

Wycombe Friends of the Earth

Minutes of Meeting

Wednesday 7th October 2009, 7.30pm at
The Environment Centre, Holywell Mead, High Wycombe

Present: 12

Apologies: 2

Welcome to new members.

1. Ecotip of the Month will be:

Avoid car pollution, traffic and fuel bills by walking your child to school. Walk to school month is October. You can also get together with other parents to organise crocodile convoys of children, with adults taking turns to shepherd kids to school. Visit www.walktoschool.org.uk for full advice.

2. Event Calendar

- The possibility of an event calendar to be put on the website, perhaps keeping it 3 months ahead, was discussed.

3. The Wave – London pre Copenhagen Rally – 5th December.

- The UK's biggest ever demonstration in support of action on climate change.
- FOE are asking local groups to join this event and there may be an assembly point for FOE groups, venue to be advised nearer the time. More details at www.the-wave.org.uk.

4. Friends of the Earth Conference – Report

One member thought conference was rather downbeat compared to previous years, probably due to finance cuts. Some groups were rather disenchanted that some campaigns have had to be pulled back.

- All 8 motions were passed (see National FOE website for details). One of them - The National FOE statement on Population size - will be revisited and was particularly important.
- Another member attended the conference for the first time and was impressed by the creative energy of members and there were many members with good ideas. A worthwhile and inspiring experience.

5. Damage to Woodland by 4x4s, raised by Speen resident

The Secretary of State has approved the fact that the woodland should not be used by 4x4s unless permission is specifically sought. This is a good result.

6. Low Carbon Transition Plan

- This plan was researched. Briefly, the plan proposes that by 2020:
- More than 1.2 million people will be in green jobs.
- 7 million homes will have benefited from whole house makeovers, and more than 1.5 million households will be supported to produce their own clean energy.
- Around 40 percent of electricity will be from low-carbon sources, from renewables, nuclear and clean coal.
- We will be importing half the amount of gas that we otherwise would.
- The average new car will emit 40 percent less carbon than now.

Four sectors need serious carbon reduction:

1. Power sector,
2. Homes (smart meters to be installed),
3. Work places,
4. Agriculture.

7. West Wycombe School

- This school would be interested in someone to give a short talk on Wycombe FOE or Green issues to fit in with their Green topic this term.
- It was suggested the talk should start with a 5 minute film/DVD as a talking point.
- National FOE may have information appropriate for schools.

8. Facebook

- This has now been set up.
- Other members were encouraged to join and enliven it.

9. The Handbook

The handbook will be moved forward. It should explain aims and how the group works.

10 Partnership Working between Local Environmental Groups

- Green issues need to have a higher profile locally. One way of doing this is by forming partnerships with other similar groups, eg the Environment Centre, Transition Towns. For instance, Transition Towns are showing the film 'The Age of Stupid' on 24th November at the Environment Centre, for which we could help with publicity and perhaps have our own details available at the showing.
- Transition Towns has given a presentation to local councillors and Wycombe FOE was mentioned.
- Exhibitions at the Environment Centre can promote such groups. There will be a meeting to discuss how this can be progressed.
- Working with WDC on promoting alternatives to plastic bags will have the benefit of making links with WDC for future issues.

11. Planet Friendly Farming Event.

- We received £57 in donations.

Impressions and lessons learned:

- Perhaps should have used the Environment Centre for a venue, due to numbers, but then we may not have had the students and people from the area local to John Hampden School.
- The actual event went well and was well received.
- Jobs need to be further delegated so that things happen at the right time and overload for some people avoided.
- There was a good discussion and was very local.
- The objectives of the campaign were: 1. to get MPs to sign the EDM, by signing postcards to send to MPs, and 2. to spread public awareness. The additional objective for the event was to gain extra Wycombe FOE members.
- Actions to come from this:
 1. follow up the theme with the schools through the students who attended.
 2. follow up the issues up with the MP.
 - MPs to be encouraged to push Government for a progressive agreement at the Copenhagen Conference in December. Dominic Grieve and Paul Goodman will be visited by at least one of their constituents.

12. Next meeting will be on Wednesday 4th November at 7.30pm at the Environment Centre (first Wednesday of each month).