

# Reading Friends of the Earth

## Newsletter July/Aug 2016

For more information: <http://www.foe.co.uk/reading> or [www.readingfoe.org.uk](http://www.readingfoe.org.uk)  
email [info@readingfoe.org.uk](mailto:info@readingfoe.org.uk) or 'phone 0118 9868260. Twitter @ReadingFOE



### Diary:

**General Meetings:** Reading FoE usually meets on the **second Wednesday of each month** in Room 1 upstairs at RISC, 35-39 London Street, at 8:00 p.m. **But not in July 2016** when we had a summer excursion (via the Forbury Gardens and the Abbey) to the Back of Beyond (other pubs are available) on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> July. Most meetings include discussion of general topics – some have a particular focus or guest speakers. Meetings are open to all.

**August 10<sup>th</sup>** - 8:00 p.m. at RISC – **General meeting** – topics and details by e-mail.

### Other Activities with Reading FoE:

**Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> August** – 10:00 am to 3:00 pm – **Earley Green Fair** – help needed for FoE stall - location is between Beech Lane and Lakeside (#19b bus route) in Earley. Please get in touch.

### Other Activities (not run by Reading FoE):

**Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> July** - Transition Town Reading Meeting: 7:30pm at Great Expectations Pub.

**Friday 15<sup>th</sup> July** – 7:30 at 'The Warehouse', Cumberland Road, RG1 3LB (by Cemetery Junction). Meeting arranged by Green Party about **East Reading Park and Ride** proposals – see below.

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> July** - **Repair Cafe** is at Park United Reformed Church, Wokingham Road, RG6 1DN, 1pm – 4.30pm. No event in August - see website for details of future events [www.readingrepaircafe.org.uk](http://www.readingrepaircafe.org.uk)

**Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> July** – 7:00 at RISC - Nuclear Awareness Group – Peter Burt of Nuclear Information Service (NIS) will talk about '**AWE - Britain's Nuclear Weapons Factory: Past, Present, and Possibilities for the Future**' to introduce the new NIS report on this subject. <http://www.nuclearinfo.org/>

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> July** – Cycle Campaign Committee Meeting – RISC 7:30 – open to Members, <http://www.readingcyclecampaign.org.uk/>

**Green Drinks at RISC** – usually on the first Tuesday of every month. Come along to the Global Café from 6.30 to 8.30 p.m. to meet like-minded people for a chat over a drink or two. <http://www.greendrinks.org/berkshire/reading>

---

### Bees at Green Fest and East Reading:

On 11<sup>th</sup> June we took our Bee-petition stall to the Green Fest in the Town Hall Square.



Thanks to Tanja, Chris, Michael, Enrico, Steve and Joanna for staffing the stalls - spreading the word about Bees and the risks of neonicotinoid pesticides and collecting many petition signatures.

And on 19<sup>th</sup> June the Bee-on-a-Bike was at the East Reading Festival where Ornella and Nick let us share some space.



## **Mixed news about Bees:**

**Success!** The government has rejected a second application by the National Farmers' Union (NFU) to allow farmers in parts of England to use 2 banned bee-harming pesticides on oilseed rape crops in 15 counties across England this autumn.

The government's expert pesticide advisors said:

- the evidence wasn't strong enough to justify the scale of application
- the application didn't show work being done to develop non-chemical alternative ways of controlling pests to avoid repeated requests for neonics in future

Friends of the Earth had submitted evidence to the expert pesticide committee including showing that the removal of neonicotinoids hadn't led to a reduction in average crop yields. They have produced an extremely detailed report on 'Farming Oilseed Rape without Neonicotinoids' which is at <https://www.foe.co.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/farming-without-neonicotinoids-100611.pdf>

**Counting Bees!** FoE say that over 375,000 bees were counted in the 'Great British Bee Count' this year – and their report includes our Beanpole Day photo. <https://www.foe.co.uk/news/counting-bees-great-british-bee-count>

**Swarm exterminated in Reading:** Sad to see that a swarm was exterminated in central Reading this week after it settled in Broad Street and a pest controller dealt with it before Beekeepers could collect it. <http://www.getreading.co.uk/news/reading-berkshire-news/mysterious-reading-beekeeper-deals-swarm-11581821>

**Brexit Threat to Bees?** Because the current ban on certain uses of certain neonicotinoids is based on European regulations it is vital that the UK government commits to maintaining the current European ban on bee-harming pesticides - and to upholding and enforcing EU nature protection rules, as Brexit goes ahead. Our continuing petition is for continuing the current ban and extending it to other crops.

## **Reading Community Solar PV scheme – invest by 15<sup>th</sup> July!**

Reading Community Energy Society (RCES) has launched their project to install solar photovoltaic (PV) panels on the roofs of community buildings in the Reading area, funded by a Community Share Offer. This is the first ever community owned renewable energy scheme for Reading.

The Society plans to deliver just over 350kWp of solar PV on 16 community buildings including schools, places of worship and community centres. The main aims of the project are to help reduce energy bills of the community buildings involved, improve the sustainability of our community, reduce climate change emissions and improve energy security. Visit the RCES [website](#) for further information and to download the [share offer](#) document, including the application form.

Everyone living in and around Reading and the rest of the UK will have the opportunity to join the scheme and the minimum investment is £200. The Society will need to raise £450,000 to complete the project. The closing date for the scheme is 15th July and so time is of the essence if you would like to get involved. The scheme will also run a local community fund to support energy efficiency projects and tackle fuel poverty. The members of RCES will receive annual share interest once the panels are all installed.

## **Park and Ride for Broken Brow?**

Long-standing ideas – opposed by many environmental campaigners over the last 20 years - for a park-and-ride site at Broken Brow and a bus-way across the Kennet to provide an easy public transport route to central Reading - are in the news again.

