



Shrewsbury Friends of the Earth

Newsletter Spring 2009

For meetings and contacts, see back page

Shrewsbury FoE local news

At last, the application for an incinerator at Battlefield, Shrewsbury has been submitted and there is much work to do. There are also a number of other activities planned over the coming months. Do join us when you can.

Recent Events

Incinerator Campaign

Throughout January, in the Market Hall and Shrewsbury shopping centres, several FoE members handed out leaflets, posters and postcards to inform members of the public about the proposed Shrewsbury incinerator. In mid February we finally saw the application and you will find more details of this campaign and what you can do to help throughout this newsletter and in the accompanying literature.

Opening of Theatre Severn

On 22nd February, we had the privilege of holding a stall at the opening lecture of the new theatre. Professor Lord May, who gave a talk called Darwin's Scientific Legacy and Climate Change, said it was a "great privilege and pleasure" to take the first event at the theatre, which he said was very fitting for "the most distinguished son of Shrewsbury". It seemed most appropriate that Friends of the Earth were also there! We had the usual leaflets etc, free light bulbs and some misprinted cotton bags, which sold well, and resulted in almost £50 in donations.



UMEE

Shropshire is now a Unitary Authority, Shropshire Council, with a town council for Shrewsbury. A number of Local Joint Committees have been set up. One of these, Underdale and Monkmoor, has a budget of £40,000 to grant to local initiatives.

Shrewsbury FoE applied for, and was awarded, approximately £4.5k to carry out an energy efficiency scheme, called Underdale and Monkmoor Energy Efficiency (UMEE). Marches Energy Agency will stage a 'Light Fantastic' event in the wards on May 16th - a promotional event to demonstrate the various types of low energy light bulbs, with games and activities including an energy producing bike! Look out for the venue.

MEA will provide FoE with a light bulb library, and will train up to 30 volunteers in distributing energy efficiency advice on Sunday June 7th. The plan is to knock on as many doors as possible in the 2 wards (almost 5,000 houses!) We will give out free light bulbs, and encourage people to take up the grants available for insulation, and give information on draught reduction etc in conjunction with Keep Shropshire Warm.

There is a rudimentary website set up, www.umeeshrewsbury.org.uk. Look on this for more information. Volunteers welcome - doesn't matter if you don't live in the wards or are not a FoE member. If this type of project works, i.e. results in more people taking up these grants, then it could be rolled out in other areas.

<http://www.greenshropshire.org.uk> is a website providing an easy way in to all local 'Green' groups.

<http://www.sharenergy.coop> is a project run by Energy4All and funded by Advantage West Midlands to establish community-owned renewable energy in the sub-region. The idea is to support community groups to develop meaningful and ambitious renewable energy projects. See also <http://www.energy4all.co.uk>

Incinerator Campaign

Dave Green writes

After much waiting the incinerator application is finally public. We can see a number of weaknesses in it:

1. The application states that the Waste Local plan excludes 'mass burn incineration' for Battlefield but tries to argue that at 90,000 tonnes this does not count as 'mass burn'. A small bike is still a bike.

2. The application tries to argue that the incinerator meets the 'essential to a sustainable waste management strategy' criteria in the WLP, it fails utterly. The incinerator may be convenient and profitable but it's certainly not essential.

3. It further argues that any undersupply from Shropshire households will be made up by commercial waste, but we should not be burning commercial waste either and many companies are getting very good at recycling (Caterpillar claim they're up to 95% locally!)

4. There are many issues of concern due to the site of the proposed incinerator being so near a borehole and the potential to flood.

5. There are few serious proposals in the application to utilise the heat.

6. There are a substantial number of potential health issues (see the following report on the Paul Connett lecture at Shrewsbury School for details).



7. The fact that the proposed incinerator, if built, would tie Shropshire into an outdated and wasteful process for 30 years is lamentable.

Daniel Kawczynski has spoken out strongly against the scheme and his researcher Barry Hines has produced an excellent critique of it. Daniel suggested setting up a task force to work on the scheme, now called No Burners in Shropshire (NOBIS), which Barry chairs. See www.noburnersinshropshire.org.uk. Members include people from FoE, Safe Waste in Shropshire, the Green Party and local residents. This is a very useful forum which has already put in a powerful case against the pollution permit application. A number of councillors from all three main parties have been voicing strong concerns recently. Interestingly, a similar plant in Cornwall which also claimed to produce heating, has just been refused planning permission despite initially being recommended for approval. It will not be easy to stop the burner but we believe with concentrated effort, it can be done, please help by coming along to our practical action meeting.

