



**Friends of
the Earth**

Motions to Conference 2009

(Final Paper updated to reflect the results of the prioritisation ballot)

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Important notes – please read:

- The Motions are listed in the order that they were prioritised by local groups as a result of the prioritisation ballot. This is also the order in which the Motions will be debated at Conference. Motions 1-6 will definitely be debated; Motions 7 and 8 were not prioritised for debate but are reserve Motions to be debated only if there is spare time in the debate; Motions 9 and 10 will not be debated but are included in this paper for information.
- **Please ensure that you read this paper before the Motions debate so that you are fully informed to be able to participate in the debate. This is particularly important if you are the designated voting delegate for your group** (and you may wish to consult the rest of your group on their views for each Motion in advance of Conference so that you know which way to vote for each Motion).
- **Please also bring this paper to the Motions debate as you will not be given a further copy.**

Motion prioritised 1st – National Transport Campaign

Proposed by Camden Friends of the Earth

Seconded by Barnet & Enfield Friends of the Earth

This Conference calls upon the Board of Friends of the Earth Ltd. to consider a national campaign to urge government to enforce a set of measures that both encourage the use of public transport and discourage the use of private cars and domestic aviation. The campaign will form a part of the campaign to deliver the carbon cuts demanded by the Climate Change Bill. To achieve the campaign aims, and minimize expenditure, we ask the board to work with other organizations that are already campaigning on such issues, in particular, the Campaign For Better Transport. In addition, we ask FoE to highlight the misplacement of government funds and/or subsidies on road-widening including M25 and M1 and the car scrappage scheme.

Background Information:

This Conference notes that the UK currently has the highest modal share of cars of all EU countries. While the cost of motoring in the UK has been falling in the last 20 years, the cost of rail has increased. Such increases have resulted in public transport fares being 20% higher in the UK than in other EU countries. In 2005, private cars contributed almost 70% of emissions from the UK transport sector. The growing trend of private car ownership does not seem to have changed [1]. Hence, this conference notes that the government has a role to play in shifting the public's preferred transport modality, and must take measures to actively favour public transport as a mode of transportation over private cars as well as domestic aviation.

Pricing is the primary measure that can be used to change people's behaviour. To this end this, this Conference calls upon the Board to incentivise public transport by campaigning for government subsidies for cheaper rail and bus travel, as well as to disincentive private car use and domestic aviation by campaigning for increased aviation and motoring taxes. The revenue from such a tax can be used to fund the rail subsidies.

Passengers have identified additional extra-fiscal factors that impact their choice of transport modality [1]. In particular,

- reliability
- scheduled times
- flexibility
- relative levels of comfort

In addition, the increasing non-cycle friendly policies of rail operators dissuade passengers from shifting transport modality away from private motor vehicles [2] This Conference asks the board to campaign to ensure that train operators work to meet passenger needs on the above issues.

To meet all the above campaigning aims (fiscal and extra-fiscal policies), we ask the board to work with other campaigning organizations that are currently addressing such issues, with the consideration that the Friends of the Earth name will strengthen the campaign aims. Collaboration with existing campaigning organizations will minimise expenditure on the campaign. In addition, we ask the Board to highlight the misplacement of government funds and/or subsidies on road-widening including M25 and M1 and the car scrappage scheme, which contradicts government policy on emission reductions.

References

[1] Transport Costs and Carbon Emissions (2008) Campaign for Better Transport

[2] <http://www.lcc.org.uk/index.asp?PageID=268>

Relation to the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan:

Which of the 11 Aims does it relate most closely to? Please explain briefly how you think your Motion relates to and impacts upon the activities already planned under that Aim(s). If your Motion is suggesting new or additional work, you must also include your views on which areas of work could be cut or reduced to accommodate it.

This proposed motion relates to Aim 2 of the Strategic Plan, namely Climate Change. In particular, it addresses objective 4 of the aim, to ensure that the UK implements an economic strategy to deliver the cuts in UK emissions.

Staff response:

Where does this motion fit in relation to the strategic plan 2008-2013?

