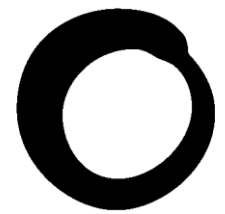


Motions to Conference 2008

A background briefing



**Friends of
the Earth**

Please read and consider this briefing carefully before submitting a Motion.

Why do we have Motions?

The Motions process is an important, formal opportunity for local groups to put forward their views and suggestions for the work and direction of Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland as a whole. There are, of course, other formal and informal opportunities throughout the year, and we hope groups will also take those up.

What are the 'rules'?

Friends of the Earth's Motions process is set out in the Standing Orders, which can only be amended by a Motion to Conference. The Standing Orders are available at <http://community.foe.co.uk/conference>, or on request from the Returning Officer and at Conference. *(Please note the enclosed documents regarding proposed changes to the Standing Orders this year.)*

Please note that Motions cannot commit Friends of the Earth to expenditure, and that there is a prescribed form of wording that must be used. This form of wording is described below and on the Motions form.

Who can propose Motions?

Motions can be proposed by all licensed local groups which will have been in existence for more than a year by Conference (for 2008 this means that your group must have originally licensed before 1 September 2007 and must have re-licensed by 1 May 2008). Motions proposed by a licensed local group must be seconded (by a different group), and the seconding group must also have re-licensed by 1 May 2008 and be more than one year old by Conference.

Friends of the Earth send all licensed local groups the relevant paperwork, including a Motions submission form. Motions have to be submitted on the Motions submission form. Please make photocopies (or download extra copies from <http://community.foe.co.uk/conference>) if you wish to submit more than one Motion, but each Motion must be submitted on a separate form.

The deadline for submitting Motions is 5pm on 23 May 2008.

History of the motions debate and process

Over the years, the Motions debate at Conference has at times been a source of frustration and exasperation for some of those involved. In response to feedback and pleas to improve the event, changes were made in 2004. These changes have been retained and are outlined below. They were drawn up in consultation with a mixed sample of local group members, staff and Board representatives.

Improved Communications

- Each year, groups will be sent details of how the Motions process operates, including timetables outlining the steps for proposing Motions to Conference and for the Board's response to the Motions debated (known as Conference Resolutions). The timetable for proposing Motions follows a set structure (detailed in the standing orders) and the dates are updated each year (please see this year's timetable at the end of this briefing). The process for preparing Board responses to Motions was last updated in April 2007.
- In advance of the Motions debate there will be an update on the implementation of last year's Motions.
- Support and training in presentation techniques will be offered to those proposing and seconding Motions.

- Staff/Board working on implementing a Motion will update proposers throughout the year.

Improved quality of debate

- To ensure each Motion has sufficient time to be debated properly, prioritisation will be done by post before Conference and local groups will prioritise up to six motions for debate - five of a campaigning nature and one of an organisational/constitutional nature. Those speaking on behalf of, or against, a Motion will know in advance of Conference that they will be given ample time to make their case, and thus will be able to prepare accordingly. We hope that each Motion will receive approximately 20 minutes of debate, (in years gone-by it averaged 10 minutes) although time may need to be allowed for Emergency Motions.
- In submitting a campaign or organisational Motion, groups will be asked to at least consider the Motion in the context of the new Five Year Strategic Plan for 2008-2013.
- The format will be improved by running the debate more efficiently with key speakers being located at the front of the hall. On occasions when an initial show of hands indicates unanimous support or rejection of a Motion, then there need be no drawn out requests for speakers of ‘for’ and ‘against’ - a for could be followed by a for, against by against.
- Local group members will be given a little more time to confer before they register their vote. As votes are made on behalf of the group (one vote per group on each Motion/Amendment), each group will have nominated a voting delegate who will be given the group’s “voting card” in their Conference pack. Votes are made by holding up the group’s voting card at the appropriate moment during the debate – only votes made with voting cards will be counted.
- Chairing will be firm – *no-one* will be allowed to overrun!

