

Reading Friends of the Earth

Newsletter Jan/Feb 2010

For more information see <http://www.foe.co.uk/reading>
email info@readingfoe.org.uk or 'phone 0118 9868260.



**Friends of
the Earth**

Diary:

General Meetings: Reading FoE usually meets on the second Wednesday of each month, upstairs at RISC, 35-39 London Street, at 8:00 p.m.

January 13th: – 8:00 p.m. at RISC – **Green Development in South Reading** – presentation by Reading University students who have been investigating options for two sites with excellent access to the M4 – see text below – plus general update.

February 10th: - 8:00 p.m. at RISC – general meeting – but including a presentation on “**Green IT**” by Tripta Prashar of “GivingTime and Solutions” <http://www.givingtimeandsolutions.com/> - a company that helps organisations to reduce energy costs, carbon footprint, and operating costs, and to comply with climate change legislation and best practice.

Other FoE Activities:

Saturday January 16th – **Greater South East Regional Gathering for FoE Local Groups** – London – opportunity for updates on FoE campaigns and feedback on Copenhagen – contact Enrico or katie.higgins@foe.co.uk.

Other Activities and Meetings:

Tuesday January 12th: – Campaign for Better Transport – 8 p.m. at Great Expectations, London Street.

Wednesday January 13th: – 6:30 p.m. at Civic Offices – **Transport Users Forum** – workshop on Third Local Transport Plan for 2012 to 2017. The second LTP (2006-11) can be found on the Council's website via the following link: <http://www.reading.gov.uk/ltp/GeneralM.asp?id= SX9452-A7817040>

Monday January 18th – 7:30 - Earley Environment Group AGM with talk on **Environmental Education** by Ornella Trevisan - Function Room Maiden Place Community Centre, off Kilnsea Drive. More info; 0118 9868260

Monday February 8th: – Town Hall, 18:15 for 18:45. **Transport Implications of Heathrow Expansion** – the case FOR expansion by BAA (the case against will be presented at a meeting in March). Institute of Logistics meeting – booking essential – see http://www.ciltuk.org.uk/pages/ierearchres?_group=Thames%20Valley

Wednesday February 10th: – 6:30 p.m. at Civic Offices – **Transport Users Forum** – regular meeting.

Monday February 15th – 7:30 - Earley Environment Group – presentation on proposed **Shinfield Wind Farm** by Tom Brinicombe of 'Partnerships for Renewables' <http://www.pfr.co.uk/rushymead/> - Function Room Maiden Place Community Centre, off Kilnsea Drive. More info; 0118 9868260

Green Development in South Reading?

The national FoE organisation gave us a grant to enable us to sponsor supervision of work on regeneration by students of planning at Reading University. They will present their results at our January meeting and written reports that we can use to lobby the Council should follow later.

Two separate teams have looked at the “Courage Brewery” site (operations closing in 2010) and the old “Digital Pyramids” site between the old A33 and the A33 Relief Road (already empty). Both are interesting because of proximity to the M4 – what ‘green’ options are there for a site with excellent motorway access? Certainly there is demand for more housing in Reading, and almost anything would be better than more offices, but what other services or facilities does Reading need that would benefit from motorway access and yet would reduce travel distances? It will be very interesting to find out what information and arguments the students come up with.

The reports should be in time to help us respond to Borough’s ‘Site Allocations’ consultation in the new year, and should help other FoE groups respond to proposals on similar sites.

Copenhagen and Climate Change

The Greater Reading Environmental Network's public meeting in November with Martin Salter MP, Professor Jonathan Gregory of Reading University, and Phil Thornhill of 'Campaign against Climate Change' was very well attended despite an extreme downpour. Mr. Salter appeared enthusiastic and well-informed and agreed to take our 'Message to Copenhagen' to Gordon Brown.

Reading Borough Council has signed up to the 10:10 Campaign which encourages organisations and individuals to work towards making a ten per cent cut in their carbon emissions in 2010 (www.1010uk.org) with all-party support.

A good number of people from Reading went on 'The Wave' march in London the weekend before the Copenhagen conference opened, to join many thousands marching, chanting and drumming. A Reading FoE contingent took Mike Cox's banner to join a FoE section of the march and reached the Houses of Parliament just in time for the final 3:00 p.m. outcry. On the way Enrico led the chanting of slogans with both volume and enthusiasm!

