

Wycombe Friends of the Earth

Minutes of Monthly Meeting on Wednesday 7th October 2015, 7.30pm at
The Friends Meeting House, 25 London Road, High Wycombe, HP11 1BJ

1. Welcome and Apologies

Present: 11 (a new attendee was welcomed)

Apologies: 2

2. Finance

The treasurer reported that WFOE is £436 in credit and that we need a new cheque book. A new cheque book will be requested.

3. Solar energy feed-in tariff.

The joint co-ordinator researched this, many thanks – summary as below:

A consultation is open until 23rd October and there will be a short window of opportunity after that for lobbying.

Government's position – still committed to their target of 20% of electricity to be renewable by 2020 which they say is well on track.

However, they need to stay in budget and feed in tariff is taking it beyond budget.

Solar PV feed in tariff is 12.47p per kw/hr for one installed at present. It is proposed that for installations from Jan '16 it will drop to 1.63p and will decline to zero by 2019.

They claim that the 1.63p will return 4% on investment for those installing PV solar, assuming life is 30 years, and in SW England. (where most sunshine is) plus some costs like replacing converters. At present installation costs are on average £6,800 for a 4kW system.

However, there is to be a cap on total expenditure so they propose a cap on the number of installations to be carried out so they know their expenditure. They will reduce the rate faster if there are more installations than budgeted for. Furthermore, if signals are that, despite these reductions, the number of installations will still exceed budget, they might scrap the scheme and not pay any feed-in tariff for new installations. (Existing unaffected.)

Common ground between FOE and the government – it will mean a million fewer installations between now and 2020, with commensurate additional carbon emissions

FOE claim there will be huge job losses in the solar industry which could kill the industry so they suggest a smaller and slower reduction in feed-in tariff.

FOE ask people to write to MPs, and have provided briefings. Additionally they are particularly targeting 30 MPs, among them Steve Baker.

FOE encourage us to meet our MP and will supply a campaigner and others to come with us to state the case.

The co-ordinator will get back to FOE and try and get a firm yes or no to a campaigner to join us and will contact the group and will circulate the consultation and FoE briefing details.

4. Diesels.

The other joint co-ordinator researched this – many thanks. Summary below:

Diesel engines operate at a higher temperature than petrol engines and therefore are more efficient. The fuel is more energy dense. They generally emit less carbon dioxide.

But they are more polluting in nitrous oxide because of this higher temperature.

They also emit polluting particulates which are a product of inefficient combustion.

Petrol engines can have a catalytic converter fitted – diesels can't.

According to The Guardian the cost of damage to health is £35 for petrol engines but £440 for diesels per year.

Diesels were promoted because of petrol cost escalation a few years ago and are most polluting in city centres where there is more congestion and slow and stationary traffic.

5. Heathrow expansion

The joint co-ordinator attended a meeting on Heathrow expansion with FOE groups plus other groups.

An FOE document states that the government claim there will be cost benefit of up to £147bn, other groups suggest £1.5-7bn over a longer period.

Aircraft lobby says that aircraft are becoming more efficient.

Another meeting is due this Friday and the member hopes to attend.

A visitor, who is opposed to the expansion, is invited to our next meeting.
The joint co-ordinator will circulate the briefing pack for members.

6. Climate change, including the November 29th March.

A member has posters and leaflets which she distributed.

A member will take in a poster to Bucks New Uni and ask if there is a green group in the university.

A member will write to the Bucks Free Press to raise awareness.

The webmaster will try and get an electronic copy of the publicity for the member to pass on and also for the WFOE website.

7. Feed-back on the September Pann Mill stall

It occurred and was fine although it tends to preach to the converted re: bees.

Despite several posters on other topics, most interest was in bees.

It was disappointing that people did not engage with the other topics.

We need other opportunities to talk to the non-converted.

The joint co-ordinator had to pay £10 for the stall and will be reimbursed at the November meeting.

Hughenden Manor Apple Day might be another opportunity - 17th/18th October this year.

Consider this for next year.

8. Bees (including the Chinnor & Thame action)

Sun 11th October, 11am at Towersey railway bridge: Chinnor and Thame FOE are planting wildflower seeds along the Phoenix Trail.

Tues 20th October: bee stall in Thame market from 9 am. Chinnor and Thame FOE need help.

Sat 24th October: bee stall outside Thame Town Hall. Chinnor and Thame FOE need help.

9. Future Events –

19th October in Oxford. Nicholas Stern 'Why are we waiting?' A member to circulate details.

10. Ecotip. This month's ecotip will be:

Create a garden pile

Now's a good time to prepare for wildlife that might come and hibernate in your garden over the winter, such as frogs and hedgehogs. Put an uneven pile of logs in a quiet corner, for small animals to get cosy. Even a pile of stones will offer shelter to a range of insects and spiders.

11. Any Other Business

- Naomi Klein film is out – we could apply for a screening. A member has looked into this and is keen for us to screen it. The online form requires the date and whether it will be a public or private screening and there will be a fee.

The member will find out more details with a view to setting up a screening in mid November, perhaps during the week after our next meeting.

- Morrisons. The manager thinks the area around the store belongs to Wycombe District Council. Wycombe Wildlife Group suggests we go ahead with a litter pick and we can assess the situation for more substantial wildlife maintenance at the same time.

The joint co-ordinator will liaise with WWG about a date and circulate it to the group.

- Fair Trade

Wycombe Fair Trade Association has renewed Wycombe as a Fair Trade town. They suggest Wycombe FOE be an associate member of their group. A member will find out more.

12. The next meeting will be on Wednesday 4th November 2015 at The Friends Meeting House, 25 London Road, High Wycombe, HP11 1BJ.