

# GreenAction

2010

The magazine of Friends of the Earth Cymru



Cyfeillion  
y Ddaear  
Cymru

Friends of  
the Earth  
Cymru

**CERTAINTY AND HOPE**  
Top climate scientist speaks out

All over  
Wales  
people are  
making a  
difference

*like you*



# Making a difference

**Sometimes you meet someone and their intelligence, humour and humanity shine out like a beacon.**

Sir John Houghton has been one of the world's leading climate scientists for decades. Brought up in Rhyl, he's retired now and could be taking it easy, enjoying the fabulous view of the Dyfi estuary from his beautiful home.

But Sir John is a scientist through and through, and he's still constantly excited by the wonder of our world and our ever-growing knowledge. And his passion for truth means he can't ignore the mis-information that's so often repeated about climate science.

So although well into his seventies, Sir John is still speaking at public meetings and appearing on TV. And he's helped us with our briefing, 'Climate science: Countering the Myths'. You can find some of these myths – and the facts that counter them – on page 12. Or download the full version from our all-new website, [www.foecymru.co.uk](http://www.foecymru.co.uk).

On page 8 Friends of the Earth Cymru director, Gordon James, quizzes Sir John on what inspires him to keep going. And, as one of the best people in the world to answer, asks him exactly how confident should we be in the current state of climate science.

And if Sir John Houghton, with all his knowledge and experience, believes there's so much we can all do to make a difference, that rising to the challenge of climate change can actually make the world a better place – well, we'd surely be wise to listen to him.

So this issue of Green Action is dedicated to the people across Wales who are already making a difference. And that probably includes you. On the cover are some of those who give so much of their time, supporting good green ideas and lobbying against the bad ones. Pages 4 and 5 have some stories from these inspiring people. And if you're one of them, or are just like them – a big thank you from all of us.

Or you might be reading this because you help us financially. This makes a big difference too, so thank you for

your continuing support. On page three are some of the ways you could help us even more, and in these times we do need every bit of help you can give.

To give them their due, our politicians in Wales have been pretty busy lately too. The Welsh Assembly Government continues to place sustainability at the heart of its policies, and aims to take a leading role in tackling climate change.

There've been a lot of changes in Welsh and UK politics recently, and with an Assembly election next year there are possibly a lot more to come. But are these changes all going in the right direction? On page 10, Friends of the Earth Cymru campaigner, Haf Elgar, looks at what's been going on in Cardiff and Westminster. And adds up some of the good decisions taken in Cardiff Bay that have come from Friends of the Earth Cymru campaigns.

But many of the targets and policies of our national governments will mean nothing unless they're followed through locally. So go to page 11 to find out about our campaign to encourage local authorities to commit to real action to tackle climate change.

Perhaps this is a campaign you could get involved in too. Either by joining up with one of the Friends of the Earth local groups in Wales who are busy on the campaign, or by making your own voice heard by your local politicians.

Because if you're not yet involved with Friends of the Earth, right now is a great time to make a difference.

**Simon Williams, Editor**



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**Friends of the Earth Cymru**  
33 Castle Arcade Balcony  
Cardiff CF10 1BY  
tel: 029 2022 9577  
fax: 029 2022 8775  
email: [cymru@foe.co.uk](mailto:cymru@foe.co.uk)  
web: [www.foecymru.co.uk](http://www.foecymru.co.uk)

Editor and designer:  
**Simon Williams**

Contributors:  
**Neil Crumpton, Haf Elgar, Gordon James, Bleddyn Lake**

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### Friends of the Earth Cymru:

-  is dedicated to protecting the environment and promoting a sustainable future for Wales
-  is part of one of the UK's most influential environmental campaigning organisations
-  is part of the most extensive environmental network in the world, with almost 2 million supporters across 5 continents and more than 77 national organisations worldwide
-  supports a unique network of local campaigning groups, working in communities throughout Wales
-  is dependent upon individuals for more than 90 per cent of its income

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# Support us...

Friends of the Earth Cymru is a part of Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland. There are lots of easy ways you can get involved – from raising money just by searching the internet to taking part in a fundraising event

○ If you're not already a financial supporter of Friends of the Earth, why not sign up today? Your donation will help us find solutions that protect planet and people, now and in the future. Visit [www.foe.co.uk/cymru](http://www.foe.co.uk/cymru) or call **0800 581 0510**. We'd be extremely grateful for your support

○ If you're concerned about the kind of world that future generations will inherit, leaving a gift in your will to Friends of the Earth is one of the best things you can do. Find out more at [www.foe.co.uk/legacies](http://www.foe.co.uk/legacies) or call Candice on **020 7566 1606**

○ Switch to get your household electricity from 100% renewable electricity from Good Energy and we get a £50 donation. Visit [www.good-energy.co.uk/foe](http://www.good-energy.co.uk/foe) or call **0845 456 1640**, quoting Friends of the Earth

○ Have fun and help us out - organise a fundraising event for Friends of the Earth Cymru. Call **029 2022 9577** to find out more

