone Manor).

The topics discussed were:

- The Chimney—could it have a small industrial museum at its base telling the history of the site?
- A bridge over Harrow View connecting the two sites?
- Green Industries
- A new police station
- Moving Caryl Thomas Clinic
- Establishing a youth centre and a multi-purpose hall, theatre and art galleries, and design workshops
- A central square with a water feature, called Eastman (there is a plentiful supply of water from an artesian well)
- Eco initiatives were needed and a sensitivity for views of landmarks such as Grimsdyke, Nower Hill and Harrow Spire.
- Eyesores should be hidden or eradicated
- Links of Green Sites by a green corridor were planned
- The ground is 1.5 metres high above road level. There will be surplus earth from the digging out of foundations. How about some hills in the landscape?
- All agreed that there should be an emphasis on family housing. This should have plenty of greenery around and be no higher than four storeys with perhaps the odd block of flats
- There should be a link between Moat Farm and the Kodak playing fields through to the other site and on to the station at Harrow & Wealdstone. It should be a place to visit with pleasing vistas and a café to draw people in to visit
- Car parking was discussed—many options were identified but no conclusions were reached
- Are the sports facilities and fields to be retained, or developed for another purpose, eg as a green space or corridor?
- Access to the site along Headstone Drive is hampered by the narrow low railway bridge
- Congestion at the Quadrant is linked with the planning permission situation for the “Goodwill to All”
- A pedestrian bridge connecting communities is possible and would improve access to Moat Farm and the new complex from Wealdstone

For more details please look at the website www.harrowview.info

I was impressed by their professionalism, their desire to take on ideas to make a pleasant environment and their research into local needs and types of properties that sell from local estate agents.

Marion Garner-Patel, Planning Group Chair

