

# Wycombe Friends of the Earth

## Minutes of Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2010, 7.30pm

The Friends Meeting House, London Road, High Wycombe

**Present:** 8

**Apologies:** 4

### **1. Welcome**

Mike welcomed everyone to Wycombe FOE's 2010 AGM.

### **2. Minutes of last AGM**

Approved by the meeting

### **3. Review of the year**

There was a presentation of the review of the year, as previously distributed to members. In summary:

This covered our **campaigning activities**:

- in support of the national Food Chain campaign
- in the run-up to the Copenhagen climate talks
- a project to reduce usage of plastic and other single-use bags that we delivered on behalf of the Local Strategic Partnership
- correspondence about two local land-management issues
- signposting a local school to appropriate FOE web resources
- continued membership of the national Marinet network

Plus **organisational and miscellaneous matters**, including:

- completion of the handbook for members, containing guidance and information on how the Group operates.
- ongoing refresh of the website
- enhanced cooperation and liaison with Transition Town High Wycombe, but a setback due to the closure of The Environment Centre triggering the need for a new venue
- social events
- our nomination for an Earthmovers Award at 2009 FOE Conference

The meeting was reminded that it was a year since the Coordinator took on the role from the previous member, who, he said, deserved great credit for how he led the Group from its inauguration in 2006, and laid its solid foundations. Thanks were also given to other postholders and members for their efforts during the year. It was reported that membership stands at just over 30, with average attendance at monthly meetings being about a dozen.

**Activities for this year** will include continued work on the Food Chain Campaign, both national actions, and potentially local angles too. Indeed, at the moment, several members are assisting Transition Town HW with the production of a Local Food Directory, a project with obvious linkages. Views and suggestions were sought about what other local environmental issues we could / should be involved in.

#### **4. Finance Report**

In summary:

- We started the new financial year with a balance of £278.88 and ended it with a positive balance of £246.48, although it should be noted that there are outstanding expenses of £192.50 and income of just over £500 carried over into next financial year.
- Income this year has come from membership fees, donations and a payment by Wycombe District Council for the cost of the plastic bag surveys.
- Expenses are mainly for room hire, FoE Partnership agreement and payments to the surveyors for the W.S. P. Waste project.
- Once all payments are in we are anticipating an overall gain of £500 from the Wycombe Strategic Partnership project.
- Our room hire expenses for the coming year will amount to £144 (with Partnership Agreement and web-site expenses on top) so we will need to bear in mind the ongoing need to increase income in some form to cover these regular expenses.

#### **5. Election of Officers**

Co-ordinator and Treasurer post holders were re-elected.

While formally no other post is required to be filled by election the meeting did endorse all other existing post holders to continue for the following year.

#### **6. Plans and ideas for the future**

There was some discussion around the idea of working with the Council on projects. A member stated his view that that this was ok provided we didn't compromise on our ideals and got our voice heard, and were not just being used.

A member restated her slight reservations about the Lush event as it still relied on pushing consumerism, encouraging people to buy non essential items.

A member thought that the Council was a vast organisation with many arms and aims which it was impossible to fully align with.

A member thought it essential that we still challenge what they do when we need to.

The group were in agreement that we should check:

1. Are there other issues we should be discussing or campaigning on?
2. Is our profile prominent?
3. How do we ensure that all involvement is fulfilling?

It was agreed that a note will be sent to all members asking for a couple of lines on what works for them in terms of the way the group works and its activities.

A member said that as he hadn't been present for most of the last year he felt quite detached from the group's work.

A member raised the point made at last month's meeting about having a talk at the start or end of the meeting. Talks for the next few months were agreed

- 1) Population
- 2) Railway plans
- 3) Feed in Tariffs (Possibly speaker from London who has contacted the group)

#### **7. Any Other Business.**

In closing a member thanked the co-ordinator for all his work over the year.

A member suggested we put a summary of the year's events onto the website.

## **Routine Business**

- 1) Ecotip of the Month  
Agreed to use tip about using public transport, subject to the addition of travelinesoutheast as an extra web address
- 2) Hamilton School Fete  
Stall at the Fete on 19/6 from 1200-1600. Some help will be needed to man the stand  
Need to get a prize for a food-related quiz. The Rangers will be on the stand
- 3) Food Chain campaign  
Which MPs will take forward Private Members Bills is soon going to be balloted. If a local MP is chosen we will be expected to lead on persuading them to take the food campaign issue forward. This is the only time that it is acceptable to lobby an MP who is not your direct representative so we can still be involved even if a local MP is not chosen.  
The vote has been put back so we have a little more time to plan – We will have a meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> June to discuss, in advance of the 3 week lobbying period.
- 4) Local food directory  
Thanks were expressed to Alan for the amount of work he has been putting into the directory. Mike reminded the group that TTHW had received £275 towards costs from a High Wycombe area County Councillor. The main players in producing the directory have been Celia Carter, Sheila Manley, Mike and Alan and Nayani Algama. The directory includes suppliers/growers within 10 miles of Wycombe town centre which actually extends as far as Chesham, Henley and Wendover. Lots of businesses qualify and they now all need to be contacted to see if they want to be included.  
It would have been possible to produce an online directory but the group wanted to do a hard copy format. The £275 funding given would not stretch to this so a bid is being submitted for a further £1000 of funds to allow the printing of 3000 24 page booklets.  
A script has been produced for the people contacting the suppliers that starts “we are a group of volunteers” so that we don’t suffer being hung up on by businesses who think we may be trying to sell them something.  
Sam suggested we use his brother as a test of the script as he is in business, although not part of the directory.
- 5) Blog  
2 members expressed interest on doing a blog. Noted that a TT member already does one for TTHW. Bucks Free Press are on a look out for more – a member might do lifestyle tips while A member would do more nature themed entries.  
A member is making enquiries to the BFP ready for a submission.
- 6) Next meeting  
will be on Wednesday 7th July at 7.30pm until 9.30pm at the Friend’s Meeting House.