

Reading Friends of the Earth



Newsletter November - December 2024

For more info: www.readingfoe.co.uk * ...

or Facebook [Reading Friends of the Earth | Facebook](#) ...

or email info@readingfoe.org.uk ... or 'phone 07503626167.

* Note: Our new website is still under development. Our original website - still updated - is <http://www.readingfoe.org.uk> .

General Meetings: Reading FoE usually (*but not in November 2024*) 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.

Thursday (not Wednesday) 14th November Our November monthly meeting will be held in Room 3 at RISC and on Zoom at 7:30. We will start with a presentation on **Heat Pumps** by guest speaker Mike Smith covering the basics of heat pump systems and their real world performance plus a few observations on issues in moving away from reliance on gas as a heating fuel (*more detail below*). Then we will discuss future campaign activities, meetings, etc.

Wednesday 11th December 7:30 pm. Fox and Hounds in Caversham - in person only. We should discuss plans for 2025. (Provisional – check for changes nearer the time. Dress warmly in case noisy guests move us outdoors.)

Reading Climate Emergency Strategy:

Thursday 7th November 7:30 pm – Reading FoE Zoom meeting to prepare responses to 'Survey 2' on revision of the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2025-30. (*More details below*).

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: 'Save the Whale' from 1979. May: loft insulation from c. 1979. July: a celebration of national FoE 10th birthday from 1981. September: 'The Big Ask' climate change campaign from 2006.

In **December 2022** we launched our **Campaign for Warm Homes** with a photo-call for the National Day of Action. It was good to see so many people outside the Town Hall. Thanks to friends from Greenpeace, XR, Green Party and Global Justice, and to Graham for assembling placards and Anne for the photograph! We eventually handed in our petition to local parliamentary candidates before the 2024 election.



Future Events and Opportunities with Reading and national FoE:

Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2025-30: Thursday 7th September – 19:30 - Zoom meeting
Revision of Strategy for 2025-2030 is being developed by the Climate Action Network and the Council-
see <https://readingcan.org.uk/priorities/>

General ‘Survey 2’ is open for individuals and groups to comment on until 10th November -
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CJKQ2MT> An easy-read .pdf of the questions is at
https://www.gren.org.uk/resources/Survey2_Oct_2024.pdf

Our meeting will discuss individual and group responses to ‘Survey 2’ and plan to submit a group response. All welcome to join discussion.

Please e-mail info@readingfoe.org.uk to be sent Zoom link if you have not received it with this newsletter.

Reading FoE monthly meeting - Heat Pumps in the Real World

Our November monthly meeting will be held on Thursday (not usual Wednesday) 14th November in room 3 at RISC at 7:30. The in-person meeting will be also be live-streamed on Zoom - please e-mail info@readingfoe.org.uk to be sent Zoom link if you have not received one. We will start with a presentation on Heat Pumps by Mike Smith for the first hour or so after which we will discuss future campaign activities, meetings, etc. All welcome.

The presentation will cover the basics of heat pump systems and their real world performance plus a few observations on issues in moving away from reliance on gas as a heating fuel.

Mike Smith was formerly the Engineering Director of BSRIA, a membership based, non-profit distributing, specialist test house serving the building engineering services sector of the Construction Sector. During the 20 years as Director, he specialised in many areas but particularly testing and research related to heat pumps, including involvement in the European Heat Pump Association.

Delivering FoE’s Climate Change Act Report to MPs and further actions on climate.

To mark the 16th anniversary of the Climate Change Act on 26 November Friends of the Earth is publishing a report to showcase what the Act has achieved so far, and how its future legacy is under threat. They suggest we hand deliver a hard copy to our MPs – ideally in person or to their office. If we sign up to this they will send us a printed copy of the report along with a link to a template foreword that we can adapt. <https://forms.friendsoftheearth.uk/climate-change-act-report-delivery>. This would be a good way to follow up our October meeting with ‘our’ three MPs – will discuss at our meeting on 14th.

FoE also propose we **start a local petition** in support of a ‘Big Climate Plan’. Funding announced in budget is much less that FoE thinks is required - <https://friendsoftheearth.uk/latest/labour-unveils-first-budget> . Guidance on local petitions here: <https://groups.friendsoftheearth.uk/resources/build-support-big-climate-plan>

Current Issues:

COP29 – November 11th to 22nd <https://cop29.az/en/home>

This year’s ‘conference of the parties’ to the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), runs from November 11 to 22, in Baku, Azerbaijan. The theme of COP29, according to the Azerbaijan presidency, is “in solidarity for a green world”. It has been termed the ‘Finance COP’ because agreeing on a new climate finance goal is top of the agenda, alongside a call to countries to update their national climate commitments ahead of COP30.

Much has been written about the urgency for action – recent research claims that climate change made the ten deadliest extreme weather events of the last 20 years more intense and more likely

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cdxvnk10xz2o> .

