

Wycombe Friends of the Earth – Annual General Meeting

Minutes of AGM at Wednesday 3rd June 2015, 7.30pm at
The Friends Meeting House, 25 London Road, High Wycombe, HP11 1BJ

1. Welcome and Apologies

Present: 14

Apologies: 2

2. Review of the Year

The *Review of the Year* was circulated to all members and more copies were available at the meeting. For the past year, the co-ordinator role has been divided successfully between 3 co-ordinators. It was reported that the group is ticking over but needs to try and expand activities and gain more members. More information on the past year can be found in the circulated report.

3. Financial report

The group was in credit. WFoE has 15 paying members (£10 annual membership). With higher room charges for 2015-16, we may need to consider fund raising during the coming year as we will outspend our subscription income. (To be discussed at the next meeting). Further details on the group's income and expenditure can be found in the financial report, circulated at the meeting.

4. Election of Officers

Two co-ordinators were willing to stand again as joint co-ordinators and were nominated, seconded and confirmed as joint co-ordinators.

The current treasurer was nominated, seconded and confirmed to continue as Treasurer.

5. Any Other Business

- Base Camp. It was agreed to nominate a co-ordinator to vote on our behalf on motions at Base Camp.
- Chinnor and Thame Green Fayre is on 7th June where there will be second-hand bikes, toys and musical instruments, second hand books, plant stalls etc. It is run in conjunction with Chinnor Open Gardens. Any offers of help will be gratefully received.
- Hamilton Fete will be on 13th June 12-4pm. Offers of help on the eco stall will be welcome.
- Pann Mill. It was agreed to run a WFoE stall at the next Pann Mill Open Day on Sunday 12th July. 4 members offered to man the stall. Other offers of help will be welcome.

There followed a talk by Guy Shrubsole, Climate Campaigner for National FOE.

Guy has been a member of FOE for nearly 10 years. He marched at the Gleneagles G8 summit and this inspired him to campaign further through Friends of the Earth.

During the last 10 years there have been positive changes on climate change. For example:

- the UK is part way through an energy system change. Members of FOE have worked hard for this
- FOE has put pressure on the government to reduce carbon emissions
- FOE campaigned for Feed in Tariffs in 2010 and, as a result, 700,000 people in UK now have solar panels.
- In 2014, UK emissions dropped by 8% in one year which is a big drop. Also, 20% of our energy now comes from renewables.
- The UK has been fracking-free for 4 years.

Globally, more countries are taking action. US emissions have fallen and coal consumption in China has dropped over the last 2 years.

However, there are still 4 big challenges which FOE is concerned about:

1. Gas. FOE will be working to stop a new dash for gas usage through fracking and to stem the danger of a resurgence in new gas power stations which would be a danger to the UK's carbon emissions targets.

2. Coal. FOE will be working to prevent further coal mining. The UK is now using less coal; nevertheless, some coal is still being used and much is obtained by open cast mining which is a very destructive method, leaving scars on the landscape.

3. New Airport Runway. Within next few weeks, the Davis commission will report on a new runway for Heathrow or Gatwick Airport. There will be local and climate impacts.

4. Wind Energy. It has recently been learned that there will be no new subsidy for on-shore wind. FOE will be working towards increasing the use of renewable energy.

Generally, FOE is aware it needs to do more to inform and energise people with regard to climate change. Up coming events to tackle this include:

- Base Camp on 12-14 June in Derbyshire, – nearly 500 people are coming to this, which is very positive.
- Mass lobby of parliament on climate change on 17th June in London. Nearly 1000 people going from FOE alone.
- London demonstration on austerity in favour of an economy based on sustainability, on 20th June.
- There will be a decision on fracking in Lancashire at the end of this month – Lancashire is the front line. There will be a rally in Preston and also a petition to sign.
- Climate Change Conference in Paris in December. All the above could have an impact on decisions in Paris. FOE will attend and put pressure on negotiations. The last conference ended in a weak agreement, despite a lot of positive hype. This time it is hoped that it will be stronger, so if pressure is put on government over the above issues it will add power to the climate change argument. We need to show that the public do want action. (Barclays are investing in fracking!).

Under the coalition, there was an energy bill but the Treasury likes to control this. The government will not decarbonise the electricity structure in the near future. This might leave us with the default position of building new power stations. Off-shore wind and solar farms have a lot of potential as local communities aren't so affected as those that are on-shore.

FOE need to question the values of growth and capitalisation in the light of climate change in the future. But this will be difficult as it seems so far away to the public. Therefore, we need to tackle it bit by bit on the way to this greater goal.

A discussion followed about climate change and climate change campaigning:

- A Chinnor member talked about Chinnor and Thame FOE and its promotion of a greening policy, such as putting postcards in doors that encourage people to reduce energy (and cost!) in 10 ways. Postcards are then put in windows to encourage and inform others.
- Wind and solar farms attract local opposition
- Encouraging the use of cycle paths, for example, would reduce energy.
- The 'green deal' struggled to make a big change in making homes energy efficient as there was not the take-up that was anticipated for a variety of reasons.
- Stalls are a method of campaigning locally.
- Climate change conversations must be encouraged and kept going in order to change attitudes.
- The IEA (International Energy Agency) has stated that global carbon emissions have remained static over the last year.

The meeting was then closed.

6. The next meeting will be on Wednesday 1st July 2015 at The Friends Meeting House, 25 London Road, High Wycombe, HP11 2LG.