○ Raise extra funds for Friends of the Earth just using the internet search engine Everyclick. Register at [www.everyclick.com/friendsoftheearthtrust](http://www.everyclick.com/friendsoftheearthtrust)

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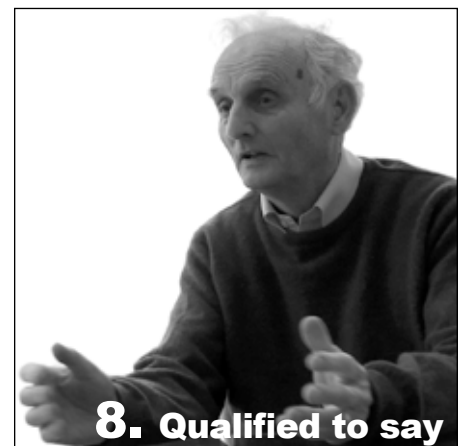
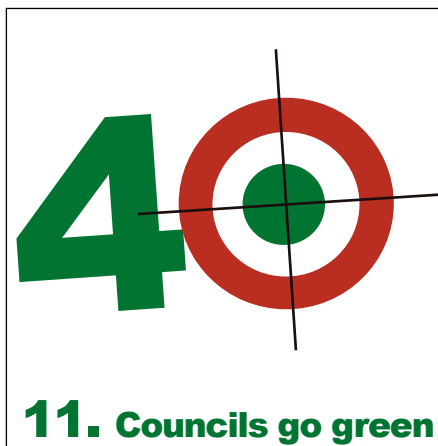
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All over Wales, people are making their world a greener place. Wherever you live, you can get involved with a Friends of the Earth local group



**Kat Nicholson**

**Pontypridd Friends of the Earth**

“Being part of a Friends of the Earth local group is brilliant for getting involved with action on a local level, and at the same time contribute to much larger national campaigns too. It’s also been great for meeting people who have similar priorities and care about the same things as me.”



**Raoul Bhambral**  
**Cardiff**

“We have a great bunch of people doing great things. Recently we’ve held a pre-election public meeting, and promoted local food with a film screening and ‘food fight’. We had fun, and let the people of Cardiff know more about sustainable food.”



**Rick Mills**

**Môn a Gwynedd**

“During my 10 years as a member of the Môn a Gwynedd group, I’ve come to realise the weight that many politicians give to one’s views as a Friends of the Earth representative. It really does open doors that might otherwise remain closed.”



**AnneMarie Foley**  
**Carmarthen**

“By being a member of my local group I feel I’m doing something positive to help combat climate change. I’m feeling a lot less helpless, and realise there are things that can be done – campaigning, holding events and building awareness can all help.”



**Carole Jacob**  
**Torfaen**

“Since joining my local group, I feel my voice is now heard, and I can make a real difference about the some of the issues that concern me. I really enjoy campaigning, and it’s great to be able to get involved as much or as little as I want.”



## Bleddyn Lake

Local Groups Development Officer

“ My work takes me all around Wales, helping our ever-increasing network of local groups. The range of work the groups do constantly amazes and inspires me.

If you’re thinking about starting a new group, get in touch and I’ll help organise a launch meeting with lots of publicity. All you need to bring is plenty of enthusiasm and the desire to make your world a little bit greener. ”

## Get involved...

Most groups meet once a month and work on various local, national and global campaigns – find the relevant contact for your nearest local group on the map opposite. If you want to start a new group, contact Bleddyn Lake on 02920 229 577, or email [bleddyn.lake@foe.co.uk](mailto:bleddyn.lake@foe.co.uk)

## Coal, climate, councils, Copenhagen and plastic bags

Friends of the Earth local groups in Wales have been busy making a difference, thinking globally and acting locally.

Groups worked hard in the run up to last year’s Copenhagen climate talks, supporting actions locally, and nationally in Cardiff and London. Some even travelled to Denmark where they joined Friends of the Earth groups from around the world.

Local group members are supporting renewable energy all over Wales, and opposing opencast coal sites and large waste incinerators in Newport, Cardiff and Merthyr Tydfil. The Newport group also successfully opposed a new

biofuel power station, which would burn palm oil imported from Asia. Massive palm oil plantations are contributing to climate-changing deforestation, displacing local communities and destroying habitats.

Groups in Mon a Gwynedd, Llangollen, Swansea, Caerphilly, Torfaen and Cardiff have been busy working on the ‘Get Serious about CO<sub>2</sub>’ campaign (see p11), asking councils to set targets to cut emissions locally.

Monmouth group helped organise another successful Green Travel day, and in the run up to Earth Hour, the Carmarthen group ran a day of

workshops, speakers, films and food.

Some groups are continuing their campaigns to reduce plastic bag use. These campaigns have already helped persuade the Assembly Government to support a mandatory charge for plastic bags, to come into force in spring 2011.

The run up to the General Election was a really busy time, with groups lobbying parliamentary candidates to sign up to green commitments and running green hustings.

This local, national and international work shows we can bring change at all levels by working together – there is a way for each of us to make a difference.

