

# Reading Friends of the Earth Newsletter Sept/Oct 2011



**Friends of  
the Earth**

For more information see <http://www.foe.co.uk/reading>  
email [info@readingfoe.org.uk](mailto:info@readingfoe.org.uk) or 'phone 0118 9868260.

## Diary:

**General Meetings:** Reading FoE usually meets on the second Wednesday of each month upstairs at RISC, 35-39 London Street, at 8:00 p.m.

**September 14th:** – 8:00 p.m. at RISC – **General Meeting** – topics later by e-mail.

**October 12th:** - 8:00 p.m. at RISC – **General Meeting** – topics later by e-mail.

## Other Activities and Meetings (not run by Reading FoE):

**September 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup>** – **West Berkshire eco-buildings open days** – various homes and other buildings showing what can be done - <http://www.actionforall.org.uk/greenexchange/news/view/1674>

**September 8<sup>th</sup>** – **Traffic Management Advisory Panel** – Civic offices 18:30

**September 10<sup>th</sup>** – 6:30 Saturday evening in Palmer Building - **Conservation – the next 25 years** - three expert speakers looking at the future of wildlife conservation - £10 including refreshments <http://www.reading-rspb.org.uk/>

**September 12<sup>th</sup>** – 6:30 at RISC – **Greater Reading Environmental Network Board meeting** - <http://www.gren.org.uk/Events.cfm>

**September 16<sup>th</sup>** – 7:00 Coley Park Community Centre – **New Reading Cycling Forum** - established by Reading Cycle Campaign to get More People on More Bikes More Often <http://www.gren.org.uk/Events.cfm>

**September 24<sup>th</sup>** – 1:30 to 4:30 Park United Reform Church, Palmer Park Avenue – **Pellets and Panels** – half-day conference relating experience with solar panels and biomass boiler. Pre-booking and £5 fee required – see <http://www.gren.org.uk/Events.cfm>

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## Earley Green Fair

Earley Green Fair on 6<sup>th</sup> August was well attended by the public, despite a couple of showers, and there was a good range of stalls including Greenpeace – campaigning on fisheries policy – and the local Wildlife Trust and Earley Environment Group.

We focussed on FoE's 'Plug Us In' survey of public opinion on energy issues – gathering information towards the refocussed energy campaign FoE intends to kick off in October.

As well as energy policy people talked to us about waste and recycling, and there was interest in solar panels and 'Feed In Tariffs'.



*Earley Green Fair – Photo: Adela Nistora.*

We interviewed 57 people for responses to the survey  
[http://www.foe.co.uk/community/campaigns/climate/plug\\_us\\_in\\_31080.html](http://www.foe.co.uk/community/campaigns/climate/plug_us_in_31080.html)

Here are the Questions and the Answers we got – not a random sample – just people prepared to talk to us.

<b>1 In your view, what is the most important energy issue facing the UK today?</b>	<b>Percentage Response</b>
The price of energy and fuel	11
Dependence on imported oil and gas	28
Availability and supply of oil and gas	11
The safety of nuclear power plants	7
The impact of our energy system on climate change	41
Something Else or Don't Know	2

People had great difficulty choosing which to single out as the most important issue but both climate change and dependence on imports were seen as very important.

<b>2 The UK needs to invest billions in coming decades to keep lights on and reduce dependency on oil. Where do you think the most money should go?</b>	<b>Percentage Response</b>
Nuclear power	12
Power from the sun, waves or wind	46
Making energy savings in homes, business and industry	34
Capturing carbon pollution from coal and gas plants	7
Something Else or Don't Know	0

Again people found it difficult to pick one priority – most seemed to think several initiatives important. Renewables and energy saving had clear support although some people prioritised nuclear power or carbon capture.

<b>3 Do you think that more green energy should be generated locally e.g. through solar panels on roofs or wind farms owned by councils or communities?</b>	<b>Percentage Response</b>
Yes	82
No	7
Don't Know	11

As with the Reading Waterfest survey people were supportive of action by Councils to generate renewable energy. We need to point this out to Earley and Wokingham Councils – using the example of Reading discussed below.

#### **Reading Goes Solar:**

On 17<sup>th</sup> August Reading Council agreed, with all-party support, to start a programme to borrow up to five million pounds to install photovoltaic solar panels on various Council buildings – predicted to generate around 1,200,000 kWh per year. The supporting documents make the point that energy costs are expected to double by 2020 and that the Feed in Tariff should result in an annual average income of over £200,000 to the Council.

[http://ww2.reading.gov.uk/documents/Committee\\_Services/Cabinet/2011-2012/110711/SolarPanels.pdf](http://ww2.reading.gov.uk/documents/Committee_Services/Cabinet/2011-2012/110711/SolarPanels.pdf)

The Council is also going to work with the 10:10 organisation on their solar scheme for schools. 10:10 will pilot their scheme with seven schools in Reading. The scheme will help schools to raise funds from the community and business to invest in their own solar panels.

<http://www.1010global.org/uk/2011/07/solar-schools-renewables-feed-in-tariff-energy>

Reading FoE can't claim any direct credit for this initiative, but we have been drawing Councillors' attention to local concern about the issues by our 'Get Serious' postcard campaign over the last two years, by last year's meeting with the coalition leaders about Carbon Budgets, and by involving Labour Cabinet members in the Home Energy Workshops in June.

#### **Reading abandons "Merton Rule":**

In July Reading Council passed a revised 'sustainable design and construction supplementary planning document' which removed the requirement for significant developments to incorporate on-site generation of energy and energy efficient design measures to off-set at least 20% of predicted carbon dioxide emissions. They claim this has been superseded by updates to the Building Regulations. However the change would seem to remove an incentive to incorporate renewables and to design low-energy buildings to reduce the cost of installing renewables.