This motion fits with the Climate Aim, particularly the following objective:

Promote and secure a the energy policy solutions and technologies, including at a local level, required to reduce carbon dioxide emissions in the UK in line with those required for the UK to live within the carbon budget identified by the Tyndall Centre report 'Living within a Carbon Budget' including though ensuring the development and delivery by the Government of a economic strategy focused on the movement to a low carbon economy.

Operationally, what work have we done, are we doing or are planning to do in relation to this issue?

We have worked extensively on this issue for a number of years, most recently by working with other NGOs to influence the Transport Carbon Reduction Strategy and also annual Budgets. The Dept for Transport are probably the least green of all Government Departments and the Climate Change Act was in part designed to ensure that all departments had to take climate change seriously. But more work needs to be done on this particular department.

Our Get Serious about CO₂ Campaign will have a strong focus on transport demand management, including calling for the shifting of funding away from roads and towards public transport, walking & cycling. This is because the vast majority of journeys are local and local transport policy will determine how they are carried out. AS much as resources allow we will also continue to press on national transport policy, especially on taxation issues

If we were to do address this, what would be the resource implications for existing work?

We cannot launch another national campaign on transport without seriously impacting on the local transport work that is part of Get Serious about CO₂. However we will continue to liaise as best we can with other NGOs working at this level.

Motion prioritised 2nd – Biofuels

Proposed by Islington Friends of the Earth

Seconded by Southampton & Eastleigh Friends of the Earth

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

- Continuing to highlight the need to abolish biofuel targets, and opposing the current expansion of agrofuels, in particular in response to policy proposals favouring agrofuels;
- Opposing the use in the UK of fresh vegetable oil or other agrofuels for power generation or stationary heating such as in homes;
- Facilitating an ongoing campaign to abolish biofuel targets, which may need to be partly driven by motivated members, in a similar manner to anti-incineration campaigning, and should aim to garner support in many other campaign groups national or local;
- Highlighting more the need to tackle unsustainable levels of consumption of bio-commodities (i.e. those from farm, forest or fisheries), and that this will not be solved by 'sustainability certification';
- Looking at ways to overcome the restrictions of some of its lobbying alliances so as to be more outspoken over biofuels, unsustainable consumption, and energy choices, including, as one option, re-building some of those alliances.
- Providing on-line material to assist local groups campaigning against the use of biofuel in power stations in their areas.

Background Information:

This Conference notes:

FoE has cautiously favoured new vegetable-oil CHP plans.

However, biofuels are not 'much of a muchness' with fossil fuel. The uptake of more fresh vegetable oil for bioenergy will currently cause in the order of 3x more emissions than the equivalent petroleum, see <http://tinyurl.com/cnhtza>, let alone the non-carbon value of diverse ecosystems displaced. Agrofuels (liquid biofuels from large-scale field or forestry sources) are a major cause of habitat loss worldwide, though still a tiny part of

energy consumption. The IMF wrote (8/4/08): "Almost half the increase in consumption of major food crops in 2007 was related to biofuels".

The UK is in ecological deficit even excluding all its fossil fuel use (<http://tinyurl.com/ckctft>), has long been a net importer of food/feed, and agrofuels have an effective land requirement (neutralisation footprint) larger than the equivalent petroleum (<http://tinyurl.com/dh9cec>).

Second generation 'cellulosic' agrofuels are far less effective at CO2 abatement than using unrefined biomass for heating and electricity (<http://tinyurl.com/damlml>, pp30-31), uses that already compete, variously, with livestock bedding, silage, papermills, and grazing land.

Therefore, no ongoing UK use of agrofuels is currently sustainable.

FoE Europe's September 2007 policy paper called for the abolition of biofuel targets. In the same month, a FoE Conference resolution called for FoE greatly to increase campaigning against unsustainable biofuels and to oppose all biofuel targets.

FoE's press releases this year on the Conservatives' and CBI's 'low carbon' policy papers opposed their suggestions of using nuclear power, in keeping with FoE policy, but said nothing about their pro-agrofuel proposals. Yet agrofuel incentives and consequential food scarcity are probably leading annually to far more human health problems and environmental destruction than civil nuclear power ever did. The Conservatives' paper advocated a more ambitious RTFO than the Government, plus using second-generation biofuels in power stations, yet FoE called the overall Conservative package "essential", which the Conservatives can now quote.