# Friends of the Earth local groups in Wales

## 1 Abergavenny & Crickhowell

Jackie Bradshaw  
 abandcrickfoe@yahoo.co.uk  
 www.foe.co.uk/abergavenny

## 2 Aberystwyth

John Crocker 01974 272218  
 aberystwythfoe@yahoo.co.uk  
 www.foe.co.uk/aberystwyth

## 3 Barry

Keith Stockdale 01446 734368  
 greenkeith@virginmedia.com  
 www.foe.co.uk/barry

## 4 Caerphilly

Bleddyn Lake 029 2022 9577  
 bleddyn.lake@foe.co.uk  
 www.foe.co.uk/caerphilly

## 5 Cardiff

Raoul Bhambral 0750 492 8248  
 info@foecardiff.co.uk  
 www.foecardiff.co.uk

## 6 Carmarthen

Steve Hack  
 steve@carmarthenfoe.org  
 Chris Corcoran 01267 223023  
 www.foe.co.uk/carmarthen

## 7 Chepstow

Clive Shakesheff  
 rcshakesheff@googlemail.com  
 www.chepstowfoe.org.uk

## 8 Flintshire

Rob Owen 01352 710 714  
 glynowen@hollywellcomputers.co.uk  
 www.foe.co.uk/flintshire

## 9 Heart of Wales

Janine Wilbraham 01597 870039  
 janinewilbraham@googlemail.com  
 www.foe.co.uk/heartofwales

## 10 Llangollen

Sam Rex 01978 862 913  
 extinct\_rex@hotmail.com  
 www.foe.co.uk/llangollen

## 11 Llanidloes

Frances Browne  
 01686 412 788  
 www.foe.co.uk/llanidloes

## 12 Merthyr Tydfil

Alyson Austin  
 postmaster@caustin7.plus.com  
 www.foe.co.uk/groups/merthyrttydfil/

## 13 Môn a Gwynedd

David Stephenson 01248 810236  
 rick.mills@btinternet.com  
 www.foe.co.uk/monagwynedd

## 14 Monmouth

Haydn Cullen-Jones  
 monmouthfoe.coord@hotmail.co.uk

## 15 Newport

David Yates  
 dave.yates@phonecoop.coop  
 www.foe.co.uk/newport

## 16 Pembrokeshire

Ellie Clegg  
 07800 789 930  
 silhouette@cooptel.net  
 www.foepembrokeshire.co.uk

## 17 Pontypridd & District

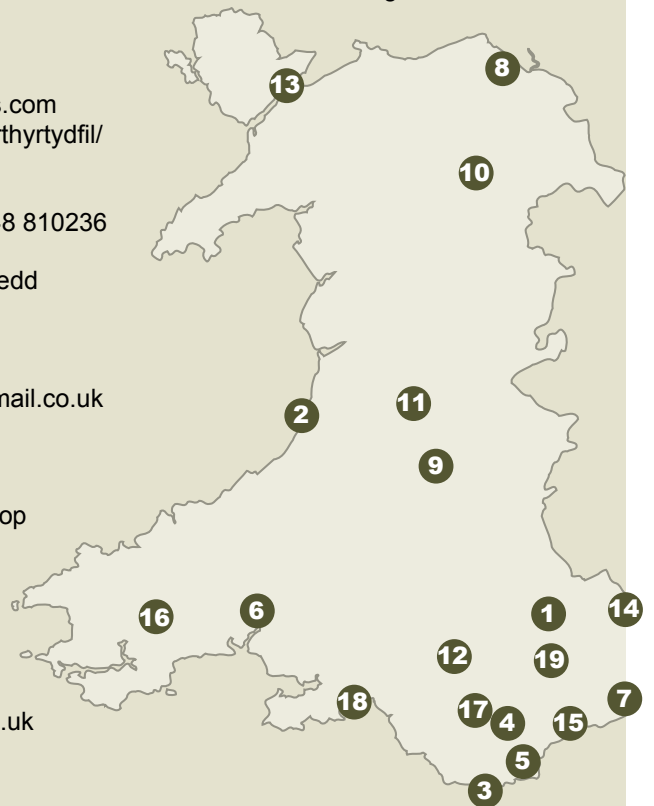
Kat Nicholson  
 pontypriddfoe@googlemail.com  
 www.foe.co.uk/pontypridd

## 18 Swansea

Roy Jones 01792 813 600  
 Roy@gellideg.demon.co.uk  
 www.swanseafae.org.uk

## 19 Torfaen

Carole Jacob 01633 875627  
 carole.jacob48flc@ntlworld.com  
 www.torfaenfoe.org.uk



Diana Marquand and Llinos Roberts of Carmarthen Friends of the Earth tell shoppers in Carmarthen how they can help Fix the Food Chain

## Fixing the food chain

Factory farming demands massive amounts of soy, as a key ingredient in animal feed. Most of this soy comes from huge plantations in Latin America, created by clearing vast tracts of land. This large-scale deforestation means considerable greenhouse gas emissions and the loss of valuable wildlife habitat.

