

Reading Friends of the Earth

Newsletter July-August 2022

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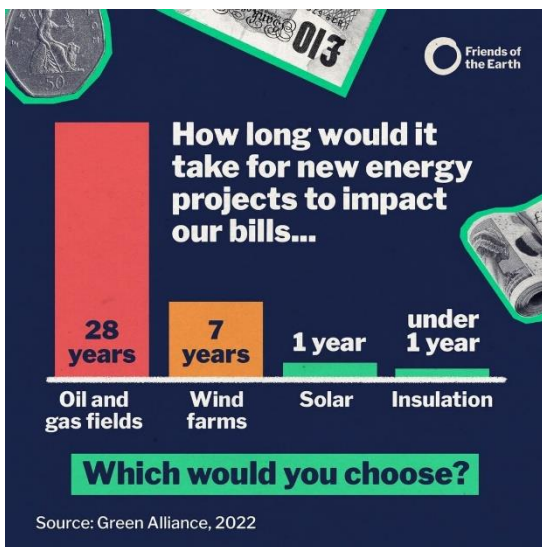


General Meetings: Reading FoE will usually meet on the **second Wednesday of each month** in Room 1 upstairs at RISC, 35-39 London Street, at 7:30 p.m. (formerly 8:00 pm). Access from London Street is via passage to the right of the shop-front. Most meetings will be 'hybrid' using Zoom. Please request a Zoom link if you have not received one. Most meetings discuss plans and general topics. Some have a particular focus or guest speakers. Meetings are open to all. If in doubt check our website www.readingfoe.org.uk or phone or e-mail for confirmation (contacts above).

Wednesday July 13th: 7:30 pm. Topics to include discussion of and responses to:

- Burghfield Incinerator which is expected to go to West Berkshire Planning on in August (see our objection on www.readingfoe.org.uk and UKWIN's comments <https://ukwin.org.uk/incinerators/library/West+Berkshire/282>)
- Proposals for solar farm at Bloomfield Hatch – see below.
- 'Insulate Reading' – we need to plan publicity based on Paolo's EPC analysis and simulations.
- Review of RBC's Strategic Environmental Planning and Transport Committee meeting on 7th July

Wednesday August 10th: 7:30 pm. General meeting. Check for updates on www.readingfoe.org.uk



Other Future Activities with Reading FoE:

3rd or 24th August: West Berkshire Planning Committee may discuss **Burghfield Incinerator?** Newbury 18:30. Provisional - to be confirmed – we may decide to go to object on the day.

Saturday 6th August: Can you help on our **Earley Green Fair** stall (near Maiden Erlegh Lake) – 10:00 to 15:00.

Sunday 25th September: Help also needed on our stall at **Reading Cycle Festival** in Christchurch Meadow

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

Reading Cycle Campaign – has regular monthly meetings and other activities. <https://readingcyclecampaign.org.uk/>

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

Reading Bicycle Kitchen – regular sessions at Unit C10, Weldale Street, RG1 7BX
– see <https://www.readingbicyclekitchen.org/>

Green Drinks – usually on the first Tuesday of every month – see [Reading Green Drinks | Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ReadingGreenDrinks/)

Heat Pumps at Waterfest:

Our stall at the Waterfest on Chestnut Walk on 4th June featured presentations on Heat Pumps by guest speakers Dr. Mehdi Shahrestani (UoR) and Dr. Rayner Mayer. Chris (pictured), Enrico, Barbara and Graham engaged with passers-by. John Sharpe sourced a PA system and encouraged people to come and listen.



Simply replacing everyone's gas central heating with direct electric heating, or even storage heaters, would use a lot of electricity and so require very major up-upgrades to electricity distribution and generating capacity. But heat pump systems can deliver three to five units of heat energy for every unit of electrical energy they use. Air source heat pumps extract heat from the outside air using a fan system while ground source extract heat from underground via fluid circulating in deep boreholes or horizontal arrays of tubing.

Dr. Mehdi Shahrestani (a Lecturer in Sustainable Technologies at the University of Reading) said:

"Heat pumps are one of the promising technologies for our journey to a Net Zero Carbon future but buildings should be very well insulated to reduce electricity use."

"Compared to ground source heat pumps air source heat pumps have lower installation costs but higher electricity consumption, running costs, and CO2 emissions."

