

# Reading Friends of the Earth Newsletter Sept-Oct - 2019



For more information: <http://www.foe.co.uk/reading> or [www.readingfoe.org.uk](http://www.readingfoe.org.uk)  
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## Diary:

**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 September 11<sup>th</sup>** - 8:00 pm at RISC – **General meeting** – to include discussion of response to Reading Transport Plan consultation (see Page 3).

**Wednesday October 9<sup>th</sup>** - 8:00 pm at RISC – **General meeting** – topics by e-mail later.

## Other Activities with Reading FoE

**Saturday September 7<sup>th</sup>** – 13:15 – 17:15 – **Reading FoE Campaigning Workshop** – improve local campaigning: Brenda Pollack (FoE SE Regional Co-ordinator) see <https://www.facebook.com/events/454999562021504/>.

**Saturday September 28<sup>th</sup>** – 12:00 – 16:00 (?) – Reading FoE stall at **Reading Town Meal** in Forbury Gardens.

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

**Wednesday September 4<sup>th</sup>** – 7:30 at RISC – Global Justice Now will be showing excerpts from the film 'Human Flow'. Ai Weiwei documenting this terrible 'human flow' of displaced refugees.

**Monday September 9<sup>th</sup>** – 6:30 - **RBC Cleaner Air and Safer Transport Forum** – see overleaf.

**Friday September 20<sup>th</sup>** – **School Strike** – if there's one in Reading we should support it – but nothing seems to be planned nearer than Oxford. <https://ukscn.org/events/>

**Tuesday September 24<sup>th</sup>** – 6:30 (for 7:00?) Three Guineas - **Health and the Reading Climate Action Network** – Ethical Reading meeting with speaker Chris Beales - <https://ethicalreading.org.uk/events/>

**Thursday September 26<sup>th</sup>** – 18:00 London Road Campus - **UoR Community Meeting Strategy Supper**  
<http://www.reading.ac.uk/15/about/newsandevents/Events/Event809010.aspx>

**Thursday September 26<sup>th</sup>** – 18:00 London Road Campus - **Future Housing and Population Change in Reading** – Reading 2050 lecture. <https://www.reading.ac.uk/architecture/architecture-public-lectures.aspx>

**Wednesday October 16<sup>th</sup>** – 16:30 – 18:00 – **Transport Strategy for South East 'drop-in'** in Reading Town Hall – book on <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/transport-strategy-regional-drop-in-event-reading-tickets-68126013741>

**Thursday October 17<sup>th</sup>** – provisional date – details later – **Save Our Ancient Riverside** meeting to plan to improve and sustain the area around Kennetmouth. See comments on <https://saveourancientside.co.uk/>

**Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October** – 12:00 – MERL - **DIPPING, DOSING, DRENCHING: MANAGING UNHEALTHY BEASTS** - MERL Seminar series – booking advisable - <https://merl.reading.ac.uk/event/merl-seminar-series-farm-animals/>

**Thursday October 24<sup>th</sup>** – 18:00 London Road Campus - **Reading in a Dynamic Knowledge Economy 1980-2050** – Reading 2050 lecture. <https://www.reading.ac.uk/architecture/architecture-public-lectures.aspx>

**Repair Cafe** – usually third weekend of month – <http://www.transitionreading.org.uk/projects/reading-repair-cafe/>

**Reading Bicycle Kitchen** – 'pop-up' events in various locations – see <http://www.readingbicyclekitchen.org/>

**Green Drinks at RISC** – usually on the first Tuesday of every month.. <http://www.greendrinks.org/berkshire/reading>

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## NCS Challenge artworks:



### **Climate Emergency:**

Many levels of government have now declared a 'Climate Emergency' with various target dates for achieving 'net zero' emissions. In late June the government passed legislation committing the UK to a target date of 2050.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-becomes-first-major-economy-to-pass-net-zero-emissions-law>

Reading, committed to being 'carbon neutral' by 2030, was joined in July by Bracknell (2050) and Wokingham (2030). Now Reading has appointed Councillor Adele Barnett Ward to chair a '**Cleaner Air and Safer Transport Forum**' <http://news.reading.gov.uk/new-cleaner-air-and-safer-transport-forum/>. Its first meeting is on 9<sup>th</sup> September 6:30 to 8:00 in the Civic Offices where we will be represented.

"The Cleaner Air and Safer Transport Forum will focus on a range of transport based topic areas that discuss, review best practice and seek to recommend ways forward. Key topic areas will include:

- air pollution
- electric charging infrastructure
- education and school initiatives
- finalising of Reading's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

The new forum will also incorporate the work of Reading's long-established Cycle Forum."

The **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change** says that to have a good chance of keeping temperature rise below 1.5°C requires reducing global greenhouse gas emissions by 45 percent below 2010 levels by 2030 and reaching net zero by 2050. They made it clear that by limiting warming to 1.5° we may be able to mitigate some of the effects on health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security and economic growth.

Because carbon dioxide accumulates in the atmosphere early reductions in emissions are perhaps more important than a particular 'net zero' date. Terms like 'net zero' and 'offsetting' require better definition and we need to understand what allowance is made for importing goods or services created with emissions in other regions.

**Reading Climate Action Network** is reviewing its Strategy and holding a mid-term review on 15<sup>th</sup> October with the aim of completing a final draft by the end of December. <https://readingcan.org.uk/>

**Extinction Rebellion** are planning to shut down all roads in Westminster from 7<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> October with help from their Reading group <https://rebellion.earth/event/international-rebellion-uk-action-continues-7-october-2019/>

See <https://www.facebook.com/xrReading/> for their local events.