WWF and Prince Charles' business leaders' forum are promoting ever wider applications of 'sustainability certification' for farm, forestry and fished commodities. These schemes are attracting widespread criticism from grassroots NGOs. FoE Indonesia rejects the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil. To date such schemes have been slow in penetration and/or flawed, and they cannot address 'leakage' or 'displacement', unless all major nations were to apply them rigorously to sets of inter-related commodities, and could properly police breaches and 'laundering'.

Moreover, if the wealthy do not curb their demand for these commodities, increasing injustices and inequalities will occur as demand outstrips supply, particularly in regard to the poor in the South.

NGOs need to better put the case for reducing unsustainable consumption levels of eco-commodities, which is the fundamental lesson of Footprint Network research.

FoE is compromised in the Climate Clinic that advises political parties, since other partners include the Renewable Energy Association, Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership and WWF, which all support agrofuel expansion; the CHP Association and Micropower Council.

FoE is also a co-partner with WWF in the annual Green Standard Report on the political parties, which has said very little to date on biofuels.

Relation to the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan:

Which of the 11 Aims does it relate most closely to?

1. Biodiversity & ecosystem services. 2. Climate change. 3. Sustainable economies & resource use.

Please explain briefly how you think your Motion relates to and impacts upon the activities already planned under that Aim(s). If your Motion is suggesting new or additional work, you must also include your views on which areas of work could be cut or reduced to accommodate it.

In regard to campaigning under aim 2, this Motion proposes that FoE be more outspoken about the fallacy of planning to make emissions reductions via agrofuels, whether in vehicles or power generation, and more outspoken about the pitfalls in other energy choices including some that would be advocated by the CHP association and Micropower Council.

In regard to campaigning under aims 1. and 3., the Motion proposes that FoE be more outspoken about the need to tackle overall levels of consumption of bio-commodities, abolish biofuel targets, and to highlight the pitfalls of 'sustainability certification'. Aim 3, Objective 4 recognizes the need to reduce EU resource consumption, and FoE

recognizes the need to cut our livestock consumption ("What's feeding our food?" full report). FoE Europe calls for the abolition of biofuel targets.

In terms of resourcing:

- The Motion proposes an ongoing campaign to abolish biofuel targets, but recognizes this may need to be partly driven by motivated activists, as with anti-incineration campaigning.
- Producing on-line material to assist local group campaigners facing biofuel power station plans could come out of biofuel campaigner's time, and/or by deferring the updating of policy position(s) in other areas. Once in place, it will save staff time dealing with ad-hoc requests for guidance and support by local group campaigners on the subject.
- The remaining points in the Statement of Intent suggest that FoE does differently what it already does, including its press releases and joint lobbying, rather than doing more of something.

Staff response:

Where does this motion fit in relation to the strategic plan 2008-2013?

Biomass use for energy purposes is accepted as having potentially significant impacts on demand for land and rates of land clearance which, in turn have impacts on biodiversity and greenhouse gas emissions.

Under objective four of strategic aim one on "Biodiversity and ecosystem services", Friends of the Earth aims: "To ensure Europe's use of biomass and bio-fuels is sustainable by securing legally-binding measures within EU Directives and related UK law (Fuel Quality Directive, revised Bio-fuels Directive, and revised Road Transport Fuel Obligation) and elsewhere so as to protect ecosystems that are vital for biodiversity and human well-being."

Under objective four of strategic aim three on "Sustainable Economies and Resource Use", Friends of the Earth aims to: "Secure within five years, under the EU's Thematic Strategy on Natural Resources, a legally-binding framework to ensure that the EU reduces its consumption of resources over the next 25 years. The framework will ensure European resource consumption is measured by the European Commission and strategies implemented to reduce the impact of Europe's resource consumption on climate change and biodiversity, including through technology-forcing product regulations."

Operationally, what work have we done, are we doing or are planning to do in relation to this issue?

Friends of the Earth has run a major campaign in 2008 opposing EU biofuel targets in the EU Renewable Energy Directive.

