

Reading Friends of the Earth Newsletter Sep/Oct 2014



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. **But not this October – see below.** Most meetings include discussion of general topics – some have a particular focus or guest speakers. Meetings are open to all.

September 10th - 8:00 p.m. at RISC – **General Meeting** – hope to include discussion of 'Third Thames Bridge'.

October 15th - Burning Biomass for Electricity: Solution or disaster? – presentation from Duncan Law of Biofuelwatch – <http://biofuelwatch.org.uk/> - 8:00 p.m. at RISC – see below.

Other Reading FoE Activities and Meetings:

Sunday 14th September - Reading FoE stall at **Ufton Court** – 11:00 to 16:00 - helpers needed – details by e-mail. Viking themed event, but we'll be featuring new 'Bee & Bee' campaign material.
<http://www.berkshireeventsguide.co.uk/events/ufton-court-family-open-day/>

Wednesday 29th October - **"Why Bother with Fracking?"** – Prof. Chris Rhodes - RISC 7:30 – see next page.

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

Friday 12th September – **Bracknell FoE meeting on Fracking** – 18:00 in Bracknell - see next page.

Saturday 20th September – **Repair Cafe** – Jacksons Corner, – 12:00 to 17:00.
<https://www.facebook.com/ReadingRepairCafe>

Thursday 25th September - **'Grow Wild Together'** Harris Gardens 11:00 am – see 'Bees' next page.

Monday 6th October – **"Why bother with Fracking?"** – Prof Chris Rhodes - Maiden Place Community Centre 7.30pm. Earley Environmental Group meeting. www.earleyenvironmentalgroup.co.uk

Thursday 9th October – **"Better Recycling and Less Waste"** – 19:00 Highbridge House, entrance from sideroad off Duke Street, RG1 4RU. Joint meeting of GREN & Reading Neighbourhood Network - see below.

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>

Bees (and Beer)

Nine of us made it to The Crown at Playhatch in July to celebrate Brakspear's involvement in Bee Worlds – sending seeds to their pubs to grow bee-friendly flowers.

We were a little disappointed that the area sown was quite small and not actively publicised to their patrons, but every little helps, and there were other areas of the large garden with many other flowering plants. And we all had beer, and most of us enjoyed a walk or a bike-ride on a fine evening.



“Grow Wild Together”

Reading University is working with Kew Gardens to host an event in the Harris Gardens on Thursday 25th September at 11:00. This will include the opening of the Harris Bee Garden, where there will be one of the hives on display in an observation nuc, and there will be some honey for people to try.

Kew Gardens Grow Wild project will have a gazebo there, with some information about the project, then people can sow some of the seeds (and they get a free pack to take away). Please sign up for (free) tickets at: www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/university-of-reading-kew-gardens-grow-wild-together-tickets-12703190585

“Better Recycling and Less Waste”

GREN and Reading Neighbourhood Network have arranged this meeting on Thursday 9th October (19:00 Highbridge House, light refreshments from 18:30) which should be of interest to many FoE members. Oliver Burt (RBC’s re3 Project Manager) will introduce waste management and recycling in Reading – including current issues with contamination – and show a video of operation of the Smallmead Materials Recovery Facility. Having set the scene there will then be discussion of how to improve performance under the present re3 contract:

- what are key points to get across to public and member groups?
- improving recycling from flats and HMOs, potential next steps?
- waste reduction – what are the main problems and opportunities?

“Burning Biomass for Electricity: Solution or disaster?”

“A little known but fast growing part of government renewable energy policy - does it meet carbon saving, planet protecting, energy security aims? If not, what do we do about it? How do we refer to it when discussing renewables?”

Duncan Law, a member of Biofuelwatch <http://biofuelwatch.org.uk/> and of Transition Town Brixton <http://transitiontownbrixton.org> will take us through these issues and show a short film before Q&A and discussion. Room 3 at RISC at 8:00 pm on Wednesday 15th October (a week later than our usual meeting).

It will be interesting to have news from London from someone so involved there. There should be time for some general discussion of Reading FoE business afterwards as Duncan heads for his train.

“Why Bother with Fracking?”

Reading FoE have arranged this public meeting in Room 3 at RISC on Wednesday 29th October, during Reading International Festival. Chris will be giving the same talk to Earley Environmental Group on 6th October.

Professor Chris Rhodes, chairman of Transition Town Reading, will discuss the options for global and UK energy in the context of declining supplies of conventional crude oil. He will review the controversial ‘Fracking’ process and constraints on renewable energy and electrification, concluding that we must adapt to lower-energy lifestyles. His talk will include issues around population, energy use/efficiency, and where we are going (or should go) as a human society.

