



*"We are a network of grandparents and elders who care about the world our descendants will inherit. We have learned that the current plans of energy companies and governments will, if not radically changed, put our grandchildren's future at risk. We seek to cooperate and enter into dialogue with others. Where other actions fail, we are prepared to take direct action, in a spirit of non-violence and respect."* (from our website).



Newsletters are usually about news, but what do you do when yesterday's serious news is forgotten, and replaced by today's "breaking news"? That is what we're constantly up against within the climate change field, where some things move slowly. So we make no excuse in continuing to focus mainly on fracking (hydraulic fracturing) in this newsletter.



**Fracking.** On a number of occasions recently we have joined forces with a generation that is young enough to be our grandchildren, in protests, mainly outside several Barclays Bank branches in Bristol, against the bank's policy of investing in **shale gas** production (but note, most other High Street Banks also invest in fossil fuels). The argument for such a policy is that shale gas will fill a short-term shortage of energy supply (listen out for the phrase "keeping the lights on") until

renewable energy is more widely available. In the meantime, the planet becomes more depleted, extraction adds to CO2 emissions, and the environment deteriorates.

Further protests are currently taking place throughout the UK, and particularly at Preston New Road (PNR), near Blackpool, where the mining company Cuadrilla is working to get started with drilling. Two members attended the mass day of protest at PNR on 16<sup>th</sup> March (<https://reclaimthepower.org.uk>), dressed in white – for peace. This was not the last opportunity to protest. The local community involved with protests at the fracking site are planning three months of rolling resistance starting in April and various environmental groups are taking responsibility for the planning and participation each week. We will be playing our part. But remember that there are still other fracking sites at various stages of planning. Although the Banks Group had their application for an open-cast **coal mine** at Druridge Bay turned down by the government this week, plans for another, at Bradley, are at an advanced stage ([www.coalaction.org.uk](http://www.coalaction.org.uk)).



**International contacts:** Fracking affects us locally, as the most productive sites are virtually on our doorsteps. But we also feel a sense of responsibility for highlighting the damage of fracking to the whole world. Our Swiss grandparent partners ([www.gpclimat.ch](http://www.gpclimat.ch)) inform us of similar struggles against fracking in their country. One of the international

fracking giants has recently bought up the local football team in Lausanne, presumably as a way of softening local opinion. This caused enough controversy to have reached their national news (refresh your French, visit <https://www.rts.ch/play/tv/emission/mise-au-point?id=385360&station=a9e7621504c6959e35c3ecbe7f6bed0446cdf8da>). Greenpeace, supported by our climate-grandparent partners in Norway recently failed – predictably – in their court case, widely supported by the public, around the State’s responsibility under the Constitution to protect the environment (including the climate) for future generations. This was costly process, but it is now hoped that the case will be taken to the High Court.

**AGM:** Since our start we have been a small group, based in the Bristol area. We now plan to organize more formally, with a constitution and committee. Our first **Annual General Meeting** will be held in Bristol on **Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> October**. More details later. You don’t have to be a grandparent or old to come along!

**Plastic Pollution: big problem, small steps:** Climate Change is not a niche subject: it links with many other areas of environmental concern. Plastic pollution is currently a hot topic in the UK. Plastic relies on oil, and plastics pollution is made worse by the unpredictable and heavy rainfall - which is associated with climate change – that washes a large proportion of plastic into the sea. Some of us recently joined a local group in campaigning against single-use plastic for catering, and as a result one of our local councils has just decided to abolish its use in their own establishments.



**First things first:** We continue to be concerned about the whole economic system which encourages economic growth at any cost. Growth contributes to climate change, hence the message opposite (“Let’s change the system, not the climate”). We enjoy links with faith groups, like the Quakers who have produced a set of 7 booklets on the New Economy (see [www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/economic-justice/new-economy](http://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/economic-justice/new-economy))

**Local councils for the climate:** Two of our members met with our Swiss, French and Belgian counterparts in Brussels at the end of November, and paid a visit to Ottignies, a local council that has acquired Covenant of Mayors status (see [www.covenantofmayors.eu](http://www.covenantofmayors.eu)). This carries with it obligations, amongst other things, to cut CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by a greater amount than is generally required. A number of British cities and local authorities are already part of this scheme, and we are trying to encourage some other Councils to follow their example. However, at least one local Council, where two of our members have raised planning objections at public meetings, seems likely to give planning permission for an expansion of the largest shopping centre in the West of England. Public consultation has now closed, but its policy still makes sad, but interesting, reading. ([www.consultations.southglos.gov.uk/consult.ti/Climate18/consultationHome](http://www.consultations.southglos.gov.uk/consult.ti/Climate18/consultationHome))



**Our unpredictable climate:** We had a 20 degree C fluctuation in temperature in the West of England during the week this newsletter was being assembled. On the coldest day, a Climate Change study group run by two of our members was cancelled because of snow, dangerously slippery roads, no public transport, and some shortages in the shops. A sign of worse to come?



Visit us on <https://network23.org/gfase/> Follow us on Facebook: @gfaseuk,

Our actions are on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and type Grandparents For A Safe Earth into the search box.

**GfaSE - for the generations to come**

edited by Sigurd Reimers 23 March 2018