#### **New Nottingham Declaration:**

An agreement between the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) and the Local Government Group (LG Group), published in March 2011, commits to setting up a 'New Nottingham Declaration': "*a mechanism for councils to demonstrate their commitment to continued action on climate change, and [which] will enable them to sign up to locally appropriate targets and goals*". so we should aim to get the Council to sign up to this when the wording is agreed. [http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/nott\\_dec\\_principles.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/nott_dec_principles.pdf)

### **Waste and Recycling:**

Enrico attended the July meeting of the re3 Stakeholder group <http://www.re3.org.uk/> - along with with representatives of Greenpeace and three Residents' Associations.

There was discussion of the difficulties of recycling for people living in flats – a suggestion that they generally had a poor attitude as well as practical difficulties. Reading Council representative said some of the key issues were multi-occupancy, the conversion of houses into flats, short term lets, and migration. Contamination was addressed by the RBC enforcement team which actively encouraged local landlords to take responsibility for contamination produced their tenants, and was taking clear actions with regular roadshows using the “Are You Doing It Right” campaign. Mark Tipton of re3 was to meet with landlords in the three boroughs so the issues of contamination can be considered with those who can really influence resident behaviour.

re3 regularly placed ‘Green Pages’ advertisements in free local papers to inform people of how to improve recycling – the Stakeholders were to review their content. Enrico commented that this was paid for from the waste minimisation project funding when it was actually about increasing recycling and reducing waste to landfill as opposed to reducing waste overall.

Enrico asked for an update on plastics recycling – whether provision had been made to recover other types of plastics. re3 responded that the Material Recovery Facility will not be processing new types of plastic because optical sorters were already effectively separating the plastics required by the market and any adjustment can change the quality of the plastic produced.

re3 Annual Environmental Report is at [http://www.re3.org.uk/Data/Page\\_Downloads/Re3AER10\\_11.pdf](http://www.re3.org.uk/Data/Page_Downloads/Re3AER10_11.pdf)  
This claims that ‘recovery’ has increased from 52.2% to 72.6% year on year because about 60,000 tonnes was sent to the newly-opened Lakeside Energy from Waste facility at Colnbrook run by Grundon.

The FoE position is that the incineration of household waste depresses recycling and wastes resources, and releases greenhouse gasses. Instead of promoting zero waste, incinerators rely for feedstock on material that should be recycled or composted. Incinerators create toxic emissions and hazardous ash, and therefore pose significant health risks. See <http://ukwin.org.uk/>

The re3 Stakeholder Group, which meets every three months, was very keen to increase the number of stakeholder representatives, so anyone interested should get in touch.

### **Waste Petition:**

A response to our petitions from the Waterfest and Home Energy Workshops for a target to reduce ‘black bag’ waste by 50% by 2020 has been received from defra via Rob Wilson MP. It confirms that the government is committed to a 50% recycling target for household waste by 2020 as required by the EU – but we knew that already.

It says the government is taking measures towards a ‘zero waste’ economy but ‘is not convinced that setting a national target for England ... is the best way of achieving our ambition.’

### **South Reading Development:**

Tesco held their consultation exhibition on turning the Brewery site into a massive warehousing distribution complex, and the Worton Grange site already has planning permission for warehousing.

Joanna spoke to the architect for the Tesco warehouse proposal at their exhibition about the possibility of another wind turbine and anaerobic digestion. He assured her they would look into this.

Michael investigated Tesco’s green claims on their website – they certainly seem to be taking steps to address their carbon footprint –so they may well be open to suggestions for improvements: “We’ve made an important commitment: by 2020 we will halve Tesco’s global carbon footprint and build new stores that emit half as much carbon as those built in 2006.” “Now we understand where we are emitting climate-harming greenhouse gases, we are taking steps to reduce them.”

They even have their own train and claim that in 2010/11 train use saved 8,000 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e & 6 million road miles, so suggestions that a new warehouse should be linked to the Basingstoke line may be welcomed.

For detail of our work on the two South Reading sites see <http://www.anjoro.plus.com/downloads/southreading.doc>.

## Useful Websites etc.:

[www.greenlink-berkshire.org.uk](http://www.greenlink-berkshire.org.uk)  
[www.foe.co.uk](http://www.foe.co.uk)

**GREN** - Greater Reading Environmental Network <http://www.gren.org.uk/>.

**Transition Reading** - Reading's Transition Town movement <http://www.transitionreading.org.uk/>

Doorstep collection of WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) service in Reading being offered by Midex Reverse Technologies <http://www.midex-rt.com/>

True Food Co-op: [www.truefood.coop](http://www.truefood.coop) now with new shop in Emmer Green!

Reading Borough Council Waste and Recycling:  
<http://www.reading.gov.uk/environmentandplanning/wasteandrecycling/>

South East Forum for Sustainability: <http://www.sefs.org.uk>

Citizens Committee on Oil Peak And Decline (COPAD) [www.copad.org](http://www.copad.org)

<http://www.fishonline.org/> gives info on over-fishing, fish to avoid, etc.

[www.ejfoundation.org](http://www.ejfoundation.org) (Environmental Justice Foundation)

Local Food Directory, with links: [http://www.greenlink-berkshire.org.uk/Local\\_Economy.htm](http://www.greenlink-berkshire.org.uk/Local_Economy.htm)

RISC <http://www.risc.org.uk/readingfairtrade/>

## Reading FoE Officers

At our AGM on April 14<sup>th</sup> 2010 Enrico Petrucco and John Booth were 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 join in our day-to-day communications please email [info@readingfoe.org.uk](mailto: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 2011/10

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 £7.00 / £4.00 (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.