Local expert Dr. Rayner Mayer added:

"Reading is built over a chalk aquifer that is particularly suited to extracting geothermal heat and operating ground source heat pumps which are working well at the University's Carrington building."

Ground source heat pumps have the advantage that in cold weather, when demand is highest, the temperature underground remains quite warm so their efficiency stays high - when air source would have to use much more electricity. Reading Council now requires new development to consider using ground source heat pumps and is starting to insulate some of its own properties and to retro-fit air source and ground source heat pumps.

For more details see <http://www.readingfoe.org.uk/links/Links.pdf>

Stall at East Reading Festival – 26th June:

We had a good day in Palmer Park meeting the public and talking with Reading and Wokingham Councillors – Karen Rowland (see photo), Rob White, and Andrew Mickleburgh. Thanks to Chris, John, Barbara and Anne.



Burghfield Incinerator

Planning Application 20/02029/COMIND was supposed to go to West Berkshire (East) Planning Committee on 1st June but latest news is that it may be on August 3rd or 24th. Graham plans to speak for us at the meeting (if/when it happens) and we intend to put out a Press Release beforehand..

We need investment to reduce waste and use new technologies for recycling - not to increase Berkshire's CO2 emissions and heavy lorry traffic!

Last year the Climate Change Committee made a 'priority recommendation' that by Spring 2022 government should "Introduce the necessary planning guidance and policy to ensure any new Energy from Waste plants (including incineration, gasification & pyrolysis facilities) are built with carbon capture usage and storage (CCUS) or are 'CCUS-ready'."

See our objection on www.readingfoe.org.uk and UKWIN's comments and objection at ukwin.org.uk/incinerators/library/West+Berkshire/282

Climate Change Committee: “The current strategy will not deliver Net Zero.”

In a June 2022 statement CCC Chairman, Lord Deben, said: “The UK is a champion in setting new climate goals, now we must be world-beaters in delivering them. In the midst of a cost-of-living crisis, the country is crying out to end its dependence on expensive fossil fuels. I welcome the Government’s restated commitment to Net Zero, but holes must be plugged in its strategy urgently. The window to deliver real progress is short. We are eagle-eyed for the promised action.” <https://www.theccc.org.uk/2022/06/29/current-programmes-will-not-deliver-net-zero/>

The report says: “The areas of strongest progress are backed and led by well-designed Government policy:

- **Deployment of renewable electricity.**
- **Electric cars** are being adopted in greater numbers each year.

“In other areas, low-carbon options remain in their infancy. Policy has not yet begun to guide the promised private sector action:

- **Energy efficiency in homes.** Given soaring energy bills, there is a shocking gap in policy for better insulated homes.
- **Agriculture and land use** have the weakest policies in the CCC’s assessment. Progress in reducing farming emissions has been glacial.

On road transport the CCC said that some form of “road pricing” is needed under which drivers are charged for how much they drive if the government is to cover the “significant hole” in the public finances left by the loss of fuel duty and other taxes when petrol and diesel cars are replaced by electric models.

June 2022 progress report to Parliament <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/2022-progress-report-to-parliament/>

Bloomfield Hatch Solar Farm:

This is a proposal from West Berkshire Council to give itself planning permission for 30 years for a Solar Farm (76.2 Acres, 26.65 MWp, claimed to be sufficient to supply electricity for 7,828 average homes) on agricultural land between Grazeley Green and Mortimer that it owns. The agricultural is ‘Grade 3b’ and the area is about 0.045% of the Council’s land area. It is surprising that it says it does not require an environmental assessment.

To see details or to comment go to <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/planning-application-search> and search by the Planning Application number which is 22/01330/REG3. Then go to ‘Documents’ and then ‘View associated documents’. To comment you need to log in. (Website is a little slow).

At our June meeting we proposed to respond accepting solar farm but also calling for good use of land below the panels to benefit biodiversity and agriculture and for guarantees that ground maintenance will be undertaken in order to achieve this. We will discuss in more detail in July

FoE has recommended that as well as a group response it is good to get members and others to submit short personal emails/letters too, particularly at this formal planning consultation stage – but please make individual responses as you see fit.

