



## PUBLIC MEETING IN SHREWSBURY

### THREAT OF GAS DRILLING IN NORTH SHROPSHIRE AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**TUESDAY 3 JUNE 2014**

**7.00 – 9.30 pm**

**The Gateway, Chester Street,  
Shrewsbury SY1 1NB.**

Dart is planning to drill an exploratory well for coalbed methane - at Dudleston, Ellesmere.

An application is due to be lodged.  
This could lead to many gas wells in the area.

Shropshire Council says that Dart does not need an Environmental Impact Assessment. The local MP & Environment Secretary, Owen Paterson, welcomes gas drilling.

The Wildlife Trusts and other similar groups are fearful for the effect on wildlife. The health of people living near wells can suffer. Shropshire water courses are complex; there is a real danger of pollution across the borough and beyond.

Frack Off, the national campaign, have spoken to packed halls in Dudleston and Oswestry. Local people are leading the action against gas exploration <http://frackfreedudleston.org.uk/>. Shrewsbury FoE is supporting them.

**THE SHREWSBURY PUBLIC MEETING IS TO HEAR MORE ABOUT – AND TO DISCUSS -  
COALBED METHANE, FRACKING, CLIMATE CHANGE & RENEWABLE ENERGY SCHEMES.**

## FRACK-FREE NORTH SHROPSHIRE

### DEMONSTRATION AND CONCERT: SATURDAY 7 JUNE 2014

**FREE** + fully licensed bar

Hermon Chapel Arts Centre, Chapel Street, Oswestry SY11 1LF

**Start: 10.30a.m**      make placards and decorate the venue  
**Procession: 2.00pm**      start from Park Gates in Oswestry, wind through the town to Castle Mound and then to Hermon Chapel.  
**Concert: 7.00p.m**      Hermon Chapel

**LINE-UP** includes: Ione Rose, Sonya, Dave Walker, Alan Doyle, Hazar and Timberwulf.

More info: Duncan Kerr, tel 07522116609 or Deborah Harris tel 07811102844.

# NEWSLETTER MAY 2014

## BEE CAMPAIGN



**2<sup>nd</sup> May: end of the consultation on the Government's Pollinator Strategy. End too of a most important stage in the bee campaign. Shrewsbury FoE has been very active.**

Our stall in The Square on 7th April asked people to push for changes to strengthen the pollinator strategy.

The strategy contains lots of positive actions & policies. But some areas need improvement. In particular: \* finance and advice for farmers to create more suitable habitats for pollinating insects and in pesticide control; \* more money to monitor the situation in the years to come. It is important that the means to back up good intentions is made available.

For months SFoE was involved in national action to support EU legislation against pesticides – successful in the face of UK Government opposition. Then there was action on the strategy. Now we wait!

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## PLANNING DISASTER: WHAT'S GOING ON?

Most people will now be aware that Shropshire faces many unwelcome housing developments – on sites not mentioned in Shropshire Council's development plan.

Following government requirements, Shropshire Council produced a plan showing where developments would take place. Naturally not everyone agreed with the proposals, but there was extensive consultation (eventually) and the SAMDev (Strategic Allocation and Management of Development) process seemed at least a reasonable way to deal with an unpalatable task.

But – and it's a big BUT. What we now know is that Shropshire must show, according to a government devised formula, that it has at least 5 years supply of housing land available. In practice, Shropshire has 4.95 years supply. So the plan has not been formally approved and counts for very little.

This means planning applications have to be considered in accordance with the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) instead. This contains a presumption in favour of granting permission if the development is "sustainable". The definition here of sustainable is not what any environmentalist would understand by the word. Effectively, unless the proposal can be shown to be truly outrageous, it should be approved.

So approvals have been happening at an ever increasing pace across Shropshire (as across the

country generally), driven by the fear that a refusal will lead almost certainly to a successful appeal by the developer and high costs for the Council.

It is hoped the Council's plan will be approved in the autumn. Until then, we are going to see developers having a go at obtaining permissions for lucrative sites that they would have had no chance of getting in the past.

The most blatant case locally is that of the Pengrove site on the River Loop in Shrewsbury. For many years, lots of attempts have been made to get permission to develop this extraordinarily sensitive site. On each occasion, including one inquiry led by a planning inspector, permission has been refused. The most recent application was turned down last year but has now been allowed on appeal - to build two massive "eco-houses". The description adds insult to injury.

This government has put in place legislation that allows developers to override sensible plans and in particular the wishes of local people. There is no doubt that this is fully intended. Efforts by Shropshire Council to negotiate on the issue have failed.

The gravy train set in motion for developers is well illustrated by the Pengrove case. This prime site was put on the market very quickly for £1.2 million. It is us, the community who will pay by the considerable damage to the amenity of the River Loop.

## Shrewsbury Events – what a waste?

Great – Shrewsbury is seeing more and more large public events.

But what of the waste produced? Following a number of critical comments from local people, SFoE decided to approach event organisers. So far, we have had meetings with the Folk Festival and the Flower Show to talk about recycling and waste reduction – with good results.

