

# Reading Friends of the Earth



## Newsletter September - October 2021

For more info: [www.readingfoe.org.uk](http://www.readingfoe.org.uk) ... or Twitter @ReadingFOE ... or Facebook [Reading Friends of the Earth | Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ReadingFriendsOfTheEarth/) ... or email [info@readingfoe.org.uk](mailto:info@readingfoe.org.uk) ... or 'phone 07503626167.

**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. If Global Café shut access is via passage to the back of the building. Most meetings discuss plans and general topics, some have a particular focus or guest speakers. Meetings are open to all.

We resumed these meetings in July 2021, but if in doubt suggest you check our website [www.readingfoe.org.uk](http://www.readingfoe.org.uk) for changes of plan since this newsletter, or phone or e-mail for confirmation (contacts above).

**Wednesday September 8<sup>th</sup>:** General meeting at RISC – topics including planning for events detailed below – 8:00 pm

**Wednesday October 13<sup>th</sup>:** General Meeting at RISC - 8:00 pm

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**COP26 really matters. Contact your MP to tell them you want it to succeed.** Here's a link to guidance with a letter to customise (don't ask to meet them if you don't want to!): [Invite your MP - Great Big Green Week ... Do it now!](https://www.readingfoe.org.uk/invite-your-mp-great-big-green-week)

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### Other Activities with Reading FoE:

**Reading Cycle Festival** – Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> September. Volunteers needed to help run stall at this event in Christchurch Meadows which runs from 11:00 until 16:00. Expecting 500 people. Cycle themed activities, food, music, council approved and supported. Aim of the event is promote cycling for fun, sport and commuting as well as other environmental themes. <https://readingcyclefestival.co.uk/>

**'Great Big Green Week'** - September 20<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>. 'Reading Town Meal' and 'Reading Climate Festival' running roughly in parallel. We have two on-line events for the Climate Festival – see <https://readingcan.org.uk/events/>.

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> September 16:00 – Dr Eugene Mohareb (UoR) on **'How Cities Can Help Shrink the Carbon Footprint of Food'** – on-line - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/how-cities-can-help-shrink-the-carbon-footprint-of-food-registration-168577406561>

Friday 24<sup>th</sup> September 18:30 – Dr Phil Coker (UoR) on **'Should your next car be electric and will it melt the grid?'** - on-line - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/should-your-next-car-be-electric-and-will-it-melt-the-grid-registration-168276516591>

### How cities can help shrink the carbon footprint of food

Dr Eugene Mohareb – Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> September – 16:00

The infographic features a central circular graphic divided into two halves. The left half is labeled '~65%' and contains several small circular images representing various food production and distribution methods, including a truck, a field, and a person. The right half is labeled '~35%' and shows a large image of a tractor in a field. Below the graphic are logos for ReadingCAN, Abbey Quarter Business District, THE GREAT BIG GREEN WEEK, and Friends of the Earth Reading. A vertical banner on the right side of the slide reads 'READING CLIMATE FESTIVAL 2021'.

### Should your next car be electric and will it melt the grid?

Dr Phil Coker (University of Reading) – Friday 24<sup>th</sup> September – 18:30

A photograph of a white car plugged into a black electric charging station. Below the image are logos for ReadingCAN, Abbey Quarter Business District, THE GREAT BIG GREEN WEEK, and Friends of the Earth Reading. A vertical banner on the right side of the slide reads 'READING CLIMATE FESTIVAL 2021'.

**Reading Town Meal:** We will have a stall at the Forbury Gardens event on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> September - 12:00 to 16:00. Helpers will be needed – let us know - and get a free lunch! <http://www.readingtowntmeal.org.uk/> –

**Ecofair at St Andrew’s Caversham** – stall on Saturday October 2<sup>nd</sup> – 14:00 to 16:00 – helpers welcome.

**Reading International Festival** – October 11<sup>th</sup> to November 12<sup>th</sup> – theme is “**Together We Can Halt Climate Change and Build a Better Future**”. We have two on-line events for the International Festival.