Improved implementation

- We have now set up systems and checks to ensure that each Motion accepted by the Board follows a clear and timely pathway into Friends of the Earth’s Five Year Strategic Plan and staff work programmes and the Boards has appointed a “Friend of the Motions” to oversee this process.
- A document outlining the process which the Board will follow in responding to Motions, and the timetable for this, is sent to groups each year.

A question and answer session

- To be held at Conference and be open to local group, Board and staff members. At this Q&A session local groups will be able to both seek clarity on the Motions to Conference and ask burning questions on anything else they feel is relevant to Friends of the Earth. This will also be an opportunity to discuss Motions which are not prioritised.

Additional Guidance from the Chair

The Chair of this year’s Motions Debate will be Dave Coleman, the elected board member for the North West region. He has added the following comments:

“At annual Conference, a lively Motions debate can be thought-provoking, stimulating and enjoyable and one of the high spots of the weekend. Clearly one of the most important things in achieving this is that the quality of the Motions being proposed is high. This means Motions which are well thought out and meaningful, are positively worded and unambiguous and give a clear expression of feeling or ideas that if carried, “move us on” as an organisation and leave us all better informed.

In recent years Motions Debates have clearly stepped forward in terms of quality of Motions and process and the Capacity Building Team will be working harder than ever to ensure that this year’s debate is stronger still. The Returning Officer will work with all proposers and seconders of Motions at the drafting stage to ensure your Motions stand the greatest chance of success. However, the earlier the Motion is submitted the more time the team will have to help you with the preparation and drafting and the easier this will be. The timetable is extremely tight; submit your draft Motion early; don’t wait until the deadline!

Here are a few other thoughts to consider when drafting your Motion for this year's debate:

- Motions should be positively worded, stating clearly what you would like the organisation to do should the Motion be passed by Conference.
- Whilst it is reassuring to have Motions that, in effect, approve existing policy, these are unlikely to get past the prioritisation stage unless they offer something that is distinct from what we do now.
- The Board works hard to ensure that the organisation does not under-deliver on any of its campaigning activities and thus there are no assumptions of "slack" in the financial budgets. Should your Motion express a view that we should be carrying out a new or additional activity, it should also indicate which activities we currently do that your proposed activity should replace, or otherwise, how this new activity can be delivered without additional funding.
- Lastly, remember also that we are now in the final stages of moving into our new Five Year Strategic Plan, which was arrived at after extensive consultation at every level of the organisation. A Motion seeking to reverse or significantly alter the direction of activities being delivered under the Five Year Plan will be weighed up very carefully by the Conference audience (and ultimately by the Board), so your Motion is unlikely to succeed unless the justification for the change in strategy is extremely strong."

Good luck!

Dave Coleman

Chair of Motions 2008

Some key points you should note:

- ➔ Prioritisation will take place by post prior to Conference.
- ➔ A maximum of six prioritised motions will go forward for debate.
- ➔ On the Motions submission form you are requested to consider your Motion in the context of Friends of the Earth's Five Year Strategic Plan 2008- 2013. (Your group should have a copy of this document. You can also view this document online at: <http://community.foe.co.uk/conference> or request a copy from Jill Andrews, 26-28 Underwood Street, London, N1 7JQ, 020 7566 1677 or localgroups@foe.co.uk)
- ➔ You will be offered support in presenting your Motion at Conference effectively if you would like it.

Submitting a Motion

Putting your Motion into the right category

The Board asks that Motions be categorised, so that we can easily divide them into 'campaign-related' Motions and 'constitutional / organisational' Motions.

Examples of campaign-related Motions: *calling on Friends of the Earth to co-ordinate a national campaign against road building; calling on Friends of the Earth to mount a campaign on sustainable food production; calling on Friends of the Earth to develop a policy and campaign on Air Transport; calling on Friends of the Earth to campaign for reform of the land use planning system.*

Examples of constitutional / organisational Motions: *calling on Friends of the Earth to amend the Standing Orders of Conference; calling on Friends of the Earth to extend the period of balloting in Board elections; calling on Friends of the Earth to reiterate its non-party political stance.*

How should Motions and Amendments be worded?

The Board of Friends of the Earth cannot accept Motions which seek to commit Friends of the Earth irrevocably to expenditure; instead, Motions should ask the Board to consider or assess a course of action.