**Warnings from Defra Chief Scientist:** in interviews on leaving his post after 7 years, Prof Sir Ian Boyd said the public had little idea of the scale of the challenge from the so-called 'net zero emissions target'. He said that polluting activities should incur more tax.

He believes the Treasury should reform taxation policy to reward people with low-carbon lifestyles and nudge heavy consumers into more frugal patterns of behaviour. It was vital, he said, for the changes to be fair to all parts of society. Useful review of information in this BBC article <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-49499521>

### **Petition for a 'Pollinator Action Plan' for Reading Presented!**

In 2018 we featured the national FoE 'Protect our Pollinators' petition on our stalls at summer events, and it was also on-line on the national FoE website. For the Reading Borough Council area we had 93 signed cards plus 4 on-line – a total of 97 - and Enrico presented them to the 'Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport' committee on 9<sup>th</sup> July.

The petition read: "***I want my Council to adopt a Pollinator Action Plan***"

"We rely on bees and other pollination insects for so many plants and crops. But too often we forget they need somewhere to live. Your Council plays a vital role in taking care of your local area."

Enrico Petrucco said: "The National Pollinator Strategy for England highlights serious declines in our native pollinators and makes a call for action from everyone to help conserve these species."

"A Local Pollinator Plan is an opportunity to review current management of parks and other green space, and may identify more attractive and potentially cost saving opportunities. Making changes will not only benefit pollinators but will provide higher quality public green space; helping to bring people closer to nature, with the health and wellbeing benefits this provides."

In response (<https://democracy.reading.gov.uk/documents/s7838/Petition%20-%20Pollinators.pdf>) Councillor Page (Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport) said that Reading is already undertaking actions to help pollinators and has been for over ten years. He did not commit specifically to developing a Pollinator Action Plan but said the Council was committed to aligning its active and long-standing local work with the National Pollinator Strategy.

The Council proposed to revise its Biodiversity Action Plan which, alongside a wide range of other elements, will detail the actions that the Council and other partners will take to stem the decline in pollinator (and other invertebrate) numbers. This will be delivered in time to inform actions anticipated to start next year.

## **The Challenge**

Enrico arranged for 'National Citizens Service' volunteers for 'The Challenge' to work on environmental themes in August. See <https://the-challenge.org/what-we-do/programmes/ncs/>

Two 15-17 year old groups of 10-20 people planned and operated self-devised actions in support of Reading Friends of the Earth campaign activities. They were introduced to possible campaigns on day 1, carried out sponsorship action on day 2, and operated their campaign event on day 3 (not contiguous).

See the pictures of art made by NCS team Reiss who chose to support plastic-free campaigning. The hand prints are from young children encouraged to make their mark against plastic pollution. The other artworks (front page) are made from plastic team Reiss reclaimed from the environment.



They said that the day was successful. They handed out all of the plastic-free campaign information and about half of the other campaign materials.

The second team, NCS Perham, also raised awareness on plastic waste. They also reclaimed plastic during their sponsorship day. During their event day they distributed plastic-free information and invited people to add their finger print to a mural of a turtle.

Both teams donated their art to Reading FoE. NCS Perham also donated some litter pickers which will be provided for continued conservation/clean-up work by another charity.

## **Reading Local Transport Plan Consultation/Survey:**

See <https://consult.reading.gov.uk/dens/reading-transport-strategy-2036/> which also gives details of local drop-in events. Responses are required by 20<sup>th</sup> September so we will discuss at our next meeting. Summary of questions is at <http://www.readingfoe.org.uk/transport/RTP4%20Consultation%20Questions.doc> There is no explanation or background information on the measures discussed and it's hard to understand how RBC will treat the responses – they ask people if they think particular measures will be effective, but surely that is a technical question?

## **More Summer Stalls**

We ran campaigning stalls at RISC Roof Garden on 6<sup>th</sup> July, Earley Green Fair on 3<sup>rd</sup> August, and The Living Rainforest on 28<sup>th</sup> August. Thanks to our hosts and volunteers on all these occasions.

## **Moor Copse Excursion – Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> July**

Our July meeting was a Saturday afternoon walk around Moor Copse Nature Reserve [www.moorcopse.org.uk](http://www.moorcopse.org.uk) with the volunteer reserve warden Anne Booth, ending up for drinks at The Greyhound in Tidmarsh.

We saw butterflies and flowers and crickets and grasshoppers and learned about the management of this BBOWT reserve which features coppiced woodland, flower-rich meadows, and the river Pang.

## **Trees:**

Chris and John attended an Oxford FoE meeting where we were told England had 10% tree cover compared to the 35% EU average. It's important to get the right trees in the right places. Barriers to improvement are money and land – 1% of the people own 50% of the land in England.

FoE website says that doubling the number of trees in the UK could deliver annual carbon sequestration equal to about 10% of the UK's current greenhouse gas emissions. FoE has launched a petition to double tree cover <https://act.friendsoftheearth.uk/petition/tell-uk-government-double-tree-cover> .

Working out what to plant where, and understand when or if any benefits will appear, is complicated ...e.g. <http://www.realclimate.org/index.php/archives/2014/10/how-do-trees-change-the-climate/>

## **Useful Links and General Information:**

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 - <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](http://www.greenlink-berkshire.org.uk)

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

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)

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

## **Reading FoE Officers**

At our AGM on April 10<sup>th</sup> 2019 Enrico Petrucco and John Booth were re-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](mailto: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 2019/20**

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.