



Shrewsbury Friends of the Earth

Newsletter

Autumn 2009

For meetings and contacts, see back page

Shrewsbury FoE local news

Val Oldaker reports that FoE's big campaign this year is 'Get Serious'. Carbon emissions need to fall now and fall fast to avoid dangerous climate change. Councils have a big part to play in tackling climate change and they need to commit to cutting emissions in their area by at least 40 per cent by 2020. Shrewsbury FoE is asking our local authority to take climate change seriously. So far, we've collected about 100 postcards to send to local councillors. We will continue to collect these. Val feels that Shropshire Council do seem to be making an effort to tackle the problems. Their plan is at [http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/committeesarchive.nsf/O/E93AEE980FF86179802575370034CC8B/\\$file/Climate%20Change%20Report.pdf](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/committeesarchive.nsf/O/E93AEE980FF86179802575370034CC8B/$file/Climate%20Change%20Report.pdf) The council has also appointed a carbon reduction officer and is looking for 'champions' in each department to drive forward a green agenda. I'm sure we could think of many more things they could do (put the lights under Shire Hall on fire, for instance), but it's a good start.

It's an interesting situation – we know that a number of officers are very environmentally conscious, now we have to convince all the Members that major changes must take place.

For further information about this national campaign and what we could achieve locally see http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/getting_serious_about_climate_change.pdf

Val will be attending the FoE 2009 Local Groups Conference in Nottingham later this month. Shrewsbury FoE was asked to second a motion for FoE Conference, on personal carbon allowances. The proposed motions were prioritised as follows:

1. National Transport Campaign (Motion 7)
2. Biofuels (Motion 2)
3. Government Climate Change Campaign (Motion 4)
4. Population (Motion 3)
5. Local Group Information and Support (Motion 5)
6. Strategic Plan and Organisational Direction (Motion 8)
7. Geo-engineering (Motion 10)
8. International Carbon Emissions Trading (Motion 9)
9. The Role of the Boards of Friends of the Earth (Motion 6)
10. Personal Carbon Trading Scheme (Motion 1)

Only the top six are debated so the Personal Carbon Trading Scheme will not be debated at conference.

As well as a review of FoE recent achievements here will be campaign workshops and seminars including one by David Mackay, FRS, author of "Sustainable Energy - without the hot air" on "What does a low carbon future look like and can we make it attractive?".

We look forward to hearing from Val about how we can contribute to this work in the future.

Saturday 24th October 2009 is an international day of action on climate change called **350ppm** - the aim is to reduce global atmospheric concentrations of CO₂ to 350 ppm which was pre-industrial revolution concentrations - see their website www.350.org

There is a gathering in Oswestry - organised by Oswestry Transition Town group in the Memorial Hall from 10.00 a.m. till 2.00 p.m.

Blackberry Fair

Community Arts Network Group Blackberry Fair are following on from their very successful Sustainability Fair in 2008 with another on Saturday October 3rd. 9-00am – 6-00pm at the Market Hall in Whitchurch. For details Contact: Steve Chapman 0777 304 7744 / stevechappie@talktalk.net

More about Climate Change.....

10:10



On 1st September the [10:10 campaign](#) – supported by the Guardian was launched at the Tate Modern. Its aim is to encourage people and organisations to cut their carbon emissions by 10% in 2010. On the same day, a Guardian/ICM poll revealed how Britons say they could do far more to counter climate change.

Guardian Climate Change Survey:

61% of people said they could do more to help stop environmental damage, and 85% believed climate change is, or will be, a threat.

Only 32% said they already did enough to combat the process.

Most of those asked agreed that individuals should be expected to take action such as fitting low energy light bulbs (85%) or turning down their heating (86%).

Only 23% said that climate change is not caused by man, with 71% accepting human activity is the main cause.

However, just over half (52%) said climate change would take place regardless of what individuals do, with 46% believing they could make a difference.

Comparing results from 2005, the newspaper found that more people now think that we should drive and fly less, and buy more food from European sources. But only a third backed a pay-per-mile tax for road usage, and 29% said they would be willing to pay more for greener energy. Support for wind farms has also risen by 10% to 79%, and resistance to nuclear power has decreased. This year 32% of those polled said they would accept a nuclear power station being built within 20 miles of their home, up from 19% in 2005.

