

# Reading Friends of the Earth



## Newsletter May – June 2024

For more info: [www.readingfoe.co.uk](http://www.readingfoe.co.uk) \* ... or Twitter @ReadingFOE ... or Facebook [Reading Friends of the Earth | Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ReadingFriendsOfTheEarth/) ... or email [info@readingfoe.co.uk](mailto:info@readingfoe.co.uk) ... or 'phone 07503626167.  
\* Note: Our new website <https://www.readingfoe.co.uk> is still under development. Our original website is <http://www.readingfoe.org.uk> .

**General Meetings:** Reading FoE usually meet on the **second Wednesday of each month** either in person or on Zoom. Often in Room 1 upstairs at RISC, 35-39 London Street, at 7:30 p.m. Access to RISC from London Street is via a passage to the right of the shop-front. Most meetings will be 'hybrid' - 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.

**Wednesday May 8th:** 7:30 pm. **Clean Air Living Matters - with RBC's Ross Jarvis**  
Will meet in person at RISC and on Zoom. Will include discussion of Reading's Clean Air Living Matters and other air quality related projects with RBC's Principal Air Quality Project Officer Ross Jarvis who will join us on Zoom. (More detail below). Will also discuss future activities – in particular relating to expected general election.

**Wednesday June 12th:** Probably 7:30 pm. Expect to be in person – hope to start with an outdoor walk to look at wildlife and/or proposed development sites (subject to weather) then retiring to a pub or café. Will decide details in May – check websites and Facebook if not updated by e-mail.

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### Fifty years on...!??

Legend has it that Reading FoE first met in 1974. Entering our second half-century we can celebrate a long history of local activities. Our January newsletter featured a campaign for cycling from 1975. March featured 'Save the Whale' from 1979. Now it is time for home insulation – also from the late 1970s – and very relevant today!

**Now**

### Beanpole Day 2024

We had a successful stall at Caversham Court on April 20<sup>th</sup>. Graham's display and samples of Compost aroused interest and we promoted our 'Reading for Warm Homes' petition which calls for more home insulation.

**Then**

### Loft insulation 1979 (?)

We insulated a pensioner's loft to publicise: the importance of insulation to cut bills; the availability of local council grants; and that the grants only covered three inches of fibreglass when eight inches was better.



Thanks also to Chris and to Robin, Anne and John.



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### Future Activities and Opportunities with Reading FoE, FoE SE region, and national FoE:

May 22<sup>nd</sup> – 3-5 pm — **Mapping suitable sites for onshore wind and solar** - FoE on-line event to showcase and discuss various mapping exercises that have been carried out to identify suitable sites for onshore wind or solar - on-line <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/mapping-suitable-sites-for-onshore-wind-and-solar-tickets-880804508997>

Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June – **Reading Waterfest** – Forbury Gardens and riverbank. We have booked a stall and intend to present workshops on Heat Pumps. Please offer to help on the day.

Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> June - **Reading Climate Festival** run by Reading Climate Action Network – we are joining Berkshire Greenpeace, XR Reading, Global Justice Reading in an on-line event at 18:30 to discuss our various ‘**Campaigns to Change Systems**’. Have said we will feature ‘Reading for Warm Homes’. <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/campaigns-to-change-systems-tickets-874007498957?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June – **East Reading Festival** – Palmer Park. Another opportunity to run a stall to get ideas over to the public and visiting media and politicians. Please offer to help on the day.

29<sup>th</sup> June – **FoE South East - Summer Groups Gathering** – Brighton <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/south-east-summer-action-gathering-tickets-844791041747>

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### **Clean Air Living Matters:**

Three of our supporters attended the Council’s Clean Air and Safer Transport Forum on 3<sup>rd</sup> April. This left many questions unanswered so it is very good that Ross Jarvis, RBC’s Principal Air Quality Project Officer, will come to our May meeting to provide more detail on CALM and other local Air Quality issues.

For background information see report on the Air Quality consultation <https://consult.reading.gov.uk/dens/air-quality-action-plan-2024-2029-consultation/> at the bottom of which is a link to a summary of current Air Quality in Reading.

The main objectives of the CALM programme are to:

- increase knowledge around air quality, its causes, impacts and solutions, with pupils and staff in schools.
- increase awareness of air quality in the wider community and surrounding schools.
- encourage behavioural change in activities that impact on poor air quality, surrounding schools.
- encourage behavioural change in activities that impact on poor air quality, surrounding schools, by enabling pupils, parents and the wider community to take action.

CALM runs until the end of March 2025, is funded using a £327,000 Defra Air Quality Grant, and is being delivered with support from Stantec and the University of Reading.

