

Havant Friends of the Earth

Group Newsletter March 2011



**Friends of
the Earth**

Havant FOE 10th Birthday:

It's been suggested we celebrate this in September which is the group's true anniversary and combine it with a short AGM before. FOE nationally is moving its partnership renewal process to the autumn so it would fit well

Membership:

Our local membership is holding steady and it's that time of the year when renewals are due. Subs payable please to Havant FOE remain unchanged and should be sent to Patricia Williamson at 6, Clovelly Road, Emsworth, PO10 8PD

Members Survey Results:

Many thanks to members who did the recent survey. Apologies for any problems with the soft copy form-we'll have to do better next time. There were six questions on skills, member's campaign priorities, campaigning ideas, frequency of meetings and supporting the Go Greener Week later this year. In summary the responses placed climate change, energy efficiency and recycling as the main focus areas. Most felt that meetings should be held quarterly in Havant or Emsworth. The preferred format was a talk or film followed by a debate and planning events. Members generally supported the Go Greener Week and offered to help out on this and other group activities. Next Meeting in April

Havant Go Greener Week:

We've made rapid progress with our two partners, Havant Transition Network and Havant council, towards joining up the dots for the Havant Goes Greener week on 23-28th May. Paul Diaper, Patricia Williamson, Ray Cobbett and Susan Holt are representing FOE. The council has offered a £1000 that together with other contributions amount to £2000 so far to fund events. The week sets out to celebrate the many aspects of green activities throughout the borough including the gardeners, wild life lovers, local food producers, conservationist as well as businesses offering planet-friendly solutions and much more. The opening on the May 23rd is in the Spring (Havant Art Centre) and will include a film (Low Impact Man) followed by a workshop asking groups how they would make the borough greener. During the week talks are planned on grow-our-own food, greening the home, bee keeping and alternative energy. The high spot will be on Saturday 28th when a Family Fair is being held in Havant Park. Almost 40 firms and organisations have been invited so far. We hope to create a festival feeling with things to buy do, eat and enjoy. If you know of any business or group who should be invited let us know on havantfoe@talk21.com. There's a new website havantgoesgreener.org.uk going live shortly giving more details.

Hampshire Green Senate:

Havant FOE is joining a meeting next month in Eastleigh to explore how the various green groups in Hampshire could combine their resources to make a bigger impact. Others attending include transition towns, the greening campaign and various climate change networks. Report in next newsletter

2011 FOE National Campaigning Priorities:

Havant FOE has been asked along with all FOE groups which of the following campaigns we want to active in, energy, food, localism, recycling and international climate change. The reason for them asking the question is to provide support for mounting local campaigns and engaging in national ones. Our local activism base is very small and so care must be taken over what the group wants to take on. The suggestion is that each member arranges the five topics in order of importance and sends them to havantfoe@talk21.com. The responses will be summarised and more details obtained from FOE on what is actually involved.

Website:

The group website is now taking 100 hits a week and our Facebook page has 32 friends including two MEPs and the former director of the FOE, Tony Juniper. The site is updated every week and Kevin Birch, our web co-ordinator, is happy to put up articles, research, links and material related to our core activities. The website and this newsletter are now the primary means of keeping in touch with members

Havant Local Plan:

The Local Plan or to give its proper title, Havant Borough Core Strategy, has now been formally adopted by councillors. It becomes the benchmark for all planning applications in future and binds the council to building 6300 new homes over the next 15 years. Almost every part of the borough is up in arms over this number as it can only be met by building on green field sites throughout the borough. Despite fighting a tough campaign Emsworth lost their battle against 290 new homes in the green gap between the town and Westbourne. A similar fight is raging in Bedhampton, led by FOE member, Jim Graham. Hayling Island residents are now getting ready for their battle against almost 600 homes. The bottom line is that Havant council agreed to build more homes than they have sustainable capacity for and then tried to blame it all central government.

Southern Water:

Southern Water is being taken to court by the Environment Agency on various counts of alleged unjustified discharges of raw sewage into Langstone Harbour. If found guilty the company will be fined but will it stop them doing it again? The RSPB coordinator for nearby protected sites at Farlington has already warned of spreading green algae that can affect oxygen levels and threaten the harbour's wildlife. FOE campaigning arm Marinet (<http://www.marinet.org.uk/>) is concerned with these matters as are Surfers against Sewage (<http://www.sas.org.uk/>) and Friends of Langstone Harbour.

Havant Transition Network (HTN):

HTN celebrated its first birthday with a reception in Havant attended by 30 people. Havant is one of a growing network of Transition Town throughout the country and abroad and is focused on building self sustaining communities with other like-minded groups.

Drive slower or not at all:

Research shows that a few mph less can make significant fuel savings amazingly. Ministers are talking about increasing the limit to 80mph. In many cases bus, bike and foot is better even though bus fares are rising.

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