

Reading Friends of the Earth Newsletter Sep/Oct 2013



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

Change Your World – FoE Local Groups Newsletter:
http://www.foe.co.uk/community/resource/change_your_world.html

Diary:

General Meetings: Reading FoE usually meets on the second Wednesday of each month upstairs in Room 1 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.

September 11th: – 8:00 p.m. at RISC – **General Meeting** – future plans for the Bee Cause and events.

October 9th: - 8:00 p.m. at RISC – **General Meeting** – topics by e-mail when decided.

Other Reading FoE Activities and Meetings:

Sunday 29th September – Ufton Court Open Day - 11:00 am to 4:00 pm. Indoor Bee stall at this Grade I listed tudor manor house on the Berkshire/Hampshire borders, run as an educational trust. www.uftoncourt.co.uk

Saturday 5th October – Reading Town Meal - Forbury Gardens 12:00 to 4:00 pm. We will be running an outdoor 'general' stall at this event. <http://www.readingtowmeal.org.uk/index.cfm> Please volunteer to help

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

Monday 16th September – “The resurgence of Bovine TB in England and Wales: a scientific and political conundrum” - Nick Taylor, a veterinary epidemiologist working at the University of Reading. 'No solution will be offered'. EEG meeting in the Function Room, Maiden Place, off Kilnsea Drive, Lower Earley at 19:30. Non-members welcome. See <http://www.earleyenvironmentalgroup.co.uk/Events/EventsUpdate.asp?EventID=457> .

Tuesday 24th September – Launch of Reading Climate Change Strategy – 08:00 am for 08:30 am in Reading University. See below. For more details and to sign up please see <http://rmbocc2013.eventbrite.co.uk/>

Wednesday 2nd October – Reading Town Meal Debate – ‘Should Food be Cheaper’ – 7 pm in the Great Hall of Reading University <http://www.readingtowmeal.org.uk/debate.cfm> - reserve a place at [university events page](http://universityevents.org.uk).

Sunday 20th October - GREN/TT Repair Café – 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm at Highbridge House, 16-18 Duke Street, Reading, RG1 4RU. In planning but intending to feature all sorts of repairing including bikes, electronics, toys, clothing, and creative uses for rubbish. Check out www.gren.org.uk 'Events' section for updates.

Green Drinks at RISC - is 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>

The Bee Cause

We continued to collect campaign postcards at the Caversham Festival and the Earley Green Fair, and ran a very successful 'Bee Walk' in Caversham Court Gardens led by ecologist Ivan Wright. We had press coverage of the Green Fair with a photo of the bee costumes, and articles and photos in the press both before and after Bee Walk.



Bee team at Caversham – photo: Alice Comi.



Flying the flag at Caversham – photo: Alice Comi.

The **Bee Walk** in Caversham Court Gardens was attended by 54 people. Thanks to Reading Borough Council and the Friends of Caversham Court.



Bee Walk – Veronica welcomes the crowd

Ecologist Ivan Wright, who is County Bee Recorder for Oxfordshire, identified nine different species of bee within just a few minutes and explained their wonderfully intricate behaviour and habitat requirements.

He said that recent debate about protecting bees and other pollinators had been rather skewed towards the familiar honey bee but this was only one type of bee out of around 270 species found in Britain.

Bumblebees make up 23 species and the rest are solitary bees. The causes of decline in wild bees include loss of habitat and pesticides which often contain suspect neonicotinoids, including in products sold to gardeners.

He said Caversham Court was the best example of planting flowers useful for bees by a local authority that he had seen, and was much enhanced by the allotment area and churchyard nearby where many species would be able to nest.

Latest FoE Bee Cause news is that the government is to hold two Workshops this autumn entitled “Value and Health of Pollinator Populations in England: Towards a Pollinator Health Strategy” which will offer national experts from government and non-government organisations the opportunity for an open debate to assist development of the ‘National Pollinator Strategy’.

Defra document about this, published in July 2013, is at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/210926/pb13981-bees-pollinators-review.pdf

For more information see FoE’s Bee Cause Campaign Hub at <http://forum.foe.co.uk/campaignhubs/index.php/page/page686.html>

A Reading University student has won a prize for this photograph of a spider attacking a bee: <http://www.reading.ac.uk/news-and-events/releases/PR530386.aspx>

Clean British Energy and the Energy Bill:

The Energy Bill has now to be considered further by the House of Lords. We hope more efforts will be made to include an urgent decarbonisation target at the Report Stage. <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2013-14/energy.html>

Meanwhile on 16th July the Centre for Alternative Technology launched the third version of its ‘Zero Carbon Britain’ report - ‘Rethinking the Future’ <http://zerocarbonbritain.com/index.php/current-report> which “integrates new research in two key areas ‘keeping the lights on’ with a variable renewable energy supply, and ‘feeding ourselves properly’ on a low carbon diet.”

