

Reading Friends of the Earth



Newsletter May - June 2023

For more info: www.readingfoe.org.uk ... or Twitter @ReadingFOE ... or Facebook [Reading Friends of the Earth | Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ReadingFriendsOfTheEarth) ... or email info@readingfoe.org.uk ... or 'phone 07503626167.

General Meetings: Reading FoE usually meet on the **second Wednesday of each month** in Room 1 upstairs at RISC, 35-39 London Street, at 7:30 p.m. **BUT see below for our May meeting – we are trying something new!** Access to RISC 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. Meetings may cancel at short notice due to Covid or availability of group officers - if in doubt check our website www.readingfoe.org.uk on the day or phone or e-mail for confirmation (contacts above).

Wednesday May 10th: 7:30 pm. **Meet Enrico in the 'library' at the Calico Bar** (former Great Expectations - 33 London St, Reading RG1 4PS – next to RISC) - where he should be able to link up with Zoom to people who cannot attend in person. Expect to be more of a social plus informal discussion of a range of environmental issues rather than a 'business' meeting with an agenda - but will discuss our future events.

Wednesday June 14th: 7:30 pm. General meeting at RISC. Including from 8:00 pm an on-line introduction to our 'Reading for Warm Homes' campaign and petition - advertised as a **Reading Climate Festival event** – see below.

Beanpole Day – 22nd April



Paolo, Graham and Chris looked after our stall at Econet's event in in Caversham Court Gardens featuring our 'Reading for Warm Homes' petition and the national FoE 'Planet Over Profit' campaign.

As well as beanpoles for sale there were wildlife stalls from RSPB, BBOWT, and Tree Wardens and campaigning groups like Global Justice Now who were campaigning against the 'Energy Charter Treaty' <https://www.globaljustice.org.uk/blog/2022/06/energy-charter-treaty/>

Alok Sharma MP did attend the event but we are not sure he saw our stall.

Thanks also to Anne, Robin and John for help with transport and setup.

Reading for Warm homes petition to Reading MPs – sign now!

Thanks to Enrico our petition is live on the 'Action Network' so now we need signatures to present to the MPs (with wider publicity!) in the autumn. **Sign petition here:** <https://tinyurl.com/5n7tu5tt> Please sign if you are in either Reading constituency (Alok Sharma in Reading West or Matt Rodda in Reading East) – we can sort by postcode later.

Petition calls for:

- Urgent support for people dealing with sky-high energy bills. Price guarantees, targeted extra payments and fair energy pricing.
- A new emergency programme to insulate our heat-leaking homes. Upgrading our homes with insulation is the cheapest and easiest way to permanently reduce bills.
- An energy system powered by cheap, green renewables. To end the need for expensive and polluting gas in the long term, we must move to a homegrown, renewable energy system.

Please also help us publicise this initiative to other local people and concerned groups.

Leaflet on Warm Homes – and local fuel poverty ‘hotspots’:

Enrico has also created an A5 leaflet (see our website) with advice and contacts on energy saving on one side and information on the petition on the other. Please ask us for paper copies or on-line versions to distribute to other organisations or to hand out at meetings.

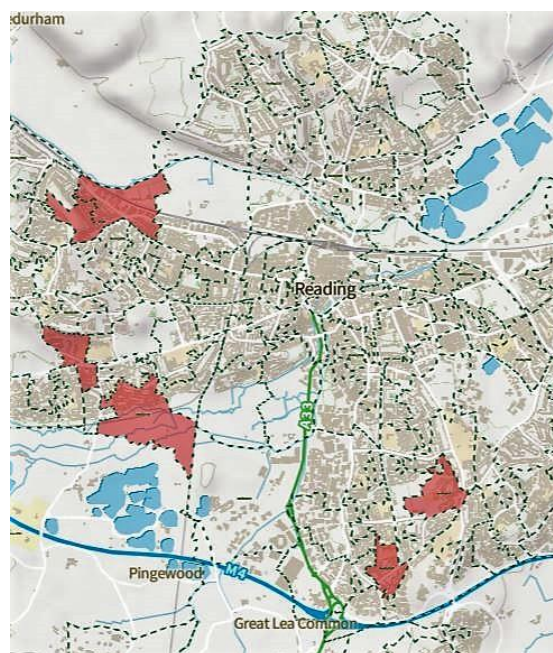
FoE has released a recent analysis of fuel poverty finding there will still be at least 5 million households (1 in 5) in fuel poverty in England and Wales in 2023 and more than 1 million households in extreme fuel poverty.

