



Shrewsbury Friends of the Earth

Newsletter **February 2011**

For meetings and contacts, see back page

www.shrewsfoe.org.uk

'GREEN GUIDER' JUDY WINS EARTH MOVERS AWARD

Judy Coleridge is a very worthy winner of a national FoE Earth Mover's award as she has edited the Shrewsbury Green Guide since 1988, taking it from a list of recycling options to a 60 page book covering topics such as food, transport and energy. The recent 18th edition had a print run of 5,000 and only a few hundred copies are left. Judy collected the award at the Friends of the Earth annual conference.



The next Shrewsbury Green Guide will be expanded into its own website, as we hope we can make more live links with ideas, groups, websites and photos. If we get funding, we will do a smaller informative paper guide too - we hope to have this ready by early summer. In the meantime, we keep the listings updated from last year's guide, which you can see on www.shrewsfoe.org.uk.

Now is your chance to send in information for the guide, and suggestions would be very welcome (see back page for contact info). In June 2011, Friends of the Earth nationally will be 40 years old, and Shrewsbury Friends of the Earth will be 35 years old, so we hope to launch the website at the same time, and have celebrations, which will be announced in the next newsletter and walks and talks.

NWRR Demotion Confirmed

To our delight Shropshire Council have now confirmed that the North West Relief Road as a whole is no longer an active scheme and there is at present no real chance of it getting built, though they will protect the route just in case. This will probably be reviewed in 2020 when they look again at the County's Core Strategy. However the section from Churncote Roundabout to Shelton could still get built as part of the Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) north of Welshpool Road. (see article on the Core Strategy).

SC are now going to concentrate on the Integrated Transport Strategy for Shrewsbury, which includes many good ideas, including work on encouraging people to use alternatives to the car. One item of concern on the list though is the proposed Parkway Railway Station at Preston Boats (where the A5 and A49 split to the East of Shrewsbury). Further studies are needed to see if this is really a good idea.

New Energy Project for Shrewsbury

Marches Energy Agency and Keele University have set up an interesting new scheme looking at how knowledge of and action on energy issues is spread amongst a community. The scheme will work in two areas, Newcastle under Lyme (with a relatively less developed energy arena) and Shrewsbury (chosen as for its relatively well developed community energy scene). There will be a full-time project worker in Shrewsbury, based at MEA, and we look forward to working with them.

Shrewsbury FoE hope to look at developing more energy related work later this year (when we've got the incinerator campaign sorted). Hopefully there will be more news of this in the next newsletter.

AGM

On 9th November we held our AGM in the Hobbs Room. Despite a couple of IT glitches, we watched a comprehensive pictorial record of our activities held during the year. As members commented with their memories of the events, we celebrated a huge number of campaigning activities and events that had attracted a wealth of press and publicity. Significant successes included the campaigns against the proposed incinerator and the NWRR as well as Judy being presented with an Earthmover award at the national FoE conference in September. Judith felt that all local group members deserved credit for these achievements such as: members joining us on walks around Shrewsbury or talks at the Hobbs Room; signing petitions; sending off postcards; manning the occasional stall; the more active members who turn up for the business meetings each month and just as importantly by members paying their membership subscription to enable so much to be achieved.

All committee members indicated that they were willing to stand again and the committee remains as it was in 2010. The committee was thanked for their work during the year and a short film Beyond the Tipping Point was shown after which the audience enjoyed a stimulating debate on the different ways in which our environmental messages could be taken forward in the future.

Festive Drinks

Shortly before Christmas, around a table or three pushed together in the Three Fishes public house can be found a motley crew of environmentally passionate individuals putting the world to right. 14th December was the occasion in 2010 so look out later this year for details of when you can come along and join us at Shrewsbury FoE festive drinks.

Spreading the word

National FOE has a number of different campaigns for us to work on in 2011. A key one is the Energy Bill see: www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/climate/press_for_change/cold_times_26545.html. There is also a national recycling campaign in March and lots of work to do to locally. Judy is already preparing to take the award-winning Green Guide to a new dimension and the group is gearing up for the possibility of an appeal from Veolia regarding the proposed incinerator. Many of these can be helped along by very easy actions by you. Sending a postcard or writing to your councillor can make a lot of difference. We know that our monthly business meetings do not attract everyone but it would be a shame if you missed the opportunity to contribute now and again. This year we are going to make it much easier for you to be connected by making more use of our website www.shrewsfoe.org.uk. Our business meeting notes will be posted on this site along with the Co-ordinator's report highlighting news from national and regional FoE so that you can easily find out what is happening locally and further afield. If you have time, why not check it out to see if there is anything that interests you. In addition, we can remind you with an email to let you know about the little things that can help a lot - like sending an email to your MP.

