



Motions to Conference 2011

Guidance notes

Please note that the Motions process has changed quite significantly this year, so please read and consider these guidance notes carefully. The deadline for Motions submissions is Tuesday 31 May 2011. No late Motions will be accepted.

1. 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.

2. What's new about the Motions process in 2011?

Following the passing of a Board Motion to Conference in 2010, which proposed various changes to the Motions process, there are a number of new and different aspects to the way things will be run this year.

The Board Motion gained the approval of Conference to:

- Encourage greater participation of local groups in proposing, defining, amending and prioritising motions to Conference via a more streamlined and participative process;
- Promote more active debate of motions at Conference;
- Replace the old Amendment process with an online amendment process at the discussion stage of Motions.

(Read the Motion in full at www.foe.co.uk/resource/event_background_documents/board_motions_2010.pdf)

The full details of what you need to do this year are detailed in the following sections but, in summary, the key changes to the process are:

- We are now using electronic media for the bulk of the process;
- Rather than completing a full motions submissions form at the outset, licensed local groups are invited to propose an initial Motion by emailing in a statement of intent, plus a short background information summary;
- No seconding group is needed at the initial submission stage;
- All initial Motions will be posted up online in a private area of the discussion forum, and all local group members will be able to view and comment on the Motions proposed over a set period of time (and proposing groups will be able to respond). The previous amendment stage has been abolished on the grounds that amendments to motions will automatically happen during this online comment and construction process;
- After the deadline for comments has passed, all Motion proposers will be asked to finalise the text of their initial Motion in light of any comments and suggestions received in the forum, and find a seconding group;
- All finalised initial Motions will be posted online and all local groups invited to prioritise the Motions for debate via an online ballot;
- The proposers of the prioritised Motions will be asked to expand their Motion into a full-length submission;
- Staff responses will be written for each of the full-length prioritised Motions;
- The final Motions paper, with full-length Motions and staff responses, will be circulated prior to the debate
- As last year, Motions discussion groups for each prioritised Motion will be held at Conference in advance of the debate.

3. 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 2011, this means that your group must have originally licensed before 9 September 2010). The same rules apply for groups seconding Motions. Motions cannot be proposed by a Board or Staff Member.

4. What is the timeline for the 2011 Motions process?

The following table lays out the key stages in the process and corresponding deadlines (please see the sections on the following pages for the full instructions on how to submit a Motion and engage in the online commenting process):

Task / stage:	Date:
Motions process opens:	Weds 13 April
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All local groups are sent the Motions pack and the online process is set up 	
<i>Interim stage:</i>	[7 weeks]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any licensed local group can submit an initial Motion submission by email during this period (statement of intent plus 100 words max of background information) Once checked, each initial Motion is posted up online (by the Returning Officer) as soon as possible in a private Motions area of the discussion forum Any local group member can join the forum and request access to the private Motions area. Once access is granted, comments, additions or suggested amendments to any of the Motions can be made (on behalf of their group) All Motion proposers will also be able to join the forum area and respond to any comments or suggestions made (as well as comment on other Motions proposed) 	
Deadline for initial motion submissions:	End of Tues 31 May
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any initial submissions received by the deadline and not yet posted up online, will be checked and posted up online as soon as possible No late submissions will be accepted after this date 	
<i>Interim stage:</i>	[4 weeks]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final chance for groups to add comments, additions and amendments in the forum; and for proposing groups to respond online and /or make changes to their initial Motion 	
Deadline for comments, additions and amendments in the forum:	End of Thurs 30 June
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No new comments will be able to be added to the forum area after 30th June (although previous discussions, comments etc will still be able to be viewed) 	
<i>Interim stage:</i>	[1 week]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposing groups revise/finalise their initial Motion submission in light of comments made via the forum, and confirm a seconding group for their Motion All finalised initial Motions must still adhere to max 100 words limit for background info 	
Deadline for finalised initial Motions submissions:	End of Weds 6 July
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalised initial Motions submissions posted up online asap after deadline 	
Motions prioritisation ballot opens:	Fri 8 July
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online ballot system set up and all local groups notified 	
<i>Interim stage:</i>	[4.5 weeks]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Groups complete prioritisation ballot form online 	
Deadline for prioritisation ballot:	End of Mon 8 August
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online prioritisation ballot system closes 	
<i>Interim stage:</i>	[2 weeks]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposing/seconding groups of the prioritised Motions (only) convert their initial Motions submissions into full-length Motions 	
Deadline for full-length Motions to be finalised:	End of Mon 22 Aug
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposing/seconding groups must submit their agreed full-length Motion by this deadline 	
<i>Interim stage:</i>	[2 weeks]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff compile responses to full-length prioritised Motions 	
Deadline for staff responses:	Fri 2 Sept
Final Motions paper circulated to groups (posted online and hard copies in Conference packs)	9-11 th Sept
Motions discussion groups	9-11 th Sept
Motions debate	9-11 th Sept

5. What are the 'rules'?

The basic principles and stages of Friends of the Earth's Motions process are set out in the Standing Orders, including detail on how the Motions debate is conducted. View them at www.foe.co.uk/motions.

