

Report from the Board of Friends of the Earth on the Implementation of Motions from Conference 2010



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The motions are tabulated below in order prioritised by local groups in the prioritisation ballot. Each of them is treated in turn in the following pages, providing the Motion and response.

Prioritised Order for debate	Motion	Board Committee responsible
1 st	Marine Biodiversity and Sustainability	Campaigns
2 nd	GM Campaigning	Campaigns
3 rd	Broad Range of Campaign Experience and Media Profile	Campaigns/Engagement
4 th	A National Eco-literacy Campaign: Youth & Education Network	Campaigns/Engagement
5 th	Develop the Human Rights and Justice Component of Environmental Campaigning	Campaigns
N/A	Board Motion 1: Process for review of Election Rules	Operational Excellence
N/A	Board Motion 2: Additional Duties of Regional Broad Members	Operational Excellence
N/A	Board Motion 3: Removal on prohibition on employees of local groups standing as candidates for the Board	Operational Excellence
N/A	Board Motion 4: Changes to the current Motions process	Operational Excellence

Debate results:

Motion	For	Against	Abstained	Result
Marine Biodiversity and Sustainability	74	3	4	PASSES
GM Campaigning	67	5	12	PASSES
Broad Range of Campaign Experience and Media Profile	72	2	10	PASSES
A National Eco-literacy Campaign: Youth & Education Network	54	9	19	PASSES
Develop the Human Rights and Justice Component of Environmental Campaigning	72	5	6	PASSES
Board Motion 1: Process for review of Election Rules	48	14	18	PASSES
Board Motion 2: Additional Duties of Regional Broad Members	73	0	5	PASSES
Board Motion 3: Removal on prohibition on employees of local groups standing as candidates for the Board	73	2	11	PASSES
Board Motion 4: Changes to the current Motions process	64	3	18	PASSES

1st prioritised Motion - Marine Biodiversity and Sustainability

This Conference calls upon the Board of Friends of the Earth Ltd. to consider:

1. Devoting some resources to running a campaign demanding that the Government use its powers under the Marine & Coastal Access Act to implement the recommendations contained in the 2004 Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution report "Turning the Tide";
2. Liaising with our sister organizations in other EU countries, via FOE Europe, with a view to running a campaign around the review of the EU Common Fisheries policy, calling for:
 - a) The establishment of an extensive and ecologically coherent network of "no take" marine reserves throughout EU waters;
 - b) A binding requirement to set catch limits in line with scientific recommendations;
 - c) A moratorium on all fishing for endangered species, such as bluefin tuna;
 - d) An end to deals allowing EU fishing fleets to plunder the fishing grounds of less developed countries.

Board report:

The new organisational strategy signed off by the Board on June 9th establishes five new Policy and Campaigns Programmes, one of which is the Nature and Ecosystem Security Programme.

We consider that work on marine biodiversity is within the scope of this programme, although the longer term work plan for the programme is yet to be determined and will need to be based on a comprehensive assessment of opportunities across the biodiversity agenda.

A review of biodiversity campaigning undertaken by the independent consultant Chris Rose recommended launching a campaign as a popular "way in" to ecosystem services. The Senior Management Team and the Board felt that this was a more manageable biodiversity campaign in the short term than campaigning on the Common Fisheries Policy which would require very significant support and coordination across Friends of the Earth Europe.

We are exploring the possibility, however, of our new "Energy Futures" campaign including a component which highlights the potential benefits of large scale marine renewables (e.g. offshore wind farms) for marine biodiversity, both because they become de facto "no take" zones and create artificial reefs. We will shortly be commissioning some research from a leading University to establish the evidence base for this link and will promote the findings widely when available.

In addition, Craig Bennett (Director of Policy and Campaigns) is very sympathetic towards the spirit of this motion, and has been sitting on the steering group of Marinet since the beginning of the year.

2nd prioritised Motion - GM Campaigning

This Conference calls upon the Board of Friends of the Earth Ltd. to consider:

- That in light of the crucial role played by Friends of the Earth and the local groups in preventing the unsustainable introduction of GM crops into the UK and reducing GM imports up until now, that this role should be continued at this critical time.
- That further expansion of GM soya and maize will undermine the objectives of the Food Chain Campaign.
- Reallocating one full time member of existing staff to work on this issue as soon as possible
- Encouraging local group members, activists and supporters to campaign on GM issues whenever it is strategically appropriate to do so.

Board report:

There is no plan in our new Strategy and Campaigns Programmes to reprioritise proactive campaigning on GM, however Friends of the Earth does continue to monitor and track GM issues where they are directly relevant to the campaigns we are currently working on and in the future this work will fall within the scope of the Land Use, Food and Water Security Programme.

Highlighting the problems associated with the widespread planting of GM soya, for example, has been important in our work with Friends of the Earth Paraguay.

We are also continuing to engage in the GM debate where it is relevant to do so, such as in the context of 'Food Security'. In November 2010, for example, we offered a robust defence of our position on GM when it was criticised in the Channel 4 documentary "What the Green Movement Got Wrong", and have continued to do so when criticised on subsequent occasions (e.g. around the launch of the latest book by Mark Lynas).