‘**Local to Global action on the Climate Crisis**’. 'With the COP26 global climate talks to be held in early November in Glasgow, **Alasdair Roxburgh, Director of Communities and Networks, Friends of the Earth** will look at why local campaigning action matters and how it influences international climate talks'. Friday 15<sup>th</sup> October at 19:30. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/local-to-global-action-on-the-climate-crisis-tickets-168068799303>

‘**The African Hydrogen Partnership - Clean, Sustainable, Renewable African Hydrogen for Achieving Global Net Zero**’ Presentation by Siegfried Huegemann - Vice Chairman, Co-Founder of The African Hydrogen Partnership (AHP) - followed by discussion. Friday October 22<sup>nd</sup> 19:30. <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/clean-sustainable-renewable-african-hydrogen-tickets-167999794909>

**Mid-COP demonstrations** – let’s plan for local events in middle of International Festival – 6<sup>th</sup> November. Latest FoE guidance [Global day of action: 6 November 2021 | Climate Action \(takeclimateaction.uk\)](https://www.foe.org.uk/global-day-of-action-6-november-2021-climate-action) is calling for stunts and/or demos.

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

‘**Reading Town Meal**’ – on-line events September 20<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> – <http://www.readingtowntmeal.org.uk/workshops.cfm>

**Reading Climate Festival** – November 9<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> – wide variety of events – <https://readingcan.org.uk/events/>

**Reading International Festival** – October 11<sup>th</sup> to November 12<sup>th</sup> – wide variety of events – full program not yet published. Expect to see on <https://www.risc.org.uk/main> later in September.

**Repair Cafe** – usually third weekend of month - check on their website for times and locations <http://www.transitionreading.org.uk/projects/reading-repair-cafe/>

**Reading Bicycle Kitchen** – regular sessions at the Queens Arms – but currently outdoors – see <http://www.readingbicyclekitchen.org/>

**Green Drinks at RISC** – usually on the first Tuesday of every month – not sure what if anything is happening during Covid restrictions – see <http://www.greendrinks.org/Berkshire/Reading> and also <https://www.facebook.com/groups/243919622305571/>

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**Reading Hydro Opens!:**

Scheme was formally opened on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> August – invited guests included Steve because of all his voluntary efforts – lots of good publicity was achieved. See video of opening at <https://readinghydro.org/>

**Transport and Air Quality in Reading – What’s Going On?**

Local Transport Plan ‘Next Steps’ document presented to SEPT on 30<sup>th</sup> June includes worrying news on Air Quality. <https://democracy.reading.gov.uk/documents/s17618/Local%20Transport%20Plan%20Next%20Steps%20Report%20Appendix%20A.pdf> – see sections 4.2 and 4.3.

It says the Council had conducted “initial business case work to investigate the environmental and economic case for developing a Clean Air Zone.” Section 4.3 says: “ ... The environmental case for a CAZ identified that the expected improvements in air quality would be marginal and that only one (of 13) receptors that currently exceeds the Air Quality Standard would improve sufficiently so that it no longer exceeded the acceptable standard, with 12 still exceeding the AQS. The report also noted that due to the current CAZ minimum standard, between 95% and 100% of vehicles would be compliant by 2026/27.”

This is amazing because even without Covid we had understood that Reading expected to be fully legally compliant on Nitrogen Dioxide levels by the end of 2021, as predicted following modelling as a result of which it received £1.5 million government funding in 2019 to reduce emissions from Reading Buses: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/915959/air-quality-no2-plan-supplement-annexD.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/915959/air-quality-no2-plan-supplement-annexD.pdf) and <https://www.inyourarea.co.uk/news/reading-buses-given-1-5m-to-improve-towns-most-polluted-roads/>

The Council has not responded to requests to:

- provide data on the 13 receptors that exceed air quality standards and explain the results
- provide details of the study that concluded that a CAZ would only bring one receptor into compliance
- explain why a stricter CAZ strategy (that could bring the whole area into compliance) was not investigated

While Nitrogen Dioxide is a serious pollutant even when below the legal limit the likely concentrations of micro-particles – PM2.5 – is of even greater concern. The UK National Air Quality Objective for annual average PM2.5 is 25 ug/m<sup>3</sup> but the WHO guide is 10 ug/m<sup>3</sup> and WHO are explicit that this is not a safe threshold. RBC estimated in 2018 that it was 16.1 ug/m<sup>3</sup> on Caversham Road.