Friends of the Earth's 'Fix the Food Chain' campaign aims to help UK farmers break this link between meat and dairy production and deforestation. Local groups all around Wales have been busy promoting the campaign,

holding events, public meetings, film showings and lobbying their MPs to support a new law to help promote sustainable agriculture.

Heart of Wales Friends of the Earth hosted a public meeting with a soy farming expert from Brazil, which highlighted the human rights abuses linked to soy farming, as small-scale farmers are being pushed off their land by multinational agricultural companies.

The campaign also seeks to promote good quality, local produce and demands that supermarkets offer farmers a fair price for their produce.

# Environmental justice for Merthyr

Some of the unsung heroes of Friends of the Earth are the lawyers and planners of the Rights and Justice centre. This small team has defeated major companies in High Court judgements and forced the reversal of government policy decisions. They work tirelessly for environmental justice and to empower people, especially in some disadvantaged communities that can sometimes seem overwhelmed by environmental problems.

One such community is Merthyr Tydfil. The birthplace of the industrial revolution, this town in south Wales has since suffered air pollution, high unemployment and poor health conditions. The most recent blight on the town has been an enormous opencast coal site right on people's doorsteps at Ffos-y-Fran, with local residents suffering noise and dust pollution around the clock.

And now, a planning application from American company, Covanta, could see a massive rubbish-burning incinerator further blighting the area and the lives of residents. If the application goes ahead, every day lorries and trains will be thundering into Merthyr, full of the rubbish from all over Wales and beyond needed to feed the incinerator. Then more lorries are needed to take the resulting ash away to hazardous waste sites.

Incineration is not green. It produces toxic ash, emits excessive amounts of carbon dioxide, and acts as a disincentive to reduce waste and increase recycling.

But the decision won't be taken by the local council, the National Assembly or even by MPs. Because burning

rubbish creates energy, it's being considered as a power station. Under the current system, the decision will be taken by the undemocratic planning body, the 'Infrastructure Planning Commission' (IPC). This means no public inquiry and no right for the local community to present expert evidence or cross-examine the company.

Despite a commitment from the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition Government at Westminster to abolish the IPC, it seems that much of the process will stay in place, but with the Secretary of State taking the final decision.

As well as not having to take account of the views of local residents, this planning process can also undermine Welsh Assembly Government policies, including the strategies on energy and waste, commitments to cut carbon and planning policies.

Friends of the Earth is challenging this process, and the lack of people's rights to be involved in planning decisions and democratic accountability for them. Our Rights and Justice team are working with Merthyr residents to provide legal support, and to try and ensure that the concerns of the community – and climate change – are taken into account in the process. And our waste campaigners will be providing expertise to make a strong case against the incinerator.

Merthyr Friends of the Earth local group is also working closely with residents and politicians to oppose this massive incinerator, and to halt the environmental degradation and further blighting of their community ●



Melanie Girouard

## Supporting hill farming

We need a system that's fair to farmers, if we're to break our dependency on the imported soy used for animal feed that's causing deforestation, and move to more sustainable farming methods.

Wales has great examples of sustainable farming that produces quality food for local markets, with many family farms, a growing organic sector and much grass-fed livestock. But it's a difficult time for many farmers. 80 per cent of Wales has 'Less Favoured Area' status, recognising it's difficult and costly to farm. These farms have to compete with intensive factory farms across Europe, which offer lower quality and little social benefit yet continue to benefit from unfair subsidies.

Hill farming has a key role to play in producing sustainable livestock, especially sheep. It helps future food security and provides local food not reliant on imported soy. Grazing helps maintain biodiversity and can lock carbon in soils. It's also crucial for the economy of much of Wales and has a big effect on jobs.

Friends of the Earth's 'Fix the Food Chain' campaign will continue to fight for a healthy future for hill farms in Wales.

# ENERGY

## Yes please

Greening our energy supply is massively important if we're to reduce our climate-changing carbon emissions. But not all 'low carbon' energy is created equal. Here's the sliding scale from 'Yes please' to appropriately-sited wind power, through some more complicated 'It depends', to a big 'No thanks' to nuclear...

**Wind** energy features strongly in the Welsh Assembly Government's new Low-Carbon Revolution energy strategy. The targets for on and offshore wind power would alone generate as much electricity as is currently used in Wales. Large offshore windfarms would be built in the Bristol Channel and Liverpool Bay, providing exciting economic opportunities for Wales. Recent research estimates that wind power, mostly offshore, could generate more electricity than future UK energy demand.

**Marine Renewables** Wales has a considerable marine energy potential. With large ports and heavy industry, we're well-placed to harvest it. The Severn Estuary Tidal study is in its second year, and further evidence is emerging about the damaging effects of large barrages such as the proposed Cardiff-Weston Barrage. A tidal device is proposed in Ramsey Sound off Pembrokeshire, and a few miles away the 'Wave Dragon' project is being developed. An array of tidal turbines is proposed for the sea off Anglesey.

# Transport for the future

## How much can greening the transport system contribute to emission cuts – and will the economy pay the price?

**R**oad transport in Wales emitted just over 6 million tonnes of carbon dioxide in 2007, 16 per cent of Wales' total emissions. If we're going to get anywhere near the Welsh Assembly's target of cutting emissions by 40 per cent by 2020, we have to tackle the way we move around.

