

Reading Friends of the Earth



**Friends of
the Earth**

Newsletter July/Aug 2012

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

Diary:

General Meetings: Reading FoE usually meets on the second Wednesday of each month upstairs in Room 1 at RISC, 35-39 London Street, at 8:00 p.m. Most meetings include discussion of general topics – some have a particular focus or guest speakers.

July 11th: – 8:00 p.m. at RISC – **General Meeting** – topics later by e-mail to the list, but should include preparation for Earley Green Fair and progress with revision of Reading Climate Change Strategy.

August 8th: - 8:00 p.m. at RISC – **General Meeting** – topics later by e-mail to the list.

Other Activities and Meetings (not run by Reading FoE):

Tuesday July 10th – GREN Networking Event – 18:30 to 20:30 at the Friends Meeting House – 2 Church Street RG1 2SB. GREN and the Quaker Meeting House are hosting this meeting to help members of the various environmental groups in the Reading area to share concerns and solutions and to discover how to work together better. They ask that people wishing to attend notify GREN either by mail to chair@gren.org.uk or by 'phone to 0118 941 5144. For more information about GREN see www.gren.org.uk .

Saturday August 4th – Earley Green Fair – 10:00 to 15:00 at Beech Lane end of Maiden Erlegh Lake - Council-organised summer event – please volunteer to help on our stall for a few hours – we will probably be promoting the Clean British Energy Campaign (see below), and perhaps the “Bee Cause” as well.

Waterfest – Wrong Sort of Rain.

This year on 16th June the Waterfest reverted to the Forbury location because excess rain and waterflow had prevented many canal boats from assembling. Despite some strong winds and occasional showers we had a reasonable number of visitors to our stall.

Fifty-five people signed our postcards to MPs – calling for a ‘Clean British Energy’ revolution - and were awarded ‘CBE’ badges or stickers. Some were happy to be photographed in our athletics-themed ‘Brighton Board’.

The messages to MPs are that:

- Parliament is debating Electricity Market Reform this year, but Government plans look set to continue with expensive imported gas; risky nuclear power; and domination by just six companies who make huge profits while thousands live in dangerously cold homes.
- It's time to open up the electricity market to allow smaller companies to compete, and businesses, councils community groups and individuals to generate their own electricity.
- Cutting energy waste and switching to Clean British Energy is our best hope for affordable fuel bills in future.

http://www.foe.co.uk/what_we_do/clean_british_energy_35564.html

We also gave out information on two small, ‘green’ electricity suppliers - Ecotricity and Good Energy.

The stall next to ours was run by Transition Town Reading who are proposing to run events based on the national FoE “Bee Cause” campaign.



Reading Climate Change Strategy Revision.

In January 2012 the Reading Climate Change Partnership (RCCP) began the process of developing a new Reading Climate Change Strategy to run from 2013 to 2020.

After the 'Reading Means Business on Climate Change' meeting in January and the launch of the consultation process GREN held a meeting on Saturday June 9th for members of environmental groups to get to grips with the process. Drafts of strategy chapters were reviewed at a meeting of the Green City Forum, attended by around 70 people, in the Civic Offices on June 27th.

The intention is for the eight "Theme Leads" to have draft action plans available for review by the end of July 2012. To monitor progress and to submit your ideas go to <http://www.rgpn.org.uk/>. Since the GREN and Green City Forum meetings this on-line forum has become much more active with many interesting points being made – some of which probably need to be questioned or strengthened

The RCCP is a sub group of the [Reading Local Strategic Partnership](#) which will help to develop and deliver the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Reading Climate Change Strategy. Reading Borough Council has a [Climate Change Strategy](#) for the period 2008-2013.

Less and More Support for Renewables....

The Feed-in Tariff for Solar PV will drop again on 1st August to 16p per kWh for an individual household installation rated at less than 4 kW, which the government estimates gives a return of 6% per annum. Further cuts of 3.5% every three months are anticipated if installations are at sufficiently high levels. The FIT will now last for only 20 years - formerly 25 years, but the 'export tariff' will rise from 3.5p to 4.5p.

<http://www.solar-trade.org.uk/media/Feed%20In%20Tariff%20for%20August%202012.pdf>

The Renewable Heat Incentive – to make payments for renewable heat used - is now in place for non-domestic installations of ground- and water-sourced heat pumps, small biogas, solid biomass, solar thermal, and geothermal. In practice it is applicable to domestic installations shared by more than one property. Government has adopted a mechanism to limit cost to £70m this year – it expects expenditure will be £42m. Again payments will last for 20 years and be linked to the RPI – return estimated to yield 12.5% initially for the median participant. Government will be running two further consultations over changes to the scheme including tariff for single domestic installations.

http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/meeting_energy/Renewable_ener/incentive/incentive.aspx

Outside the City Limits

The 'Conservation News' section of British Wildlife Magazine <http://www.britishwildlife.com/> often contains interesting news, links and comments such as the following:

The Environmental Audit Committee's inquiry into Sustainable Food said there "should also be provisions in Local Plans to ensure that communities are provided with open spaces to grow their own produce, including for example options for communities or co-operatives to buy land for these purposes". It welcomed support for food waste collections and said that while the overarching aim behind the Government's work in improving the UK's food system is 'sustainable intensification' the emphasise should be on 'sustainable'. Policy must take account of social and environmental impacts of the food system, including retaining space for small scale production practices and local food networks. <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmenvaud/879/87909.htm>

Another link was to research into environmentally sustainable beef suggesting that extensive feeding on grass can be sustainable – "Climate Change – the answer is bullocks" - <http://www.tochallengethethinking.co.uk/186-2/>

Peak Oil

Slides from Dr. Roger Bentley's talk to the Earley Environmental Group on 25th April are available from <http://www.earleyenvironmentalgroup.co.uk/Environment/PeakOilTalk.asp> Dr. Bentley's analysis was in terms of conventional oil supplies, and he concluded that 'unconventional' supplies would be available at higher prices.

Interestingly George Monbiot has recently taken a different view – suggesting that 'Peak Oil' may be some way off because of 'unconventional' supplies <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/jul/02/peak-oil-we-we-wrong> .

One of the comments on Monbiot's article recommends this article in the 'Energy Bulletin' <http://www.energybulletin.net/stories/2012-07-02/peak-denial> which reckons \$100 dollars a barrel is needed to justify new projects and continues "However the main thing to take from this is that conventional oil did probably peak several years ago." Unconventional sources also give a lower energy return on the energy invested in them."

Useful Websites etc.:

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

GREN - Greater Reading Environmental Network <http://www.gren.org.uk/>.

Transition Reading - Reading's Transition Town movement <http://www.transitionreading.org.uk/>

Doorstep collection of WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) service in Reading being offered by Midex Reverse Technologies <http://www.midex-rt.com/>

True Food Co-op: www.truefood.coop - Winner Best Retail Initiative BBC Food & Farming Awards 2011 - shop in Emmer Green and local markets!

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

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)

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

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

Reading FoE Officers

At our AGM on April 11th 2012 Enrico Petrucco and John Booth were elected to the posts of Co-ordinator and Treasurer respectively.

Reading FoE e-mail communications

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

Alternatively we have a separate list for people who only want to receive our newsletter and information about important events and actions.

Reading FoE Subscriptions – Subscribe NOW for 2012/13

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 £8.00 / £5.00 (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.