

Reading Friends of the Earth Newsletter July/August 2019



For more information: <http://www.foe.co.uk/reading> or www.readingfoe.org.uk
email 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. (*Note - July meeting is replaced by excursion on 20th.*) Most meetings include discussion of general topics – some have a particular focus or guest speakers. Meetings are open to all.

Wednesday August 14th - 8:00 pm at RISC – **General meeting** – topics by e-mail later.

Other Activities with Reading FoE

Saturday July 6th – 12:00 – 16:00 – Reading FoE stall at **RISC Roof Garden Open Day** for 'Orchard Day' - back of RISC – contact Enrico if you want to help, or just come along. Entry to Roof Garden £3:50 to see this award-winning sustainable garden: 185 species, low maintenance, multi-use perennial planting, edible forest, water harvesting, hard landscaping with renewable/recycled/reused materials.

Tuesday July 9th – 18:15 for 18:30 – presentation of FoE **Petition for Pollinator Action Plan** – Council Chamber, Civic Offices – details overleaf.

Saturday July 20th – afternoon **Excursion to Moor Copse Nature Reserve** – details overleaf.

Saturday August 3rd – 10:00 to 15:00 - **Earley Green Fair** – west end of Maiden Erlegh Lake by Beech Lane - please offer to help on our stall.

“The Challenge” In a community partnership between Reading FoE and 'The Challenge', a national citizen service set of campaigns are scheduled for weekends in August – details overleaf.

Other Activities (not run by Reading FoE so check for changes):

Thursday July 18th – 14:00 to approx. 16:00(?) – **Visit to Smallmead** – GREN have arranged a guided tour of the recycling separation process run by re3. Very dusty and noisy but amazing. Over-16s only. Lots of stairs to climb. Pre-registration essential – e-mail tricia@marcouse.com

Wednesday July 24th – RISC - 19:30 – **Environmental Injustice & Climate change** – panel discussion
<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/readingfringefestival/t-qgnzqr>

Saturday July 27th to Sunday August 4th – various wildlife walks, talks and activities every day – something for everyone - co-ordinated by 'Wild About Reading' – see <https://www.wildaboutrg.com/> - SOAR walk on 3rd August.

Repair Cafe – usually third weekend of month – <http://www.transitionreading.org.uk/projects/reading-repair-cafe/>

Reading Bicycle Kitchen – 'pop-up' events in various locations – see <http://www.readingbicyclekitchen.org/>

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>

East Reading Festival Stall



Silver-Washed Fritillary at Moor Copse



Petition: 97 residents call for a 'Pollinator Action Plan' for Reading.

In 2018 we featured the national FoE 'Protect our Pollinators' petition on our stalls at summer events, and it was also on-line on the national FoE website. We have now got the local petition cards back from head office and have arranged to present them to Reading's 'Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport' committee on 9th July.

For the Reading Borough Council area we have 93 signed cards plus 4 on-line – a total of 97. This shows local support for more action by the Council to improve the town for pollinators – and people - with more flowers and places for wildlife.

40% of signatories recorded one or more suggestions for local action by the Council of which:

- 44% called for more wildflowers in general
- 31% called for verges to be mowed less
- 18% called for less use of pesticides and herbicides
- 13% called for more education
- 13% called for more green spaces and wildflower areas

Other suggestions included: free seeds for schools; Bee hives and 'hotels'; keep the green belt; urban biodiversity corridors; keep blackberry bushes; reduce cars; plant pollinators in Forbury gardens; more allotments; support Lavender Place; bins for garden waste should be free; hedges and trees should be retained.

This petition was a collaborative initiative between Friends of the Earth and Buglife and this joint document outlines the way forward and gives examples of actions taken by other Councils including Devon and Dorset.

<https://www.buglife.org.uk/sites/default/files/Helping%20Pollinators%20Locally.pdf>

It says:

"The National Pollinator Strategy for England highlights serious declines in our native pollinators and makes a call for action from everyone to help conserve these species."

"A Local Pollinator Strategy or Plan provides an opportunity to review current management of parks and other green space, often identifying new more attractive and potentially cost saving opportunities. Making changes will not only benefit pollinators but will provide higher quality public green space; helping to bring people closer to nature, with the health and wellbeing benefits this provides."

Moor Copse Excursion – Saturday 20th July

We have long had a mid-summer tradition of taking a break from regular 'business' meetings and heading into the surrounding countryside. This year our July meeting will be a Saturday afternoon walk around Moor Copse Nature Reserve www.moorcopse.org.uk with the volunteer reserve warden Anne Booth, ending up for drinks at The Greyhound in Tidmarsh. We hope to see butterflies and flowers and learn about the management of this BBOWT reserve which features coppiced woodland, flower-rich meadows, and the river Pang.

We will set off walking from the Moor Copse car park at about 2:15 and get to The Greyhound around 3:30. Distance about 2 miles on the level - but sometimes uneven under foot. Please let us know if you intend to come (ideally with a mobile number) so we can contact you in case of bad weather or other circumstances beyond our control.

Arrangements: The reserve is north-east of the bridge over the M4 carrying the A340 between Theale and Pangbourne <http://www.anjoro.plus.com/map.htm> and is not readily accessible by public transport. If you don't plan to cycle or drive get in touch and we can arrange to pick you up from near the #17 bus 'City Road' stop in Tilehurst at about 14:00 (e.g. bus leaving Minster Street at 13:28), or perhaps elsewhere by arrangement. If making your own way: don't use the postcode, take care on the A340, and beware of pot-holes on the steep downhill turn-in to the car park.

