

Environment newsletter

No5 Winter 2009

Angela Smith MP



As your Member of Parliament I wanted to let you know what I've been doing to raise environmental awareness, both locally and nationally.

I am particularly heartened by the excellent work done by imaginative individuals, voluntary organisations and businesses in the area who are addressing the challenges that climate change presents and I am delighted to support them.

Angela Smith MP

10:10 - it's not too late

As the Copenhagen summit approaches, questions about climate change will be at the forefront of the world's attention.

It is, therefore, a good time for us all to take a fresh look at how we interact with the environment. Government must take the lead on this issue and that is why this Labour government was the first to introduce legally binding targets to limit greenhouse gas emissions and why we have met our Kyoto commitments twice over.

Individuals can make a big difference and that is why Angela has joined the 10:10 campaign on climate change which encourages individuals and businesses to cut their carbon emissions by 10% by 2010. Thousands of people across the country are signing up to this movement, including the entire government front bench. Just a few simple steps like driving less or eating locally produced food can help cut emissions, while helping you to save money at the same time.

Angela said, *"When I talk to people on the doorstep and in the street about the environment they often wonder whether what they can do at home makes a difference - I can assure you that it does. Campaigns like 10:10, which mobilise a huge number of people, can make a huge impact not only in reducing the*

amount of carbon we emit but by raising awareness. Not only do such measures help save the environment, they can also put pounds back in your pocket.

"Personally, I already strive to recycle as much as possible - you can imagine how much paper I am sent! I also use energy saving appliances and have solar panels on my roof to heat water. When out and about in the area I have seen how imaginative people are when it comes to ensuring nothing goes to waste. A good example of a grassroots project that makes a difference is the Re-use centre in Thurrock (see inside) and my pledge for this year is to promote and support projects like this."



Angela is pictured with Ed Miliband, Minister for Energy and Climate Change, signing up to "Ed's Pledge" to support efforts to get a climate change deal at the Copenhagen summit in December.

Find out more about the 10:10 project at www.1010uk.org



CUTTING 10% OF EMISSIONS IN 2010. EVERYONE IS AT IT.

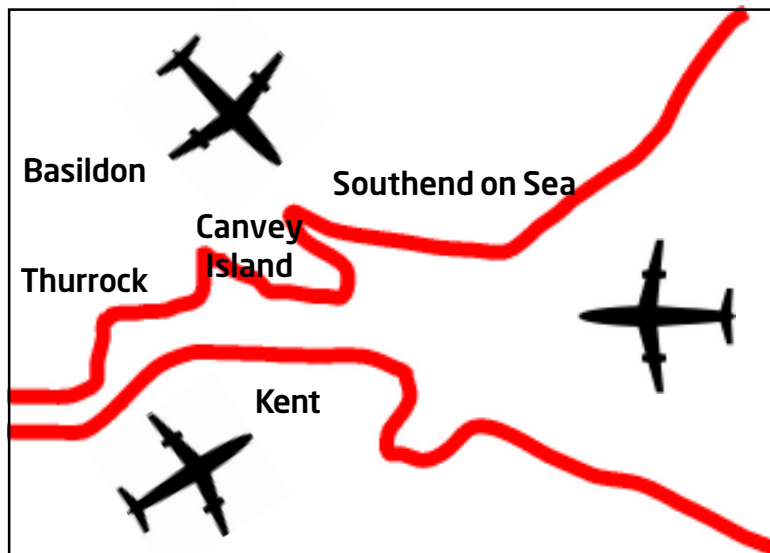
Plane mad!

Angela strongly opposes London Mayor Boris Johnson's plans to pursue the idea of an international airport in the Thames Estuary off the Essex coast.

Despite Government plans to expand existing airports such as Heathrow, the Mayor believes that such action would be an "error", instead supporting the construction of a man-made island in the estuary. Boris even says that the construction of such an airport would be the "single biggest... and bravest project we do".

Brave, or foolhardy?

The plan is estimated to cost in the region of £40 billion and the environmental cost is also staggering. The Thames Estuary is home to many species of migrating birds, as well as other marine wildlife within the estuary. If an airport were to be built slap-bang in the middle of this vital habitat, the consequences could be disastrous for the river eco-system, not to mention the potentially lethal possibility of bird strikes. The RSPB has come out against these plans, stating it is one of the five most important sites in the UK for water birds wintering or migrating.



Air travel is one of the biggest global contributors to carbon emissions but Johnson claims that this scheme is the "green option". But, as a Greenpeace spokesman pointed out, "just because you move the emissions to the other side of London doesn't mean they won't cause climate change". Johnson's proposal does little except move the environmental damage away from his well-heeled constituents in Hendon and dump them on the people of Essex.

Angela said, "This scheme is plane mad. I have already received a lot of correspondence from constituents who are opposed to this plan, and I will be campaigning hard to prevent this from happening."