How to Stop Battlefield Incinerator – which will be held at The Gateway at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday 21st April with Keith Kondakor an award winning, anti-incinerator campaigner.

National campaign

Friends of the Earth are starting a new campaign this year. 'Food Chain' will expose the devastating impact of factory farmed meat and dairy foods, and challenge MPs to change the way these foods are produced. The meat and dairy industries create more climate-change emissions than every plane, train and car on the planet. Soy crops to feed European food animals are devastating rainforests.

People in the UK are unwittingly caught up in this damage, and the campaign will aim to get the Government to switch subsidies towards planet-friendly farming.

Conference

The National Friends of the Earth conference will take place on 12th and 13th September at a central location which is yet to be arranged.

TOUR DE PRESTEIGNE 2009

The World's Premier Electric Bike Rally will happen on 9th, 10th May. This event mirrors the growth of interest in electric bikes and will be even bigger and better than last year's successful event. There will be plenty of new bikes to try from all the major manufacturers and displays of other weird vehicles. With talks, races, hill climbs, good food, drink, live music on the Saturday night plus street performers it will be a great weekend. If you own an electric bike or are thinking of buying a bike there is no better place to be than in Presteigne. www.tourdepresteigne.co.

Paul Connett lecture at Shrewsbury School

'Incineration: an unacceptable practice in the 21st century'

The above title produced a stimulating talk at Shrewsbury School on 27th March as part of the current anti incinerator campaigning in Shrewsbury and Telford. It was an inspiring and detailed outline of the issues by Paul Connett, Professor of Environmental Chemistry at St .Lawrence University ,New York State, USA. The lecture was arranged by anti incineration groups 'Safe Waste in Shropshire' and the Telford campaign (PAIN). These groups, along with Shrewsbury FOE are organising opposition to the proposed incinerator at Battlefield and one at Priorslee, Telford. Connett's speech was a powerful mixture of substantive and serious research against incineration as a waste disposal method, given with wry humour. He convincingly expressed passion and professionalism for his area of expertise.

The main arguments:

Environmental - incineration wastes valuable resources far outstripping the energy it produces, and creates the need for specialised storage to deal with the residual toxic fly ash. Incineration does not eliminate the need for landfill-an outcome the proposers, Veolia, would skate over.

Health – incineration has been an experiment which

has left a legacy of unacceptably high levels of dioxins and other compounds in the human population, the food chain and in wild life. It is already considered to be an outmoded and dangerous process(i.e. in California extensive programmes for alternatives are underway). He stressed that the variable chemistry of burning waste is unpredictable. There are no guaranteed health safeguards.

Economic –incineration is an inefficient method. With rising recycling rates - relatively high in Shropshire - there stands to be a problem of committing enough waste to operate on a 24/7 basis. Our region is likely to become a hub for importing raw household and commercial waste. This would have added countywide/regional transport and environmental implications.

Significantly Professor Connett emphasised the need for society to address the reduction of overall consumption rates, adding that companies should not be allowed to create non recyclable products .He stressed the need to address the source of the problem and tackle over supply and demand for energy and products.

The urgency of the message was clear. Incineration is no panacea - it is unacceptable.

Severnlets

LETS - Local Exchange Trading Systems or Schemes - are local community-based mutual aid networks in which people exchange all kinds of goods and services with one another, without the need for money.

SevernLETS has obtained a Grass Roots grant via the Shropshire Community Council to put the scheme on line. It is now possible to list offers and wants, basic information, and even your photo, on the website. When you make a trade, this can be input directly, so there is no need for cheques.

The website www.severnlets.org.uk, is almost up and running. If you are interested, please keep checking the site as it will be ready shortly. To use the service, have a look at the web site, read the information, then contact Paul on 01743 246224 or Val on 01743 260971. If you feel ready to join or are already a member who wants to put their details on line, it is possible to do so by visiting the members' area.

EVENTS

HOW TO STOP BATTLEFIELD INCINERATOR

Tuesday 21st April 7:30 p.m.

with Keith Kondakor, an award winning anti-incinerator campaigner at the Gateway, Shrewsbury.

WALK TO HENCOTT POOL Sunday 10th May, 2 p.m.

Ecologist Rob Mileto will show us why this internationally registered wetland, in a very bad shape, should be saved.

