

Reading Friends of the Earth



Newsletter November- December 2020

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

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.

Wednesday November 11th: RISC have cancelled all bookings in response to government lock-down so we cannot meet in person. Would be good to see people on a Zoom call at 8:00 so please register on <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/reading-foe-november-meeting-tickets-128101345573>

Wednesday December 9th: We have RISC Room 1 booked from 8:00 pm and may hold a meeting if circumstances allow but it seems more likely that this will be on-line too. If no news check on website.

Because of Covid 19:

- RISC has imposed a limit of six people at meetings in Room 1 and requires visitors to follow social distancing, hand sanitising, and not come if they have any symptoms or recent contacts.
- So if you are thinking of coming to a planned meeting:
 - Check our website www.readingfoe.org.uk for changes of plan since this newsletter ... will aim to post cancellations there by noon on the day of the meeting.
 - If a meeting is likely to go ahead phone or e-mail (contacts above) and leave your details and we will contact you to confirm there is space for you, or let you know if the meeting is cancelled.

Other Activities with Reading FoE:

We are sponsoring two on-line 'events' in the Reading Climate Festival. See next page for details.

"Why Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage is Essential to Net Zero".
Webinar 13th November.

ReadingCAN
Reading CultureLIVE
Friends of the Earth Reading
READING CLIMATE FESTIVAL 2020

Local Transport:
Climate Change, Clean Air,
and Congestion ...
Webinar 14th November

ReadingCAN
Reading CultureLIVE
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READING CLIMATE FESTIVAL 2020

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

Reading Climate Festival – November 9th to 15th – wide variety of on-line events – two Reading FoE events detailed below - download full program from <https://readingcan.org.uk/events/event/reading-climate-festival>

Repair Cafe – usually third weekend of month - seems to be continuing when legal but check on their website – <http://www.transitionreading.org.uk/projects/reading-repair-cafe/>

Reading Bicycle Kitchen – regular sessions at the Queens Arms – but currently outdoors – see <http://www.readingbicyclekitchen.org/>

Green Drinks at RISC – usually on the first Tuesday of every month – not sure what if anything is happening during Covid restrictions – see <http://www.greendrinks.org/Berkshire/Reading> and also <https://www.facebook.com/groups/243919622305571/>

Reading Climate Festival – two events ‘sponsored’ by Reading FoE:

“Why Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage is Essential to Net Zero”. Friday 13th November 7:30 pm

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says that Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage is essential to preventing catastrophic climate change and predicts it providing 9% of emissions reductions required for Net Zero by 2050.

Some production processes – steel, cement, lime and glass - cannot be decarbonised any other way. CCS is also useful if burning biomass or fossil fuels to supply power when low-carbon sources are not available.

Local expert Suzie Ferguson will present the fundamentals of the technology, why it is needed, and describe active programmes in UK.

To register for this Zoom meeting at 7:30 pm on Friday 13th November go to <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/why-carbon-capture-utilisation-and-storage-is-essential-to-net-zero-tickets-125717407149>

“Local Transport: Climate Change, Clean Air, and Congestion .” Saturday 14th November 3:00 pm

A review of Reading’s emerging fourth ‘Local Transport Plan’ with reference to Transport for the South East’s ‘Strategy’, and government’s ‘Transport Decarbonisation Plan’.

Are there environmental limits to traffic growth? How can we ‘make the polluters pay’?

Zoom presentation followed by discussion. John Booth for Reading Friends of the Earth.

To register for this Zoom meeting at 3:00 pm on Saturday 14th November go to <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/local-transport-climate-change-clean-air-and-congestion-tickets-125485312949>

Reading Town Meal

John gave an on-line presentation on local transport issues to this year’s Reading Town Meal. Recordings of other events and slides presented are at <http://www.readingtownmeal.org.uk/workshops.cfm>

Reading Golf Course – plans for at least 260 houses in Caversham:

A planning application (Number: 200713) has now been submitted to Reading Borough Council for a development of at least 260 houses on Reading Golf Course off Kidmore End Road, Caversham, with an allocation for 570+ cars. It is opposed by Keep Emmer Green (KEG) <https://www.keepemmergreen.com/> their website carries a good analysis of the issues with links to documents etc.

An objection addressing Air Quality, Transport and Climate Change was submitted for Reading FoE – see <http://www.readingfoe.org.uk/Documents/Objections%20to%20Reading%20Planning%20Application%20200713%20from%20Reading%20FoE.pdf>