Support Angela's opposition to the Thames Estuary airport - sign the form on the reverse of this newsletter and post it back today.

Re-use your unwanted furniture

Angela is delighted to support the Thurrock Re-Use Project, a volunteer-run scheme which encourages the re-use of furniture and equipment. These refurbished items are then sold on at low cost to community groups and those in need. Their 're-paint' project collects surplus paint from retail and trade sources and is made available to charities or community groups at just £1 per litre.

Angela said, "This is an invaluable service for community groups and those in need, but it's also great for the environment - it stops unwanted items being dumped or going to landfill sites."



Angela is pictured meeting David Lawrence at the Thurrock Re-Use Project.

News in brief . . . News in Brief . . . News in brief . . .



Green transport pod

Angela recently visited the ARRK workshop in Basildon. She saw their latest project the "ULTRa pod", a state of the art vehicle designed to transport people quickly while producing no emissions.

Angela said, *"This is an outstanding example of innovation in Basildon which can make a real contribution to reducing our damaging carbon emissions"*.

Basildon's 'green' van

Angela has welcomed Basildon company Abby Couriers to Parliament, to see their new 'green' van in action. Angela is pictured with the Abby team at Westminster. Abby Couriers is a family-run firm employing over 200 people. It bought the first electric-powered courier vehicles to make deliveries more environmentally friendly as they have zero emissions.

Angela said, *"With increasing pressure on battling climate change in today's society, the vehicles Abby Couriers are now using are the way of the future and are very important in reducing energy. Yet again Basildon is leading the way in green transport technology."*

For more information about Abby Couriers, visit: www.abbycouriers.com



Recycling

Both Thurrock and Basildon Councils have pledged to increase recycling and local residents are playing an increasing part in this. In Basildon, recycling rates have increased by 6% in a year and the new bins in Thurrock should make recycling easier.

Angela said, *"it is only through the efforts of residents that recycling schemes can be successful. Working together, we can eliminate wastage and reduce the amount of rubbish going to landfill. There have been problems in some collections and if you experience any difficulties, and the Council can't help, please let me know."*



Greening our communications

As the minister responsible for Green ICT, Angela announced that the government has saved at least £7 million of public money through environmentally friendly changes in its computing policy.

Changes include extending the service life of PCs, introducing double-sided printing as the default option and ensuring computers are switched off overnight. This has helped cut the carbon footprint of Central Government computers by 12,000 tonnes - the equivalent of taking 5,000 cars off the road or enough carbon to fill 2,500 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

Angela said: *"Information technology is one of the hidden causes of climate change - worldwide, computers rival the airline industry for carbon emissions, but few people are taking action to improve the situation"*

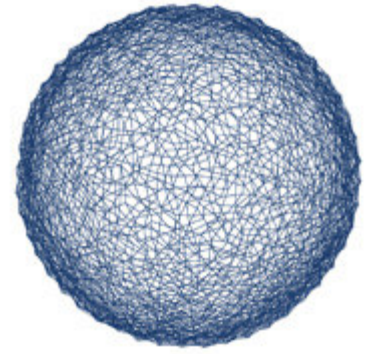
Countdown to Copenhagen

In December representatives of the British government will travel to Copenhagen to try to seal a global deal on climate change.

Leaders from around the world will convene to secure an agreement which covers emissions cuts, helping developing countries progress sustainably and to halt deforestation.

Angela said, "It is vital that we secure an ambitious, workable plan to tackle the threats to the welfare of people around the globe caused by climate change. It's easy to think of these problems as only having an impact on the other side of the world but the recent Climate Impact Projections show that the UK faces droughts, flooding and sea level rises which will affect every single person in this country. The British Government is leading the way on facing up to the challenges of global warming; with your support we can do more".

You can find out more about the dangers of climate change by visiting the website www.tcktcktck.org.



COP15
COPENHAGEN
UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE 2009

Find out more about the organisations featured in this newsletter:

www.1010.uk.org

Help the environment by committing to cut 10% of your carbon usage by 2010.

www.tcktcktck.org

Keep up to date with all the latest developments in the run up to the Copenhagen summit.

www.2ndgen.co.uk

Support the Thurrock Re-Use project online.

www.uk.freecycle.org

A network of people looking to recycle and re-use old furniture and appliances.

www.greenict.org.uk

Find out more about greening your IT usage and saving money along the way.

Contact Angela

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You can also follow
Angela on Facebook at
facebook.com/angelasmithmp

Please tell Boris - I am opposed to an airport in the Thames Estuary!



Name: Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms

Address:

.....Postcode:.....

Email:

Please return to:

Angela E Smith MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA.

Angela Smith MP may contact you in the future using the details you have supplied. If you do not wish to receive further from Angela then please tick the box provided.

Keep up to date with Angela at www.mpangelsmith.org

Her site includes details of local activities around and about Basildon and East Thurrock.

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flackk@parliament.uk