10:10 is the national effort to cut the UK's emissions by 10% in 2010. Please sign-up today. By committing to cut your emissions by 10% in 2010, you will join thousands of individuals and organisations all actively helping stop climate change by making simple changes to their lifestyles, homes and businesses. More importantly, your voice will be part of the national demand that the UK Government acts quickly to cut our country's emissions as a whole. If we in the UK can prove that fast, deep cuts can be made at a national level, then we may just inspire all the other big polluting countries to follow suit. For further details and to sign up to the campaign see <http://www.1010uk.org>



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF CLIMATE ACTION

350 is the number that leading scientists say is the safe upper limit for carbon dioxide—measured in parts per million in the atmosphere. 350 ppm—it's the number humanity needs to get back to as soon as possible to avoid runaway climate change.

A Global Day of Climate Action on **24th October** aims to encourage decision-makers at Copenhagen this December to produce a treaty that is strong, equitable, and grounded in the latest science.

For further details and ideas visit:

<http://www.350.org/understanding-350#2>

Shrewsbury FoE will have a stall in the Wildlife Trust in Shrewsbury on this day between 10.00 a.m. until 3 .00 p.m. Do call by to discuss these issues and help spread the message.



Zero Carbon Britain, a programme developed by the Centre for Alternative Technology details how we can eliminate emissions from fossil fuels and break our dependence on imported energy by halving energy demand and investing in renewable energy generation. Peter Harper will talk about the ZCB programme on Wednesday **25th November** in the Hobbs Room at 8p.m. <http://www.zerocarbonbritain.com/>



Thousands of people dressed in blue will flow through the streets of London to demonstrate their support for a safe climate future for everyone

Come with us - for details train tickets from Shrewsbury and cheap coaches from Birmingham visit our website www.shrewsfoe.org.uk or phone 01743 367968

COP15 From 7th December 2009 environment ministers and officials will meet in Copenhagen for the United Nations climate conference to thrash out a successor to the Kyoto protocol. Sign Friends of the Earth's petition at <http://www.foe.co.uk/climatetalks/petition.html> to urge them to do the right thing.

Dave Green reports "Incinerator campaign smoulders on."

Attempts are being made to get the new Shropshire Council to review the incinerator as a policy issue. There is considerable sympathy for this from many Councillors but substantial resistance from Veolia and council officers, with threats of high costs under the contract if the Council wants to change tack (though no details of how much are forthcoming). Whilst this is very frustrating it is clear that there is still a reasonable chance of getting the proposal stopped by getting the planning application rejected and this is where we will be putting most of our effort. The application should be discussed later this year or early 2010.

We need help in two ways over the next few months:

1, Contact your Councillor and MP to let them know you object to the proposal and why. **This is particularly important even if you live outside of Shrewsbury.** You do not need to write a lengthy treatise, in fact the fewer words the better. If you want details of our objection look on our website, send us an e-mail or give us a ring. (davidgreen742@btinternet.com or 01743 360055).
2, When the application is discussed we need as many people to turn out as possible. If you want to be notified of when that'll be do get in touch.

Together we can stop this ridiculous proposal.

North West Relief Road - Dave Green brings us up-to-date

'Relief' Road Con

Don't panic, the recent announcement that the Government has accepted the initial case for the North West 'Relief' Road doesn't mean it's going to get built. Any Government close to an election it thinks it will lose will make all sorts of promises it knows it won't have to keep. It's clear to me that this is what's happening with the NWRR. Shropshire Council will now spend many hundreds of thousands more on developing the scheme further and all interested parties will put further efforts into cases for and against the proposal when the chances of any money actually being available when the full business case is ready is minimal.

Also at the same time as approving all the transport schemes put forward without discretion the Department for Transport issued guidelines indicating that carbon impacts of schemes will have to be carefully assessed and taken into account. If they'd bothered to look at the NWRR

they'd have seen that it will do nothing to contribute to the stiff targets the Government itself has set for carbon reductions.

