

Wycombe Friends of the Earth

Minutes of Monthly Meeting

Wednesday 2nd May 2012, 7.30pm

at The Friends Meeting House, 25 London Road, High Wycombe.

Present: 12

Apologies: 2

1. Welcome and apologies

2. Forthcoming events

(visit the WFOE website calendar for further details - <http://www.wycombefoe.org.uk/>)

- May 13th – Pann Mill Open Day, 11am-4pm
- May 26th – Milton Keynes or Aylesbury – local workshop on supporting local wind farm applications (mainly Aylesbury area)
- June 16th – Hamilton School fete
- June 16th – Chinnor and Thame Friends of the Earth Green Fayre, 10am-3pm

3. AGM preparations

- The AGM will be on Thursday June 14th in front room at Friends Meeting House.
- This will be put on the website.
- 2 members will deliver the AGM notices in the next week.
- Members to consider if they would like to take on an officer role.
- As a group we will run out of money, so we need more membership or fund raising activities.
- We might consider whether to move our monthly meeting venue elsewhere.
- There will be an opportunity to do a Bees campaign update.
- The Co-ordinator will investigate the possibility of a speaker at the AGM, eg, a local bee-keeper.

4. Main points of Bee campaign meeting on Tuesday 1st May:

- A Google doc will be set up so bee sub-committee can add information.
- The Co-ordinator will approach WDC to encourage Council sites to be planted with wild flowers.
- Members will seek bare public ground for wild flower sowing.
- A member will set up a stall to promote the campaign at local school.
- Members will approach garden centres to ask if they are considering stocking and promoting bee friendly plants (Bees, bugs and butterflies events coming up at Little Marlow Garden Centre)
- 2 members will create a leaflet for families to follow a bee friendly trail in school holidays.
- A member will give a bee friendly talk in a local school.
- The WFOE website will be updated to include bee campaign items.
- The FOE logo on the WFOE website will be changed to the new one.
- Roots in HW are to set up a 'bee' display. Some FOE wild flower seeds could be available.
- There will be a WFOE stall at the Pann Mill Open Day to promote this campaign.

5. FOE re-branded Goods

The new FOE T-shirts, banners etc. were displayed. It was generally thought by most members that these should be kept centrally and used as and when needed.

6. Next meeting will be the **AGM on Thursday 14th June 2012** at 7.30pm at the Friends Meeting House, 25 London Road, High Wycombe (on the corner of London Road with Stuart Road). There followed an interesting talk and slide show by a member of 'Population Matters', which generated subsequent discussion. The following points were among those highlighted and have been noted with reference to the 'Population Matters' website at <http://populationmatters.org/>

Population concern is fundamentally a concern about the balance between human needs and the resources available to meet those needs, now, and for the foreseeable future. From the period of Confucius and Aristotle, observers throughout history have noted the consequences of unsustainable population growth. Such concerns tended to increase at times when population grew, but then subsided when technology enabled resources to catch up. However, their concerns about a rising population have too often been drowned out by those who support population growth for economic or political reasons.

Historically the size of human communities has depended on their ability to harness resources. Population growth was relatively slow until the 18th Century, when a step-change in agricultural productivity helped world population to rise dramatically. The industrial revolution initiated a huge increase in global trade while public health improved tremendously, both changes enabling population to increase.

Later, in the mid 20th Century, increased agricultural productivity achieved through the Green Revolution allowed population numbers to double between 1950 and 1990. Nevertheless, our [dependence](#) on natural resources remains absolute. Numbers are now projected to rise from seven billion in 2010 to between eight and eleven billion by 2050. It is unlikely that an equivalent increase in [food production](#) can be repeated without the use of significantly more [energy](#), [water](#) and fertiliser, inputs which are themselves limited and may also be vulnerable to climate change.

Industrialisation and rising standards of living are also increasing each person's consumption of water, energy and [materials](#) as well as food, and putting already limited [space and amenities](#) under yet more pressure. Our lifestyles and the technology we use are driving over-consumption, leading to serious consequences as resources run low.

We rely on the world's ecosystems and rich biodiversity for everything we need to exist, from the regulation of our atmosphere and the pollination of plants to the creation of important new medicines and crops.

Overall world population has grown throughout history despite occasional downturns. Current trends show that this growth may be driven by a number of factors, in particular ageing, lack of reproductive health and access to modern contraception, lack of women's rights and poverty. In some countries, migration also contributes significantly to the increase in population.

Many have observed that famine, war and pestilence were consequences of too rapid a growth in population.

Following the Second World War, the world population reached 2,500 million. Improvements in public health spread to the developing world and population numbers took a huge leap upward.

Robert McNamara, then President of the World Bank, said, "Short of nuclear war itself, population growth is the gravest issue the world faces. If we do not act, the problem will be solved by famine, riots, insurrection and war."

This view was shared by people as diverse as Albert Einstein, Lyndon B. Johnson and Martin Luther King. Concerned nations and organisations, led by the United States, accelerated support for family planning programmes, using newly-developed modern contraceptive methods. While these programmes worked well in many countries, they were not always voluntary. For example, in India under Indira Gandhi's State of Emergency, many men were put under pressure to accept sterilisation. This is something that Population Matters and other population concern organisations today condemn.

As we look ahead to the middle of this century, world population is projected to reach between 8 and 11 billion. Increasing numbers of people are voicing concerns about population numbers in a context of biodiversity loss, climate change and rapid depletion of limited oil, fresh water, land, habitat and wildlife resources.