

SEFS 2011

At the AGM in November last year, SEFS faced a bleak future with little or no funding to continue. However, thanks to the hard work of our newly elected chair from Wildlife Trusts South East, Ian Hepburn we have secured two sources of funding for 2011/12.

- 1) The Environment Agency have granted us £5,000 to continue the work SEFS does as the umbrella for the environment NGOs working on the Water Framework Directive work in the South East River Basin District, and to expand this to include the Thames River Basin District.
- 2) In addition the Wildlife Trusts in the SE have offered SEFS to match £1 for every £1 donated by other member organisations. So your membership is very important to SEFS this year and will, in addition to these other two sources and our reserves help see us through to the end of March 2012

So what will SEFS be doing?

In addition to expanding its work on the Water Framework Directive, SEFS will continue to act as a focal point for environmental policy in the South East. We are building strong links with other organisations like (Climate South East, South East England Biodiversity Forum, South East Protected Landscapes, South East Green Infrastructure Board, RAISE etc.). We have also started to investigate how we can engage with the Local Enterprises Partnerships that cover the South East of England and the remaining regional bodies like the SE Strategic Chief Executives (SESEC), SE Strategic Leaders (SESL) and the SE England Councils (SEEC).

Over and above this SEFS is working on; HS2; tracking and sharing information on national planning policy and maintaining and developing its role as the environmental network for the South East of England. We'll be reviewing our work programme with members at our General Meeting on the 15th June and amongst others we've arranged for Myles Thomas from the Environment Agency to come and speak about what River Basin planning and implementation really means for drinking water, streams, rivers, ponds and lakes near you. Please book your place via the [SEFS website](#).

CPRE

After 10 years of unstinting effort to protect the countryside and its communities as Regional Director CPRE South East, Edward Dawson, has left CPRE. He is starting a new chapter of his career as an acknowledged expert in planning and other areas of regional policy working as a freelance consultant. As Edward has stepped down as the CPRE member of the P&EC, SEFS would like to offer our sincerest thanks to him for his contributions and input to SEFS policy on many topics. Edward along with Brenda

Pollack and Chris Corrigan was one of the remaining founders of SEFS so it is a sad moment. However along with our thanks we would also like to pass on our best wishes to him in his future career. Edward can be contacted at edawson@postmaster.co.uk.

UPDATE FROM OTHER SOUTH EAST FOCUSED BODIES

South East Protected Landscapes.

South East Protected Landscapes play an important role in representing and coordinating many aspects of the work of the 8 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and 2 National Parks that are partly or wholly in the South East of England.

The coming months will be challenging for the Protected Landscapes in the South East as they have not been insulated from the coalition government's cuts, but things could have been a lot worse. Each protected landscape team has received around a 5.4% cut to its core budget for 2011/12.

For the AONBs nationally there has also been a change in sponsorship arrangements. Previously, the AONB teams have received their funding from Natural England, however, from 2011/12 AONBs will be funded directly from Defra as are the National Parks. The arrangements for National Park and AONB sponsorship will sit within a single team in Defra. Natural England will continue to provide technical advice to government on landscape matters.

In the context of collaboration between Protected Landscapes, SEPL has recently secured around £1 million over 3 years, from RDPE, to develop and promote "Sustainable Tourism in the South East's Finest Landscapes". The project will identify, train and promote businesses providing sustainable tourism. SEPL will work with its private sector partner Responsibletourism.com to take these sustainable tourism "products" to market. Critically at the end of the period of public funding Responsibletravel.com will continue with "Sustainable Tourism in the South East's Finest Landscapes" as viable business.

Further information about SEPL can be obtained from Richard Clarke on 07968 832545, or richard.clarke@surreycc.gov.uk.

Climate South East

Climate South East (CSE) has revoked its former governance structures and is putting in place a new Advisory Panel to support Directors and ensure that decisions are robust and transparent. The Terms of Reference for this are being drawn up and CSE will shortly be inviting participation from various organisations and individuals. They are also seeking

new Directors and would be keen to hear from interested people.

The coordinator's role is funded through September 2011, and funding is being sought to extend this and to carry out projects identified as part of the new work programme. A particular focus is engagement with businesses:

- CSE recently completed a successful pilot in Oxfordshire to engage SMEs by training accountants to take them through a resilience "health check." The plan now is to take this work to the wider South East.
- A pending project, with counterparts in London and North East, seeks to work with Business Improvement Districts to identify vulnerability to weather and outline adaptation options and costs.
- Work is taking place with counterparts in the South West to update the web-based tool CSE developed to support tourism business in improving climate resilience. They hope to work with regional partners to promote the tool, which is free to use (although case studies would be appreciated).