6. How do we submit an initial Motion?

This year, the Motions submissions process is much simpler. Please follow the steps detailed below to submit a Motion:

a. Discuss ideas together as a group

If any member of your group has an idea for a Motion, you need to all discuss this together and be in agreement on the aim and wording of the Motion. A Motion is submitted by the group, not by individuals, so the whole group needs to be consulted on the Motion being suggested and be behind its submission. You might all agree to delegate the drafting of the Motion to one individual or a sub-group, but the whole group needs to be supportive of the Motion in general. If Motions submissions are received from a group member, not the current Coordinator of the group, that is fine, but we will contact the Coordinator to double-check that the submission comes from the group.

When discussing your ideas, please note that Motions cannot seek to commit Friends of the Earth to expenditure. In addition, Motions will only be accepted that ask the Board to *consider* or *assess* a course of action, and are structured in the way detailed in section b below.

b. Carefully word your Motion

Your initial Motion submission needs to be made up of two parts:

1. A statement of intent
2. A short background information summary (max 100 words)

The statement of intent is your actual Motion - i.e. what do you want to see happen. It needs to be short and specific, and shouldn't include any description of the issues and facts behind your Motion (instead this information goes into your background information). You need to start your statement of intent with the words "This Conference calls upon the Board of Friends of the Earth Ltd. to consider ... [your Motion text]...".

Your background information is your opportunity to provide some further explanation, such as to outline the context of your Motion or the arguments in its favour. The clearer your background information, the better other groups will be able to properly consider the issues your Motion raises. At this initial submission stage, your background information must be a maximum of 100 words long - so use it to summarise your key points (e.g. a bullet point list is fine). If your Motion is later prioritised for debate, you will have the opportunity to expand the background information to 500 words, and therefore, provide much more detail.

Please write your statement of intent and short background information in plain English, avoiding technical terms where possible, so that it can be easily understood by all local groups. If the Chair of Motions or the Returning Officer feel that your statement of intent or background information are insufficiently clear, overly complicated, or in some way erroneous, they will ask you to re-write the relevant section. 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.

c. Submit your Motion by email

To submit your Motion, please send an email to localgroups@foe.co.uk with the following information:

1. **Motion title** - specify the title you wish us to use for your Motion (e.g. for listing online etc)
2. **Statement of intent** - this must start with the words "This Conference calls upon the Board of Friends of the Earth Ltd. to consider..."
3. **Short summary background information** - this must be a maximum of 100 words long (if it's longer, you will be asked to reduce it)
4. **Proposing group name** - Motions must be proposed by groups, not individuals
5. **Contact details of a group member who will act as the Main Contact for this Motion** - this can be any group member, it doesn't have to be the Coordinator, and please provide name, email address and daytime phone number

The deadline for initial Motion submissions is the end of Tuesday 31 May. This is a strict deadline and no more Motions will be accepted after this date. If you have any queries about the submissions process or need any assistance with compiling your Motion correctly, please contact the Motions Returning Officer, Jill Andrews, on 0113 389 9952 or at localgroups@foe.co.uk

7. What happens after an initial Motion is submitted?

Motions are checked by the Returning Officer to ensure that they are consistent, unambiguous and that they comply with the rules. If your group's Motion does not comply, you will be asked to amend it accordingly. It is quite normal for us to suggest minor changes to the wording at this time – these changes should not in any way affect the meaning of your Motion; instead they are designed to clarify the aim of your Motion and to prevent misinterpretation. If two very similar Motions are submitted, the proposers will be given the opportunity to combine their Motions.

Once checked, each initial Motion will be posted up online by the Returning Officer as soon as possible in a private Motions area of the discussion forum, so that other local group members can view it, and start adding their own comments, additions or suggested amendments.

8. How do we view and comment on Motions online?

All initial Motion submissions will be posted up online in a private area of the discussion forum by the Returning Officer as soon as possible after receipt. **Between 13 April and 30 June, these Motions can be commented on in the forum by any local group member (on behalf of their group).** Proposing groups are also encouraged to respond to any comments or suggestions made to their Motion (as well as comment on other Motions proposed).

