

## Wycombe Friends of the Earth - Minutes

For Zoom meeting on Wednesday 6th January 2021 at 7.30pm:

Present online: 10

Apologies: 5

Eco Tip: Food waste

- **Wycombe Food Hub** (<http://wycombefoodhub.org>) is a charity located near All Saints Church, High Wycombe which diverts supermarket waste food to people on low income. They are currently looking for more volunteers for picking up waste food from supermarkets. Reducing food waste is key to fighting climate change according to Project Drawdown [www.drawdown.org/solutions/table-of-solutions](http://www.drawdown.org/solutions/table-of-solutions). So apart from feeding the needy and saving the planet, you also get some government approved exercise during lockdown.

- **Food waste** generates greenhouse gasses. In landfills, food is broken down by bacteria that produce methane, a gas which contributes to global warming. It's estimated that about 18 million tonnes of food goes to landfill ANNUALLY in the UK. That's also wasted money that people are spending! The key is to only buy as much as you need. By being smarter with food purchases and by eating everything, a family of four could save as much as £70 each month.

- Food requires a lot of resources to grow and transport. Many of the fruits and vegetables that we have here in the UK are not even grown here and they are imported from other countries. This means that we're consuming fuel in trucks and planes to transport food, but it all goes to waste if we're not actually eating the food. Plus, growing crops requires a lot of resources like energy and water too, which gets wasted along with the food if it's not eaten.

- Thousands of people around the world don't have enough food to eat on a daily basis. We should be preserving the food that we are so lucky to have!

So:

1. Only buy what you need and plan your purchases.
2. Reduce, or eliminate, your meat and dairy consumption.
3. Buy your food from sustainable sources where possible.
4. Buy local where possible.
5. Buy food with reduced packaging.

**Finance:** Current balance is £448. £30 donation received from one member, otherwise no change.

**Climate action:** Bucks Climate Action Alliance has not done much over the last month but a meeting scheduled for mid-Jan. Up for discussion will be their approach to the County elections in May. This might lead to drawing people's attention to workshops by national FoE.

National Foe has offered a workshop on campaigning for council elections. Councillors can be invited and anyone else who wants to attend. There is some doubt as to whether elections will actually take place. Might not be sure until the end of March.

**Food Waste:** Ivan keen to explore this subject and whether there is scope for action. He mentioned "Project Drawdown" which lists climate change solutions. Food waste and plant based eating are in top 5 solutions. Can we review current campaigns, any dormant ones and do we have any resources to campaign on this? Maybe at least our Pann Mill presence could be on this theme.

It was noted that food waste is a good way of involving those who are not activated by climate change and also that it is a complex issue, bearing in mind that there are some families with not enough food to go round. There was some discussion on this theme and it is clear we do not know enough about whether waste is primarily by supermarkets or consumers or others. Much would seem to have been done during the pandemic to divert waste to those in need. Locally the Wycombe Food Hub is collecting excess food and distributing it. A member will contact a member of this organisation with the idea of holding some kind of on-line event, open to all like minded organisations, to help us become familiar with the issue. There was general approval for this idea.

One way to contribute to less food waste is to shop for reduced items in the supermarket, with the idea that these would be discarded if not sold. It would also be desirable to avoid plastic packed items.

**Council and Area Boards.** Not many of us had received replies to our emails. Only 3 replies in total. No advance or response to emails from Area Boards either, however Penelope is continuing with discussions in the background.

**Recruitment for officer positions:** National Foe will advertise on national network. Replies by end Feb requested.

**Continuing campaigning under Covid:** No ideas. One reply from a cabinet member had said that until Covid was sorted they could not do anything about Climate Change. Difficult to organise and people not in mindset. Probably just need to be ready to go when the situation allows.

A member was very positive about the effectiveness of letter writing and keen to support in this way where possible.

There was also mention of the fact that Margaret Thatcher made the first reference to action on climate change, a handy fact to have up your sleeve for those who think it is primarily a left wing activity. A member will send link to quote. There was also talk of a multi-million emergency fund which no-one knew much about !

#### **AOB:**

- **Composting:** This subject was raised, with questions as to how best to home compost to avoid attracting rats and what happened to the food waste and green waste that the councils take away. One member did look into this, but we were still not certain. Perhaps something else to investigate again. Home composting is best done in an enclosed container to avoid the rat issue.
- **Community Energy scheme** talk on Monday evening at 6 pm organised by a member. Should be good. Link has been circulated. We are all invited to join but are requested not to put this link on social media because of the risk of unwelcome interruptions. Speaker is Peter Capener who can be found on LinkedIn.

Meeting ended at 20.35.