<https://policy.friendsoftheearth.uk/insight/whos-impacted-fuel-poverty-2023>

FoE’s on-line map identifies six ‘neighbourhoods’ within Reading Borough as ‘fuel poverty hotspots’. <https://mapst.ac/foe/fuel-poverty-hotspots-2023#11.14/51.4516/-0.9694> .

We should try to involve people in these areas and seek support from their Councillors and MPs. (Seems to be four ‘hotspots’ in Reading West and two in Reading East).

Reading’s ‘fuel poverty’ hotspots’



Planet Over Profit:

National FoE are supporting the Corporate Justice Coalition on-line ***petition for a Business, Human Rights and Environment Act*** that really holds companies to account.

From turning a blind eye to toxic chemical leaks, to living with forced labour, it’s time to say no. It took a Friends of the Earth investigation in 2019 to find that Co-Op, Morrisons, Waitrose, Iceland and Lidl were all selling corned beef from a Brazilian company (JBS) that has been repeatedly linked to the destruction of the Amazon rainforest

Powerful UK companies are trashing the environment and wrecking the lives of people overseas through their global supply chains. A new law would:

- ***Require companies to prevent environmental and human destruction in their supply chains***
- ***Hold companies liable for harm to people and planet***
- ***Enable affected communities to access justice.***

Sign petition here: <https://tinyurl.com/3j63e4sw> Background information: <https://www.foe.uk/supplychains> and <https://policy.friendsoftheearth.uk/insight/environment-act-wont-haltdeforestation-or-protect-human-rights>

May-June Activities with Reading, National or South East FoE:

13th May – 11:00 to 17:00 - **FoE South East Summer Gathering – in Brighton.** A day of skills building workshops, discussion, and creative activities, on campaigns both local and global plus a beach picnic! Unfortunately a day of train strikes. Link here to [Book your place](#) if you think you can get there.

25th May – 18:00 to 19:15 - **United for Warm Homes monthly meeting on-line** [register to attend](#)

10th June – Waterfest – we will have a stall in the Abbey Ruins and give a presentation – please let us know if you can help us talk to people about our campaigns – especially our ‘Reading for Warm Homes’ petition – details soon.

14th June - Reading Climate Festival – as above – we plan to devote an hour of our monthly meeting to an on-line presentation on our ‘Reading for Warm Homes’ petition and associated topics.

25th June – East Reading Festival: – please let us know if you can help us talk to people about our campaigns – especially our ‘Reading for Warm Homes’ petition – more details later.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/866740961259586>

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

Kidical Mass Reading - "Making space for the next generation, one bike ride at a time!" - are holding a number of rides for children in the coming months - see www.kidicalmassreading.co.uk or on Twitter @KidicalMassRead

5th May - Reading Critical Mass ride leaving at 19:30 from the Civic Offices in Bridge street. Leisurely ride for about an hour and a half finishing at the Castle Tap. Rides on the first Friday of every month.

24th May – 'How to Save the Planet: Degrowth vs Green Growth?' Film and Discussion
– RISC 19:30 – Global Justice Now - <https://www.facebook.com/events/3043121885821115/>

10th to 21st June - Reading Climate Festival <https://readingcan.org.uk/festival/> - Held in association with the UK's [Great Big Green Week](#) Reading Climate Festival 2023 offers more than a week of live and online events to inspire and encourage positive action on climate change between 10th and 21st June, ending on [Show Your Stripes Day](#). For details of many events see [Eventbrite](#). The 'Parade' on 17th June may be something to join in as Reading FoE?