Motions may have two sections:

The first section should contain key supporting information relevant to the Motion, and should use only the following two expressions: "*This Conference notes ...*" (for factual information) and/or "*This Conference*

believes ..." (for opinions). Please note that you must not include lengthy explanatory text here; this should be provided as background information instead (see below).

The second section must begin *"This Conference calls upon the Board of Friends of the Earth to consider ..."* and should contain the expression of intent, i.e. the action that you are asking for.

Please note that a Motion need not have both sections, but **must** have the expression of intent. A Motion without an expression of intent will not be accepted.

You can get advice from Friends of the Earth staff or from your regional Board member. If you're not sure of your facts, or whether Friends of the Earth is already doing (or planning to do) what your Motion proposes, you are strongly urged to check it out with the relevant member of staff. You might also like to check against Friends of the Earth's Strategic Plan 2003-2008 (http://community.foe.co.uk/local_groups/strategy_grassroots_version.pdf) and the draft Strategic Plan 2008-2013 (<http://community.foe.co.uk/conference>). Please contact the Returning Officer, Jill Andrews, for advice or to find out who is the best member of staff for you to talk to. She can be contacted on 020 7566 1677 or at localgroups@foe.co.uk.

How do we explain the background to our Motion?

Motions must be as short as possible. This ensures that the debate is focussed and that the Motions paper is easily digestible. There is only space in the Motion for key supporting information and the statement of intent. Consequently, each Motion needs at least some further explanation, such as background and/or of the arguments in its favour, so that groups can properly consider the issue prior to Conference. Motions will not be accepted unless they are accompanied by background information.

Background information should be as concise as possible. You are allowed an absolute maximum of five hundred words to explain the context of your Motion and/or to present arguments in its favour. However, if you consider that the Motion does not require much further explanation then you should use fewer words. Please write your background information in plain English, avoiding technical terms where possible, so that it can be easily understood by all local groups. Background information must be sent in together with your Motion(s) on the submission form – **by 5pm on 23 May 2008**. The detail of each Motion, including the background information, will be incorporated into the Motions paper and sent to all local groups.

What if our group doesn't like all of what someone else's Motion says?

Once all Motions have been submitted, local groups have an opportunity to submit Amendments to Motions. The purpose of an Amendment is to improve a Motion. For example, a Motion might be in three or four parts, and your group might support some of the things it says, but wish to develop one of the parts. In this case, you could submit an Amendment to the Motion, deleting the bit you wish to improve, and replacing it with your chosen wording. The proposing and seconding group of the Motion to which the Amendment refers will be asked if they wish to incorporate the proposed Amendment. If they do, the Motion will be changed to include the Amendment. If not, the Amendment will be debated and voted on separately at Conference (if the Motion is prioritised), and then the Motion (as amended) will be debated and voted on as a whole. *(Please note that the proposed changes to the Standing Orders include a requirement for all Amendments to be proposed and seconded by licensed Local Groups. The current Standing Orders do not have a requirement for Amendments to be seconded. If the updated Standing Orders are adopted by Conference at the start of the Motions debate, the subsequent debate will be governed by them. Therefore, we recommend that all groups proposing Amendments also secure the support of a seconding group to ensure that the Amendment adheres to the proposed – and potentially adopted – Standing Orders.)*

How can Motions be amended?

As with proposing, only licensed Friends of the Earth Local Groups can propose Amendments. An Amendment form will be circulated with the draft Motions paper on the **6 June 2008**, and Amendments must be submitted on this form. As with Motions, you are asked to keep your Amendment as short as possible, and to provide background information to explain the context and/or the arguments in its favour; a

limit of 100 words of background information applies to all Amendments. The deadline for Amendments is **4 July 2008**.

What if another Motion is submitted which says roughly the same thing?

The Conference Organising Committee and the Board have the right to combine Motions on the same subject. If this occurs, each proposing group concerned would be contacted.

What about the prioritisation ballot?