- It does not meet the ideal of Reading’s Sustainable Design and Construction SPD that (3.11) “In achieving Zero Carbon Homes for major residential developments, the preference is that new build residential of ten or more dwellings will achieve true carbon neutral development on-site.”
- It does not make significant use of on-site renewable energy generation options.
- It does not give good account of impact and mitigation of felling 118 TPO’d trees.
- Construction phase emissions are not remotely significantly mitigated by proposed tree planting.
- Insulation standards could be significantly better – U-values are well above typical Passive House levels. This would reduce future running costs and carbon emissions.
- Given that central government dictates that Reading must aim to build a number of new homes every year a smaller number and/or different style of dwelling on this site, or development in a different location, would be more sustainable?
- Reducing the number of homes and/or building at higher density (as envisaged in Local Plan CA1b) would reduce its direct impacts and might make land available for alternative uses beneficial to the local community.
- This development, by location and number of car parking spaces, seems likely to lead to relatively high use of private cars:
 - A location within easier reach of central locations (in both distance and elevation) would likely result in lower levels local transport emissions and more use of ‘active travel’.
 - Car parking provision should be reduced –in a future with less car use it is a waste of space.
 - There is only one and a half cycle parking space planned for every two flats.
- In context of climate change it would be better to address demand for homes by measures to reduce the number of empty homes and vacant buildings than to build in this location.

Reading Transport Improvements:

Reading has responded to the Covid crisis by seeking government funds to change highways to favour cycling and public transport, some of which were implemented in the summer. Schemes are listed and mapped at <https://www.reading.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/active-travel-and-social-distancing/> . One scheme has already been withdrawn and some in Tranche 2 have not yet had funding approved. One of these is an inbound bus lane along the A4 from Suttons Roundabout to Cemetery Junction – something similar was discounted as an alternative to the Mass Rapid Transit scheme.

Environmental Recovery after Brexit – Environment Bill back to Parliament

Discussion of the Environment Bill returned to Parliament on 3rd November after a delay of more than 200 days. Much improvement needed!

The **Green Party** says “Government's vague long-term plans to deliver environmental improvements, ‘enabling’ local authorities and ‘promoting’ resource efficiency amount to little when compared with the European law it intends to replace.” <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2020/10/28/green-party-accuses-government-of-ripping-up-environmental-protections/>

Meanwhile the government’s **Natural Capital Committee** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/natural-capital-committee-advice-on-governments-25-year-environment-plan> reports “Based on a partial assessment of available data, **no significant progress has been made towards most of the 25 Year Environment Plan ten goals since 2011**, with many areas in decline. A proper assessment of progress is inhibited by the lack of a baseline.”

It recommends that “the government should ensure that the proposed Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment pilot and any subsequent fully developed baseline exercise focuses on measuring the extent and condition of all natural assets across England, as per the NCC’s detailed advice – not just habitats, and should incorporate a substantial citizen science component.”

Road Investment Strategy – TAN campaign update!

In late July Transport Action Network were given permission to proceed with their legal challenge to the “largest ever roads programme” at the High Court on grounds of incompatibility with the government’s ‘net zero’ target for climate changing emissions. On 29 October TAN tried, and unfortunately failed, to add air pollution and strategic environmental assessment to the legal challenge. The main case is likely to be heard in the new year ... so TAN continue to appeal for funds. <https://transportactionnetwork.org.uk/ris2-legal-action/>

Reading Climate Emergency Strategy:

On 2nd November the final version of the revised strategy was approved by the Policy Committee. Download from Agenda at <https://democracy.reading.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=138&MId=3386>

Local Transport Plan:

RBC’s post-consultation version should be revealed at the SEPT Committee meeting on 18th November before going to Policy Committee in December. Documents on-line from 11th November.

<https://democracy.reading.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=139&MId=3446> . Consultation documents are available at <https://www.reading.gov.uk/transportstrategy>.

‘Global Refills’

RISC’s Zero Waste shop offers bulk food - including household liquids to be dispensed into your own bottles - in the town centre. RISC website lists all the items it stocks. <https://www.risc.org.uk/global-refills> ...

Reading 2050 - new report on Reading 2050 Lecture Series.

This public lecture series ran from 2017 to 2019 at the University – many interesting speakers but unfortunately not usually well-attended – so it’s great to have this record to refer to. Topics from energy to art - check the title page!

<https://livingreading.co.uk/public/downloads/AhO8o/Reading%202050%20Lecture%20Series.pdf>

See also Press Release at <http://www.reading.ac.uk/news-and-events/releases/PR850208.aspx>

National FoE newsletter:

Celebrates banning of plastic straws <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-54366461> and provides a link to a Guardian review of environmental activism over the last 50 years ... “The environmental movement has been very successful,” says Joanna Watson, who has worked at Friends of the Earth for three decades. ...

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/oct/12/climate-crisis-campaigns-pledge-real-change>

Climate Coalition / Green Homes Grants

The Climate Coalition – a group of groups supported by FoE – will release a 10-point Plan for zero emissions next week. It says that the government’s Green Homes Grant scheme, which offers grants up to £5,000 to help households with insulation and other measures, is vastly over-subscribed and grants must be spent by the end of March. It calls for the scheme to be continued until 2030.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-54795208> see also <https://www.theclimatecoalition.org/>

Useful Links and General Information:

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/>.

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/>

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

Our 2020 AGM scheduled for April 8th was postponed so Enrico Petrucco and John Booth will continue in the posts of Co-ordinator and Treasurer respectively until a meeting can be convened.

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 2020/21

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.