<https://www.reading.gov.uk/climate-and-pollution/clean-air-living-matters-exploring-reading-with-schools/>

### **Parliamentary Elections:**

Reading will have new parliamentary constituencies at the coming election so we can aim to engage with three sets of candidates: ‘Reading Central’; ‘Reading West and Mid Berkshire’; and ‘Earley and Woodley’.

Candidates can be found by constituency from: <https://whocanivotefor.co.uk/ppcs/details/?region=South+East>

Here is a list of FoE’s demands of the parties; <https://policy.friendsoftheearth.uk/insight/friends-earths-demands-general-election>

Guidance on meeting candidates: <https://groups.friendsoftheearth.uk/elections/guide-meeting-your-parliamentary-candidates>

Reminder that when representing FoE we are required to be party-politically impartial: <https://groups.friendsoftheearth.uk/political-impartiality-guidance>



### **“Reading for Warm Homes” - petition to Reading MPs – sign now!**

Including ‘on-paper’ signatures we now have about 150. National target date for presentation to MPs was 18<sup>th</sup> November but we are continuing to gather signatures. We need to decide when to arrange to present it to current MPs. There will be an opportunity to re-use the petition signatures in the run-up to the expected election in the new constituencies.

**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) or in the new 'Earley and Woodley' constituency – we can sort by postcode later.

Petition calls for:

- Urgent support for people dealing with sky-high energy bills.
- A new emergency programme to insulate our heat-leaking homes
- An energy system powered by cheap, green renewables.

FoE 'United for Warm Homes' campaign is now moving towards engaging with MPs and candidates to persuade them to 'sign the pledge' before the general election.

**Pledge: "I support the United for Warm Homes campaign's call for a new nationwide home insulation programme with funding of at least £6 billion a year. This should be delivered street-by-street, area-by-area, starting with neighbourhoods that need it most."**

<https://unitedforwarmhomes.uk/sign-united-warm-homes-pledge>

**Local Nature Recovery Strategy – survey closing 7<sup>th</sup> May**

Berkshire has a wide range of valuable habitats from chalk streams to heathlands. The LNRS is a Berkshire-wide effort to identify what is important for wildlife in the future and what local initiatives should be prioritised with funding potentially from government, local authorities, NGOs and compensatory payments from developers. Landowners will be expected to make 30-year agreements to manage land for nature in return for payments.

"Each LNRS will map areas of current particular importance for biodiversity, and work with partners from many groups, from landowners to businesses, to eNGOs, and the public. Priorities for nature recovery will be agreed and these will be used to create a local habitat map. These will depict what needs to happen to achieve the agreed aims for nature. This will link up with delivery mechanisms, such as Biodiversity Net Gain for planning and Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes for land management including farming."

On-line survey is open until 7<sup>th</sup> May but community stakeholder workshops are over – participants spoke about risks of flooding, need to think long-term to take account of climate change, wildlife corridors, and maintaining nature for people within urban areas as well as in rural hotspots. Maps will be developed over the coming months and there will be another round of consultations.

Website is <https://rbwmtogether.rbwm.gov.uk/berkshire-local-nature-recovery-strategy> To complete the on-line 'Priorities for Nature Survey' go to 'important links' in the right-hand column.

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

**West Berkshire Hustings** – have heard that the Wildlife Trust is planning a hustings for parliamentary candidates to be held on June 6<sup>th</sup> at Burghfield. Details later.

**Reading Climate Festival – June 8<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>** – currently 28 events planned – see <https://readingcan.org.uk/event/reading-climate-festival-2024/> and <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/reading-climate-festival-31664834047> . Current programme at [https://readingcan.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/RCF2024\\_Programme\\_1-05.pdf](https://readingcan.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/RCF2024_Programme_1-05.pdf) (may be updated soon).

**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](http://www.kidicalmassreading.co.uk) or on Twitter @KidicalMassRead

**Reading Critical Mass** cycle ride. ... Rides on the last Friday of the month. Leave at 19:30 from the Civic Offices in Bridge Street. Leisurely ride for about an hour and a half finishing at pub. Not sure if still happening. Check before you go! <https://criticalmassreading.wordpress.com/> doesn't seem to be updated ???

**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](#)

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**Useful Links and General Information:**

Recent links for Reading FoE stalls and campaigns: [www.readingfoe.org.uk/links](http://www.readingfoe.org.uk/links)

Friends of the Earth 'England, Wales and Northern Ireland' <https://friendsoftheearth.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>

Newbury Friends of the Earth – Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/755866711218545/>

**Reading FoE Officers etc.**

Our 2024 AGM on April 10<sup>th</sup> elected Enrico Petrucco to continue in the post of Co-ordinator and Paolo Turati to continue in the post of 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](mailto: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 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. 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.