To comment on the proposed Motions, including suggesting improvements, adding your group's support or saying why your group opposes the Motion, you need to do the following:

1. Go to www.foe.co.uk/forumregister and register as a new user (you can skip this step if you're already registered as a forum user). You'll get an email which you'll need to click the link in to confirm.
2. Once you're set-up as a forum user, please request access to the private Motions forum area by emailing localgroups@foe.co.uk stating your forum user name and the email address you're registered with.
3. We'll give you access to the private Motions area on the forum, and email you to confirm.
4. Please log back into the forum and you'll now be able to view and add comments in the Motions area.

These instructions (and direct links to the forum) will also be available online at www.foe.co.uk/motions.

9. How are initial Motions submissions finalised?

Motions proposers have **between 30 June and 6 July** to revise their initial Motion submission in light of any comments and suggestions made via the forum, and to submit their final version (or leave it unchanged). Final submissions must still adhere to word limit (max 100 words) for the background info summary.

By 6 July, proposing groups must also confirm a seconding group for their Motion. The rules for seconding groups are the same as for proposing groups - i.e. it must be a licensed local groups that has been in existence for more than a year by Conference (for 2011, this means that the group must have originally licensed before 9 September 2010).

10. How does the prioritisation ballot work?

We usually receive more Motions than we have time to debate at Conference. Prioritisation ensures that the Motions which local groups think are most deserving of debate get discussed thoroughly. Prioritisation will take place **between 8 July and 8 August** via an **online ballot system**. All licensed local groups will be notified of the Motions proposed and how to submit their group's vote - and this information will also be posted up online at www.foe.co.uk/motions.

The proposing and seconding groups of all Motions will be informed as soon as possible after the ballot closes whether their Motion has been prioritised for debate. If it has, they will have until 22 August to convert their initial Motion submission into a full-length Motion (details of how to do this will be sent at the time) - to which staff responses will then be compiled. For the groups whose Motions are not prioritised, no further action will be required.

11. Do we need to be at Conference to propose or second our Motion?

Yes. If your Motion is prioritised for debate, then the proposing and seconding groups must have a representative at Conference to formally stand up in person and propose/second the Motion. The Chair does however have the discretion to allow a Motion to be accepted with only its proposing group present.

12. What are emergency Motions?

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:

- the Motion is of a substantive nature; and
- relates to events that have occurred after the original Motions deadline; and
- concerns a matter of substantial importance to a significant number of Local Groups.

No more than two Emergency Motions shall be debated. In the event of there being three or more such Motions accepted, there will be a prioritisation ballot which will be conducted at Conference before the debate.

13. How is the debate at Conference run?

We aim to run the debate as efficiently as possible with key speakers being located at the front of the hall for easy access to the podium. All proposing/seconding groups of prioritised Motions will be informed in advance of the debate of the time allocated to their speech – time-keeping will be strict and the Chair will stop anyone running over their allocated time. The usual format includes the Motion being proposed by a member of the proposing group; then debated with a member of the seconding group closing the debate with a short statement; and finishing with the Motion being voted upon by Conference.

Persons entitled to speak in the debate are members of the Boards and staff of Friends of the Earth, its paid consultants, registered supporters of Friends of the Earth and members of Local Groups only. However, we aim to give priority to local group members. Staff and particularly Board members are urged to only contribute on matters of fact or if requested to do so by the Chair (e.g. to clarify a point).

Usually the Chair will open up the debate by asking if anyone wishes to speak out against the Motion just proposed. Following this, the Chair will then take speeches for and against the Motion until the issues have been sufficiently debated or time has run out. On occasions when an initial show of hands indicates unanimous support or rejection of a Motion, the Chair may use his/her discretion to not follow the usual "for" then "against" format. The Standing Orders also allow for the Chair to put a Motion straight to a vote without debate if no one wishes to speak for or against it.

14. How do we vote in the debate?

As votes are made on behalf of the group (one vote per group on each Motion), each group will have nominated a voting delegate who will have specified this on their Conference booking form and will have been given the group's "voting card" in advance of the debate (usually in their Conference delegate pack). Local group members will be given a little time to confer with each other before they register their group's vote. 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.

15. 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 senior staff 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 following Spring after 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. Both the Resolutions paper and Implementations paper are also made available online at www.foe.co.uk/motions.

If you have any queries regarding the Motions process, please contact the Returning Officer, Jill Andrews, on localgroups@foe.co.uk or 0113 389 9952.