Progress has been made recently, with the cancellation of plans to build a Gwent Levels Motorway and a dual carriageway along the A40 through Pembrokeshire, both of which would have fuelled traffic growth. These have been notable campaign victories for Friends of the Earth Cymru and allies.

But we are still travelling more kilometers by road every year – making the necessary changes will be both challenging and rewarding.

### Reducing need

Reducing our need to travel plays an important role in getting cars off the road. Better land-use planning must bring where we live, work and shop closer together, and ensure all are better served by public transport.

Rural services such as post offices, schools and shops need to survive. Tele-working and video-conferencing are still under-used ways of working. Buying more local produce would reduce emissions, while also benefiting the local economy. Transferring freight from road to rail and sea could bring significant emission reductions.

### Public transport

When we do have to travel, we can help by swapping car journeys for rail, bus, bike or walking. Government spending must favour sustainable travel over road building. Public transport needs to be frequent and affordable in order to persuade people to leave their cars at home.

Major improvements in public transport and other traffic-reducing measures are vital for improvements in environment, local economies and health. But they are not enough to bring about the required large cuts in emissions. And the importing of biofuels to achieve five per cent of the fuel mix by 2020 may reduce Welsh emissions, but at the expense of increasing emissions in the countries that produce the crops.

### Better technology

For much deeper cuts, we also have to see big changes in technology. The Welsh Assembly Government has already shown it understands this when it announced, in February 2010, its 'Hydrogen Highway' programme to set up hydrogen-fuelling and electricity-charging points at strategic locations along the M4 in south Wales.

The improving fuel efficiency of conventional engines and semi-electric cars can slash emissions by 20–30 per cent. But totally electric cars use only about a fifth of the energy of today's



Could electric-powered vehicles like the Stevens Zecar, developed in Port Talbot, be the future of road travel – and a boost for the Welsh economy?

petrol and diesel engines.

As the price of petrol and diesel continues its rise, fuel-efficient vehicles will become ever more attractive. The urgent need to cut climate-changing emissions means that on-going rises in fuel taxes are also necessary, and the revenue should be invested in cutting the cost of public transport and improving cycling and walking facilities.

### Good for the economy

Wales' economy will benefit from traffic and congestion reducing policies. And Welsh companies such as Stevens Vehicles in Port Talbot and Connaught Engineering in Llanelli are already developing electric vehicles and technology. There are undoubtedly huge opportunities for Welsh manufacturing in developing and producing electric vehicles and the renewable energy sources we'll need to power them ●

## It depends

**Biomass** Môn and Gwynedd Friends of the Earth is campaigning against a huge biomass power station on Anglesey. Concerns include the unsustainable import of 2.5 million tonnes a year of Canadian forestry, which would take decades to regrow, and the scheme's low efficiency. Using combined heat and power (CHP), waste heat could be piped to local homes and businesses making the scheme twice as efficient. A similar scheme, again without CHP, has been approved at Port Talbot.

## No thanks

**Nuclear** Despite a continued commitment from the Welsh Assembly Government to a nuclear-free Wales, Horizon Nuclear Power has announced it will seek an application to build a large new power station at 'Wylfa B' on Anglesey. If approved, the new reactors may operate for sixty years. Two new and untested 'third generation' reactor designs are currently being assessed. The waste would be twice as radioactive as existing waste, and would remain on site for up to 160 years in so-called 'interim' stores.

## Peak oil

In April 2010, the US military warned that the global surplus of oil production capacity following the recession could disappear within two years. Crude oil could soon reach \$100 a barrel, and by 2015 serious shortages could bring negative economic and political impacts.

The UK government has opened up a larger than ever before sea area where oil and gas exploitation can take place. Areas in and near the Cardigan Bay Special Area of Conservation are currently excluded, pending further investigations.

# Qualified to say

World-renowned Welsh climate scientist **Sir John Houghton** talks to Friends of the Earth Cymru director **Gordon James** about scientific rigour, hope and denial

**Gordon James:** You've had a distinguished career as a scientist at the highest level. Why do you still keep involved in the debates about climate change, even in retirement?

**Sir John Houghton:** I'm a scientist, and climate is a fascinating area of human knowledge. I've been very fortunate in the jobs I've done, privileged to have been involved in this remarkable explosion of our understanding of the climate system. With global observations, and massive computer power enabling us to do global modeling, we've been able to put the whole thing together in an exciting way.

And I can't just leave it, it's a part of my life now. I recognise climate change as a global problem, and what's needed is very good information out there. I have the knowledge, I've had the experience that few people have had, and so I feel it's my responsibility to help.

**GJ:** You were chair of the Scientific Assessment Working Group of The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change for a number of years. The IPCC is the world's leading body on climate change, but in recent months it's taken some criticism. Exactly how robust are the IPCC reports, and how rigorous is the process of compiling them?

**SJH:** Yes, there's been one error, one reference that wasn't looked at properly. But that's one error out of a thousand pages. And there are a lot of people who are determined to discredit the IPCC.

