



Shrewsbury Friends of the Earth

Newsletter **New Year 2010**

For meetings and contacts, see back page

Shrewsbury FoE local news

Val Oldaker



We are very sorry to bring you news that Val Oldaker who was a Co-ordinator for Shrewsbury Friends of the Earth group for 5 years, sadly died of Cancer on 21st January.

A celebration of Val's life is taking place at The Adam Room at the Lion Hotel, Wyle Cop, Shrewsbury at 12 noon on Monday 1st February.

Val will be sadly missed by all at FoE as well as the many environmental groups she was a member of and contributor to. Our thoughts go out to Frank at this sad time.

Val was one of the driving forces behind the creation of **Transition Town Shrewsbury**. The group was formed to bring together local people to consider questions about how our community can respond to the challenges and opportunities of Peak Oil and Climate Change.

The "In Transition" film Val introduced at the launch meeting in October attended by nearly 100 people, is available online at www.vimeo.com/8029815 and we recommend everyone watches it!

More information about Transition Town can be found at <http://transitiontownshrewsbury.org.uk/>.

Christmas Drinks

On Tuesday 8th December, despite a number of us suffering from a variety of seasonal ailments, a good crowd met at The Three Fishes for drinks and chatted amicably about green issues. It was also a chance for Phil to share the latest news on the new Welsh Bridge Junction plans which form the first part of the Connect2 project including the Smithfield Road cycle route.

Copenhagen Climate Talks

From 7-18th December, Copenhagen hosted UN talks to seek global agreement on Climate Change that would keep global temperatures rises below 2 degrees centigrade and avert climate chaos. Keith Scott visited Copenhagen and a report on his trip can be found on page 3.

In support of the Copenhagen talks, Friends of the Earth joined The Wave in London. Thousands of people dressed in blue flowed through the streets on 5th December to demonstrate their support for the talks. At least a dozen Shrewsbury FoE members went to the London Wave and feedback was generally positive about the great atmosphere at this well organised event.

In Shrewsbury, we also supported the UN Talks by holding a vigil on the evening of 2nd December in the Square.



AGM

On 25th November we held our AGM in the Hobbs Room. Val had prepared a pictorial record of many of the activities held during the year and Judith invited members to add their memories of the events to the slide show. Many planning issues had arisen during the year including the campaign against the proposed incinerator. Several stalls had been held at the shopping malls, in the Square and the Wildlife Centre. We were also fortunate to be able to hold a stall at the new Theatre Severn distributing low energy light bulbs and Green Guides.

Walks and Talks included a guided tour of the measures that local people have taken to harness renewable energy and a walk to Hencott Pool to see this internationally registered wetland. Our major campaign has been 'Get Serious' asking Council's to play their part in tackling Climate Change and cut CO₂ by 40% by 2020.

Val did not wish to stand again as Co-ordinator and Judith Rice was elected. Dave Green proposed a vote of thanks to Val to recognise all her hard work and how she had transformed the group. All other current officers agreed to stand again so John Rice remains as Treasurer, Judy Coleridge and Philip Pool as Walks & Talks organizers and Sue Fisher Membership Secretary. Jon Haycox takes over from Judith as Newsletter Editor and Mo and Ian Gregson agreed to be our Stalls Organisers.

The AGM was followed by a fascinating talk by the Centre for Alternative Technology's resident guru, Peter Harper, about the challenging but feasible Zero Carbon Britain programme. More information on this project can be found at www.zerocarbonbritain.com.

A busy year ahead

Shrewsbury Friends of the Earth group welcome the formation of Transition Town Shrewsbury (TTS). We feel that the work that can be achieved by these two groups is very complementary. TTS encourages individual and local action towards a low carbon economy whilst FoE lobbies on the wider scale to bring about changes in policies and practice. This initiative means that there will be even more ways that we can act together to make a real difference. A new edition of FoE Green Guide will be launched shortly with a transition theme.

Your FoE group will continue to support the FoE national campaign for climate justice and we also have a busy time ahead with local concerns. The public enquiry on the proposed incinerator for Shrewsbury at Battlefield will probably take place any time after February although exact timing is uncertain as yet. We will advise you on progress on this campaign and I am sure will be asking for any support you could provide to make sure our concerns are taken into account.

The North West Relief Road is still very much on the agenda. It looks possible that nearly £1m will be spent over the next 9 months on a consultation exercise. The No Way Group of which Shrewsbury FoE is a partner is gearing up for a big campaign and we need to be out on the streets during April and May to revive public interest and debate. Dave Green will be advising us about how we can support this.