Judith

Incinerator Appeal Looms

Despite the well argued case against the proposed incinerator at Battlefield and the glorious unanimous rejection of the application by SC's planning committee it looks like Veolia will be submitting an appeal. It is unclear what role SC have played in this, they argue that their hands are tied by the contract and that at least they have persuaded Veolia to burden a higher share of the costs than the contract stipulates if they do go ahead. We feel however that SC might have done more to persuade Veolia to back down and save everyone time, effort and money on a case that they have little chance of winning.

Shropshire's Core Strategy

The Core Strategy is the main replacement for the old Local Plan (www.tinyurl.com/c4wgl3). Dave Green attended most of the recent Core Strategy hearings on our behalf*. Four main issues of interest to us came up during the hearings:

1, Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs): 60% of the proposed housing to 2026 in Shrewsbury will go on brownfield sites, 25% will go in two SUEs and only 15% on other sites. There was considerable discussion between different developers as to the feasibility of the proposed western SUE at Welshpool Road with those opposed arguing that the cost of providing that section of the NWRR makes the scheme unviable. The southern SUE along Oteley Road was less contentious but we argued strongly that any development to the north of Oteley Road (the Sutton Nursery site) should keep well away from the Rea Brook.

2, NWRR: SC officers accepted that there was a much reduced chance of getting the NWRR built by 2026 and admitted that nothing in the Strategy depended on it. Only one developer asked for a greater commitment from SC for the NWRR and it turned out later that he only asked because he thought they would not be able to do so!

3, Sustainable Design: We supported the original policy on sustainable design, but an amendment was proposed limiting any minimum requirements to national standards. We argued that there is a good case for higher standards in Shropshire and that the Sustainability Checklist will be worthless without them.

4, Parkway Station: This was down as a definite scheme. We argued that further studies are needed and an amended wording to that effect was agreed.

We await the Inspector's report to see what will happen about the first three issues. The next step of the Local Development Framework will be the more detailed SAMDEV which will look at individual sites for development; we will of course be keeping a close eye on this.

(* Shrewsbury FoE paid Dave a nominal sum for this work as it was too much for him to do on a voluntary basis on top of his other work for the group.)

The Energy Bill, help needed.

The Government has promised to be the greenest ever. It has just published an Energy Bill as its flagship way of delivering the green action needed.

The Energy Bill is a massive opportunity to kick-start the green overhaul the UK desperately needs. But the Government's current plans are simply not up to the task, and need strengthening significantly. FoE is building on existing campaigns to push for two key changes to the Bill before it passes into law next summer:

- Supporting councils and communities to act on climate; and
- Effective action to cut emissions from homes.

You can help FOE make this happen, see www.foe.co.uk/community/campaigns/climate/energy_bill_26447.html.

Localism, are they serious?

It's always difficult to take seriously any proposal to devolve power and the Coalition's stated aim of increasing localism is a good case in point. Shropshire Council has publicly welcomed the new localism agenda and has set up a working group to look at how it could work in the county.

However SC's recent dismissal of the appeal from the people of Bishops Castle not to sell land for the proposed biomass plant in the town shows that there is a very long way to go. We also believe that SC could take the strong case against the Battlefield incinerator much more seriously.

Local democracy and action to tackle climate change will be undermined, not boosted, by the Government's much-heralded overhaul of the planning system

FOE, 13th December 2010



Cycling to shops and workplaces getting easier

We've been discussing bringing contra-flows to Shrewsbury with the Council for some years. Contra-flows allow cycling in both directions in one-way streets, with lanes marked on the road, or sometimes just signposts. They're quite common in some UK and European towns.

So it's good to see a sizeable package of proposals from Shropshire Council Cycling Officers. Many of them reflect the short cuts informally used by some cyclists, which is a good test of practicality and need.

There are some queries over details, but overall we're pleased. A good response from the public will help make it all happen, so let them know what you think. Details and a feedback form can be found on:

www.cycleshrewsbury.co.uk/news-and-events/news-archive/have-your-say/
write to cycleshrewsbury at the Shirehall.

The cycleshrewsbury website is worth a look: www.cycleshrewsbury.co.uk.