3rd prioritised Motion - Broad Range of Campaign Expertise and Media Profile

This Conference calls on the Board of Friends of the Earth Ltd to consider recognising that one of the strengths of Friends of the Earth is in sustaining a broad range of campaigns at all levels from local to international, and therefore it is desirable that:

- the broad base of campaign staff is protected as a first priority;
- all of the campaign teams are maintaining a strong media profile, with support for a continuing media profile locally and regionally as well as nationally and internationally.

Board report:

Our new Strategy prioritises:

1. Developing and maintaining a 'big picture narrative' about Friends of the Earth's long term vision (i.e. sustainable development) and the ability to communicate that confidently and engage in a public and political debate about this, whenever appropriate opportunities arise.
2. Developing and running tightly-focused campaigns with specific, measured, achievable, realistic and timebound (SMART) campaign objectives that deliver on particular discrete parts of our long term vision, over much shorter timescales – and which, overall aim for resonance with a wider target audience.
3. Developing and maintaining a breadth of issue expertise, both to inform and shape our future national and international campaign agenda and provide a certain amount of support to local groups in their local and regional campaigning.

There are inevitable tensions in fulfilling all of these, particularly in an organisation which needs to be prudent with its resource allocation.

However, we have confidence that our renewed approach can greatly improve our profile and influence. For example, we recently saw a spike of media profile off the back of a report we commissioned to coincide with the first anniversary of Cameron's 'greenest Government ever' – beating others to the story, which set us up as a key commentator on the issue. When a story emerged about the Government's decision on carbon budgets, part of implementing the Climate Change Act, we were able to frame it as a critical test of the Government's claim and push it – and Friends of the Earth – up the news agenda. We aim to generate more agenda-setting material like the 'greenest Government ever' report, and embed this responsive and media savvy way of working across our campaigns, in future.

4th prioritised Motion – A National Eco-literacy Campaign: Youth & Education Network

This Conference calls upon the Board of Friends of the Earth Ltd. to consider:

- The urgent implementation of a national campaign to restructure the educational system, placing Eco-literacy at the heart of the National Curriculum.
- Expanding and empowering the Youth & Education Network to deliver the above campaign and to enable more local group members to work with young people.
- Using some initial staff time and resources to investigate and secure outside funding for a staff member to run this campaign on an ongoing basis.

Board report:

For the reasons stated previously in the Board response the new Strategy does not envisage a national eco-literacy campaign. However, we have taken or are taking a number of steps to strengthen our work on environmental understanding and engagement with younger people:

1. We are in the process of signing up as formal members of the Sustainable Schools Alliance, which aims to “drive change in the education system so that all schools put sustainability at the heart of their curriculum, their campus and their community”. When we become formal supporters we will enter in to conversation with the alliance and our own Youth and Education network on the best way to make the most of this relationship.
2. We are developing an “Earth Course” environmental introduction course which will provide a way for curious members of the public to gain a basic grounding in environmental issues. This is currently in pilot stage, with a plan to start UK roll out in 2012.
3. We are in dialogue with the Youth and Education network, which we intend to sustain and build on, to inform the development of our forthcoming “audience strategy” – the strategy which will help define who we want to get involved with us and included in that discussion will be the role that youth might play in the future.
4. We have recently become supporters of the UK Youth Climate Change Coalition and we intend to develop a relationship which provides scope for us to provide opportunities for younger people to engage in environmental campaigning through Friends of the Earth through this alliance, and for us to learn more about working with younger people as a result.

5th prioritised Motion – Developing the Human Rights and Justice Component of Environmental Campaigning

This Conference calls upon the Board of Friends of the Earth Ltd. to consider the human rights dimensions of its campaigns as a further tool to achieving its objectives. Reading from our objectives, "Everyone, everywhere, now and tomorrow, deserves to have a good life". However, the justice and human rights element of this value tends to be under-messaged in the campaigning work and materials from Friends of the Earth EWNI. This would restore to Friends of the Earth EWNI's work consideration of the human dimension of justice, in addition to the work on biodiversity or interspecies justice.

Board report:

We refer to the previous Board response – which makes the point that this is a central part of our campaigning and has been for many years. The new Strategy contains a matrix of 3 and 10 year Campaigns Programmes Objectives which demonstrate that the centrality of the human rights and justice component remains, and not only in the ‘Fair and Planned Transition’ programme but across all the Campaigns Programmes.

Over the last year:

- Our Rights and Justice team have worked with FOE Cymru to highlight the environmental injustice of proposals to build a huge incinerator in Merthyr, including producing a video downloadable from the Friends of the Earth home page.
- Following our “Warm Homes” campaign, the Government has pledged to introduce a minimum energy efficiency standard for rented homes. This will help to address the scandal of fuel poverty in the poorest households
- Our work with Friends of the Earth Paraguay has highlighted the human rights and justice component of soya production in South America, resulting in significant media coverage

1st Board Motion - Process for review of Election Rules

2nd Board Motion - Additional Duties of Regional Broad Members

3rd Board Motion - Removal of prohibition on employees of local groups standing as candidates for the Board

4th Board Motion - Changes to the current Motions process

Board report:

All four Board Motions are in the process of being implemented.