CSE is currently working with Climate North East to map drivers for climate adaptation in local authorities given the demise of NI 188. Research by the UK Climate Impacts Programme suggests that there is an appetite among Local Authorities (LAs) to continue the work, although staff and resources are increasingly limited.

Nationally, Climate UK is also closely involved with the revamping of the **Nottingham Declaration** programme, exploring how to support LAs in meeting its requirements.

Climate UK is investigating the potential to incorporate itself in order to be better positioned to deliver on climate resilience needs at all spatial levels. Defra has been supportive of this effort, and conversations with DECC, BIS, and DCLG are also taking place, while work is being done to identify private-sector and possible EU funding as well. For more details contact Kristen Guida: email - Kristen.Guida@climatesoutheast.org.uk

PLANNING...

...For Growth

As part of the Budget announcements this week George Osborne launched a new Planning Initiative – The Plan for Growth. This has been supported by a written ministerial statement from Greg Clark.

Plan for Growth is aiming to radically reform the planning system to:

- introduce a powerful new presumption in favour of sustainable development, so that the default answer to development is 'yes';
- localise choice about the use of previously developed land, removing nationally imposed targets while retaining existing controls on greenbelt land;
- produce a shorter, more focused and inherently pro-growth National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to deliver more development in suitable and viable locations;
- set clear expectations that with immediate effect local planning authorities and other bodies involved in granting development consents should prioritise

growth and jobs, through a Written Ministerial Statement by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on 23 March 2011;

- introduce new powers so that businesses are able to bring forward neighbourhood plans and neighbourhood development orders;
- bring forward proposals to extend Permitted Development rights, and will consult on proposals to make it easier to convert commercial premises to residential;
- pilot a new land auction model, starting with public sector land; and
- ensuring all planning applications and appeals will be processed in 12 months and that major infrastructure projects will be fast-tracked

There is serious concern about these plans within organisations like Friends of the Earth, and the "greenest government ever" is not helping its reputation by watering down Zero Carbon Homes criteria. A move which has caused WWF to quit the Zero Carbon Taskforce)

...For Climate Change

In 2009 The Climate Coalition was set up to persuade the Government to put climate change at the heart of the English planning system. The coalition is a group of 40 cross sector organisations including Friends of the Earth, RSPB, National Trust, Sustainability Centre, Campaign for Better Transport and Sustran. Its aim is to ensure that the planning system makes a full contribution to meeting the climate change challenge. As part of this a guide has been developed and sent to all Councils titled Planning for Climate Change: guidance and model policies for Local Authorities you might want to check your council received its copy (sent in November last year). Copies of the guide have also been sent to all LEPs. The TCPA have also published a guide on Community Energy: Planning, Development and Delivery

LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIPS

There are seven Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) covering the area formerly known as the South East Region

1. Brighton and Hove, Croydon, the Gatwick Diamond and West Sussex – Coast to Capital
2. Kent, Greater Essex and East Sussex
3. Oxfordshire City Region
4. Solent
5. Thames Valley Berkshire
6. Enterprise M3
7. And to the north of the region and beyond South East Midlands LEP- Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes, Aylesbury Vale in Buckinghamshire and the Boroughs of Northampton, Kettering and Corby and the districts of South Northamptonshire, Daventry and Cherwell in Oxfordshire.

The LEPS are currently going through a process of organisation and are expected to have Boards in place in April. Details of this progress and contact arrangements in the interim can be found on the BIS website. SEFS is attempting to make contact with all the LEPS covering the South East, with varying degrees of success. If you've had experience with trying to contact or get involved with your local LEP please do let Alison in the SEFS Secretariat know how you've got on.

In the meantime the government is developing its own thinking on LEPs and in the Plan for Growth paper produced alongside the budget the Chancellor outlined the following potential roles for LEPs

- providing a powerful voice for business in the planning system;
- leading the production of strategic plans that identify and align strategic economic priorities and guide infrastructure delivery;
- providing a strong business role facilitating for key infrastructure investment;
- producing evidence and technical assessments to inform decision-making; and
- facilitating decision making on complex applications.

