

Reading Friends of the Earth

Newsletter Nov/Dec 2016

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. Most meetings include discussion of general topics – some have a particular focus or guest speakers. Meetings are open to all.

November 9th - 8:00 p.m. at RISC – **General meeting** – probably some focus on transport and on plastics recycling, and discussion of air quality measurements.

December 14th - 8:00 p.m. at RISC – **General meeting** – topics and details by e-mail.

Other Activities (not run by Reading FoE):

Monday 7th November – Café Scientifique – “**Soil Yourself**” – the importance of soil health – Smokin’ Billy’s – Butts Centre at 7.30pm. http://www.scienceinreading.org/event/cafe-sci-soil/?instance_id=107

Wednesday 9th November – 6:30 pm prior to the planning meeting at 7pm. **Demonstration against Broken Brow Park and Ride proposals** – Wokingham Borough Council, Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham, RG40 1WH <https://www.facebook.com/events/194493377665832/>

Saturday 12th November – Tree planting in Palmer Park <https://www.facebook.com/events/164402774019450/>

Tuesday 15th November – **Reading Nuclear Awareness Group** 7.00 – 9.00 pm at the RISC Centre (Room 1), 35-39 London Street, Reading, RG1 4PS. AGM plus meet new Research Manager at Nuclear Information Service.

Thursday 17th November - Reading Climate Forum – “**The effect of Architecture and Urban design on new buildings and refurbishments to achieve low environmental impact**”. Eight expert speakers covering everything from resilience to low energy timber buildings, plus 'round table' discussion - see www.reading.ac.uk/architecture/climateforum for topics, details and registration. School of Architecture – UoR London Road 6:00 pm.

Sunday 20th November 12:00 to 4:30 - **Repair Cafe** is at Parkside Cafe, YMCA, Tilehurst, RG30 2DD see website for details of future events in 2017 www.readingrepaircafe.org.uk

Monday 28th November 7:45 pm at RISC – GREN meeting on **Air Quality** with national FoE campaigner Jenny Bates and discussion of local actions, followed by brief GREN AGM

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>

Barclays: Stop Funding Fracking!

On Saturday 29th October campaigners from Reading Friends of the Earth and Berkshire Greenpeace – with assorted friends and endangered species - staged a protest against Barclays Bank in Broad Street, Reading.

Barclays funds fracking company Third Energy who recently got approval to frack for shale gas in Ryedale in Yorkshire – despite thousands of local objections.



We argued that the fracking process is disruptive and potentially dangerous to local communities, and that fossil fuels should stay in the ground to avoid worse climate change. We delivered letters to the Bank Manager asking Barclays to end plans to frack in Yorkshire..



Bowler-hatted bankers waving cash – one of whose human mask had slipped to reveal their true identity – were confronted by a Polar Bear, an Arctic Fox, and an Orangutan – all animals threatened by climate change. The Polar Bear won the day of course!



Climate Change:

The Paris Agreement came into force on November 4th, but UNEP (the United Nations Environment Program) has said that by 2030 greenhouse gas emissions will exceed the level needed to keep global warming to the target level unless better performance is achieved.

The 'Emissions Gap Report' http://uneplive.unep.org/media/docs/theme/13/Emissions_Gap_Report_2016.pdf says that emissions in 2030 are expected to reach 54–56 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, far above the level of 42 billion tonnes needed to have a chance of limiting global warming to 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

The report says: "We must take urgent action. If we don't, we will mourn the loss of biodiversity and natural resources. We will regret the economic fallout. Most of all, we will grieve over the avoidable human tragedy; the growing numbers of climate refugees hit by hunger, poverty, illness and conflict will be a constant reminder of our failure to deliver."

It is good news that the Kigali agreement to phase out refrigerants will cut heat-trapping HFCs equivalent to 80 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide over the years to 2050, predicted to reduce warming by about 0.5 degrees, but it's a pity some nations are going to take so long - <https://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=55310> .

Hope there is more good news from COP22 at Marrakesh <http://www.cop22-morocco.com/> this month.