It's not a new thing. Back in the 1990s there was a big misinformation campaign led by ExxonMobil and the American coal companies. So it's been going on for a long time, and there are still lots of people involved. Predictably, before the UN climate talks at Copenhagen they were working very hard indeed.

But the IPCC did a very thorough, scientific job. Getting everyone to pool their knowledge, to balance out all the data and look at the whole picture, to look at the world as a whole and not just one region of it, was a very powerful way of finding out what all the data meant.

## The IPCC

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is the world's leading body for the assessment of climate change. It was established by the United Nations (UN) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in 1989, to give a clear view on climate change and its potential consequences.

The IPCC reviews and assesses the most recent scientific, technical and socio-economic information produced worldwide. Thousands of scientists from all over the world contribute, and the reports reflect differing viewpoints within the scientific community.

An intergovernmental body, the IPCC is open to all member countries of the UN and WMO. Because of its unique scientific and intergovernmental nature, the IPCC provides highly rigorous and balanced scientific information to decision makers.



We had no preconceived notions about what we were going to say, except to believe in the basic science. We argued long and hard about what we were certain about. But they were always entirely scientific arguments, never political or personal.

Some countries like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait were determined to weaken the reports at all costs, and looked for anything that might cast doubt. So we had good arguments, but we approved the text through a very tough process. You could not have a tougher scrutiny of the material than that process, it was a tremendously rigorous process.

**GJ:** Why is there such a strong desire to deny climate change? Very few climate skeptics and deniers have good qualifications in climate science, yet they're given an awful lot of coverage in the media.

**SJH:** It is what people want to hear, because they have the impression that they'll have to change their lifestyle enormously to cope with climate change. But that is not true. What we have to do is get carbon-free energy as fast as we can get it. But that can be done.

The International Energy Agency, the top energy body in the world, publish a bible every year. The IEA is technically a very competent outfit. In 2008 they published a report which tells in great detail what has to be done to reach carbon emission reductions of at least 50 per cent by 2050. It might not be quite enough to keep temperature rises within 2 degrees, but it is well on the way. They explain what has to be done with renewables, with transport, with everything.

Being more sustainable is a different issue, but in terms of fighting climate change, it's not going to mean enormous changes of lifestyle, lots of things can be done that won't affect our basic living standards at all. We just need to concentrate on getting carbon-free energy, and stopping deforestation, which is a big part of the problem.

**GJ:** So you're optimistic that we can address the problems soon enough to avoid the worst aspects of climate change?

**SJH:** I don't see any reason at all why we can't. Though in this country, it does depend a great deal on the attitude of the government.

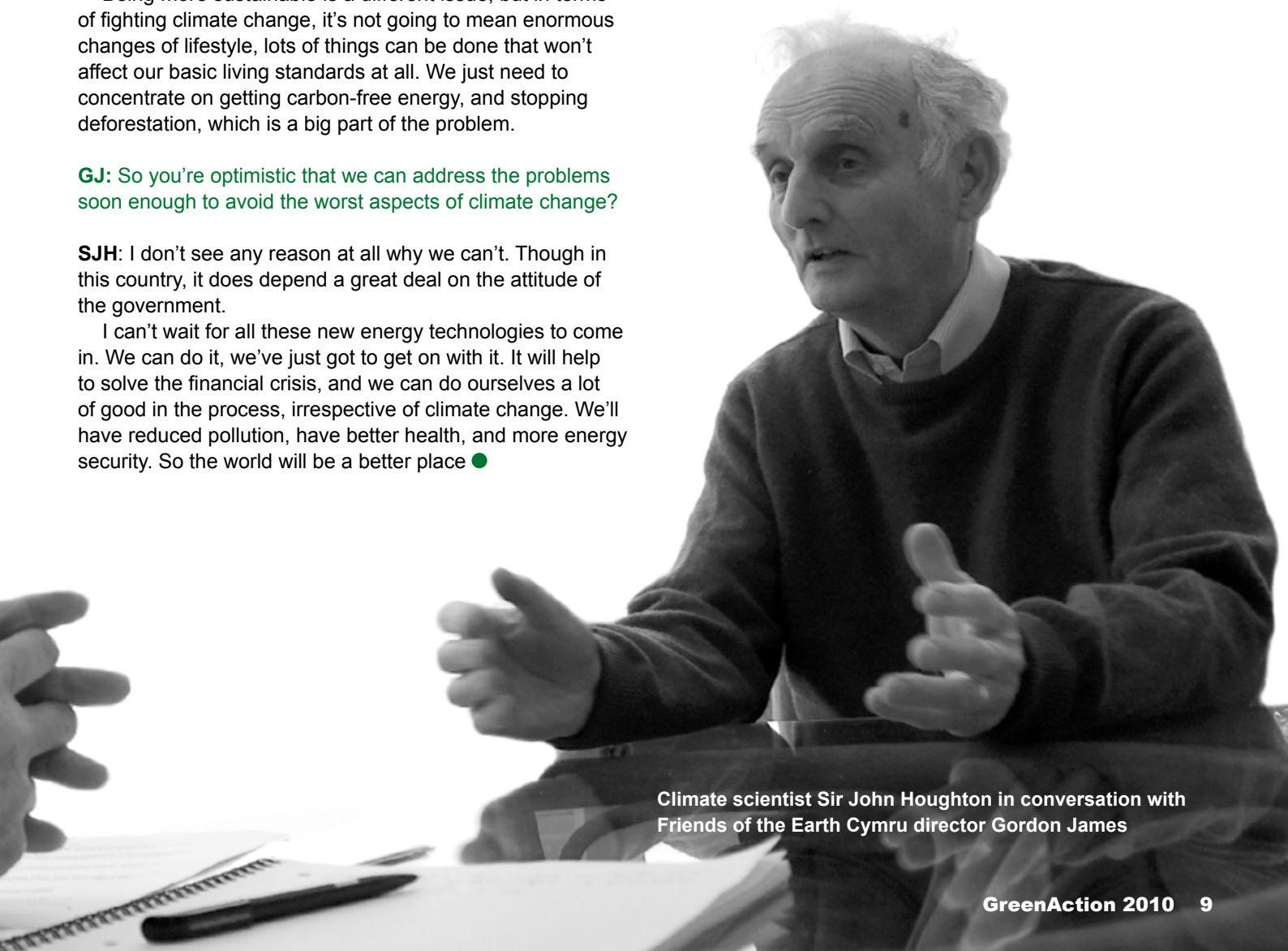
I can't wait for all these new energy technologies to come in. We can do it, we've just got to get on with it. It will help to solve the financial crisis, and we can do ourselves a lot of good in the process, irrespective of climate change. We'll have reduced pollution, have better health, and more energy security. So the world will be a better place ●