<http://www.getreading.co.uk/news/reading-berkshire-news/thames-valley-park-park-ride-11515841>

**Park-and-Ride:** Wokingham has put in a formal planning application for a 277-space park and ride site at Broken Brow – just to the East of Kennet Mouth <http://h2g2.com/entry/A1048745>. Issues include: loss of wildlife habitat; loss of amenity to Thames Path users from light and noise; whether it will have significant impact on traffic in Reading; and whether the £3.6 million cost would be better spent on alternative measures to reduce traffic.

Deadline for comments is 20<sup>th</sup> July – comments can be made via the website. The application is No. 161596 <http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-application/search-planning-applications/>

Reading Green Party is holding a public meeting to discuss this on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> July at 7:00 pm at The Warehouse in Cumberland Road and has a petition at <https://www.change.org/p/no-park-and-ride-on-the-thameside>

**Mass Rapid Transit:** A public exhibition of the East Reading MRT scheme proposals will be held on Tuesday 19 July, 1-7pm, at the Waterside Centre, Thames Valley Park Drive. <http://www.reading.gov.uk/east-reading-mrt> and there is a consultation on it at <http://www.reading.gov.uk/PReastreadingmrt> open until 16th August – we can discuss a possible formal Reading FoE response at our August meeting.

### **'Smart M4' Examination:**

The examination into proposals for a 'Smart M4' – a 'controlled motorway' with 'all lane running' with no hard shoulder - is over and a decision is expected by 3<sup>rd</sup> September. FoE, Reading FoE, and Campaign for Better Transport were leading critics calling for all lane running to be abandoned.

Since the Examination closed in March the Transport Select Committee has investigated 'All Lane Running'. Evidence has looked at safety implications – including delays in getting emergency services to incidents when there is no hard shoulder. The Committee has concluded "The Department should not proceed with a major motorway programme on the basis of cost savings while major safety concerns continue to exist."

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmtrans/63/63.pdf>

John gave a presentation on the 'Smart M4' at the 'Green Fest' and an updated version is accessible at [http://www.readingfoe.org.uk/Documents/Impacts%20of%20Smart\\_M4%20-%20Reading%20FoE%20v4.pdf](http://www.readingfoe.org.uk/Documents/Impacts%20of%20Smart_M4%20-%20Reading%20FoE%20v4.pdf).

Key points are:

- Cost – high because All Lane Running requires 11 bridges to be rebuilt with extra width
- Safety – much less safe than a 3-lane 'controlled motorway' with a hard shoulder
- Congestion – can't cope with non-motorway traffic increase – journey times up by 4 or 5 minutes by 2037 unless other roads are 'improved'
- Carbon emissions – simulation of wide area emissions up by 19% by 2037 – National Policy statement says "any increase in carbon emissions is not a reason to refuse development consent" but Examining Panel has asked Department for Transport for additional information on this so there is some hope.
- Air Quality – very technical debates as to whether limits will be exceeded – uncertainty due to difficulty forecasting future emissions.
- Noise – over 4,000 properties still above night-time 'Significant Observed Adverse Effect Level' in 2037

### **Air Quality:**

At its May meeting [http://www.gren.org.uk/resources/160523\\_GREN\\_Members\\_Minutes.pdf](http://www.gren.org.uk/resources/160523_GREN_Members_Minutes.pdf) Greater Reading Environmental Network (GREN) agreed that its members would seek to make sense of local air quality issues with a view to some campaigning activities in the autumn.

Campaign for Better Transport has a briefing note <http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/node/3253> which makes grim reading but has some useful links:

- The largest source of emissions is diesel vehicles
- Up to 95% of diesel vehicles on the road are currently breaking air pollution limits

Meanwhile news from Nottingham which has raised its Workplace Parking Levy charge to £379 for employers who provide 11 or more liable places. The revenue, about £9 million last year, is invested in new tram lines and bus routes.

<http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/transport-parking-and-streets/parking-and-permits/workplace-parking-levy/about-the-workplace-levy/>

### **Committee on Climate Change report on Fracking:**

Friends of the Earth have produced a report commenting on the Committee on Climate Change's recent report which said "Our assessment is therefore that onshore petroleum extraction on a significant scale is not compatible with UK climate targets unless three tests are met".

FoE call on the government to halt fracking plans until it is certain the three tests can be met, and calls on it to assess UK fracking against stronger carbon budgets taking account of the Paris agreement.

<https://www.foe.co.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/ccf-fracking-climate-change-101385.pdf>

## Useful Websites etc.:

Friends of the Earth 'England, Wales and Northern Ireland' <http://www.foe.co.uk>

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

Reading Climate Action Network - <http://www.readingclimateaction.org.uk/>

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

Reading Sustainability Centre - <http://readingsustainabilitycentre.co.uk/>

Action AWE (Atomic Weapons Eradication) is a grassroots campaign of nonviolent actions dedicated to halting nuclear weapons production at the Atomic Weapons Establishment factories at Aldermaston and Burghfield. <http://actionawe.org/>

Greenlink Berkshire [www.greenlink-berkshire.org.uk](http://www.greenlink-berkshire.org.uk)

True Food Co-op: [www.truefood.coop](http://www.truefood.coop) - shop in Emmer Green.

Citizens Committee on Oil Peak And Decline (COPAD) [www.copad.org](http://www.copad.org)

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

[www.ejfoundation.org](http://www.ejfoundation.org) (Environmental Justice Foundation)

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

## Reading FoE Officers

At our AGM on April 13<sup>th</sup> 2016 Enrico Petrucco and John Booth were re-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 receive and join in our day-to-day communications please send an email to [info@readingfoe.org.uk](mailto: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 2016/17

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.