### **Reading Golf Course – plans for at least 257 houses in Caversham:**

The new planning application (Number 210018) to Reading Borough Council was rejected in July on grounds of loss of open space and various issues around layout, trees and ecology. There were significant last-minute improvements to the proposals for renewable energy although even higher standards could have been proposed. Decision document is at <http://documents.reading.gov.uk/AnitePublicDocs/00485804.pdf>

Keep Emmer Green <https://keepemmergreen.com/> are reviewing the Planning Officer's report to Committee – presumably to see if the developers could appeal and to try to anticipate any changes they might make that would make it impossible to refuse. KEG are also proposing that the land be used for an Arboretum.

### **Incinerator proposed for Burghfield:**

During the summer of 2020 local company J Mould (<https://www.jmouldreading.co.uk/>) submitted planning application number 20/02029/COMIND to build an “Energy from Waste” (EfW) incinerator located on the local authority boundaries of Reading Borough Council and West Berkshire Council in Burghfield (as discussed in our May newsletter). We have objected. There is no news as to when this will go to their planning committee.

### **National FoE – Links and Webinars:**

#### **Pre-COP on-line gathering:**

This on-line event on Saturday 2 October (11:00-14:00) is a chance to discuss plans for the Glasgow climate talks with groups across the UK, share learnings and get inspired to make the most of this moment. We'll also take action on North Sea oil and gas. [The pre-COP Gathering Registration, Sat 2 Oct 2021 at 11:00 | Eventbrite](#)

#### **Climate Justice:**

{Repeated from last newsletter} Following a webinar on this topic FoE have recommended:

- David Lammy's TED talk – [Climate Justice can't happen without racial justice](#)
- [The Climate Justice explainer page](#) on our Take Climate Action website
- Our [climate justice reading list](#)

#### **FoE petition on Cumbria coal mine:**

On 7 September a public inquiry to decide the fate of the proposed new Whitehaven coal mine begins. In the wake of scientists' starkest warnings yet on the climate emergency, it's astonishing that projects like this one are even on the table. And yet this mine could **still** get the green light.

So far, over 38,000 people have signed FoE's petition calling on the government to stop the mine. Here's where you can add your voice. [Stop plans for a new coal mine | Friends of the Earth](#)

#### **FoE petition pre-COP calling for wealthy nations to act:**

[Nobody should lose their home, livelihood or life because of wealthy nations ignoring the climate crisis. Agree? Add your name to demand action, not words. | Friends of the Earth](#)

### **Hydrogen Strategy:**

The government's new Hydrogen Strategy is welcome but it doesn't mean we can do without heat pumps and retro-fitted insulation to keep our homes warm. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-hydrogen-strategy>  
In the UK hydrogen is not an energy source – like electricity it is a medium for distribution and storage of energy. 'Green hydrogen' is made from low carbon energy. 'Blue hydrogen' is made from natural gas with consequent CO2 emissions which may be reduced by 'carbon capture and storage' at additional cost. See FoE paper here: <https://policy.friendsoftheearth.uk/insight/role-hydrogen-our-future>

### **Jet Zero: a consultation on government strategy for net zero aviation**

Someone's got a way with words! <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/achieving-net-zero-aviation-by-2050>  
Some interesting numbers there. Good government is committed to including international aviation (and shipping) emissions in the UK's Sixth Carbon Budget and are consulting on an earlier target for UK domestic aviation to reach net zero by 2040. But one of the options considered requires offsetting 21 M tonnes of carbon in 2050!

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

Friends of the Earth 'England, Wales and Northern Ireland' <http://www.foe.co.uk>  
– Policy and Insight <https://policy.friendsoftheearth.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/>

### **Reading FoE Officers**

**Our 2021 AGM on April 14<sup>th</sup> elected Enrico Petrucco and John Booth to continue in the posts of Co-ordinator and Treasurer respectively.**

### **Reading FoE e-mail communications**

**If you would like to be on our 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) to request our GDPR Consent form. We have separate lists for people who only want to receive our newsletter (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 – Subscribe NOW for 2021/22**

**A donation of £8 annually would be welcome from members but is not required. We're much happier to have an extra pair of hands doing the important stuff.**

**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.