

**SOUTH BEDFORDSHIRE FRIENDS OF THE EARTH
NEWSLETTER FOR OCTOBER 2006**

FUTURE EVENTS

- 25 October** New Members Meeting 7.30 for 8.00 at Friends Meeting House, North Street, Leighton Buzzard (Ken 01525 372036)
- 30 October** Hanging banners opposing MI widening on MI bridges (Victoria 01525 385097)
- 31 October** 10.00 till 1.00pm - Action day in Linslade New and Old Woods, clearing brambles and footpaths etc. Also a chance to discuss the longer term maintenance of the woods. (Heather 01525 379773)
- 4 November** Stop Climate Change Coalition Grand Rally, 12 noon in Trafalgar Square (Michael 01582 606021)
- 6 November** Monthly Meeting 7.30 for 8.00 at Hunt Hotel, Leighton Buzzard (Ken 01525 372036)
- 11 November** 10am to 3pm. Action day in Linslade New and Old woods. Footpath entrance to New Wood from Knaves Hill/Rowley Furrows, Linslade (Heather 01525 379773)
- 4 December** Monthly Meeting 7.30 for 8.00 at Globe PH, Dunstable (Peter 01582 663915)

MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 9 OCTOBER 2006

Present: Victoria Harvey, Helen Roy, Jules Stobonovitch, Andy Gayler, Michael Taylor, Liam Green, Tony Donnelly, Andrew, Robert Stobonovitch, Heather Fox, Chris Stevenson, Peter Hatswell.

Apologies: Stella Goddard, Ken Barry, Mr Evans.

Group News

As he was present, Victoria took the opportunity, on behalf of SB FoE, to thank Michael for his sterling efforts as secretary for the group for the last 12 years.

Stella's new leaflet for restoration of bus services in Leighton Buzzard was circulated. It has gone down well and one councillor received 500 responses. The County have backed down and reallocated funding and restored the bus service in Linslade.

It was proposed to do similar leaflets for Dunstable and Houghton Regis where similar swingeing cuts were reported to have been made. Peter would find out councillor contact details for these leaflets.

On current projects, Chris mentioned that this months clean-up for Clipstone Brook was fully subscribed. Some photos would be taken for display at the new members meeting.

Following the success of the Greening of Leighton Buzzard, it was thought that a Greening of Dunstable might be undertaken. We need a map of existing green spaces in the town which Peter will try and obtain from Mark Saccioccio or Richard Walden. The loss of space around the Grove Theatre site and the needless felling and overzealous pruning of some mature trees was lamented. There was a rumour that one of the new housing areas would be gated, thus reducing access through what had once been public open space. Any scheme to plant new trees should involve larger specimens that could not easily be vandalised. Asking members of the public to adopt a new tree and water it through dry periods is a possibility.

A lively discussion took place on the subject of food waste collection in the light of SBDC possibly changing to bi-weekly collection of grey bins/black sacks. FoE national policy is firm on the separated food waste issue, both to alleviate pressure on landfill and to provide a useful processed compost. We have to try and sell the idea of a 2 week collection as an aid to recycling with a weekly collection of separated food waste to keep down smell and infection problems. New landfill taxes are going to significantly increase Council tax and the savings from separating food waste are said to be cost effective.

Tony was sceptical that the fortnightly scheme would work, bearing in mind the tendency of some individuals to fly tip even in areas of high landscape value.

Membership

Jules has been contacting members from our list who have not paid or not been active for some time and has had an encouraging response. To increase members involvement we need to remind them that they have to fight for issues they feel strongly about. She felt that a Person Centred Approach might be the most effective method and was happy to be the point of contact for individual concerns.

At the New Members meeting (see above calendar) Hugh Ellis (National FoE Planning Expert) will probably talk on the housing expansion plans for 15 minutes or so in each half of the meeting with time for questions. Some related issues were suggested to deal with new housing expansion, e.g. constraints on water supplies, needs for decent bus services (particularly for children, the disabled, elderly and those without cars), cycleways and footpaths and a concentration on low cost housing with sustainable construction to reduce CO₂ emissions. Local food and local action using the appropriate District or County councillors plus the MP for housing policy changes could be encouraged by listing contact names in specific areas of concern.

We could also hold more public meetings on contentious issues such as airport expansion.

Publicity is an important tool and Andy offered his expert services on identifying what is newsworthy about issues that individuals are pursuing. His email is andy_gayler@yahoo.com and he is very happy if people think that they might have a story to give them advice on how to turn it into a press release. He could give a short talk at the New Members meeting on how to get things published along with other members on such items as solar/wind energy and the greening projects.

Andy Gayler was voted in as our publicity officer.

Other Business

Michael recommended that we all make the effort to see the Al Gore film "An Inconvenient Truth" which is showing in Milton Keynes at the moment. He also reminded us about the Climate Change Rally on 4 November.

CONTACTS

Officers

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