“THE TRUTH ABOUT THE DASH FOR GAS”

Bracknell FoE are showing this film which examines the impacts of fracking and coal bed methane extraction in the UK on 12th September at a meeting with Bracknell MP Dr Phillip Lee who will talk about the Government’s plans for fracking. More details and free tickets at Eventbrite on this link: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/frack-the-forest-tickets-12552166869?aff=eac2>

While there seems to be no immediate prospect of fracking locally, this whole area is open for applications in the 14th Landward Licensing Round <https://www.gov.uk/oil-and-gas-licensing-rounds> . Under a previous round a consent was granted for somewhere near Windsor, which is not so far away. See map of areas for 14th Round: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/330774/14R_Offier.pdf

Neonics accused:

The Task Force on Systemic Pesticides <http://www.tfsp.info> has found that neonicotinoid pesticides (three of which are currently subject to a two-year partial ban by the European Commission, despite UK government objections) cause widespread damage to ecosystems. “Neonics impact all species that chew a plant, sip its sap, drink its nectar, eat its pollen or fruit ... and these impacts cascade through an ecosystem weakening its stability.”

Reading Bicycle Kitchen

Amazing new use for Jackson’s Corner – with grant aid from RBC an exciting space offering bike repairs and sales has been created. Check for opening times – some weekday evenings and Saturdays.

Bee Cause Progress

We had FoE stalls at the Caversham Festival and at the Earley Green Fair, covering both B'n'B campaigning (providing information for people to provide homes and food for Bees in their gardens) and the Fracking issue. Thanks to Anne, Gloria, Michael, Chris, Veronica, Clive, John and Enrico for help with these stalls.

FoE expected the Government to launch its National Pollinators Strategy this July but it is still now expected to be in the autumn.

Our stall at Ufton Court on 14th September will primarily be about the B'n'B campaign – any further offers of help on the day would be most welcome.

Joanna is investigating if it is possible to create a BeeWorld in conjunction with the Reading Station redevelopment.

Climate Change Centre Reading (CCCRdg)

Not to be confused with the Reading Climate Change Partnership www.readingclimateaction.org.uk (which is part of the Local Strategic Partnership), or Reading Sustainability Centre (which is currently working to bring forward a Hydro scheme and Sustainability Centre – see www.gren.org.uk), Climate Change Centre Reading (CCCRdg) have sent us this introduction to their activities:

We are a climate change interest group for green development, a lobby group for sustainable zero carbon project initiatives in Reading.

Climate Change Centre Reading (NGO in development) aims to create a multilateral partnership between the Reading area and the active companies working in it. Our vision is for Reading and its business to join forces to reduce the carbon footprint and other environmental impacts of us who live and work in the area, as in Reading over 40% of our carbon output comes from local business.

We look to support and strive for the development of productive, results-driven carbon reduction strategies, for organisations in the Thames Valley Business Community, while advancing and planning the education of the public and businesses in order for them to change their behaviour, and reach long term sustainability.

To achieve this, we are preparing to set up a learning centre, a 'Climate Change Centre – Rdg', hosting monthly seminars and meetings in Reading Town Centre, for the super keen, but also to get the average man off the street interested in climate change by acting as an education centre, where people can see how they can protect the earth as well as their wallet! Our next priority is to raise the required funding for this cause.

Rather than waiting for legislation, we want people to think about what impact businesses and local government can make together - meeting and exceeding set carbon targets.

Driving Readings bid for the 2017 European Green Capital Award (EGCA)

There is still time to register and apply. Call for applications open!

Given that Reading is seeking to be at the forefront of sustainable development, actively participating in the EGCA presents a unique opportunity for the town to become a leading authority in driving urban prosperity, in particular through key areas such as role modelling an Eco evolution, and streets as public spaces.

With regards to structure of energy consumption, we are all aware that renewables and energy storage will make a significant breakthrough during 2015, and together with committed stakeholders a migration away from fossil fuels continues to gain momentum.

To consolidate collective efforts in addressing the Green Capital challenge, Reading Local Strategic partnership / The Reading Climate Change Partnership together with Reading 2050 can meet the 12 criteria to achieve EGCA2017.

Other important projects:

- School.CO2lutions - 6 month Secondary school energy reduction challenge and education programme in partnership with Thames Valley Vision.
- Compostable food packaging #ZeroWasteBerkshire
- Transnational Climate change governance
- Combating Climate change through Placemaking

See their blog at <http://www.CCCRdg.org.uk>

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>

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 9th 2014 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 2014/15

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.