

Wycombe Friends of the Earth – Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 6th May 2009, 7.30pm

The Environment Centre, Holywell Mead, High Wycombe

Present: 12

Apologies: 2

1. Finance

Sally reported no change. The group is in credit.

2. Ecotip of the Month Two ecotips will be put on the website as follows:

Tea tree oil is a powerful essential oil and known anti-bacterial. It's great for cleaning mould and mildew - try a dilute mix of 3-4 drops in 2 litres of water (cold or hot). Soak mildewed items or spray on to trouble spots using a plant mister. Scrub, then rinse off. Source: 'Save Cash & Save the Planet', <http://www.foe.co.uk/shop>.

If spring is encouraging you to enjoy the great outdoors, take a look at the great range of ethical goods on offer at the Natural Collection. Whatever takes your fancy - organic gardening, wildlife, walking or just enjoying time al fresco - check out the goodies at <http://www.naturalcollection.com/organic/Friends-of-the-Earth.aspx?from=foe.org.uk>

3. Communication between groups

Posters advertising Transition Towns and The Environment Centre were distributed to group members who had agreed to distribute them in various places.

4. Living within our Limits Document

Notes to members about the Wycombe District Council 'Living within our Limits' Supplementary Planning Document will be distributed. which "sets out minimum standards of construction for development with particular regard to energy efficiency and generation of renewable energy" to find out whether we want to send a WFOE or individual response. (It may be of interest to note that in a recent campaign in Swindon, although there were 55,000 signatures on a petition against a building project, it was counted as one because they were members of one group).

5. Thame and Chinnor FOE events coming up

Leaflets were issued to advertise Thame and Chinnor FOE events:

- a Swapshop on Saturday 9th May from 10am-12 noon in Chinnor Village Hall,
- a film showing of 'The Age of Stupid' on Friday 5th June 8.00pm at the Thame Players Theatre, Nelson Street, Thame.
- a Green Fayre on Saturday 20th June from 10am-4pm in Chinnor Village Hall

6. Wooburn Park

There are plans to build a zip wire and other recreational facilities on an area which has been given special status as a nature reserve. It was suggested that we support the building of a recreational area with minimal impact on the area, eg raised walkways. Large areas have been left unmown and there are numerous insects and plants that should be preserved under biodiversity provision. A reply will be sent on behalf of WFOE as above.

7. Local Campaigns

Sustainability in Schools

No meeting with the Sustainability Officer from Bucks CC has been arranged yet. The sustainability officer is promoting school farm visits, encouraging schools to grow food, etc.

Plastic Bag Campaign

No further work has been done. It will be monitored. It has been proposed that September 12th should be national plastic bag-free day.

Greening of Eden

Relevant personnel have not been in contact, so no progress to date.

Bare Gardens

No progress this month.

8. Draft WFOE Handbook

All Members were asked to read this and give feedback but especially to approve the constitution so that it is ready for the AGM next month.

9. National Campaign – Food Chain Campaign

- The campaign was outlined. It is calling on the Government to revolutionise the way we produce meat and dairy produce, by moving away from intensive production dependent on imported food, and instead supporting home grown animal feeds and low-impact meat and dairy production. It seeks to do this by increasing public awareness about the links in the food chain, and by pushing for the introduction of a Sustainable Livestock Bill. It can also be easily linked with themes like locally-sourced produce, grow-your-own, healthy eating, reduced meat consumption etc.
- Many ideas were produced, which could be undertaken to raise awareness of this campaign. Members put stickers by those ideas they thought would be feasible to undertake. Results will be emailed and a shortlist to members to be discussed more fully at a future meeting.
- Aylesbury Vale FOE has a campaign to invite young people aged 18-30 to produce artwork in digital format about the Food Chain Campaign, in order to raise awareness of this issue and to get young people involved in FOE.
- The possibility of setting up a forum via our website was discussed. It is a good idea, as it would encourage discussion on our campaigns which would fulfil our aim of raising awareness, but it needs someone to manage it.
- There is a regional gathering at the end of May which will inform about Food Chain campaign.

10. Annual General Meeting scheduled for June

Jean will send out formal invitations to all members for the AGM on Wednesday 3rd June, today. The minutes of the last AGM will be attached. The Treasurer's report and the Review by Sam will be sent out to members when available.

11. Any Other Business

- There is a Food Group meeting at the Environment Centre on Friday 8th May, 7.30pm.
- Conference 2009 is going ahead. The deadline for submitting motions to conference is June 5th 2009 by 12.00 noon. See link www.foe.co.uk/events/conference.html. All local groups will receive the first draft of the proposed motions and amendment forms by 26th June.

Next meeting will be the Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 3rd June 2009 at 7.30pm at the Environment Centre, Holywell Mead, High Wycombe. Refreshments will be available after the meeting.