LEPs are viewed as being able to “play a vital role in supporting local authorities plan for key sub national infrastructure”

TRANSPORT

Aviation

Lydd - The Public Enquiry into the expansion of Lydd airport began in the middle of February and will run until July. RSPB, CPRE, Kent Wildlife Trust and Natural England are working together with the Lydd Airport Action Group putting forward a case against the proposal. You can follow LAAG on [Facebook](#) and keep up to date with news from the Public Enquiry via the [RSPB Blog](#)

Biggin Hill - Biggin Hill airport is hoping to cash in on the Olympics and is planning to extend its operating hours during the event period leading to around 668 extra flights. More details from [AirportWatch](#)

Farnborough - Farnborough operators TAG have just won an appeal to increase the number of flights it handles to 50,000/year between now and 2019. More details from [AirportWatch](#)

Flying Less is Good for Business - A new report from WWF suggests that following the recession leading businesses are making a permanent commitment to fly less. Nearly half of businesses surveyed said that they had cut business flights over the past two years and, of these, 85% said they don't intend to return to 'business as usual' flying. Together, these findings suggest that future business flying will not return to pre-recession levels.

The report, [Moving on: why flying less means more for business](#), found that nearly all companies who have reduced their flying say it's possible to stay profitable and competitive while flying less. The key findings of the report were:

- 47% of companies have reduced the number of business flights they've taken in the past two years
- Of those companies which have cut their flying, 85% do not intend to return to 'business as usual' flying
- 86% of companies are either reducing their carbon footprint from business travel or intend to do so
- 63% of companies that responded now have a policy in place to reduce business travel, or are intending to develop one.

The main benefits cited by businesses of changing travel practices were cost savings and reduced carbon emissions, but these were quickly followed by the ability to work during travel disruptions, having less staff away from the office and greater staff productivity.

[Click here](#) for more details and case studies

Policy Framework for UK Aviation

Buried in the Plan for Growth document published as part of George Osborne's budget was an announcement which said that Government will publish a Policy Framework for UK aviation. This will ask questions on how best to balance the contribution of aviation to the UK economy with environmental concerns”

The scoping document consultation is now available on the [DfT website](#). It is not technically a public consultation, however, concerned organisations and NGOs will be able to make comments. Further details and briefings will be available from [Airportwatch](#) and [AEF](#)

LTP3

18 of the 19 transport authorities in the region have now completed consultations on the drafts of their 3rd Local Transport Plans (LTP3s). The SEFS Core Transport Group has been scrutinising plans to see how well and to what extent issues such as climate change and the promotion of sustainable transport are covered. A summary of the current situation can be viewed on the SEFS website but more detailed assessments are ongoing. LTP3s are in two parts; a Strategy and an Implementation Plan (IP). Very few Transport Authorities have so far produced an IP. This is of concern as Strategy is cost free but Policy Implementation requires funding and with money in short supply, as a result commitments to promote smarter choices and tackle climate change may suffer.

HS2

The consultation on HS2 was launched on 28 February and continues until 29 July. SEFS will consider producing a response, if that would add value to those being produced by other organisations. SEFS Core Transport Group will act as a focal point for members on this issue.

Although in sympathy with many of the goals set out in the consultation, including increasing capacity on the rail network, SEFS is opposed to the project as it is proposed.

We have noted the proposed mitigation measures to address the environmental impacts of the scheme but we consider that they fall far short of acceptable.

We are not convinced that this particular project will achieve the claimed benefits in respect of CO₂ reductions or modal shift.

Over the coming weeks we will post on the SEFS website what we consider to be our key issues, with a focus on alternative route options and objectives to meet sustainable transport goals.

Details of the consultation which runs until 29th July and associated events can be seen on the [DfT website](#)

DfT lists of schemes.

A recent statement on 'Investment in Major Local Transport Schemes' released by DfT, shows the Bexhill/Hastings Link Road in final position on a list of schemes set out in Benefit/Cost Ratio (BCR) terms, in what they call the Development Pool. These are schemes whose value for money has been confirmed but not all of them will be affordable. They will be subject to further analysis, consultation and revised funding

offers from Local Authorities. Decisions will be taken by the end of 2011 on which of these will be funded. In respect of Highways Agency schemes, A23 Handcross to Warninglid will go ahead before 2015. The A27 Chichester Bypass is listed to go ahead post 2015. SEFS wrote to the Minister pointing out that the decision to proceed with this scheme seemed to contradict a previous Highways Agency position that it was unaffordable. The reply was that it was 'too early to comment on the final form any solution for the A27 might take.'