## Sir John Houghton: a life in science

- 2007** Shared Nobel Peace Prize, as co-chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) Scientific Assessment Working Group
- 1988-2002** Chairman or Co-Chairman, Scientific Assessment Working Group, IPCC
- 1990** Founded The Met Office Hadley Centre, the UK's foremost climate change research centre
- 1983-91** Director General (later Chief Executive), UK Meteorological Office
- 1976-83** Professor of Atmospheric Physics, Oxford University

Born in Dyserth, Clwyd. Educated at Rhyl Grammar School and Jesus College, Oxford.

“ You couldn't have tougher scrutiny, it was a tremendously rigorous process ”



Climate scientist Sir John Houghton in conversation with Friends of the Earth Cymru director Gordon James

# Inside the Assembly

It's all change, again. Things never stay the same for very long in politics. But are we moving in the right direction, asks **Haf Elgar**?

**T**he biggest recent change in Welsh politics has been the retirement of Rhodri Morgan after nearly 10 years as First Minister. He didn't always fully agree with our campaigns, but he did speak out on issues he believed in, such as a nuclear-free Wales.

Rhodri's successor, Carwyn Jones, stepped into his shoes by making a visit to the Copenhagen Climate Summit in December 2009 his first

engagement in the job. This was after Friends of the Earth and Stop Climate Chaos Cymru (SCCC) members had pressed him hard to go during the leadership contest.

Friends of the Earth Cymru also worked with SCCC to take Wales' bluest climate campaigner, the twenty foot long Dai the Dragon, to the steps of the Senedd. Dai attracted a lot of attention, and many Assembly Members came out to support our main ask for the Copenhagen summit.

Wales continues to stay ahead of the UK Government in its commitment to tackling climate change, including a commitment to cut carbon emissions by 40 per cent by 2020.

In the Assembly committees relevant issues have gone beyond the 'usual suspects' of the Sustainability Committee, with Enterprise Committee inquiries on railway infrastructure and green jobs, a Legislation Committee measure on waste shipment and a Special Assembly Procedure Committee opposing the dualling of the A40 in Pembrokeshire.

With key Assembly Members such as Jane Davidson and Mick Bates having announced they're stepping down next May, it seems there's been a strong surge to get things in place and leave a lasting legacy on tackling climate change.



**Friends of the Earth Cymru campaigner Haf Elgar**

It's also a time of change for relationships across the border, with a new government at Westminster negotiating its relationship with the devolved government, a planned referendum to increase the Assembly's powers, and the UK Infrastructure Planning Commission system taking decisions on power stations, wind farms and incinerators in Wales. All this means potential for a lot of clashes.

The coming year will be crucial as we work to get commitments from all the parties for the next Assembly term. A low carbon future for Wales must be the main focus of manifestos ●



**School children with the largest climate campaigner in Wales – Dai the Dragon**

## blue + yellow = green?

Westminster's new Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition has found significant green common ground, which could develop a low-carbon economy in the UK. The early announcement of the scrapping of a third runway at Heathrow was a positive start, and a sign that aviation emissions are being taken seriously.

Chris Huhne is an Energy and Climate Change Secretary who signed up to all our climate pledges in the election campaign, and championed green issues.