If you are able to support us in any way in taking these issues forward, we would be most grateful for any additional help during this busy year. This could be addressing envelopes, collecting signatures or explaining the significance of these issues to your friends and relatives. It would also be wonderful if you could promote membership of FoE by explaining what our aims are to more people to give them the opportunity to join us - enabling us to speak with a louder voice.

In addition to the above other issues, there will be a general election in the first half of 2010 and your local group will be finding ways to tease out candidates' views on environmental issues. This information may help you if you are undecided as to where to cast your vote. Do make sure that we have your up-to-date contact details i.e. address, phone and particularly email details, so that we can keep you in touch with this very important work.

There are currently vacancies at our business meetings for the following positions:

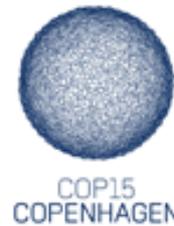
- someone to keep an eye on waste and recycling issues;
- help with promotion and publicity.

Do get in touch if you would be interested in helping us.

COPENHAGEN

A report from Keith Scott on The Flood – Copenhagen, 11th-14th December 2009.

Following an offer, on the Friends of the Earth website, to take part in a demonstration in Copenhagen in the middle of the UN COP15 talks from the 7th to 11th December - I decided to have a go. The object of the exercise like any other public demonstrations was to show people's opposition to the way the developed world is handling the thorny question of reducing consumption or rather consuming in a way that contains less carbon emissions.



UNITED
NATIONS
CLIMATE
CHANGE
CONFERENCE
2009

The trip was for 100 FoE members from the UK to meet up with the rest of FoE International (total 1500). We departed St Pancras on the Eurostar at 5:57am Friday morning and after changing at Brussels to board a coach were due to arrive in Copenhagen at 20:30pm. Due to road works between Brussels and the Danish boarder and a couple of other hold-ups including German police pulling our three coaches from the motorway for searches, we arrived on the outskirts of Copenhagen at 2:30am! Our accommodation for the three nights was to be in sleeping bags on the floor of a primary school with breakfast included.

The Flood started at 10:00am at the Klimaforum where we gathered to hear from speakers directly effected by false solutions such a carbon offsetting. There was also an explanation of what we were going to do on the Action. We were to put on blue ponchos and carry messages from people effected by Climate Change - flags, banners, and placards - through the streets of Copenhagen to Parliament Square. We were to move as a rush of water with rushes and surges of people making lots of noise and waving flags, building momentum and excitement as we went. Meanwhile a stage set symbolising a stock market was constructed on Parliament Square where city traders were offering and selling carbon credits to passers by. The Action will end with the symbolic flooding of the offsetting centre. We created a colourful, spectacular, participatory, fun and peaceful event. The Action was organized by the Friends of the Earth International and NOAH (FoE Denmark).

After a break for hot food from the mobile kitchen we left for another mass march to the COP 15 Conference centre - this demonstration was called "Planet First People First". We were to take our message to the decision makers at the Conference Centre/Bella Centre which was "System Change Not Climate Change" we were to flock together with people from Climate Justice Now! and Climate Justice Action still wearing our ponchos and carrying flags and placards and the big "No Offsetting" banner. There were to be more speakers and musicians. Once enough people had arrived on the site at approximately 5:30pm. the idea was to handover the key messages to UNFCCC chairman Mr. Wvo De Boer who was responsible for delivering the messages to the UFCC delegates themselves. Unfortunately due to the police's action we weren't allowed to get anywhere near the Bella Centre. Having been separated from my colleagues it was a case of every man for himself, having had only a couple of hours sleep and feeling tired and cold I decided to make my way back to the Klimaforum where I met up with fellow demonstrators where we fed and watered ourselves. The general opinion was that our morning demonstration went very well and to plan we engaged with the local population the police and everything went well in a good natured event. However the afternoon demonstration was just the opposite, as the police and authorities were hell bent on not allowing people to get any where near the Bella Centre so our demonstration was, in effect, not allowed to go ahead for the final part. In meeting up in the evening we heard to our surprise that the BBC were reporting over 400 arrests. I personally could not believe that as I had seen absolutely nothing in our morning demonstration to lead me to believe that that was the case. What actually went on near the Bella Centre I cannot comment on as we were not allowed near it.

On Saturday evening a party was organised at the Klimaforum the music proved to be a bit noisy so we came out and formed small groups so that we could talk and relax sampling the excellent, and appropriately named, Global Ale. This came from a local Copenhagen microbrewery - Nørrebro Bryghus Brewhouse. The evening did finish off with a bit of bad news in that as it had taken so long extra to get to Copenhagen, we were told we would not be staying till Monday but were leaving at midnight on Sunday so that we were assured we were certain to make the connection with the Eurostar at Brussels. Also we had to change schools so had to transfer our gear on Sunday morning. We did not stay too late as we had to find our way back by public transport to our accommodation which was 45 minutes away from the centre. Needless to say we slept rather well on Saturday night!

