

## **Wandsworth Friends of the Earth Group Meeting**

**February 17, 2016**

### **Those present:**

*Mike Grahn*

*Lynne McNulty*

*Susie Morrow*

*Terry Brown Chair*

### **Apologies:**

Stuart Oliver

Paul Dinsdale

TGB explained that he wished to review the activities of the group to establish a way forward. It was intended that the following should be considered:

### **Outreach & membership**

#### **Focus, campaigns and monitoring**

#### **Types of Activity**

In the event, not all of these topics were covered, but where discussed, comments are added to the listings below

### **Outreach & membership**

#### **How to reach more potential members**

**Email lists:** National FOE should be able to help with this, giving emails of local members. We could then email national members in the area, inviting them to come along to the local group meetings.

**Twitter:** Need to do more tweets referring to meetings and website

**Advertise:** Only possible where it can be done at no cost

**Get published:** Would have to be based on some public/interest raising campaign activity. There are quite a few local Newspapers and Magazines who would take good copy

**Wandsworth Radio:** The possibility of coverage on Wandsworth Radio was discussed. It's probably easy to get an interview, but once again this would require interesting topics/public activity

**Other groups/organisations:** No conclusions were drawn about any advantages of working with other organisations or other nearby FOE Groups. TGB believes that cooperation with Wandsworth Environmental Forum has its value. WEF has access to town hall rooms and seems to be able to put on an event quite effectively. Also It

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might be worth canvassing local amenity societies, such as the Putney Society, Wandsworth Society etc.

### **How to make joining the group more attractive**

**More compelling meetings:** TGB believed that the meetings would become more compelling if there were live campaigns and activities and more members. MG thought that the group did not have to be large to be worthwhile. We should work with the members we have.

**Better Activities:** There was a view that we should consider staging a public meeting on some chosen topic. This would hopefully draw more people to our activities and might have the added benefit of introducing new members to the group. We need it to work on what the topic might be for such a public meeting.

**Venue:** TGB raise the possibility of alternative venues. It was generally agreed that the recent makeover of the Brewers Inn had not improved it from the point of view of holding WFOE meetings. Because we are small group, it's probably best just to meet in a bar and in the evenings that generally means the pub. It was agreed that we would go back to the Spread Eagle for our next meeting. It was also thought that we might have a summer meeting on Susie's and Mike's allotment. This might include a themed presentation and might attract a wider audience.

**More Interesting Website:** This topic wasn't discussed, but the website can only reflect what is happening within the group. The website carries our recent tweets and may be able to carry some longer articles that are locally relevant. TGB will action.

**Press Coverage:** As mentioned above this will require activities that can be reported or copy that can be used by newspapers and other media.

**Enjoyable Meetings:** The consensus seems to be that meetings are most enjoyable when the discussion is lively. This means that holding fast to a strict agenda doesn't always generate the best type of meeting. A balance needs to be struck between covering an agenda and having a lively and topical discussion.

**Shared responsibility and actions:** The group is small and all members are quite busy with various voluntary activities, but it will be necessary to spread the actions once we embark on chosen activities and campaigns. **Post meeting note:** TGB finds it hard to both chair the meeting and make adequate notes at the same time. It might be better if someone else takes notes (volunteers?) and/or, If everyone's happy, the meeting is recorded (iPhone).

## Focus, campaigns and monitoring

### National FOE overview

TGB had spent some time looking at the national website and thought that the focus of the FOE has improved. In particular the global mission statement is good:

We stand for:

**A beautiful world:** we depend on the planet, so let's keep it in good shape

**A good life:** a healthy planet is one that works for people too

**A positive relationship with the environment:** acting together for the planet and everyone who lives on it

The featured National campaigns at the moment are:



The screenshot displays three campaign cards on a light blue background. Each card features a thumbnail image on the left, a title in bold blue text, a short description, and a 'Read more' link with a right-pointing arrow.

- The Bee Cause:** The thumbnail shows the 'THE BEE CAUSE' logo on a yellow background. The text reads: 'Find out how you can help our bees.' and 'Read more →'.
- Fracking in the UK:** The thumbnail shows a group of people at a protest holding signs, one of which says 'Smile We're going to Win!'. The text reads: 'Find out more about our campaign to stop the UK being fracked' and 'Read more →'.
- Rise up for the climate:** The thumbnail shows a large crowd of people at a climate protest with their arms raised. The text reads: 'Find out about our climate campaigning' and 'Read more →'.