The Queen's speech lacked detail, but we'll be campaigning for a strong

Energy Bill – including more ambitious feed-in tariffs, limits on emissions from new power stations and the rapid establishment of a green investment bank. The coalition government should also push for a strong and fair international climate agreement, and a UK carbon reduction target of at least 42 per cent by 2020.

A commitment to not provide any public funding for new nuclear power will make it extremely difficult to build any new reactors.

With a new government and a record amount of new MPs, there's plenty of work for Friends of the Earth.

### **They're really listening... Assembly Government policies adopted from our campaigns**

#### **Climate**

Unanimous support from the Welsh Assembly to cut carbon emissions by 40 per cent by 2020

#### **Energy**

An ambitious energy policy in March 2010 stated Wales' potential for renewables to produce double the electricity than we use by 2025

#### **Food**

Wales' GM-free commitment was strengthened with the introduction of strict controls on co-existence between GM and non-GM crops

#### **Transport**

Plans for a six-lane motorway across the highly-protected Gwent Levels were scrapped in the National Transport Plan of March 2010

#### **Waste**

70 per cent recycling target confirmed in the waste strategy consultation in July 2009. A charge for carrier bags announced after plastic bag-free town campaigns by Friends of the Earth local groups

# Getting serious



**4** per cent

**The Welsh and UK governments have committed to carbon emissions cuts across the country. But they're unlikely to happen without the support and involvement of our local councils.**

**A**ction on climate change in your local area doesn't just mean recycling at home, growing more vegetables or using low-energy lightbulbs. There are many decisions taken by our local councils – in deciding how we get around, power our homes and plan our communities – that can make a big difference to our carbon footprint.

The message of Friends of the Earth's Get Serious About CO<sub>2</sub> campaign is that we can all get involved in helping the environment in our local area, and at the same time lower carbon emissions.

Local councils have a central role to play. They can take the right decisions on transport, energy, planning and reducing waste. And just as importantly, they can show the leadership needed to harness and grow the great enthusiasm and expertise in our communities, and turn them into real policies and actions.

After all, cutting carbon doesn't just mean a better environment – our solutions also create local jobs, save money, improve public transport and tackle fuel poverty.

Some inspirational work is going

on already (see 'Councils getting it right'), but not one council is doing everything possible, or coming up with a comprehensive plan that can lower emissions and tackle climate change.

Overall, we lag behind England and other countries. That's why Friends of the Earth local groups in Wales are campaigning to get commitments from local councils to cut emissions in their areas by 40 per cent by 2020, and produce action plans or a strategy to show how this can be delivered. This will provide a focus for the work ahead, make it clear who's responsible for its delivery, how the community is involved, and to ensure that the resources are available.

This needs to happen if we're to achieve the emissions cuts committed to by both the Welsh Assembly and the UK Climate Change Act. And so we're calling for an emissions cut requirement for all councils in Wales.

Our local groups are working on campaigns across Wales that engage local authorities and improve their communities, so get involved with your local group for a better future – there's never been a better time to think global, act local ●

## Councils getting it right

**There are some good things happening in our local authorities. Can we have more like these, please?**

### Blaenau Gwent

The Council and Welsh Assembly Government is working with private companies to develop 'The Works' in Ebbw Vale, with business, housing, a hospital and college on the regenerated steelworks site. The project seeks to be an 'exemplar for sustainable energy and eco-housing', and to be carbon neutral.

### Cardiff

Cardiff Council is carrying out a 'Carbon Lite Cardiff' plan, aiming to achieve 60 per cent carbon cuts in its internal services by 2018. Projects include city-centre bikes and journey-sharing schemes, kerbside food waste collections, an insulation programme and electricity smart meters.

### Carmarthen

The Carmarthenshire Energy Agency, established in 2004, aims to develop sustainable energy projects to combat climate change and boost local economic development. Along with Menter Cwm Gwendraeth, it's currently delivering a 'Zero Carbon Communities' project to develop local energy projects

### Denbighshire

Denbighshire Council has set up 'Project Gaia' as a strategy to reduce the Council's carbon emissions by at least 3 per cent a year. A staff 'Green Team' are dedicated to scouting out ways of being greener, and coming up with new ideas.

### Powys

Powys Council is developing a Carbon Management Programme to deliver projects that will lead to a 50 per cent reduction in carbon reduction by 2017.

# Climate science: Countering the **myths**

## **‘The world is cooling not warming’**

**Average global temperature has increased about 0.74°C over the last century. Ten of the warmest years on record have occurred since 1997, 2000-09 has been the warmest decade**

## **‘Climate change is a natural not a man-made process’**

**The average global temperature rise over the last century is larger than can be accounted for by natural influences alone**

## **‘There’s no consensus on climate change’**

**The world’s leading scientists of the Academies of Science, nearly all the world’s governments, and health, military, and economic experts accept that human activity is causing climate change**

## **‘Stolen e-mails show scientists can’t be trusted’**

**Two expert inquiries have cleared the climate scientists of University of East Anglia of any scientific dishonesty**

**Go to [www.foecymru.co.uk](http://www.foecymru.co.uk) to download a full version of ‘Climate Science: Countering the myths’**



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