

# Wycombe Friends of the Earth

Minutes of **Annual General Meeting** held on  
Wednesday 5th June 2024 at 7.30pm  
at the Friends Meeting House

**Present in person at the Friends Meeting House: 11 Apologies: 7**

The meeting began with a presentation about a community wind turbine for Wycombe proposed by *Wycombe Windy Way Project*. Points that were considered:

- Solar or wind? Decided on wind because land is needed for solar so it is expensive.
- Wind has a small footprint - geographically and ecologically.
- Have to decide 1. how tall it should be 2. what ecological factors should be considered, 3. where should it go?
- Cost and fundraising. Need a location and height and energy output are critical funding decisions to be made, Could raise community shares sold to local people or groups, group funding with fundraising for grants, or a mix of the two.
- Projects like this have been completed around the country so it is viable.
- A site search must include a suitable location for a wind turbine, have national grid connectivity, land purchase - lease or gift receipts, Transport connectivity, local planning agreements, community consultation, county planning laws and regulations, community agreement.
- Would cost between £3-12 million depending on size.
- National issues - present Tory government has a de facto ban on on-shore wind turbines; a future government could change that. The project will stretch over at least 3 years, so could pressure the government for planning reform.
- Local issues - site commitment can be switched if one site fails. Approaching the county planning dept early is crucial, the site size is an important cost and planning consideration,
- Why FOE? There are already some ties between our groups, WWWP feels that our values lie close together, and our groups operate in the same area and WWWP will fit in with FOE sense of community. The project will provide benefits for both.
- Next steps - take project to local community groups and gather a project group from participating community groups and develop a project plan,
- Result of the general election is pivotal to WFoE and other groups getting involved.
- WFoE would need to know which sites and height of the turbine.
- Need people with planning, fundraising, management experience etc. to take this forward.

The presentation was followed by Questions and Answers and then the WFoE AGM.

## 1. Minutes of last AGM

Approval nominated and seconded by members. Minutes were approved.

## 2. Annual Report

Membership of the group continued at a similar level to previous years, with 20 paid up members. This is an increase of two from last year. One of the new members regularly attends meetings. Attendance at meetings is typically about 50% of the membership. The following Training events were attended. - Nature Recovery Strategy, Warmer Homes, FoE Campaigning webinar.

### Meetings

Following the trend set during COVID restrictions, we have been having monthly 'zoom' meetings with quarterly meetings in person, a social in a pub and a Christmas social event at FMH.

### Social Media

Thanks to sterling work by the social media member, Facebook followers have increased from 242 to 290. Twitter was less active at 168 followers. Thank you also to the webmaster for keeping the website up to date.

### Campaigning

This has been minimal this year, due to lack of time and campaigning abilities by members.

### Events

We were more successful with events - which tend to be our main way of interacting with the public. We had stalls at Pann Mill and Marlow Carnival; both in September. The carnival has been held for many years, this was the second year it had a 'Green Village Event'. WfoE was one of half a dozen organisations promoting environmental themes.

We participated in a very poorly attended Wellbeing event in High Wycombe in June 2023, sharing a stall with WEC. We participated in Bee Squared in the spring. The coordinator participated in the Energy Efficient Homes event in Marlow in November and other members attended. Several signatures were collected for the Warmer Homes petition. After April we also had tables at Pann Mill and Frogfest both in May 2024. Pann Mill continues to be the best attended event in which we participate – by far. At Frogfest we handed out about 160 leaflets with suggestions for how people can consider the environment in the way they live their lives and how they vote.

### Collaboration with other groups

Wildflower Seeds for pollinators - a WEC (Wycombe Environment Centre) initiative which we advertised and widely distributed. There was an article in a local village magazine about the initiative and about Friends of the Earth. In the autumn three members attended an event in Hughenden Valley where representatives of about twenty local environmental groups. It was encouraging to meet so many like-minded local organisations, and we have liaised with WEC.

Overall

A review of the year shows that we have been quite active. It is difficult to gauge the benefit of our activity, and whether we could make a bigger impact in other ways.

### **3. Accounts and Finance Report**

The treasurer presented the accounts to the meeting which run from April-April.

- At the end of the year WFoE had a positive balance of £780.94, from £745.69 at the beginning of the year.
- Main income is from membership fees amounting to £200 from 20 members this year.
- Outgoings are due to room hire (Zoom meetings have reduced this expense), website expenses (donated by the webmaster) and stall costs at street events.

### **4. A Way forward?**

The coordinator will stand down but he offered to remain as coordinator doing current tasks for a month. During that time the group will endeavour to see whether others in the group might take on some of the tasks. Many thanks to the coordinator for what he has done after taking it on after the previous coordinator.

There was a discussion about time input against effectiveness and it was decided that Pann Mill stalls were effective because they are less work and people seem to have more time to come to the stall. Linking up with WEC on stalls is beneficial. Leafletting from stalls is also effective.

It is still hoped that someone might come forward to take on the coordinator role, or some aspects of the role (i.e. sharing the current duties between two or more people).

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

- a. Coordinator - current coordinator, but only until the next meeting
- b. Treasurer
- c. Webmaster
- d. Secretary
- e. Social Media team

With no other nominations it was agreed by the meeting that the current post holders will continue in the above roles.

## **A Short Business Meeting followed:**

### 1. **Ecotip** will be:

#### **Election**

Talk to your MP, council, friends and family about green issues.

**Ask candidates at the general election** about their agenda to combat climate change. Let them know you're watching!

### 2. **Social media.** 37 posts, 18 comments and 72 reactions. (following the AGM post).

### 3. **Stalls**

- Pann Mill and Frogfest - feedback Pann Mill gets more interest by passers by in the subject matter and people are not rushing to get shopping done as in the high street, and it is less work. Frogfest was effective, but more work and perhaps had fewer people stop at the stall. Just hand out leaflets another time?

- Future stalls? Possibly September Pann Mill to coincide with the Wycombe Festival which will incorporate Pann Mill Open Day.

### 4. **AOB**

- Blue plaques for the *Restore Nature Now* march on 22nd June rally. Can print off blue plaques for placing at strategic locations.

- Steve Baker Watch and The Community and Climate cafe will present Lord Deben putting the question 'Can we really afford net zero?' 13th June at West Wycombe Primary School, Church Lane, HP14 3AH. 7pm. Free to attend, please register at <https://bit.ly/3Kwhb98>

- The treasurer will ask for membership fees.

### 5. **The next meeting** will be a Zoom meeting on 3rd July, when frequency of meetings and roles of coordinator will be discussed.