

FUTURE EVENTS

- 7 July** Houghton Regis Carnival 1 – 4pm (Peter 01582 663915)
- 14 July** Climate Change Display, Nature's Harvest, North Street, Leighton Buzzard (Victoria 01525 385097)
- 21st July** Bus Consultation complete review of Leighton Buzzard's network 10.30AM-12.00 noon Baptist Church Hockliffe Street. Beds CC, Arriva and Grant Palmer will talk of their plans followed by our chance to feed back. Numbers needed
- 23 July** Meeting on housing with Luton FoE at The Globe, Dunstable (Peter)
- 28 July** FoE Regional Meeting, Cambridge (Victoria)
- 4 August** Friends of Linslade Woods Summer Holiday Family Action Day 12 – 4pm (Esther 01525 237760)
- 13 August** Monthly Meeting 7.30 for 8.00pm at The Crown, North Street, Leighton Buzzard (Chris 01525 382343)
- 3 Sept** Monthly Meeting 7.30 for 8.00pm at The Globe, Dunstable (Peter)

MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING ON 3 JULY 2007

Present: Victoria Harvey (Facilitator), Heather Fox, Chris Stevenson, Albert West, Barry Metcalfe, Peter Hatswell, Ali Hines, Susie Page, Ken Barry.

Apologies: Stella Goddard, Michael Taylor, Gladys Knight

Updates

a. Bike Week

Barry reported that the response to the cycle rides had been very disappointing, in spite of good press coverage in all the Leighton Buzzard papers. Unfortunately only experienced cyclists turned up whereas the event was intended to encourage people new to cycling. Barry and Ken held a successful information stall on the afternoon of 23 June which had attracted a lot of interest, and people had taken leaflets and FoE membership forms. There was some very good press coverage. The stall was next to LOUD's stall which had helped to draw people to the area.

b. Market It was reported that Wendy Fair's trial has been extended for a further 2 weeks.

Climate Change Bill

The draft bill has gone for consultation but with targets not as high as those requested by FoE. Members will need to contact Luton MP, Kelvin Hopkins in the autumn. Peter had received a response from Defra via Andrew Selous, but the wording was very vague. We had highlighted that virtually all Government policies contradicted the bill.

Planning White Paper/Houghton Regis Carnival

The Government is aiming to abolish most of our rights to object to major developments. These will no longer have to be subjected to the normal planning procedure, but will be decided by a Government appointed Quango. National FoE wants members to write to their MPs and to local papers, and to get people to sign postcards. This will be the main theme for our stall at Houghton

Regis Carnival on 7 July. Victoria, Michael and Peter will set up the stall in the morning, and Ken and Albert agreed to help between 1pm and 4pm.

Millers Dairy Site

The public inquiry is on 10 July. Barry and Victoria will be attending.

Wing Bypass

Victoria has arranged to meet the Rothschilds on Friday to request a contribution towards the cost of the alternatives report. The villages have been leafleted with appeals for donations. In response to date 2 donations of £100 and 2 for £25 have been received. It was reported that Wing Parish Council were considering making a contribution.

Display

Nature's Harvest in Leighton Buzzard have suggested that a fund be set up to help the victims of recent flooding. They will be producing a display showing the link between climate change and flooding and have appealed for any materials we can offer. The display is being set up on Friday 13 July for public viewing on 14 July. Paul Brown has offered to raffle a copy of his book on climate change.

Bus Consultation

After lots of lobbying we obtained a bus consultation in Leighton Buzzard Saturday 21st July in the Baptist church in Hockliffe Street 10.30 am to 12.00noon. The county council and the bus companies will talk about their plans and the problems. The whole bus network of Leighton Buzzard will be reviewed for the first time in 15years. We really need lots of people there.

FoE Regional Meeting

This is to be held in Cambridge on 28 July. A chance to meet other groups across the region and learn about the regional challenges, as regards roads, incinerators & housing. As this is the same date as the Linslade Canal Festival and some members are committed to helping on other stalls it was agreed that we will not have a FoE stall at the festival this year.

Exemplar Sustainable Travel Site

Victoria reported that we were still awaiting confirmation regarding the £million promised by the Government. It was reported that the affordable houses will be built to "eco homes excellent" standard and the remainder will be to "eco homes very good" and there will be a very high frequency bus service, real time information in all the houses, and improved cycling facilities, and secure cycle storage in all the new dwellings.

Housing Meeting with Luton FoE

We will need to meet with Luton FoE in order to devise a joint strategy and to ensure that our aims are the same. Suggested date is 23 July at the Globe, Dunstable.

Housing

A general discussion was held to establish what line we should take regarding the enormous housing developments which were threatening the whole area. It was generally considered that it might be unrealistic to openly oppose the development but should try to aim to minimise the impact of any development on the environment. This could be done by insisting that all homes built are eco-friendly and carbon neutral and by promoting public transport. However it was also pointed that even "eco-friendly" houses could pose serious threats to the countryside and wildlife habitats, and that we should also insist that more green spaces are provided, both for human recreation and for the benefit of wildlife. We may also have to think about saving areas which merited special protection ie were of great landscape value or important wildlife habitats at the expense of having other green areas destroyed. It was agreed that if we said 'yes' to any development it would be dependent on the conditions that biodiversity, green transport and energy efficiency and renewable energy were implemented.

Friends of the Earth's 5 Year Plan

FoE wants groups to concentrate on major campaigns directed nationally, such as The Big Ask, but without offering any support for campaigns on local issues, many of which could have an impact on the national campaigns. Our view was that local and national campaigning should co-exist and complement each other, ie groups carry out FoE's directives and FoE gives groups support on local issues. It was considered that this is the only way to involve more local people in our campaigns. Many members are attracted to FoE as a result of local issues. FoE's activism aim does not mention seeking solutions. It was considered that it is not sufficient to just be an active citizen. We want more 'hands-on' campaigning, not just filling in postcards but actually achieving local aims such as better bus services. Peter also pointed out that his best information on climate change was received from sources other than FoE. Victoria will co-ordinate our response and send details to FoE.

Future Meetings

13 August at The Crown, North Street, Leighton Buzzard

3 September at The Globe, Dunstable.

CONTACTS

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