No-one from Reading FoE went to Copenhagen, but FoE nationally was represented and reported disappointment but no great surprise, commenting:

"The Copenhagen negotiations ended with no legally binding agreement. Instead we have an "accord" drafted and agreed by a few rich countries, who will now use dubious tactics to get weaker countries to sign up."

"Not only is there is no timetable or framework in place to get to a legally binding agreement, but the very existence of the "accord" will weaken pressure for one. The talks over the past two weeks have taken us further away from a fair and multilateral process in the future."

"However, in an immensely positive development, the sometimes disparate environment and development organisations found a way of working together in a strong and unified global movement for climate justice. Friends of the Earth was central to this. As a result developed countries have found it impossible to sell the final outcome as a triumph and secret negotiations and bullying tactics have been exposed as never before."

GREN is planning to hold 'Environmental Hustings' with parliamentary candidates in March.

Get Serious Campaign

We have now collected about 100 postcards demanding that Councillors 'Get Serious' about climate change. This campaign asks Councils to adopt a local area target of reducing emissions to 40% below 1990 levels by 2020. See http://www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/climate/get_serious/index.html. We intend to present these to the relevant Councillors in the next few months.

Latest News on Pincents Hill

West Berkshire Council has agreed to a request from the developer, Blue Living, and did not consider the plans for 750 homes at Pincents Hill in Tilehurst at the meeting of the Eastern Area Planning Committee in December. The developer asked for more time to consider some aspects of the proposals particularly related to roads and transport, perhaps because of comments from Reading Borough Council. The application is now likely to be considered on 24th February.

West Berkshire Council has decided to remove this site from its draft list of housing options going into its Local Development Framework process, replacing it with proposals for an additional 500 homes at Tilehurst, Purley-on-Thames, Calcot, Pangbourne and Theale. However this will be irrelevant if the present application is granted either by the Council or on appeal.

Support for Environmental Taxation

Lord Turner, head of the Financial Services Authority called for a shift to environmental taxation in an interview on Radio 4. He said "If we have to raise taxes – and we will to some extent – we can deliberately tax bad environmental things like over-use of fossil fuels, rather than good welfare-enhancing things like employment."

Marine Bill becomes Law

The 'Marine and Coastal Access Act', which will create a network of Marine Conservation Zones and a single coastal path around England, has passed into law. Martin Salter MP, who had been a member of the Joint Committee on the Bill in 2008, spoke out against attempts by commercial fishing interests to water it down.

IYB-UK

2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity – it is a celebration of life on earth and of the value of biodiversity for our lives. There is to be a Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity in Japan. See <http://www.biodiversityislife.net>

Useful Websites:

www.greenlink-berkshire.org.uk
www.foe.co.uk

GREN - Greater Reading Environmental Network <http://www.gren.org.uk> – site under development, more content should be added over the next few months. See also <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ReadingEnvNetwork/>

A Yahoo Group to co-ordinate opposition to Kennet Valley Park has been started at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SaveKennetMeadows/>

True Food Co-op: www.truefood.coop

Reading Borough Council Waste and Recycling:
<http://www.reading.gov.uk/environmentandplanning/wasteandrecycling/>

South East Forum for Sustainability: <http://www.sefs.org.uk>

Citizens Committee on Oil Peak And Decline (COPAD) www.copad.org

<http://www.fishonline.org/> gives info on over-fishing, fish to avoid, etc.

www.ejfoundation.org (Environmental Justice Foundation)

And some more on Food, Agriculture Supermarkets and GM issues:

Local Food Directory, with links: http://www.greenlink-berkshire.org.uk/Local_Economy.htm

RISC <http://www.risc.org.uk/readingfairtrade/>

Reading FoE e-mail communications

If you would like to be on our mailing list and join in our day-to-day communications please email info@readingfoe.org.uk.

Reading FoE Subscriptions – Subscribe NOW for 2009/10

To join or renew, just fill in the slip below and send it off with your subscription. We aim to provide a regular newsletter to keep members up to date with the group's activities. Our subscriptions run from April to March and are set at £7.00 / £4.00 (waged / unwaged) to cover newsletter costs, meeting room hire and campaign expenses. Further contributions would be greatly appreciated. Even if you don't have time to take an active part, your support is welcome and allows us to demonstrate more local support.

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Please tick if you are able to take an active part in our campaigns. We may contact you by phone.

I heard about the group from: _____

Please make your cheque payable to Reading Friends of the Earth, and return to the Reading FoE Treasurer, c/o 27 Instow Road, Earley, Reading RG6 5QH.