It claims that by combining cutting edge technology with a smart approach to agriculture and land use, energy supply and demand, buildings and transport, it is possible for the UK to meet the challenge of climate change and acknowledge its responsibility as a long-industrialised nation to set the pace.

Reading Climate Change Strategy:

Reading Climate Change Partnership’s revision of the Climate Change Strategy will be launched on 24th September (see above) with a new website and the start of a network and action plan.

The document ‘Reading Means Business on Climate Change’ sets out a number of opportunities to reduce carbon emissions and to take steps to adapt between now and 2020.

The launch is on Tuesday 24th September from 8am to 11am at the Henley Business School, Whiteknights Campus, University of Reading. For details and sign up please see <http://rmbocc2013.eventbrite.co.uk/>

Speakers and panellists include:

- Scott Balloch, head of Energy and Carbon Strategy, BT
- Professor Nigel Arnell, Director of the Walker Institute for Climate Systems Research at the University of Reading.
- Councillor Tony Page, Deputy Leader of Reading Borough Council,
- Steve Lamb, Chair of Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership
- Michael Sippitt, Chairman of Clerks Legal LLP (to be confirmed)

The event will focus on the benefits of businesses managing and reducing their energy use.

Park and Ride:

On 8th August Wokingham approved planning applications from Wokingham and Reading Councils for a new 400-space site next to Winnersh Triangle station and an almost 600-space site with facilities at Mere oak just south of Junction 11. Existing facilities at the Loddon Bridge and Madejski Stadium are planned to be withdrawn.

Shinfield Parish Council argued that all the patronage at Mere oak would come from south of the M4 so the Madejski Stadium facility should remain to provide for M4 travellers, but the Councils believe M4 travellers will (counter-intuitively) divert south of the M4 to take a bus to Reading. Interestingly the documents show that the Loddon Bridge facility is very little used by commuters so presumably has little effect on weekday peak hour congestion.

The Council claims that “Park and Ride facilities are a key element in Wokingham Borough Council's Strategy to promote and encourage people to travel by sustainable transport modes”. An alternative view is that, unless town centre car parking is to be reduced as park and ride is introduced, they encourage more people to travel long distances by car instead of by public transport. Their main role is to enable even more people to access town centre locations whilst (at least initially) making urban roads a little less congested.

It's not clear how Reading and Wokingham's plans for the Broken Brow park and ride and possible associated Expressway across Kennet Mouth are going, but with the two new sites going in to the south and south-east of Reading there is surely little case for a third. It would take green space on the banks of the Thames and is so close in to the town centre that it will save very little journey distance.

Reading's Woodland Project:

Consultation on the Council's proposals to improve management of woodlands including a series of management plans for 15 different areas. Documents are available on <http://www.reading.gov.uk/council/consultations/woodlandsproject/> which gives details of public meetings on 16th, 21st and 26th September.

FoE seeks Big Ideas:

The national organisation has launched a three-year project to debate ten different topics – starting with ‘cities’ and then nature, consumption, history, politics, business, women, energy, innovation and money – in the search for ‘Big Ideas that Change the World.’ Lots of scope for confusion and there seem to be a lot of exciting and rather daunting ideas being promoted - see <http://www.foe.co.uk/bigideas> and join in!

Prospectus for the activity “Mapping a route from a planet in peril to a world of well-being” is at http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefing_notes/mapping_a_route.pdf

FoE statement on population issues:

In 2009 Reading FoE, with other local groups, proposed a successful motion to FoE Conference calling for FoE to be more active on global and local population issues but the Board (which takes decisions on policy and resources) appeared not to take much action.

However a recent blog from Mike Childs, FOE UK's Head of Policy, Research and Science, showed that the issue is again receiving attention - http://www.foe.co.uk/news/population_40872.html - and FoE has now released a briefing “Global population, consumption and rights” http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/population_friends_of_the.pdf

It argues that a rights-based approach to accelerating the positive trend of declining rates of population growth is necessary in order to achieve a peak in global population around mid-century so that well-being for all can be achieved on a planet degraded by climate change, biodiversity loss, soil degradation, water shortages, etc.

Useful Websites etc.:

Friends of the Earth 'England, Wales and Northern Ireland' 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>

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

Pangbourne and Whitchurch Sustainability Group (PAWS) <http://www.pawsg.com/>

True Food Co-op: www.truefood.coop - Winner Best Retail Initiative BBC Food & Farming Awards 2011 - shop in Emmer Green and local markets.

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

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 10th 2013 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 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 2013/14

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.