"We know we are at one of those moments in our history where the future of our economy, our environment, and our society will be shaped by the choices we make now."

Hilary Benn, Environment Secretary, January 2010



Sunday was a free day - we could attend some events that FoE International were organising if we wanted to, do some sightseeing, or go to the Klimaforum where there were workshops and an exhibition going on all day. I went to the Klimaforum and attended the exhibition, relaxed and did some reading. At the Exhibition there were various stalls including the Soroptimist international organisation, a global voice for women through Awareness, Advocacy and Action and Transition Towns. There were also a couple from Denmark who owned a farm in Norway where they were setting up an Eco Village which I found very interesting. www.eco-lofoten.no They owned a farm in a micro climate and were selling plots for houses to create an eco community. It sounded interesting.

Some people might question going to these events but it must be remembered that for every demonstrator there are probably 20 people who share those demonstrators' objectives. I think it was very worth while going (despite the travel vagaries that we encountered) and would recommend any one else doing the same thing in any future demos. I was very impressed with the mix of ages on the trip particularly the number of young people who were a credit, another bonus about a weekend gathering is one can make contacts.

THE WAVE

WORLD'S BIGGEST CLIMATE CHANGE MARCH
LONDON 5.12.09



Back in the UK, 14 members of the local FoE group joined more than 50,000 people in London to demand action on Climate Change on Saturday 5th December at The Wave, billed as "the biggest Climate Change march in the world ever!" Everyone came to call on the Government to take much more urgent and effective action on ahead of the Copenhagen meetings.

The march started from Grosvenor Square. Many people had joined in the spirit of the demonstration by dressing-up. Lots of blue face paint and hair dye had been used too. Entertainment was provided by a Capoeira band. It was great to see so many young people in the crowd – our future looks bright! There were talks on stage before the march set-off, although those at the back were in for a wait due to the volume of people. The Porche showroom was suspiciously empty as the Wave passed, before heading on to Downing Street and finally encircling Parliament in a ribbon of blue.

New Shropshire Cabinet member for Climate Change

We warmly welcome a change to the Shropshire Council's Cabinet. A post has been created relating to climate change, with Anne Hartley appointed as the first incumbent.

Mapping Local Food Web in Shrewsbury

Mapping Local Food Webs is a national project led by the Campaign to Protect Rural England and funded by the Big Lottery as part of the Making Local Food Work programme. Shrewsbury has been selected as one of the towns included in the initiative.

A local food web consists of the network of links between people who buy, sell, produce and supply food in an area. As part of the project, volunteers are sought to help collect shopper questionnaires and food outlet surveys from businesses in the town that sell local produce. More information can be found at <http://www.makinglocalfoodwork.co.uk/>.

If you are able to help with the project, either as a volunteer to help collect questionnaires or a local food retailer in Shrewsbury, please contact Catherine Webster catherinew@cpre.org.uk. The project launch and public information meeting, including a talk from a guest speaker, will take place at The Gateway on Thursday 18th February 6:30 – 8:30pm.

**LOOK OUT FOR THE 2010 'TRANSITION TOWN' EDITION OF THE SHREWSBURY GREEN GUIDE.
LAUNCH ON SATURDAY 27TH MARCH AT DARWIN CENTRE, PRIDE HILL, 10 – 2.**

Congratulations to the Household Energy Service!

Well done to Dave Green and the rest of the HES team for winning the national Big Green Challenge alongside teams from the Brecon Beacons and Isle of Eigg, out of 350 group original entries. HES's £300k prize will help to secure the scheme and enable it to deepen and spread. HES was set up with the help of Bishop's Castle FOE and the Wasteless Society, they have now carried out over 1,000 household energy surveys and their re-survey figures show average carbon savings of 29% if flying is included, or 17% if you just look at house and car emissions (or £400/year!).

Dave states that "this is a wonderful boost for HES just when our previous funding was starting to run out. It seems like a lot of money but compared to three times this amount just for further consultation on the NWRR it doesn't seem so much. Our aim now is to ensure that HES is sustainable when this pot runs dry".

HES also have a joint bid in with Cwm Harry to DECC's Low Carbon Communities Challenge.

See www.h-e-s.org or www.nesta.org.uk for more details.

NWRR Saga rumbles on, at cost of £900k!