Some countries feel more threatened than others. Anneliese Dodds MP told a recent Westminster Hall COP29 debate “I was in New York for the UN General Assembly with some representatives of small island developing states, which are particularly hard hit. They said that **their slogan used to be, “1.5 to stay alive,” but it is becoming, “1.5 and we might survive”**. This really is urgent, and the new UK Government are determined to do all we can to exercise leadership, working in partnership with others.”

National FoE petition to Energy Secretary Ed Milliband MP calling on him to have a great impact at the COP is at <https://action.friendsoftheearth.uk/ask-ed-miliband-be-a-climate-leader-this-cop>

Wokingham Local Plan Revision:

Consultation closes 13th November <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning-policy/emerging-local-plan-update>

Still proposes Hall Farm development south of Earley, now renamed “Loddon Valley Garden Village” for 3,930 dwellings, of which at least 2,700 dwellings will be delivered by 31st March 2040. Current proposal does not include a

new M4 junction but a bridge over it to allow a new road to reach the Earley Outer Peripheral Road which will probably need to be widened to take traffic growth and allow for public transport and active travel..

West Berkshire Local Plan and Pincents Hill:

At the examination in public the Inspector has recommended that development of Pincents Hill should be included in the version that goes to the next phase – despite the arguments put by Olivia Bailey MP and local people.

Reading Borough Council Strategic Planning and Transport Committee:

Next SEPT meeting is on 20th November. An opportunity to ask questions, and always interesting to read the reports. <https://democracy.reading.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=139&MId=5469>

Recent Activities with Reading FoE:

'Climate Coalition' 'Day of Action'

We met with three local MPs on 11th and 12th October and were joined by other constituents who supported Greenpeace, XR, Global Justice Now and Greater Reading Environmental Network. FoE's main theme was the call for a bold, fair and ambitious action plan. In Earley we also talked about the Climate and Nature Bill (a 'Private Members' Bill currently before parliament calling for mandatory targets <https://www.zerohour.uk/secondreading/>), the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty initiative <https://fossilfuel treaty.org/about-treaty> and Draughtbusters and similar local initiatives.

Press release was picked up by Reading Chronicle <https://www.readingchronicle.co.uk/news/24654760.berkshire-mps-meet-climate-crisis-campaigners/> and a photo with Matt Rodda and brief text appeared in a printed edition.

Top right: Yuan Yang MP (Earley and Woodley, centre) with FoE, XR, Greenpeace and GJN campaigners.



Bottom left: Olivia Bailey MP (Reading West and Mid Berkshire MP, on the right) discussing climate policy with Graham Hudson (RFoE)

Bottom right: Matt Rodda MP (Reading Central – second from left) with Councillors Andrew Hornsby-Smith and Karen Rowland and RFoE and Greenpeace campaigners



Reading FoE publicity stalls at events:

Graham and John enabled us to have a presence to engage with local people at:

- **UoR 'Community Fair'** in a marquee on 24th September. The Fair is part of the Welcome Week activity for new and returning students at the University of Reading.
- **Wokingham Earth Fayre** in All Saints Church on 28th September. Spoke with a good number of people including new Wokingham MP Clive Jones (Lib-Dem) about Motorway speed limits and eco-taxes on gas and electricity. There was an interesting series of talks <https://www.allsaintswokingham.org.uk/earth-fayre-2024/> including two Council officers on response to climate emergency and UoR Prof. Merchant on "What's happening with the world's climate?"
- **St James 'Eco Church' Open Afternoon** on October 19th in Woodley. Spacious church venue highlighting a good variety of local activities. Again some interesting talks in a separate room. <https://stjameswoodley.org/about-us/eco-church/>

Other up-coming activities (not run by Reading FoE so check for changes):

Global Day of Action for Climate Justice, Saturday 16th November. The Climate Justice Coalition is asking interested groups to get together locally and organise events calling for the end of fossil fuels. <https://climatejustice.uk/cop29/> March for Global Climate Justice from 12 noon Saturday 16 November Meet outside the British Museum, Great Russell Street, London, WC1B 3BA GB

The UK's Treescape and its future' talk by Jon Stokes for Reading Tree Wardens on **Monday 25th November** at 7pm at RISC. Please contact them to reserve a seat as space is limited. <http://www.readingtreewardens.org.uk/>

How Green is your Money? Global Justice meeting with 'ethical financial advisor' on 27th November at 7:30 at RISC

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

People Planet Pint: an informal social meet up, primarily aimed at people involved in sustainability. Reading will now have its own PPP on the second Thursday of the month, next on 12th September at 18:00. Milk Bar, 8 Merchants Place, Reading RG1 1DT. <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/reading-small99s-people-planet-pintm-sustainability-meetup-tickets-923173094577>

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

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/>

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' <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 10th 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 to request our GDPR Consent form. We have separate lists for people who only want to receive our newsletters (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 free of charge newsletter to keep members up to date with the group's activities. We need funds to cover meeting room hire, zoom licence, website costs, and campaign expenses. Contributions of perhaps £10 a year would be greatly appreciated.

To contribute please:

- if you use PayPal go to <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/readingfoe>
- to pay by bank transfer request our bank account details by e-mail to info@readingfoe.co.uk
- or pay cash or cheque at a meeting or event