This is a complete con, the only people to benefit will be the Council's consultants. It's time for the new Shropshire Council to re-consider whether they really want to continue throwing away money on a highly damaging road proposal that's still highly unlikely to get built.

Also there's been serious concern expressed by landowners upstream about the possible dam linked to the river crossing near Shelton.

So the campaign against the road will carry on. There should be more details released in the autumn, if you want to be kept up to date between newsletters contact me or Geoff Black of the No Way! group.

Dave Green

A version of this article won Dave 'Letter of the week' in the Shropshire Star recently

Dave's back on the Scrutiny panel

Dave Green has been invited to sit on the new Shropshire Council Development Services Scrutiny Panel (this is the equivalent of the Economy and Environment panel he sat on under the old County Council but has a much larger remit). If you want to be kept in touch with issues the Scrutiny panel are looking at or have an issue that you think should be raised do contact Dave (davidgreen742@btinternet.com or 01743 360055).

The 1st International Plastic Bag Free Day takes place on September 12th 2009. Campaigners will be taking to the streets around the world trying to persuade shoppers not to use plastic carrier bags. Events are planned all over the country and FoE will be supporting this initiative at the Radbrook Shopping Centre on this day. In the sea plastic bags look very similar to jellyfish. Many marine animals accidentally eat the plastic bags but they can block their digestive systems and may cause them to starve to death. Please remember to take your permanent shopping bags with you every time you go shopping. <http://www.abolishplasticbags.org.uk/>

A Green Wedding

Jon and Ali Haycox share their preparations and planning for their recent big day

When we were planning our wedding we really wanted to do something a bit different that people would remember and that was very personal to us both. The idea of dragging people from all corners of the country for a big party isn't the greenest of plans; a "virtual" wedding doesn't seem to have quite the same romance. However, as this is only going to happen once in our lifetime (we hope) we couldn't resist the chance to celebrate. Mimicking the way we try to lead our lives; we decided to reduce the environmental impact of our wedding and hoped that this would add to the fun for all.

Once the venue and date had been decided, the next job on the list was to invite all our friends and family. We not only saved money, but also saved energy and resources by making our own wedding stationary with the help of a few Welsh sheep (<http://www.creativepaperwales.co.uk/>). The sheep poo paper looked very professional and had the added benefit of being compostable. We printed the invitations and thank you cards as postcards and all the additional information such as maps and accommodation was provided to guests on our website to further reduce the amount of paper required. Our wedding website was hosted by an eco web host

<http://www.ecowebhosting.co.uk/> and the energy used to power the server is offset through tree planting.

In order to make it official, we found the perfect engagement ring in a local Shrewsbury antique shop, although Jon was less impressed with Ali's enthusiasm for telling everyone what a bargain it was! When it came to choosing the wedding rings, some research showed that, although there is no independent fair trade certification for jewellery, several companies are taking their ethical, social and environmental responsibilities very seriously. We decided on Cred Jewellery (<http://www.credjewellery.co.uk>) who have a comprehensive policy dealing with everything from labour to environmental protection.

The next decision was what to wear? We had recently seen an advert for the launch of a new Barnardo's Brides shop only a few miles down the road in Wellington (<http://www.barnardos.org.uk/>). The dresses available are ex-catwalk and all the proceeds go towards the charity. It was the first and only dress shop Ali looked in and within 2 hours, the dress had been chosen and bought. The wedding suits were all hired and the jewellery for the girls was a combination of locally-made from recycled glass and family hand-me-downs.



As we are lucky enough to already have accumulated many of the items usually found on a wedding gift list, instead of presents we chose to have a charity wedding list (<http://www.thegreengiftlist.co.uk/>) so that guests could instead donate to organisations such as Bug Life, Garden Organics and World Land Trust. The link to this was provided through our dedicated wedding website and proved to be very popular and the charities have since expressed their sincere gratitude.

The wedding breakfast is a very important part of the day and a big opportunity for us to try to reduce the negative environmental impact of feeding 100 people. We worked with the caterer, who sources the food seasonally and locally as standard practice. They also stocked up the bar with a few kegs of locally brewed beer and cider which went down particularly well.