Meet at layby on Ellesmere Rd , just south of roundabout at start of the Battlefield Link road.

BIKEFEST Saturday 13th June, 10a.m.-4 p.m.

Free family cycling day – rides for all ages, picnic, Dr. Bike, stalls etc.

At the Sports Village, Sundorne Road

OUR STALL IN THE SQUARE Saturday 27th June

10-4 *A fund raising event. Visit and help at our stall.*

Please donate goods and plants.

SHREWSBURY GREEN FESTIVAL

Saturday July 4th 10 a.m.-4p.m.

Join us at this stimulating event. Donations of plants and bric a brac very welcome

At the Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Abbey Foregate.

More info from: Judy 01743 364157.

Philip 01743 367968

Website: www.shrewsfoe.org.uk

In 2007, Italy had no fewer than 574,215 official limousines for a governing class of around 180,000 elected representatives. (LRB, 26th February 2009)

By 2007, 26 per cent of children had no siblings, compared to 18 per cent in 1972. (Observer, 15th March 2009)

In the US, a record one in nine homes are vacant—over 14m in total. (USA Today, 12th February 2009)

In December 2008, food sales declined in Britain for the first time since 1986. (The Observer, 18th January 2009)

Contacts:

E-Mail:

Val: val@shrewsfoe.org.uk

Dave: dave@shrewsfoe.org.uk

Send us your E-Mail address!

Or Visit: www.shrewsfoe.org.uk*

See also: www.foe.co.uk

Val Oldaker	Co-ordinator 49, Cleveland St, SY2 5DN	260971
Dave Green	NWRR	360055
Philip Pool	Transport, Walks & Talks	367968
Judy Coleridge	Waste, Walks & Talks	364157
John Rice	Treasurer	792790
Judith Rice	Newsletter	792790
Sue Fisher	Membership Secretary 37 Sunnybank Rd SY2 6RG	358449

MONTHLY BUSINESS MEETINGS, 1st Monday of the month at 7: 30pm - normally at Marches Energy Agency, next to the Gateway. However, please ring to confirm as this may vary.

N.B. The May meeting will be on 11th May due to the first Monday being a Bank Holiday.

Green Drinks

MEA host an opportunity for environmentalists to drink together on the first Wednesday of each month. This now takes place at Loggerheads Public House at 8 pm.

Membership Subscriptions

We are grateful that most of our members have renewed their subscriptions. Extra donations are always very welcome.

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 Fisher (details above), thank you.

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.

The Age of Stupid – a powerful call to action for everyone.



On Sunday March 15th, the People's Première of the climate change film, The Age of Stupid, officially became the biggest simultaneous première in film history. In London it was an appropriately green affair with a green instead of a red carpet and celebrities cycling to the event. It took place in a tent powered by solar energy except for the popcorn machine which used bicycle power. Auditors calculated that the carbon emissions from the occasion were 1% of a typical Hollywood event. The £450,000 budget to make the film was raised by 'crowd funding' - selling shares to individuals and groups. All profits from the showings go to a 'NOT STUPID' campaign www.notstupid.org. This climate action campaign will start a giant countdown marking the remaining days, hours and minutes to the Copenhagen Climate change Summit in December where the Kyoto Treaty will be finalised. NOT STUPID is supported by the key climate NGOs including Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace and Stop Climate Chaos.

Starring local actor, Pete Postlethwaite, who plays an archivist living in 2055, the film demonstrates what life might be like if we fail to act now in the early 2000s. In the film, Pete's character says "We wouldn't be the first species to wipe ourselves out, but what would be different about us is that we did it knowingly." It weaves together a collection of disparate documentaries including an 82-year old French mountain guide, a Shell oil man who rescued 100 people after Hurricane Katrina, a wind farm developer in England, and the launch of a low-cost airline in India. The auditorium at the Assembly Rooms in Ludlow was full for the Shropshire première after which Pete Postlethwaite held a question and answer session mainly with the converted. From the conversations I overheard as we left the showing, I am sure that many people felt inspired to action. I found that the film moved along quickly and was more persuasive than An Inconvenient Truth. It delivers a strong message, is apocalyptic and yet enjoyable all at the same time. I would recommend it to everyone.

If you want to host an independent screening of The Age of Stupid before the official DVD launch around June, anyone, in Britain can host their own screening. See http://www.ageofstupid.net/indie_screenings_uk for further details.

This newsletter was assembled by Judith Rice, layout by Mike Richardson