The Folk Festival organisers were enthusiastic about tackling the issues. At our suggestion, they approached Cvm Harry, the community project based in Newtown which already manages waste for the Hay Festival and The Ludlow Food Festival. So, all being well, you will see changes this year at the Folk Festival – with waste being separated at the point where you chuck it away, and taken off for recycling. The Flower Show is a different scene. There, all

waste goes co-mingled into huge skips. However, things are not quite as they seem. The organisers need to minimise the number of vehicle movements on the site which has limited space and huge numbers of milling people. But – once they are off site - the content of the skips (which are managed by P G Skips) is all sorted and everything possible recycled.

So look this year and we trust that you will see large notices on the sides of the skips explaining to the public where all the waste will go and how it will be disposed of.

SFoE would like to thank the organisers for their honest and interesting discussions with us, for hearing our concerns, and for finding useful solutions.

### SFoE AT SHREWSBURY FLOWER SHOW

**Shrewsbury Friends of the Earth is to have a stall at the Flower Show on 8th and 9th August - after many years' absence.**

We stopped doing it because it became expensive. However, this year for the first time there will be a small marquee entitled "Our Future". SFoE has been talking with the organisers and they wish to get people thinking about changes that will hit growers in the future. So we will be there to talk to visitors about climate change & biodiversity.... and the Bee Campaign which is entering its final phase.

This phase, "B&B for Bees", is a big push to hugely increase pollinator-friendly habitat throughout the country, to provide food and homes. Our stand will offer a lot of interest: bee hotels, bee-friendly plants, kids' games.

The other stall holders are also committed to promoting sustainable practices. It is a small beginning – but we very much hope this marquee will become a regular part of shows in the coming years.

[Come and see us if you can!!](#)

### HELPING SHREWSBURY PEOPLE USE LESS ENERGY IN THEIR HOMES.

A local project which gives advice & support to people to increase their domestic energy efficiency, is inviting volunteers to join them. The volunteers, who are not experts themselves but enjoy working with a group of like-minded people and are keen to tackle climate change.

Many of us feel confused or ignorant about how best to make energy savings. And many of us would welcome support. So MEA in Shrewsbury is running the project in which experts in domestic energy work with volunteers to design local activities - activities which guide people in improving their homes and saving money whilst reducing pollution. Activities include such things as stands at fairs, informal energy discussion groups, presentations and local publicity.

The volunteers learn quite a bit about domestic energy – but their key task is to get people interested and to support them in using all the advice there is available: a wide range of factsheets, new grants, an exhibition trailer, a telephone advice line.

There is plenty of support for the people of Shrewsbury. The volunteers guide them to it!

To find out more contact Phil Newcombe.

Email: [phil@mea.org.uk](mailto:phil@mea.org.uk) Mob: 07930 342832

**Welcome to Oswestry FoE – a recently started FoE group.**

<https://www.facebook.com/oswestryfoe>

## Another incinerator shambles

For several years, Norfolk County Council planned to build an incinerator at King's Lynn. But Norfolk CC is not a unitary authority and they faced the severe opposition of King's Lynn & W. Norfolk District Council. Even so, Norfolk CC signed a 25-year contract with Cory Wheelabrator to build and operate the plant. Then problems arose over planning permission and the Secretary of State called in the application to take his own decision. So far ... so familiar. But there things stuck – no apparent decision was forthcoming,

although presumably a lot was going on behind the scenes.

Recently, Norfolk CC gave up. The contract with CW was cancelled and compensation is due from council tax payers. £30.26 million.

Maybe understanding is spreading that across the country waste is going down, that new methods of recycling are constantly being invented, that we simply can't afford to burn precious resources ... and that 25-year contracts for incineration make no sense.



Shrewsbury's green waste goes to LOWER HOUSE FARM nr CARDESTON where it is composted.

Here are SFOE and SOGS visitors on a recent tour around the site. We saw not only the composting system, but the new installations to deal with more complex waste - the anaerobic digester and in-vessel composter. And also their energy schemes: wind turbine, photo voltaics and biomass boiler.

## MONTHLY SFOE MEETINGS

We meet on the first Monday of every month at Marches Energy Agency building, The Pump House, Coton Hill, Shrewsbury SY1 2DP. 7.30pm

Anyone is most welcome. Please look on our website for more exact details about how to get to the meeting room – it isn't always easy!

<http://shrewsfoe.org.uk>

## CONTACTING Shrewsbury Friends of the Earth is not hard.

Website: <http://shrewsfoe.org.uk>

email: [coordinator@shrewsfoe.org.uk](mailto:coordinator@shrewsfoe.org.uk)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Shrewsbury-Friends-of-the-Earth/609808605750661>

We are always pleased to get comments and hear how you would like to be involved. Become a member – we welcome that! You can join via the website.

WE'RE SURE THAT YOU'RE MAKING GOOD USE OF..... <http://www.shrewsburygreenguide.org.uk>

## SFOE FUND-RAISING STALL

shrewsbury market square

SATURDAY MAY 31st

9.30 – 3.00ish

Books, bric-a-brac AND info about the threat of drilling for coalbed methane in N. Shropshire