Prioritisation will take place by post **prior** to Conference. Each local group will receive a list of Motions, with amendments, on **18 July 2008**. All groups will then need to prioritise up to **six** Motions which they would like debated at Conference and send their selection back to Underwood Street by **15 August 2008**. Please see the attached Motions timetable for an overview of important dates. This prioritisation ensures that the Motions that local groups think most deserving of debate get discussed at Conference. You may be asked to prioritise Motions within their categories – your top five campaign related motions in the campaign category and your one preferred organisational/ constitutional motion in the organisational/campaign category. The six Motions that local groups decide are the most important are debated and the debate continues until time has run out. A restricted number of prioritised Motions should ensure that all Motions get debated thoroughly and that we do not run out of time.

What if we change our minds?

Motions and Amendments can be withdrawn up until the final agenda is drawn up (approximately a month before Conference). Motions and Amendments can also be withdrawn during the debate, but only if Conference agrees to this.

If you miss the deadline for submitting Motions, then there is an opportunity to submit Emergency Motions, but only if the Chair of Motions and Conference Organising Committee considers that they relate to events that have occurred after the deadline (for example in 1996 an Emergency Motion was accepted about nuclear testing in the Pacific, a recent event that could not have been foreseen at the Motions deadline).

What happens if a Motion is passed?

Motions to Conference, if passed, become Conference Resolutions. Resolutions are not binding on Friends of the Earth - they are addressed to the Board of Directors, who ultimately decide about whether and how to act upon them. Resolutions are looked at closely by the staff Organisational Management Team and the Board after Conference, and decisions are made about who should take each one forward.

Once Resolutions are agreed by the Board, a Resolutions paper is circulated to all Groups detailing how (or whether) each Resolution will be enacted; this will normally be in the January/February following Conference. A report detailing action that has been taken on each Resolution will be circulated approximately a month prior to the next Conference i.e. 11 months after the Resolution was passed. This report will usually be followed up at Conference with a verbal update on the implementation of the Motions. The Friend of the Motions, appointed by the Board, is charged with tracking the progress of Resolutions after Conference and seeking their full implementation where possible. The Friend of the Motions process helps to ensure that as many Motions as possible that are passed at Conference are subsequently put into practice.

After your Motion or Amendment has been submitted

Motions are checked by the Board and the Returning Officer to ensure that they are consistent, unambiguous and that they comply with the rules. If your Group's Motion (or Amendment) does not comply with the above then you will be asked to amend it accordingly, and should this be the case then you will hear within ten days of the appropriate deadline. It is quite normal that minor changes to the wording of Motions are proposed at this time - these changes should not in any way affect the meaning of your Motion, they are designed to clarify the meaning and to ensure that it cannot be misinterpreted.

Motions to Conference

Timetable 2008

This timetable includes both the key mailing and deadline dates for the Motions process and some of the key procedures undertaken by Friends of the Earth staff during the Motions process.

Please note that strict observance of the deadlines will be necessary in order to allow sufficient time for the internal procedures. If you have any questions about the timetable, please contact the Returning Officer on 020 7566 1677 or at localgroups@foe.co.uk

March 21st	First Motions mailing All local groups are sent the Briefing paper, Motions submission form and accompanying documents	25 weeks before Conference
May 23rd	Deadline for submitting Motions NB: each Motion must be accompanied by background information (if relevant) and signed by proposer and seconder	16 weeks before Conference
	<i>Internal processes:</i> Returning Officer works with proposers/seconders over finalised wording for each Motion. Relevant staff respond to submitted Motions. Returning Officer prepares first draft of Motions 2008 paper.	
June 6th	Second Motions mailing - Amendments All local groups receive the first draft of the Motions 2008 paper, and Amendment Form	14 weeks before Conference
July 4th	Deadline for submitting Amendments	10 weeks before Conference
	<i>Internal processes:</i> Relevant staff revise their response in light of amendments. Returning Officer liaises with proposers / seconders regarding amendments submitted. Returning Officer prepares second draft of Motions 2008 paper.	
July 18th	Third Motions mailing – Prioritisation All local groups receive the second draft of the Motions paper (including amendments) and a prioritisation form	8 weeks before Conference
August 15th	Prioritisation deadline	4 weeks before Conference
	<i>Internal processes:</i> Returning officer collates results from Prioritisation Ballot to discern the 6 Motions to be debated at Conference. Returning Officer prepares final draft of Motions 2008 paper and contacts relevant proposers and seconders to confirm whether their Motion will be debated at Conference.	
August 22nd	Final Motions mailing All local groups and Conference delegates receive the final Motions paper	3 weeks before Conference
September 12th – 14th	Motions debate at Conference	
After Conference	Board discusses Conference resolutions. Resolutions paper is circulated to all local groups in Spring 2009.	

