



**friends of  
the earth  
Shrewsbury**

see things differently

Newsletter – February 2013

## An Unprecedented Reaction to an Outrageous Hedgerow Proposal!

On 19th December Shropshire Council received a planning application to tear out **7 MILES** of hedgerow on a farm at Chirbury. A consultation period of 14 days took us to 3rd January suggesting this was timed to hopefully pass under people's radar through the holiday period. Fortunately word spread and hundreds of objections were sent in resulting eventually in the application being withdrawn – for the time being anyway.



The outrage the applicant has generated will mean people will be watching him to see what modified proposal he comes up with next but the danger is that a watered down scheme may seem so much "better" that opposition weakens. At a time when wildlife in the countryside is under so many threats it is unacceptable to remove any hedgerows of value and especially ancient and established ones like many of these.

We must all be ready to create even more opposition if necessary because the legislation relating to hedgerows is not in our favour. There is some protection but the matter could become complicated and it is helpful if councillors know that feelings are running high.

One resident of the county has started a petition to the government to review and improve the protection of hedgerows. You can sign this by going to :- <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/44531>

## Successful Christmas Cardboard Collection

On 5th Jan 2013, Transition Town Shrewsbury and Cwm Harry organised collection points for used cardboard for recycling at The Red Barn, United Reform Church, Ludlow, Riversway Elim Church, and for the first time, Castlefields, where the photo is from where several of our members were involved. A total of £403 was raised from the sales and 52 volunteers and about 1,000 people were involved.

There was a good community spirit and willingness to recycle card, and queries about why the collection isn't continuing at kerbsides. Information this week from the Council says there are no plans to re-instate this valuable service.

We can only ask locals to collect theirs and others card and take it to bring banks, and Battlefield. In the meantime sfoe and Transition Towns will be encouraging the Council to urgently take another look at this decision.



## Thanks Dave!



Towards the end of last year when we had to accept that there was little more to be done to try and stop the incinerator Dave Green said it was an opportune time for him to take more of a back seat and concentrate on his business. As he has been such a busy, effective and respected campaigner for very many years we decided this should be recognised so Barbara baked a cake and we all celebrated at our "Christmas Drinks" on 11th December. The cake soon went but as a more permanent "Thank You" we also granted Dave life membership of Shrewsbury Friends of the Earth. We wish him every success and are grateful that we can still call on his knowledge and experience when necessary.

## Public Consultation on Planning Matters

We have become increasingly aware of people not knowing about planning proposals or consultations. The SamDev consultation last year was a case in point when because it was so long people eventually got to know about it through The Press or because Shrewsbury Town Council (and Parish Councils) held meetings. Shropshire Councils publicity for such a major issue was very limited.

There have also been cases where individual applications have not been brought to the attention of people affected. We are considering taking this issue up with Shropshire Council so if you have an example where consultation has been unsatisfactory please let us know.

## Make it Better Campaign

Early last year we decided to take part in the National Campaign – Make It Better. This is a campaign targeting the detrimental consequences that are associated with the manufacturing of everyday products. This is obviously a huge and wide ranging issue and only in November did the campaign start in earnest.



The first item on the list is the smartphone because it has become known that a high proportion of the tin used in making them is being mined on an Indonesian island called Bangka. The mining is uncontrolled, there are many miners killed every year and no restoration either so environmental damage is severe. Dredging and dumping in the sea is destroying fisherman's livelihoods and the coral reefs. More information can be found on the campaign website: <http://bit.ly/Qg5Ua>.

As Apple and Samsung are the main manufacturers of smartphones we want them to check their sources of tin and take an interest in the supply chain. So far they have avoided giving clear answers. The campaign organisers have come up with various ideas but something that most of us can do is sign the petition or send an email.

Either text the word SMART to 60777 followed by your full name to sign the petition or go to [www.foe.co.uk](http://www.foe.co.uk) and send an email to both Apple and Samsung.

At present we are looking at how we take this campaign forward locally.

# The Vanishing of the Bees

You might like to go and see “The Vanishing of the Bees”, showing at the Hive on February 22 at 2.30pm as part of the Charles Darwin festival.

The screening has been sponsored by the Mid-Counties Co-operative’s Plan Bee campaign and is part of a world-wide campaign being supported by several organisations across the UK. Last summer, Shrewsbury FoE had information about the issue at our stall in the Market Square and many people signed the petition asking David Cameron to adopt a national bee plan. Since then, national FoE has got 84 MPs to sign the petition.

In January 2013, a significant step was taken in the right direction. A report from the European Food Safety Authority stated that there is a clear link between neonicotinoid pesticides and the decline of bees. The UK government, having previously been against restrictions, has now referred the EFSA research to the independent Advisory Committee on Pesticides and said “If it is concluded that restrictions on the use of neonicotinoids are necessary, they will be brought in”.

So – on Feb 22nd after the film there will be activities, advice and demonstrations on bee-keeping and wildlife gardening. From 3.30 - 5.00 Brian Goodwin from Shropshire Beekeepers’ Association will be holding an open session on the practical steps that everyone can take to help protect bees.

It should be really interesting. For more information call the Hive on (01743) 234970 or look at [www.hiveonline.org.uk](http://www.hiveonline.org.uk).



## Stall at The Market Square

In October 2012 we had a very successful stall in The Square. 103 petition cards were signed to send to David Cameron – asking him to help save bees by introducing a National Bee Action Plan.

To sign the petition online go to the FoE website or click on this link: <http://bit.ly/IKOvjL>.



