

## Wandsworth Friends of the Earth: Meeting May 18

### 0) Attendees & apologies

*Those present were as follows*

Susie Morrow  
Mike Grahn  
Stuart Oliver  
Terry Brown

*Apologies:*

Paul Dinsdale  
Charlotte Hawthorne  
Lynne McNulty

### Previous meeting note & matters arising

It was agreed that we would follow the topics as set out in the Notes of the meeting of April 20th as 'London Asks' with a view to selecting issues that we could take up in the Wandsworth Group.

### Make London's air safer to breathe:

Pollution in London is a major issue, With Putney High Street being one of the most polluted areas in the capital and probably the country. Stuart had made the point a number of times that 300 to 400 people will die prematurely in Wandsworth each year as a result of this. The comparison is made with terrorism which causes public outrage, while deaths due to pollution go almost unmarked. The discussion of what could be done centred largely on emissions from buses and other commercial vehicles, specifically diesel engines. An Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) has been proposed and it would thus be a good idea to campaign to get rid of loopholes that water down the effect of the legislation on exhaust emissions.

From September 2020, all cars, motorcycles, vans, minibuses, buses, coaches and heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) will need to meet exhaust emission standards (ULEZ standards), or pay a daily charge, when travelling in central London. Restriction of emissions should be across the whole London perhaps within the M25 as the limit of restriction. Post meeting note: the current Low Emission Zone does not extend to the M25 in many areas, particularly Watford, Weybridge and Chigwell are among the areas not included that lie within the M25. The ULEZ is very much smaller area and really only comprises the current congestion charging zone. The LEZ and ULEZ could be enforced using ANPR.

The discussion moved on to the effectiveness of diesel particulate filter (DPF) units on exhausts and blatant illegal removal of DPFs to enhance performance and avoid the damage that can be caused by blocked filters. Apparently there is a flourishing trade in carrying out these adjustments.

There is an issue with the low emissions legislation is in that it doesn't seem to be enforced effectively. A letter to the police commander in Wandsworth to draw attention to the need to enforce particulate control from these vehicles would be a good move. Stuart agreed to draft a letter to the police.

### Make cycling safer:

There was a quite brief discussion of the cycling issue. Two points were raised, (1) the introduction of two-way cycling on one-way motor-vehicle streets and (2) the view that there is an inadequate cycling infrastructure in Wandsworth.

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### **No new runways:**

Friends of the Earth is against any new runways in London but the discussion did not highlight a specifically local aspect of this (Wandsworth specifically). Clearly air traffic is a source of global warming gases and thus climate change.

It was agreed that climate change is the central issue and that all of the points that we are discussing really relate to an overall holistic view about the abuse of natural resources that results from misdirected commercial activity and unhealthy/profligate life choices. There was general agreement that this is a frighteningly pressing issue that the general public do not seem to take at all seriously, or in many instances even be aware of. Sadiq Khan had been adamantly against the new runway and this might be an appropriate time to write to the new mayor to establish his stance now on the runway and also publish the letter or make it known that a letter has been written in the local press.

This led to the discussion also that we now have two "Local personalities" in the GLA, being the new mayor and Leone Cooper who is assembly member for Wandsworth and Merton and spokesperson on environment. It's also good to know that there are also two Green Party members of the assembly now, Sian Berry & Caroline Russell,

### **Protect London's Green Spaces:**

The point was made that green spaces do seem to be under threat in Wandsworth. The formula E contract in Battersea Park is typical of the taking over of green space, which should be a sort of sanctuary, and using it for commercial purposes. There are number of other examples in the borough, which we could highlight of the erosion of green space, but we do need to specifically identify them.

The possibility of mini-parks and the reallocation of space previously dedicated to car parking to people by greening it is being pioneered in Hackney. Mike made the point that parking allocation should be cut by 1% per year to shift people into safer and more healthy travel modes other than private cars. Green space falls within the Wandsworth planning remit and Stuart made the point that, as a stakeholder, Friends of the Earth could attend Planning Forum meetings. These are not regular, but often take place to allow the Council to advise stakeholders of developments in planning policy in the Borough.

**Ensure that all homes are built to zero carbon standards:** This again presents a question for Wandsworth Council and it would be good find out how such an ambition might be implemented through planning control.

### **Divesting pension and other funds from fossil fuel investments.**

This is something which could be raised with was with the Council, for instance:

How is their pension fund invested?

Do they purchase their electricity through a green tariff?

Are there any other policies which take account of energy use in appropriate ways?

### **Tooting By-election:**

There was a general discussion about raising of of this sort of issue and the others we have discussed with the candidates in the tooting by-election. We could draft a letter to all of the candidates which would raise the issues of air pollution, the third runway and green space in the borough as well as their attitude two the mitigation of climate change in the Borough. It was agreed to that Terry would make an initial attempt at the draft letter and pass it on to the other group members to adapt and develop.

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### **Raising awareness of local groups.**

It is clear that Wandsworth it's not alone in being a very small group and struggling to get new members. We have discussed in the past the fact that there must be many national Friends of the Earth members in the Wandsworth area, but it seems that we cannot access these people in order to encourage them to come to the group meeting. We discussed whether it would be possible to get the membership listing from National Friends of the Earth and it was agreed that Terry would raise this as an issue at the forthcoming Basecamp. There does seem to be a disconnect between Friends of the Earth at a national level and in the local groups. On this front it was also suggested that we should definitely meet up with the Southwark group, maybe at the Royal Oak in Tabard Street, Borough.

### **Activities that the group is prepared to embark on:**

Terry raised the issue of what activities the group would be prepared to participate in, irrespective of the issue being raised. There is general agreement that street leafleting is not a good idea. However Twitter and social media are regarded as good ways of "spreading the gospel" and that we should be lobbying our local politicians and the press and media. We should also be monitoring local government activity. These channels of communication and influence should be activated once we have developed our campaign ideas.

It was agreed that we would be prepared to take a stall at an event and had done this in the past and so we should put together a schedule of events, and especially annually repeating events, so that we would have time to prepare.

### **Other events, Attendances & Issues:**

#### *Past events:*

May 8: The climate march backwards: none present had attended and there didn't seem to be much news about the event.

April 27: The Die-in; 'Stop Killing Cyclists' staged a pollution-masked protest and Die-In outside the Department for Transport's HQ, protesting against the UK's horrific pollution death toll of 40,000 people every year, the enormous £20 billion annual cost to NHS and the government actions worsening the crisis. Susie Morrow attended.

#### *Forthcoming events:*

June 3-5: Friends of the Earth Basecamp in Castleton, Hope Valley, Derbyshire, Terry attending.

### **AOB**

#### **Wandsworth Friends of the Earth funds:**

Mike has been advised that our current bankers wish to start charging us a monthly fee for the Group bank account. Mike has been on the lookout for an alternative bank and asked for authority from the group to take WFOE funds into his personal bank account, if necessary during a transition from one bank to another. The Group agreed to this.

We had a broad discussion of the potential for banking our funds. Mike undertook to look further for a banking opportunity with no charge. Triodos Bank was a possibility.

### **Next meeting:**

Terry said that he couldn't do either the 15th or 22nd of June and it was agreed that there would be no meeting in June, so the next meeting therefore scheduled for July 20.