ENERGY USEAGE WRIT LARGE

Residents of a street in Brighton have opted to have their electricity use monitored and reported down the street by a local graffiti artist.

Over 3 weeks in March and April residents in Tidy Street will record their electricity use and a daily total will be marked down the street comparing it to the average use in Brighton.

The big question is will being monitored change the residents habits? More details on the project can be found [here](#) and local paper coverage [here](#)

MEMBERS NEWS

If you have a project or campaign you'd like to publicise to SEFS members and beyond please send details through to Alison at the SEFS Secretariat

Friends of the Earth

Campaigning for a clean green Energy Bill - As part of its promise to be the "greenest government ever, the coalition has published an Energy Bill as its flagship way of delivering the green action needed. However, the Bill is a massive missed opportunity and it needs to be strengthened significantly if it is to be up to the task. Friends of the Earth are building on existing campaigns to push for two key changes to the Bill before it passes into law, focussed on Local Carbon Budgets and cutting emissions from homes. You can find out more about both of these on the [FOE website](#) As part of Stop Climate Chaos FOE are working on a series of high profile **public meetings** in key constituencies this spring, targeting MPs and local decision-makers to secure their support for the campaign.

If you'd like to organise a public meeting or could help out with one, Contact brenda.pollack@foe.co.uk

South East Councils and MPs working on Climate Change - Some high profile public meetings with councils and key MPs in the South East Region have already taken place. Last November, Chris Huhne, Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, was in Eastleigh questioned by residents about the government's new Green Deal and other related issues. Greg Barker MP, Minister of State for Climate Change was asked some testing questions relating to whether the Government can live up to Cameron's claim to be the "greenest government ever" in Bexhill. Whilst Greg Clarke MP for Tunbridge Wells and Minister of State with responsibility for decentralisation was challenged on issues relating to the Localism Bill as well as Climate Change in February. At this meeting [Tunbridge Wells council](#) announced its support for

Friends of the Earth's call for a system of local carbon budgets to ensure that all parts of the UK contribute towards meeting national targets to reduce CO2 emissions.

Meanwhile, [Eastbourne Borough council](#) agreed to adopt a target of 40% CO2 reductions by 2020 as well as signing up to a letter of support for our campaign on local carbon budgets in February.

Woodland Trust

Forestry Sell-off - Subsequent to the government back down on the sell-off of Forestry Commission land, there has been a push for an independent panel of experts to be set up to inform the review of government forestry policy. The panel has now been announced and Woodland Trust is calling for both the panel and the government to be bold, effective and to take action. The Woodland Trust has created a six point list of measures for success and a Manifesto for Forests. Details of both can be found on the [Woodland Trust website](#)

Jubilee Woods - In honour of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee the Woodland Trust has launched a [Jubilee Woods](#) project to create 60 new woodlands of at least 60 acres (1 acre is about the size of a football pitch) in the UK and in addition plant 6 million trees. If you'd like to plant a new wood contact the project on 0845 293 5689 or email jubileewoods@woodlandtrust.org.uk

RSPB

Big Garden Bird Watch

The [Big Garden Bird Watch](#) has been running since 1979. The latest watch saw 143,559 people from across the South East recording garden bird sightings at the end of January. The results now in show the good news that, in spite of a harsh winter last year, garden birds in the South East are doing well. Small birds like the Gold Crest, Long-tailed and the Coal Tit were of particular concern but perhaps thanks to the increasing interest in wildlife friendly gardening these species have increased in numbers. Blue Tits, House Sparrows and Starlings were the top three birds to be spotted in the South East. But Starling numbers are still lower than when the count began in 1979.

SEFS CONTACTS

SEFS Secretariat: Alison Walters – tel: 01273 766643, email: alison.walters@foe.co.uk

SEFS Chair: Ian Hepburn – regional.policy@wtse.org.uk

P&EC Chair: Brenda Pollack – brenda.pollack@foe.co.uk

SEFS Transport & Behaviour Change: Peter England - hscap@ukonline.co.uk

Events

SEFS GENERAL MEETING: Wednesday 15th June

Venue: Ethical Property, Development House, 56-64 Leonard St, London. EC2A 4LT

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