They also supplied these links: <https://www.bre.co.uk/filelibrary/pdf/Brochures/NSC-Biodiversity-Guidance.pdf> and <https://www.rspb.org.uk/globalassets/downloads/documents/positions/climate-change/solar-power-briefing---may-2017-update-revised.pdf> BBOWT suggested - <https://cieem.net/resource/biodiversity-net-gain-good-practice-principles-for-development-case-studies-enhancing-biodiversity-on-large-scale-solar-farms/>

Reading SEPT papers for 7th July:

Agenda and documents for Reading’s Strategic Environment Planning and Transport Committee on 7th July are at <https://democracy.reading.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=139&MId=4839> . Of particular interest are:

- Item 9 – Implications of the Environment Act
- Item 10 – Low Carbon Investment Programme
- Item 11 – Buses
- Items 12 and 15 to 17– Transport programmes

If we can read some of these before our next meeting we can discuss what our responses should be.

Transport for the South East:

Transport for the South East (TfSE) (the non-statutory grouping of local authorities and others) has launched a consultation [Developing our Strategic Investment Plan - Transport for the South East](#) on its draft Strategic Investment Plan. Consultation ends on 12th September.

It is the investment plan for previously defined strategy to 2050. Forecasts 2050 reductions in carbon emissions but without 2030 targets. Proposes to spend around £1.5 billion per year. Proposes heavy spend on rail improvements but mostly not until late in the period to 2050. Not enough on active travel and carbon reduction in next decade.

Transport Action Network <https://transportactionnetwork.org.uk/> will be producing a summary of the proposals and advice on how to respond in the next few weeks.

FoE Review of Council Policies:

FoE have produced some case studies of good performance by Councils – to encourage the others. Reading is singled out for having a 'zero carbon homes' policy for new developments.

<https://takeclimateaction.uk/resources/councils-tackling-climate-chaos>

4,500 Homes and maybe a new M4 Junction for Hall Farm?

Objectors to proposed greenfield development on UoR land south of Earley

<https://www.getreading.co.uk/news/property/garden-village-south-reading-could-22316662> presented an 'Alternative Strategy for Hall Farm' to the UoR on Saturday 30th April during a strong demonstration at the Shinfield Road entrance to the University. They have another meeting with the University scheduled for 7th July.

The Conservative group that had put Hall Farm into their draft Local Plan for Wokingham Borough lost power to a Liberal Democrat led partnership (including Independent and Labour Councillors) at the June elections.

<https://www.bracknellnews.co.uk/news/20148395.wokingham-council-set-new-leadership/>

New leader Clive Jones is having meetings with local MPs and Michael Gove (Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) to try to get the government to agree to reduce the number of new homes Wokingham is required to build. <https://wokingham.today/michael-gove-promises-to-visit-wokingham-to-discuss-housing-numbers/>

To follow this campaign by 'SOLVE Hall Farm' see <https://www.green4grow.org/>

Useful Links and General Information:

Recent links for Reading FoE stalls and campaigns: www.readingfoe.org.uk/links

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

– Policy and Insight <https://policy.friendsoftheearth.uk/>

GREN - Greater Reading Environmental Network <http://www.gren.org.uk/>. Also [Greater Reading Environment Network | Facebook](#)

Reading Climate Action Network - <https://readingcan.org.uk>

Extinction Rebellion, Reading: <https://www.facebook.com/xrReading/>

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/>

Reading FoE Officers etc.

Our 2022 AGM on April 13th elected Enrico Petrucco and John Booth to continue in the posts of Co-ordinator and Treasurer respectively. A new Constitution for the group was adopted.

Reading FoE e-mail communications

If you would like to become a supporter on our mailing list and receive and join in our day-to-day communications please send an email to info@readingfoe.org.uk to request our GDPR Consent form. We have separate lists for people who only want to receive our newsletter (currently 6 per year) and information about important events and actions, and for people who want to be more involved and communicate directly with other active supporters.

Reading FoE Subscriptions:

A donation would be welcome from supporters but is not required. We're much happier to have an extra pair of hands doing the important stuff. To join or renew, just fill in the slip below and send it off with or without 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 registration 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 (if any) payable to Reading Friends of the Earth, and return to the Reading FoE Treasurer, c/o 27 Instow Road, Earley, Reading RG6 5QH. Alternatively request our bank account details.