If you have any queries regarding the Motions process, please contact the Returning Officer, Jill Andrews, on localgroups@foe.co.uk, 020 7566 1677 or at Friends of the Earth, 26-28 Underwood Street, London N1 7JQ.

Process for preparing Board response to Motions to Conference

Introduction

In recent years, the Board has appointed a Friend of the Motions to oversee the Board's response to Motions debated at the Local Groups' Conference each year.

The basic responsibilities of the Friend of the Motions include preparing the Resolutions to Conference paper, seeking the Board's comments and approval, and communicating the paper to Local Groups.

It is also the responsibility of the Friend of the Motions to track the implementation of the Motions. This requires liaison with both staff members and Board Committees and writing an Implementations Paper reporting on the progress of each passed Motion. This Paper is prepared in time to be sent to Local Group members prior to Conference each year.

This process was originally drawn up in 2003. It was then amended in 2005 as a result of the Board's own Governance Review, in which the Board committees were restructured and the annual timetable of Board meetings altered. In Autumn 2006, the Board decided to further streamline the approach to be taken for integrating passed Motions into the Friends of the Earth strategy process. Consequently, this document has been updated to offer guidance to Friend of the Motion under the new structure.

Process Timetable

1. **Immediately after Local Groups' Conference**, the Head of Campaign Co-ordination and Head of Organisational Development will review the Motions carried and will determine which Board Committees, which Organisational Management Team (OMT) members and which Activity Leaders need to respond. They will ask relevant OMT members to consult with Activity Leaders and prepare reports of proposed actions to the next meetings of the relevant Committees (with all reports copied to Committees, OMT and proposers/seconders for information). Motions rejected will also be commented on briefly in order that Board can make a response to all Motions proposed.
2. Relevant Board committees will consider initial staff responses on all Motions in **October**, focusing primarily on those Motions carried.
3. The Friend of the Motions will work up the full responses through consultation with staff as necessary and will prepare a draft Resolutions to Conference paper, ready for the relevant Board committee meetings in **December / January**.
4. Board committee meetings amend / sign off the Resolutions to Conference paper in consultation with the Friend of the Motions.
5. The Friend of the Motions ensures that the signed-off Resolutions to Conference paper is communicated to Local Groups, usually by inclusion in the Feb/Mar edition of Change your world magazine, sent out to Local Group members in early **February**.

6. Signed Off Resolutions are fed into staff planning in the following ways:
 - a. The Resolutions are fed back to the OMT members responsible for the area of work who in turn will develop next steps with whichever teams are involved in implementing the Resolutions.
 - b. Depending on the scale of the task required in the Resolution, implementation will be monitored and co-ordinated through appropriate OMT members and whichever organisational fora are appropriate, such as Policy and Politics meetings, Aims Co-ordination meetings and the Quarterly Forward Planning system.
 - c. In the **Spring**, the Friend of the Motions, together with the Head of Organisational Development and Head of Campaign Co-ordination, will oversee a short update on early progress with implementation, gathering information from staff involved in delivery. This short update will be reported to the relevant Board committees' meetings in the Spring, to ensure implementation is occurring as expected.
7. As in the past, the Friend of the Motions will then co-ordinate and write the full implementation report, in time for publishing in advance of the next annual Local Groups' Conference. This paper is usually communicated to Local Groups by inclusion in the Aug/Sept edition of Change your world, sent out to Local Group members in early **August**.

Original Author: Cathy Maguire
Date: 8th March 2003
Amended: Dave Coleman March 2006
Amended: Jill Andrews and Dave Coleman April 2007