

Branch Line

Havant
Friends of the Earth

Caring for
Our Borough



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the Earth

March 2007

Road Pricing would it work in the Portsmouth area?

By Ray Cobbett

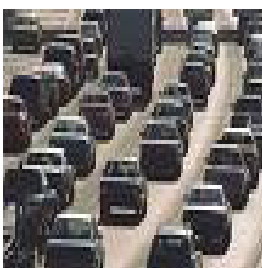
Hardly a weekday passes without a major snarl-up on our local trunk roads as traffic exceeds their design capacity. The decision to introduce a 4th lane on the M27 outside Portsmouth will not solve the problem. A long-running proposal for a Light Rail Tram (LRT) connecting Gosport and Fareham has been dropped and the talk has moved to monorails.

Not only is congestion costing the British economy billions but transport is the only sector where carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions are rising.

Nearly a quarter of all car journeys are less than two miles. We need more investment in public transport and safer streets for cycling and walking. London has just extended its congestion charging area after seeing a 15% reduction in traffic volumes.

Over a million people have signed a petition opposing road pricing. Sadly, much of the protest is based on myths and assumptions on what the government plans to do when in fact nothing has yet been decided. Motoring costs have fallen by 7% since 1997 while public transport fares have increased. In ten years 7 million more vehicles use our roads making transport the source of 21% of the UK's carbon dioxide.

The Government desperately needs to help people use their cars less and choose the least polluting forms of travel. It has to show that road pricing can work outside London and that the new money raised is invested in alternatives to car travel.



“Building more roads and widening motorways will lead to increases in traffic, congestion and emissions of carbon dioxide. We need sustainable solutions to the transport challenges of the 21st century.”

*Tony Bosworth, FOE
Transport Campaigner*

A year of local action with more to come

By Sue Holt

The announcement in the Queen's Speech that we are getting a Climate Change Bill has been universally welcomed. A year ago it seemed a forlorn hope. But action on the streets and through the press from 130,000 petitioners that included 230 from Havant has paid off.

We faced other major issues. The government is obsessed with massive airport expansion everywhere. Havant joined forces with FOE groups throughout the county to launch Against eXpansion at Eastleigh (AXE).

After hoping it had gone away, Tesco reared its head with an even more monstrous plan for tripling the size of its Solent Road store. Havant FOE, along with residents and business groups, launched SAVE OUR SHOPS. We argued our case wherever we could including on Radio Solent's Breakfast programme. We've urged the Government Office for South East (GOSE) to call in the application for Public Inquiry.

Planning is a continuing concern. Havant Council planners ignored sound advice from their own environmental health officers and recommended that councillors approve a new residential development in area with poor air quality. Havant FOE was the only substantial objector to this unsustainable scheme and won the support of planning councillors who threw it out. Still the threats to our green fields continue with the council willing to sacrifice our heritage to create jobs mostly for people outside the borough. Encouraging Havant Council to embrace a greener agenda is a major challenge for 2007.

As the Guardian's George Monbiot wrote what are we going to do now that Tesco has gone green? Here's the danger. It sounds like things are getting better. But are they? Green wash may refresh politicians and supermarkets but in the real world it's much tougher. The public interest is there as our very successful Green Living Fair showed in November. Sadly the enthusiasm is not shared by our MP who, despite giving assurances that he would sign a parliamentary petition for a Climate Change Bill, did not do so. I hope I wasn't the only constituent who received a private apology.

This article is based on Sue's annual report presented to members at Havant FOE AGM in February.

OVER THE PAGE

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How to reduce your Carbon Footprint

New book published



On average we each produce about **12.5 tonnes of greenhouse gases a year**. The US and Canada account for over 20 tonnes per person, while China and India are much lower at about 4 and 2 tonnes respectively. We need to reduce emissions to 3 tonnes of CO2 per head (says the Stern Report). ***How to Live a Low Carbon Life: The Individual's Guide to Stopping Climate Change***, (published by Earthscan) contains sound information for low-carbon living. More info: <http://www.earthscan.co.uk> Also read **SAVE CASH & SAVE THE PLANET** (Collins) by Andrea Smith

The Battle of Bosmere Field

Plans by developers to build office blocks on one of Havant's few green fields have suffered a major setback. Havant FOE teamed up with six local Residents Associations to oppose a scheme that would have caused major traffic hold-ups and damage to the local environment. Almost every Member of the council's Development Control slammed a proposal for three office blocks and a nursery on open land adjoining Langstone roundabout. The decision by the council to throw it out comes weeks after the rejection of flats in an area of high pollution, also opposed by FOE

LA	2005/6 %	Target % (set by LA)	Annual % change
IoW	38.8	24	3.3
Eastleigh	34.7	30	2.1
E Hants	33.6	24	1.2
Fareham	28.4	30	1.8
Test Valley	27.2	30	7.9
NF	26.4	30	1.8
Soton	25.7	24	8
Hart	25.4	30	1.8
Havant	24.0	30	2.7
Gosport	23.6	27	0.8
Rushmoor	21.6	24	2.6
Portsmouth	20.5	30	3
Winchester	20.2	30	2.2
Basingstoke	17.3	30	0.8
Hampshire	31.8	30	1.8

Recycling targets missed

Let's face it there are no prizes for the recycling performance of councils in Hampshire. **Only four councils met or exceeded their own targets according to Defra's latest statistics. Havant missed theirs by 6%- better than Basingstoke with a whopping 13% miss.**

The government has set targets for the amount of household waste local authorities can send to landfill. By 2010 councils will have had to cut the amount of biodegradable waste dumped in the ground to 75% of the 1995 total and to 50% by 2013 and 35% by 2020. **Extending the range of items for kerbside like glass and textiles and improving recycling centres would certainly help Havant's performance.**



Woods into Water

A new £30m storage reservoir holding around 8.7 million cubic metres of water a mile long and 1/2 mile wide is being planned for Havant Thicket. On completion in 2021 water would be pumped from Bedhampton Springs and held in the new facility

Defra says that nationally about 3.5 megalitres (ML) per day are lost through leaking pipes and distribution. It's reckoned we each consume about 160 litres a day but, with a water meter installed, this can drop by up to 30%. Work by the Environment Agency and SERA suggests that 3/4 of extra demand for water in the South East will come from new and expanded reservoirs and only 1/4 from greater efficiency. Much can be done to lower personal consumption through metering, recycling grey water and harvesting using rain butts. Meanwhile, Havant FOE plans to meet Portsmouth Water Company to discuss the eco impact the new reservoir would have on local plant and animal life. The irony is that there is less water per head of population in the South East than in Jordan.

Havant FOE PRIORITIES FOR 2007

- Work to reduce Havant's carbon footprint**
- Expand cycleway network**
- Support local shops**
- Fight green field development**
- Promote more recycling**
- Protect habitats**
- Forge alliances with like-minded groups**

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NEXT MEETING: 21ST MARCH, 15a SOUTH ST
HAVANT 7.30