Despite considerable doubts about the NWRR within the new Shropshire Council and little likelihood of the scheme ever get funding the Council have decided to proceed with another ridiculously expensive round of consultation. This should be in April or May but could get delayed if the general election intervenes.

We've taken part in discussions about how this consultation is carried out, requesting that a balanced assessment is put to the public, not another PR job, we'll have to see whether they take this on board or not.

Whatever happens we'll want to have a visible presence during the consultations, including making sure well produced materials are available showing why so many people and organizations oppose the scheme. If you can help us with this in any way please contact Dave Green.

With any luck this will be the NWRR's final fling and then the Shropshire Council will be able to concentrate energy and resources on more sustainable and acceptable transport schemes.

Community Strategy Revised

The revised Shropshire Sustainable Community Strategy is out for a final round of consultation. In many ways it's improved, including having 'climate change and environmental enhancement' as one of the 3 priorities, but it's incredibly woolly, still just a wish list rather than a strategy. For instance:

"Priority 2 – Responding to climate change, and enhancing our natural and built environment

Our aspiration: Shropshire will be recognised as a leader in responding to climate change. We will work with communities to prepare for and adapt to the issues that climate change may bring and ensure the rich varied environment is valued, protected and enhanced. Natural resources, waste and water will be managed efficiently and we will adapt our needs to meet the changing demands of the climate."

Comments are welcomed up to Feb 12th, see www.shrop.net/shropshirepartnership for details.

Battlefield Incinerator Planning Hearing expected soon.

Veolia's responses to 15 pages of questions from Shropshire Council's planning department have finally been published. Having studied them closely we see nothing to challenge our assertion that the scheme is unsustainable, against the Waste Local Plan and a risk not worth taking.

The planning hearing will now probably be in March or April, (hopefully not overlapping with the NWRR consultation!). Dave Green will be speaking on our behalf alongside many other objectors. We hope to get a good turn out when the hearing starts, if you want to attend let us know and we'll keep you posted.



Contact details:

E-Mail:

judith@shrewsfoe.org.uk

Please keep in contact by sending us your E-Mail address!

Or Visit: www.shrewsfoe.org.uk

See also: www.foe.co.uk

Judith Rice	Co-ordinator	792790
Dave Green	NWRR	360055
Philip Pool	Transport, Walks & Talks	367968
Judy Coleridge	Walks & Talks	364157
John Rice	Treasurer	792790
Jon Haycox	Newsletter	235865
Sue Fisher	Membership Secretary 37 Sunnybank Rd SY2 6RG	358449

MONTHLY MEETINGS - business and social

Our monthly business meetings normally take place at Marches Energy Agency, next to the Gateway on the 1st Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m. and aim to finish by 9:00 p.m. However, please ring one of us above as this may vary.

After these meetings, some members usually adjourn to the Woodman public house at 32, Coton Hill to continue discussing issues of interest in a more informal way. Do feel welcome to join us but please do give us a ring beforehand in case no one is going to the pub on that evening.

We often have a packed agenda at the business meetings and know that many of you prefer a more informal atmosphere such as at our popular Christmas social which provides an opportunity to discover more about each other apart from our shared interest in environmental issues. This year we are arranging several **Come Along and Meet Each Other** social events in addition to our more informal walks and talks programme. The first of these **CAMEO** events will take place on **Monday 22nd February** when a number of us will be drinking at a table at the Three Fishes in Fish Street from 7:30 p.m. Do feel welcome to join us and phone 792790 if you would like more details

On the other hand, if you cannot make a meeting but would like send us information or comments, do please email me at judith@shrewsfoe.org.uk

.....looking forward to meeting more of you during 2010.

Judith

Membership

Sue Fisher, our Membership Secretary reports that the local Shrewsbury Friends of the Earth group has 74 members. We are grateful for your continued support. We now have an arrangement for Standing Order payments, via the Co-operative Bank. Please see the renewal notice or contact me for further details.

Want To Join? If you're not a member already and would like to join please send £8 (£6 concessions) or £22 for three years to Sue, thank you. Extra donations are always very welcome.

The membership year runs from January to December.

Many thanks for supporting your local FoE Group.

Sue Fisher Membership Sec.

Suefish@talktalk.net

National FoE Subscriptions are completely separate to local group subs. If you're a national member you should receive the Earth Matters magazine, if not then we strongly urge you to join. Do so by going to www.foe.co.uk or ringing 020 7490 1555.

"78% of new housing in 2008 was
built on brownfield sites"
The Times, 28th January 2010

If you print me

Please recycle  me

This newsletter was assembled by Jon Haycox, layout by Mike Richardson