The ethical market in the UK was worth £43.2bn in 2009 compared with £36.5bn two years earlier – an increase of 18% – according to the Co-operative Bank's annual Ethical Consumerism Report.

Guardian, 30th December 2010.

Sandbag

Bryony Worthington (who used to work for FoE) has set up a new organisation, Sandbag, which is campaigning on the issue of **Carbon Emissions Trading**. Bryony argues that at the moment any energy we save only results in spare carbon permits which decrease the price of carbon and allows another company to buy more permits and release more carbon! See www.sandbag.org.uk. We would argue that we still need to reduce our energy use but the carbon emissions trading scheme needs to be sorted out. Bryony should be in a good position to work on this as she's just been appointed to the House of Lords!



Update on the MOOvement Campaign



Unfortunately, the Sustainable Livestock bill did not get the 100 yes votes it needed to go to the next stage. However, although the government was not supportive of the proposed bill, they agree there is a problem with growing soy for animal feed in South America. The government is planning positive policy changes in the coming months including buying the food we serve in schools and hospitals and new labeling to make it clear when food is British which FOE support.

Keep track of the latest on the Fix the Food Chain campaign at www.foe.co.uk/what_we_do/fix_food_chain_20576.html.

Fairtrade

In January, Shropshire's Fairtrade County status, including Telford & Wrekin, has been renewed by the Fairtrade Foundation for a further two years. Well done to all at The Shropshire Fairtrade Coalition.

Fairtrade is about better prices, decent working conditions, local sustainability, and fair terms of trade for farmers and workers in the developing world. The Fairtrade Foundation's mark is your guarantee that producers were paid a reasonable price.

Fairtrade Fortnight is 28 February – 13 March 2011 and this year supporters are being asked to "Show Off Your Label". More information can be found at: www.fairtrade.org.uk/show_off_your_label/.



West Midlands Regional Gathering

Three Shrewsbury FOE members headed to Birmingham on January 22 to take part in the West Midlands Regional Gathering. This was an opportunity to meet other local group members, learn from their experiences, share skills, and celebrate achievements. The pace of the day was fast and many topics were discussed in group sessions including the High Speed 2 (HS2) rail link, a proposed wind farm in Staffordshire, and factory farming. Time was also spent looking at the potential impacts of the Localism Bill and campaigning strategies for seeking improvements to the Energy Bill.



Many of the attendees also took part in a solidarity action to send support to family and friends of Silvino Talavera from Paraguay who died as a result of pesticide spraying of soy crops.

Wild Thyme

There will be an informal meeting about possible futures for the wholefood shop in Castle Gates - the long-standing Wild Thyme, which is experiencing some difficulty at this time. There is a lot of support out there for the continuity of a good wholefood shop with a community and educational feel.

A meeting will be held on Sunday 13th February, at 3 pm, at the new Shrewsbury Coffee House (2 doors up from the Shrewsbury Bakehouse and a few doors down from Wild Thyme). Everyone who has any kind of interest in some kind of continuity, in helping, in community, in food co-ops, is very welcome to come along.

Membership runs from January to December each year

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If your membership is due, you will receive a separate e-mail from Sue.

If you received this Newsletter by post (and are due to renew) a yellow sheet will be attached reminding you.

Any questions on membership please contact Sue (see contacts).

Sue Fisher Membership Sec

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 judith@shrewsfoe.org.uk	792790
Dave Green	NWRR	360055
Philip Pool	Transport, Walks & Talks	367968
Judy Coleridge	Green Guide, Walks & Talks judyc@thephone.coop	364157
John Rice	Treasurer	792790
Jon Haycox	Newsletter	235865
Sue Fisher	Membership Secretary 37 Sunnybank Rd SY2 6RG Suefish@talktalk.net	358449

MONTHLY MEETINGS - business and social

Our monthly business meetings normally take place at Marches Energy Agency, next to the Gateway on the first Monday of the month at 7:30pm and aim to finish by 9:00pm. 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.

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

Judith

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.

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.



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To find the page search for "Shrewsbury Friends of the Earth" on Facebook or use this shortened link <http://tinyurl.com/39jj3z9>



Every year hundreds of thousands of trees are pulped to create the cards we send. The FOE website has a great collection of free ecards so why not surprise your loved one on Valentines Day ☺

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Please recycle me 

This newsletter was assembled by Jon Haycox. Printed on 100% recycled paper.