[https://www.foe.co.uk/what\\_we\\_do/current\\_campaigns\\_index](https://www.foe.co.uk/what_we_do/current_campaigns_index)

### Local focus

Another strap-line of the FOE is "Think global, act local"

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The FOE website explains: “The FOE has the country's largest grassroots environmental campaigning network with groups in around 200 communities. Friends of the Earth local groups champion issues in their own communities. They also play a major part in winning change on national and international issues.” This should give us some clues as to what our activities should be about.

**The public realm, traffic & streets:** Traffic constraints are very much the province of Wandsworth Living Streets. But there may be an FOE angle.

**Public Open Space:** The poor levels of maintenance of much public open space and the lack of planting, trees in Wandsworth was generally discussed. There might be a relationship here also with the national ‘Bee Cause’ campaign. LMcN observed that Monsanto Roundup is being used on Council properties. A local campaign along the lines of “Bee(s) are for Battersea” might be a starter. It was noted that bees figure in the Battersea coat of arms (Is this true?). There could be quite a bit of local mileage in both pollinators (not just bees) and polluters. The lack of allotments in Wandsworth was also discussed.

**Divesting from fossil fuel investments:** There was not much discussion of this topic which was generally felt to be beyond the activities of WFOE at this time. There was however a discussion of possible activities relating to fossil fuels and energy supply. This needs untangled a bit. Topics such as the Drax Power Station and so-called biofuels, use of coal, oil and gas and in particular fracking are areas to be looked at. Here is a quote from the FOE website: “Friends of the Earth local group makes council begin to pull out of fossil fuels. Haringey Council’s Pensions Committee has just done something remarkable - shifting one-third of its investments, around £220 million, into a low-carbon fund. By moving its investments away from carbon-intensive industries (and that means no coal, and less oil), they are joining one of the fastest growing global campaigns ever.”

**Influencing private behaviour:** Again this was not discussed in any detail, but one of the issues raised was the paving over of private gardens. TGB referred to his “BringFrontsBack” campaign which is very much focused on this, but which needs quite a lot of further input. See <https://bringfrontsback.wordpress.com> .

## Possible local campaigns

**Climate:** This is still a headline issue and was generally felt to need addressing, But at a local level. The strange way everything connects, because issues relating to greening and paving in King Georges Park for instance, the Wandle and the Thames as well as the Thames Tideway sewer

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and other kinds of infrastructure all have a bearing on climate change. Again this needs to be untangled, If we are to move forward with some kind of action by the group. There was a wide-ranging discussion which it is hard to document.

**Recycling:** WFOE had for a long time been aiming to produce a short video about recycling. This had hit the buffers, Partly due to the take-up of this issue by Wandsworth Environmental Forum. Their public meeting on recycling had started new areas of action and concern. WFOE may still be able to get involved in some of these issues.

**20MPH:** The current consultation by Wandsworth Borough Council on a blanket 20mph speed limit throughout the Borough was being covered in-depth by Wandsworth Living Streets. Other than supporting their campaign, It wasn't felt that WFOE could do much more in this area.

**Open space and urban wildlife:** This is an area covered to a large extent by the London Wildlife Trust, but there could be other issues locally. Wildlife is sometimes regarded as vermin! This topic is covered to some extent above under the section on the public open space.

**Other possible areas of local action:** Falling under some of the above headings, the Wandsworth gyratory modifications and air pollution are also possible areas for action and campaigning.

There was a very general discussion during the second part of the meeting when we were joined by Vicki Carol from Wandsworth Environmental Forum. The following part of this note simply contains the headings for further discussion. We should perhaps consider these before our next meeting. Any comments would be most welcome.

## **Joining up with national campaigns**

**Bee Cause**

**Fracking**

**Climate change**

## **Types of activity**

**Street presence**

**Monitoring local government activity**

**Activity on twitter and other social media**

**Press and media**

**Marches and demonstrations**

**Lobbying politicians: local and national government**

**FOE National Campaigns**

## **Earth-care checklist**

### **Energy**

#### **Fossil fuels**

**Coal and oil**

**Gas and fracking**

**Nuclear**

#### **Renewables**

**Solar**

**Hydro and micro-hydro**

**Transfer and storage**

### **Air and climate**

**Pollution**

**Climate change**

### **Flora and fauna**

**Domesticated animals**

**Wild animals**

**Plants and planting**

**Ecologies and biodiversity**

### **Water**

**Paving and permeability**

**Flood protection**

### **Use of materials**

**Re use of manufactured resources**

**Consumables**

### **Use of land**

**Development and in impacts**

**TGB 02016-0227**

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