XR Reading hold meetings and events – see <https://www.facebook.com/groups/XRRdg/>

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 – see <https://www.readingbicyclekitchen.org/>

Green Drinks – usually on the first Tuesday of every month in the Castle Tap – see [Reading Green Drinks | Facebook](#)

Reading FoE later events – dates for your diary – details later:

August 5th – Earley Green Fair – stall at this event off Beech Lane in Earley

September 10th - Cycle Festival – stall at event in Christchurch Meadows - <https://readingcyclefestival.co.uk/>

Electrifying the economy - delays:

We've known we need to switch to electric heating and electric vehicles for years but the national grid and local network operators don't seem to have got the message:

Caversham Golf Course: Having got planning permission for 223 new homes with Air Source Heat Pumps the Golf Club have sold to housebuilders Vistry Thames Valley who have been granted permission to switch most of the homes to gas boilers because the local electricity supplier SSE says it cannot supply enough electricity to the site.

See [COMMITTEE REPORT \(reading.gov.uk\)](#) – especially Matt Rodda MP's comment on Green Energy at 4.25, and KEG at 4.28, and summary from 6.92 to 6.104) with consequent increase in CO2 emissions.

Wokingham Solar Farm: Wokingham's proposed solar farm can't operate for ages <https://wokingham.today/11-year-delay-to-connect-wokinghams-new-solar-farm-to-national-grid-will-have-an-impact-on-council-budget/>

Electric Vehicles: Current installation rates for EV chargers are less than a quarter of what is required. <https://blog.burges-salmon.com/post/102ia5m/are-grid-delays-the-biggest-barrier-to-transport-decarbonisation> .

RBC Strategic Environment Planning and Transport Committee:

The last meeting was 23rd March and is reported at <https://democracy.reading.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=139&MId=4959>

Of particular interest are:

- Item 31 - questions from Cllr McElroy on incentivising smaller vehicles and electric vehicles.
- Item 33 – Strategic Transport schemes: £26m grant from government for bus improvement scheme; Green Park Station expected to open late spring 2023; Shinfield Road cycle scheme progressing; £124k from Active Travel Capability Fund.
- Item 34 – approval of Transport for South East 'Strategic Investment Plan' - Transport Action Network has commented: "The harsh reality is that it proposes building over 50 road schemes before 2030. These will drive up traffic and emissions. They will undermine the UK's ability to reduce carbon emission by 68% by 2030, its pledge to COP. It's yet another example of why restricting global warming to 1.5 degrees looks increasingly hopeless."
- Item 38 – Bids for government funds for decarbonisation: bid for Hexagon refused but RBC may go ahead anyway; government funding and grant obtained from Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership would be used to replace gas heating in the Civic Offices with heat pumps, therefore providing a low carbon heating system.

UN Warning - Climate change making Earth 'uninhabitable':

UN Secretary General António Guterres recently warned “developed nations have an obligation now to lead a financial and technical “revolution” that can help all countries reduce carbon emissions, adapt to the future by mainstreaming renewable energy sources such as water and wind, and build up resilience to climate shocks.”

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/03/1134942>

The narrative ‘Net Zero emissions by 2050’ leads to dangerous complacency because carbon dioxide emissions from now to 2050 will stay in the atmosphere – and continue to ‘warm’ the planet - for hundreds of years. Politicians and public need to understand the urgency and respond! According to the UN ‘[Net Zero Coalition](#)’:

- To keep global warming to no more than 1.5°C – as called for in the Paris Agreement – emissions need to be reduced by 45% by 2030 and reach net zero by 2050.
- Current national climate plans would lead to a sizable increase of almost 11% in global greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, compared to 2010 levels.

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 2023 AGM on April 13th elected Enrico Petrucco to continue in the post of Co-ordinator and Paolo Turati to take over from John Booth as Treasurer.

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.

Even if you don't have time to take an active part, your registration is welcome and allows us to demonstrate more local support.

Reading FoE Subscriptions:

A subscription/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 address newsletter costs, meeting room hire and campaign expenses. Further contributions would be greatly appreciated. To contribute please pay cash at a meeting or event or request our bank account details.

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 request our bank account details.