## Shrewsbury Green Doors

Transition Town Shrewsbury organized a successful open weekend for eco homes last year. A total of 22 properties opened up their doors to over 100 separate visitors, and they received lots of positive response. This year’s event is due to take place on the weekend of Saturday 24th & Sunday 25th March. For further details please look in the local press and check the website: <http://www.shrewsburygreendoors.co.uk>.

## The Square - Filling in Princess House Overhang

As a community group we use The Square from time to time and like others in the town only came to realise rather late that the proposal if implemented would affect the "feel" of the place very seriously. Unfortunately planning permission was given last year but this was not the end of the story. The area under the overhang is "Highway" so the owner of Princess House had to apply for a "Stopping Up Order" and this gave time for objectors to get their act together in a last ditch attempt to stop it happening.

Fifty objections were sent in and opposition was led by Shrewsbury Town Council with town centre trade associations and residents. Frank put in an objection because of the negative effects on groups holding events in The Square as well as the envisaged detriment to the town as a whole. The Ministry of Transport decided to hold a public inquiry and this took place at Shire Hall on 29th January. About 60 people attended and feelings ran high but the objectors made their points and the Applicant (Owners of Princess House) had to work hard to try and justify their proposal.

The objections centred on safety and the loss of the "Cafe Culture" in the Square. Detailed consideration of how The Square is used for big events shows that if the area under the overhang is lost as a safe place for pedestrians then coming up with an alternative layout that meets the needs of people on foot and provides access for emergency vehicles may prove impossible. The outside seating for the cafes is much appreciated and does create an atmosphere in The Square which people really like.

No date has been given when The Secretary of State for Transport will announce his decision, based on The Inspector's report which he said would take three weeks to prepare.

## CLIMATE CHANGE, ANYONE, OR PERHAPS PETER MANDELSON? Comment from Philip Pool

Every once in a while, when some extreme weather incident takes over the headlines for several days running, I ask myself a question: whatever happened to global warming? Because, well, nobody ever mentions it. A few years back, every moderately dramatic flood or drought was supposedly caused by Global Warming, and our role was to point out you couldn't really say that (because the hard evidence is produced by global trends, not single incidents). And anyway, we should call it 'Climate Change' ('global warming' sounds rather nice.)

But quite suddenly, people stopped talking about it. And then I stopped too. Except occasionally to say, "whatever happened to Global Warming?" Why has it gone off the agenda?

Here's my list of why we don't talk about C\*\*\*\*\* C\*\*\*\*\* -

- 1: Campaign fatigue. The Copenhagen Summit of 2009 had a lot to answer for - preceded by heady optimism, its failure was something you just wanted to walk away from.
- 2: Maybe homo sapiens isn't smart enough to organise our way out, so let's not waste our time? Or is it already too late?
- 3: Did we accept an exaggerated view of how scary life in a warmer world might be, and it's not that bad really?
- 4: Perhaps governments are quietly just getting on with making their patch carbon-free?
- 5: Or will technology sort it out, and it's OK?

And here are my answers:.

- 1: Fatigue. Maybe. The Media is a fickle thing, but I don't get why something this important is subject to the rules of fashion.
- 2: It does sometimes seem that acting on a planetary level is beyond us. Far too early to tell, though.
- 3: Well, we're always prone to doomy scenarios. Sometimes we like to worry. But I've seen too much evidence that makes me think we do have a big, important job to do, and quickly.
- 4: It is sometimes quite impressive to see the built solutions that are springing up all around us, and how policies to combat Climate Change are written into almost every policy area, in many countries. Is that enough though?
- 5: Will technology save us? Can't catch me on that one. We're still waiting after 50 years, for technology to work out what to do with the waste from nuclear power stations.

So, my conclusion seems to be, it is a fashion thing. Droning on about disaster isn't what your average Joe and Jill wanted to hear a few years ago, but it'll be back. Like Peter Mandelson, all over the TV screens for a while, and then suddenly disappeared. (He'll be back too).

Let's hope we've still got time.

## Veolia's In - Vessel Composter \*\*\*\*\* Planning Permission Refused

Veolia have been working for a couple of years on a proposal to build an In-Vessel composting facility at Woodhouse Farm, Granville Road in Telford. This was planned to take all the green waste from Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin and to compost it with food waste, a total of 64,000 tonnes per year. Studies into the separate collection of food waste in Shropshire showed that this was uneconomic so collecting it with green waste and composting it became the favoured option.

Telford and Wrekin Council considered the application at the end of November and refused permission. Obviously, this is a step backwards but when we look more carefully at the proposal then there are issues that mean the location is unsuitable. Our friends in Telford FoE looked into the proposal in great detail and felt it so detrimental that they even put in an objection.

At this time we don't know how Veolia will proceed and await developments with interest. What with this decision and that on not collecting cardboard it seems that Shropshire's steadily improving record on recycling has stuttered to a halt.

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### NEWSLETTER

Sincere thanks to Jon Haycox who has compiled our newsletters for several years. He is going travelling and we wish him a great trip – but we need a successor. Interested ?? – please contact Barbara or Frank.

### MONTHLY MEETINGS

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.

### MEMBERSHIP

Shrewsfoe now has a 21st Century method of renewing membership!

Our membership runs from January to December each year. As this is the first Newsletter of the year it gives an opportunity to look at the website [www.shrewsfoe.org.uk](http://www.shrewsfoe.org.uk) and if your individual membership is due, pay at the same time! It is very easy. One click is all that's needed on the front page; if paying for 3 years.....use the donation button!

You will know if your membership is due as you will receive a separate e-mail reminder from Sue (membership Sec).

If you received this Newsletter by post (and need to renew) there will be a sheet attached gently reminding you and giving methods of paying.

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

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. Extra donations are always very welcome.

Thanks very much

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