

Wycombe Friends of the Earth

Minutes of Meeting

Wednesday 7th April 2010, 7.30pm at
The Friends Meeting House, 25 London Road, High Wycombe

Present: 12

Apologies: 5

Names in bold denotes action by that person.

1. Finance

- The account is in credit at present.
- Funds badly needed for further possible campaign costs.
- Monthly meeting hire costs will balance all incoming (hopefully) membership fees.
- New membership fees of £5 pa are now due.
- A banner from National FOE and flip chart holders have been acquired
- £20 to be paid to the Local Group Partnership Agreement which includes details of insurance.

2. Ecotip of the Month will be:

Walk for health, walk to school, walk to work. 17th April is the launch of Wycombe Walk Week, see www.walkit.com where you can find a route and walking time between two points in High Wycombe and many other places nationwide.

Walk to Work week nationally is from 26-30 April. The theme for this year's event is 'Get fit without the hassle. Try walking to, from or during work.'

5 challenges are set for employees this year and they include:

1. Try walking all or part of the way to work
2. Try walking all or part of the way home from work
3. Hold a walking meeting
4. Walk all or part of the way to a meeting
5. Take a walk during your lunch break

More details can be found at: <http://www.walkingworks.org.uk/walk-to-work-week-2010>

3. Forthcoming Events.

- 15th April. 7.45pm at Borlais Grammar School, Marlow – hustings in Marlow involving Beaconsfield constituency. Jeremy Bailey, Green Party, will attend. An RSVP event.
- 18th April 8pm, hustings in All Saints Church, High Wycombe town centre. We have been asked if we would like to ask a question.
- Swap shop on 24th April 10am -12 noon, Chinnor Village Hall (on website).
- 9th May. An organised walk raising money for Food Chain Campaign starting from Long Crendon. Email Mike Chadwick if you would like further details.
- 5th June, FOE SE Regional Gathering in London, details on National FOE website.
- National FOE Annual Conference 11-12th September in Reading.

Members are encouraged to view the calendar of events on the website.

4. How is your Group Doing?

Attending members filled in the above questionnaire, showing a moderately but encouragingly positive view of the group and slightly more positive than last year's.

5. Members Handbook

The latest edition of the handbook will be distributed by email. Members were asked to look through it.

6. Bring Your Own Bag Day 20th March - lessons from stall, campaign follow-up work

- Tight rope walker was good but the link to WFOE or green event was not obvious.
- Profile of our group has increased through the event.
- Stallholders operated rather in isolation, eg one group were giving out bags which conflicted with our bag giving.
- It showed that there are a number of environmentally aware groups in Wycombe.
- It was suggested that posters could have been erected in Eden saying that a percentage of council tax goes on waste/recycling etc. so it makes it more relevant to the public and their bills.
- Perhaps needed a big poster at either end of the group of stallholders, so that the public knew what was coming up and why.
- Shops thought that there was a good level of awareness about the bag free day and seemed willing to repeat the activity.
- Members thought we should participate another time if given the opportunity as it raises our profile.
- The group co-ordinator attended the information day for The Wycombe Partnership and gave the campaign presentation, which was very well received. The partnership is going to write to the head offices of the shops, encouraging their support for bag awareness and suggesting more local autonomy so that local shops could act on such matters without having to seek Head Office approval.
- The campaign and our group will be mentioned in Community News.
- The green credentials of Eden cover one side of an A4 sheet. There may be an opportunity for us to make further suggestions to green-up Eden.

7. 'Lush' Opportunity

- 'Lush' support local organisations and charities and have invited us to an event on April 25th 11am-5pm. They will sell a 'charity pot' on that day for £12 and give Wycombe FOE the proceeds minus VAT.
- We can set up a WFOE table in the store on this day.
- National FOE has no objection to the idea. It has been done before and Lush is a green retailer.
- Lush require no endorsements etc from us.
- Members discussed pros and cons in participating in the charity day at 'Lush' and it was concluded that we will participate.
- 2 members will be willing to cover half the day each and will liaise to arrange it. Thank you both.
- Membership leaflets and information about our plastic bag campaign, and other campaigns/events coming up, could go on the table.

8. Environment Centre Update

The Environment Centre has sold off their portable assets and WDC has taken over the building. The EC continues as an organisation, at present in the form of a shop front usage in the town centre (by the entrance to the Chilterns) to display environmental information. There are current discussions involving a possible link with Bucks New Uni.

9 Food Chain Campaign Training Day

One member attended the training day and gave a synopsis of the day, as below.

- Members need to get MPs interested in promoting a more sustainable agricultural bill in parliament. Nearly 200 MPs have signed the Early Day Motion, but timing has now been altered through the calling of the General Election.
- Some farmers attended who outlined the pressures farmers experience and who support sustainable farming. They find selling produce locally quite difficult as the infrastructure to do it is not always there.

- It will be difficult to persuade the very big farmers to undertake more sustainable farming as the farms are run as businesses and the profit margin is small in order that the products in the shop/supermarket are attractive price-wise to the consumer.
- There is research on reducing soya for animal feed.
- There may be an opportunity for us to promote the Food Chain Campaign in the hustings coming up, eg questions to be asked.
- Each party has made a small commitment to a Supermarket Ombudsman.
- Some members expressed interest in attending the Wycombe hustings on 18th April. One member will ask a question on behalf of Wycombe FOE.
- Members were encouraged to send letters to their candidates to encourage them to consider environmental issues. Information and possible questions will be circulated.
- 2 members will investigate the contact details of the Wycombe candidates.
- Another member will do the same for the Beaconsfield and Marlow candidates.
- A local food directory is being compiled to include local food businesses located within 10 miles of High Wycombe. More details will be circulated to the group. 5 members expressed interest in surveying an area. This also links in with the Food Chain Campaign.

10. Any Other Business

Booklets from past campaigns are available if anyone interested, otherwise they will be recycled.

11. Next meeting will be on Wednesday 5th May (first Wednesday of each month) at 7.30pm at **the Friends Meeting House**, 25 London Road (on the corner of London Road with Stuart Road).