The Challenge

In a community partnership between Reading FoE and 'The Challenge', a national citizen service set of campaigns are scheduled for weekend of 3rd of Aug, 17th of Aug, and midweek commencing 29th Aug.

During these events small groups of teenage citizens from the local area will self-organise and take action to help promote important environmental messages that they are passionate about.

See <https://the-challenge.org/what-we-do/programmes/ncs/>

More Reading Friends of the Earth members are needed to help facilitate these events. Contact Enrico if you'd like to get involved info@readingfoe.org.uk

Reading Climate Change Strategy – Launch of revision programme

The launch meeting for revision of Reading Climate Change Partnership's strategy took place on 13th June in the Council Chamber and was very well attended by enthusiastic people. We submitted a note calling for a Pollinator Action Plan, revision of Reading's Biodiversity Action Plan, revitalisation of the Berkshire Local Nature Partnership, and progress on Biodiversity Opportunity Areas near Reading.

Six 'Theme' groups were formed to prepare a revised strategy to run from 2020 to 2025. Proposal is for a 'mid-point meeting' in mid-October, a final draft by December, public consultation in February, and formal adoption in June.

If you couldn't attend but would like to be involved in developing the plan, then the dates of the next meetings for each theme are under 'events' on the front page of the website www.readingcan.org.uk . Just email the coordinator to say that you are coming and then you will be on the "list" for future mailings.

Waterfest and East Reading Festival

We had some good conversations at these June events – at the Waterfest the Reading Mayor Paul Woodward chatted with Enrico and at East Reading Matt Rodda MP called to talk.

Reading:

The **Full Council** meeting on 25th June heard a petition against the Caversham Flood Defence scheme and some good environmental questions, particularly on climate issues, from public and Councillors. Read Council responses on .pdfs linked from <https://democracy.reading.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=136&MId=3096&Ver=4>

On Workplace Parking Levy, responding to Cllr. Witham, Cllr. Page promised a consultation on the Local Transport Plan revision “very shortly” and said: “Subject to the outcome of the LTP consultation, the following options could be applied within Reading borough to meet the transport and air quality challenges that Reading faces: 1. A Clean Air Zone/Low Emission Zone 2. Road user charging 3. A Workplace Parking Levy”.

The meeting then debated and passed Cllr. Eden's motion on Single Use Plastics “Ensure that, wherever possible, single use plastic is eliminated from use within the Council as soon as this can be achieved ...”.

Reading's **Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Education Committee** on Monday 1st July debated climate change impacts on vulnerable and less-well-off people – Item 10 on the Agenda. The document is at <https://democracy.reading.gov.uk/documents/s7609/Climate%20Emergency.pdf?>

A webcast including presentation, questions and responses from Ben Burfoot at Item 10 is at https://channel.royalcast.com/readingboroughcouncil/#!/readingboroughcouncil/20190701_1 . Includes a long discussion started by Councillor Jones, followed by Councillor White, on the Climate Emergency Plan. Councillor Khan voiced some questions about climate science. Councillor McKenna and others made very positive contributions.

Wokingham:

After the May elections new Council Leader John Halsall said “My priority is our environment be it housing numbers, development, congestion or climate emergency, and on these I hope to receive other parties' support.”

At a meeting of the Executive on 27th June, after questioning from Liberal Democrat members, the Executive member for Climate Emergency, Gregor Murray, was reported as saying the Council would develop a Climate Emergency Action Plan, a key part of which would be to understand what its carbon footprint is and develop measures to reduce or offset carbon emissions.

Windsor and Maidenhead:

The Council declared a Climate Emergency with the aim of carbon neutrality by 2050, in line with government policy. It will prepare a draft plan within a year.

West Berkshire:

The Council declared a Climate Emergency on 2nd July with the aim of carbon neutrality by 2030. A newly-formed 'Environment Board' will provide an interim report to the Executive in September 2019.

Redlands School Assembly

Reading FoE has been invited to run a School Assembly on Plastics for Redlands Primary School – Charlotte Allchin is taking the lead on this.

Transport

A recent FoE policy/research paper on carbon budgeting for the whole transport sector – road, rail and air travel - is at <https://policy.friendsoftheearth.uk/insight/net-zero-carbon-budget-whole-transport-sector> . Previous papers have focussed on road transport – this looks at a total budget including IAS (International Aviation and Shipping), particularly relevant to proposals to expand Heathrow airport.

It is a response to the Committee on Climate Change's 'Net Zero' paper and says: “Transport is the only sector where greenhouse gas emissions have increased since 1990. A new analysis shows that the DfT's continued failure to curb emissions will lead to the UK breaching existing carbon budgets over the next decade, even before budgets are tightened on the pathway to net zero.”

EU Lagging on Sustainable Development:

According to WWF <http://www.wwf.eu/?uNewsID=349211>

Useful Links and General Information:

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 - <https://readingcan.org.uk>

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

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

Save Our Ancient Riverside - <https://saveourancientriverside.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

True Food Co-op: www.truefood.coop - shop in Emmer Green.

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)

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

Reading FoE Officers

At our AGM on April 10th 2019 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 .

Alternatively we have a separate list for people who only want to receive our newsletter (currently 6 per year) and information about important events and actions.

Reading FoE Subscriptions – Subscribe NOW for 2019/20

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.