GREN Events: Reading Climate Forum

Greater Reading Environmental Network (GREN) has continued its Reading Climate Forum series with four meetings this autumn - one on responding to local plan revisions, one on Water Supply, and two on the 'Warm Homes – Cool Planet' theme. Information on these and the previous series is available at <http://chrisbeales.net/readingclimateforum>

The final meeting on 17th November is hosted by the University's School of Architecture. Professor Farrelly and colleagues have arranged speakers to cover a wide-ranging set of topics. These meetings are supported by Reading Climate Action Network <http://www.readingclimateaction.org.uk/> .

Reading Climate Change Partnership (RCCP):

A report on progress with the Reading Climate Change Strategy Action Plan, for period to March 2016, is expected to go to the Strategic Environment Planning and Transport Committee on 23rd November – papers should be on <http://www.reading.gov.uk/article/9626/Strategic-Environment-Planning--Transport-Committee-23-NOV-2016> when they are published, but they are not there yet.

A process of review and revision of the Strategy <http://www.readingclimateaction.org.uk/strategy/> is starting – any comments or offers of involvement welcome.

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.

Park-and-Ride: Wokingham has put in a planning application for a 277-space park and ride site at Broken Brow – just to the East of Kennet Mouth. This will go to Wokingham's Planning Committee for decision on 9th November. People from East Reading will be leading a demonstration outside the Shute End offices from 6:30.

Air Quality:

As well as some individuals in Reading FoE a number of people in GREN are also interested in air quality in Reading so we have formed a collaborative group. The key pollutants are thought to be NO₂ (Nitrogen Dioxide), and particles PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} (where the number refers to the particle size in microns).

Reading FoE has borrowed monitoring equipment to measure PM_{2.5} from FoE, and with help from members of GREN measurements have been taken in a number of locations. We have had some issues with the equipment and are still trying to interpret the results. What is clear is that the concentration of particles varies widely from time to time and from place to place, and appears to be quite high in some places at some times.

FoE has now started an initiative to measure NO₂ using 7,000 diffusion tubes to be deployed by volunteers around the country which we hope to take part in. For 2014 Reading found 30 locations where the annual concentration exceeded the limit vale. <http://www.reading.gov.uk/article/9439/Air-Quality>

FoE Air Pollution campaigner Jenny Bates has agreed to come to speak on 28th November at a public meeting which will be followed by a brief GREN AGM – see Diary listings. More details later.

'Smart M4':

The Government has decided to go ahead with 'All Lane Running' despite many objections. The objectors certainly seemed to have the best of the media coverage – local papers published comments from Keith Taylor (Green MEP) and FoE's Jenny Bates, John was interviewed on Radio Berkshire with someone from RAC who was also critical, CEO of the Institute of Highway Engineers said it was a short term cheap measure and expressed concerns for safety and Chris Burden had a starring role on BBC TV's South Today news programme.

Perhaps most encouraging were the readers' reactions reported by *getreading* which were largely hostile – see <http://www.getreading.co.uk/in-your-area/your-reaction-m4-smart-motorway-11847009>.

Meanwhile around here the M4 seems to suffer serious incidents almost every other day causing chaos for the motorway users and people struggling with diverted traffic in Reading.

State of Nature 2016:

Wildlife organisations have published an update on 2013's State of Nature report. Working side-by-side, over 50 wildlife organisations have compiled a stock take of all our native wildlife. In summary the report says "The loss of nature in the UK continues. Although many short-term trends suggest improvement, there was no statistical difference between our long and short-term measures of species' change, and no change in the proportion of species threatened with extinction."

The report reveals that 56 per cent of the species studied have declined over recent decades. More than one in ten of all the species assessed are under threat of disappearing from our shores altogether. However, the report illustrates that targeted conservation has produced inspiring success stories and, with sufficient determination, resources and public support, we can turn the fortunes of our wildlife around. https://ww2.rspb.org.uk/our-work/stateofnature2016/?utm_source=homepage&utm_medium=website&utm_campaign=son2016

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

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 13th 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 .

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.