As the wedding was all the way down in Dorset, we encouraged our guests to share lifts and use public transport. In fact, we took this a step further as Ali travelled to the wedding on the public bus on its regular route passing the family home and venue, much to the surprise of the other passengers. As the event was a long way from our Shrewsbury home, we decided to take a bit of Shropshire with us and so the wedding favours for all our guests were small pots of Shropshire honey and chutney.

All of these and many more little touches helped to make our wedding day extra special, not just for us, but hopefully, for all of those invited too!

Many thanks go to Jon and Ali for sharing this account of their preparations with us and for providing the lovely picture of the bride travelling with her father to the wedding.

Many of us have had the opportunity to wish them a long and happy married life together – sentiments we are sure that all our members will no doubt endorse.

The average British household contains 2.4 televisions, 1.6 computers, 2.4 videogame consoles, 3 mobiles and 2.2 MP3 players.
(Metro, 5th May 2009)

More than half of Britons think the countryside is "boring." One in ten adults are unable to identify a sheep; 83 per cent do not recognise a bluebell.
(Farmers Guardian, 30th March 2009)

Shrewsbury Friends of the Earth - recent activities



'Get serious' day in the Square.

We set up stall in Shrewsbury's main square (our second home!) to talk to the public about climate change. Most people 'got it' at once, and understand why we are running the campaign. We got lots of postcards signed, to be sent to local Councillors, and some great pictures – it's surprising how difficult it is to get people to look serious when you point a camera at them!

Shropshire Environmental Alliance

Shrewsbury FoE is a member of the Shropshire Environmental Alliance. For the Unitary elections, SEA sent a list of questions on attitudes to environmental issues to many of the candidates. They intend doing the same for the next General Election. They will also respond as a group to the consultation on Shropshire Council's Strategy Document on Sustainable Communities. The consultation ends on 30th September. Open workshops will be held as part of the Area Partnerships Forums on 9th September in Craven Arms, 23rd September in Highley and 30th September in Shrewsbury Sports Village. See:

http://www.2shrop.net/live/images/cme_resources/Users/Shropshire%20Partnership/Shropshire%20Partnership/info%20on%20scs%20june%2009%20-%20front%20page/SCS-Consultation-document-Final-300609.pdf

For such a large group of people, representing Transition Town groups, Carbon reduction and other 'green' groups, there is a surprising degree of agreement on what the main issues are, and what the solutions could be. It is a very positive experience. www.greenshropshire.org.uk



Ludlow Green Fair

Now Shropshire is Unitary, we're trying to make some impact on the rest of the county. Various other groups are helping, but where possible, we will attend events in other towns. Ludlow Green Fair has been going for a few years now, and was very well attended – although about half the people we spoke to were from outside the county. We're also members of Shropshire Community recycling, and so Val did a stint on their stall too.



Contacts:

E-Mail:

Val: val@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	358449

MONTHLY MEETINGS - business and social

Our monthly business meetings will 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 to confirm this with one of our members above as this may vary.

Very often some of the group adjourn to the Woodman public house at 32, Coton Hill to continue discussing issues of interest in a more informal way. If you do not wish to come to the more formal business meeting, please do feel welcome to join us at the pub after 9 p.m. but do give us a ring beforehand.

On the other hand, if you cannot make the either meeting but would like send us information or comments for the agenda, do please email us in advance of the meeting.....

.....looking forward to meeting more of you at our Christmas social on 8th December.

Membership

Sue Fisher, our Membership Secretary writes: The local Shrewsbury Friends of the Earth group has 74 members but we are always interested in reaching more people so do encourage your friends to join. The majority of our members prefer to receive information by email which saves time and resources. It would be great when you change your e-address if you could remember to let us know and if you don't currently receive your newsletter electronically, please consider this option.

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 Jan to Dec.

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.

More British households own two cars (27 per cent) than have no car (23 per cent). (Social Trends, Office of National Statistics)

Prince Charles's spending on office equipment and stationery for 2008-09 was £218,000, up almost a fifth on last year.

New Statesman, 9th July 2009

The number of people in Britain is growing by 1,000 a day. (Social Trends 2009)

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