Since the passing of the EU Renewable Energy Directive, there is not a major political opportunity to scrap the targets.

However there is an opportunity to stop the implementation of the target across the EU through demonstrating that the majority of biofuels will not meet the EU's own obligation on greenhouse gas savings, if emissions from indirect land use change are taken into account.

Friends of the Earth has already commissioned and released new research on emissions from indirect land use change and EU lobbying work is included in the campaign forward planning.

So far relatively little work has been done on the use of vegetable oil and other biomass sources of energy in power plants and currently no further work is planned.

However, Friends of the Earth is considering whether to influence the UK's action plan for delivering the EU target for renewable energy with the aim to reduce the amount of transport biofuel in the plan, as well as establishing what amount of biomass for power and heat generation can realistically be produced in the UK while avoiding negative knock on effects.

Friends of the Earth's messaging on biofuels highlights the need to reduce overall fuel use and that "sustainability certification" is not a sufficient solution to the problems caused by biofuels.

The Reduce Resource Use campaign highlights the wider need to reduce the consumption of commodities (including, where relevant, bio-commodities).

If we were to do address this, what would be the resource implications for existing work?

Friends of the Earth already runs a campaign on biofuels, managed by a dedicated campaigner. Online materials to assist local groups campaigning against the use of biofuel in power stations could be provided within existing resource allocations. Friends of the Earth's messaging strives to include messaging on biofuels and energy choices where relevant. Friends of the Earth forms alliances with a range of groups, not all of whom may share our position on every subject. Alliance statements usually focus on the core issues on which the alliance agrees and it may not be appropriate to mention areas of disagreement. Friends of the Earth will continue to highlight the need to tackle overall unsustainable consumption through its Reduce Resource Use campaign and on biofuels specifically.

Motion prioritised 3rd – Government Climate Change Campaign

Proposed by Chepstow Friends of the Earth

Seconded by Monmouth Friends of the Earth

Amended by Teignbridge Friends of the Earth (seconded by Torbay Friends of the Earth)

This Conference calls upon the Board of Friends of the Earth Ltd. to rigidly adhere to the Climate Change Act and make the British public fully aware of this Act. This would include urging the Government to mount a major campaign, based on all the scientific evidence relating to climate change, with the aim of making the public aware that to avoid possibly catastrophic climate change, significant changes in our lifestyle will be necessary and that the time to start working towards these changes is now.

Background Information:

This Conference believes that the overwhelming seriousness of climate change is not adequately reflected in Government policy or pronouncements, despite there being a Climate Change Act of Parliament. Actions speak louder than words and some actions of this Government, particularly its support for new coal-fired power stations and a third runway at Heathrow airport, serve only to make the public cynical about Government protestations of concern about climate change. There is also the problem of disinformation spread by the media which seeks to deny the seriousness of the threat from climate change and simultaneously to deny the role which renewable energy, particularly wind energy, can play in reducing that threat. The Government must use all of its resources including television advertising to educate the public as to the truth about climate change and by this means win the public's support for the necessary measures to counteract the threat which it poses.

Relation to the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan:

Which of the 11 Aims does it relate most closely to?

No. 2, Climate change

Please explain briefly how you think your Motion relates to and impacts upon the activities already planned under that Aim(s). If your Motion is suggesting new or additional work, you must also include your views on which areas of work could be cut or reduced to accommodate it.

The objectives under this Aim will not be achieved unless there is a good deal more *active* public support for them than exists at the moment. If the motion is acted upon there is a greater chance that the public will not just meekly accept whatever proposals the Government makes but will actively demand that they put these proposals into effect. It is however for the Government to take the first step by informing the British Public of the Climate Change Act to make it unambiguously clear that the dangers from climate change are real and severe. At present there is confusion in the public's mind caused by contradictions in Government policy which compromise the Act and this confusion can only weaken the public's resolve to make the necessary changes in lifestyle.

Staff response:

Where does this motion fit in relation to the strategic plan 2008-2013?

This motion fits with the Climate Aim, particularly the following objective:

Promote and secure a the energy policy solutions and technologies, including at a local level, required to reduce carbon dioxide emissions in the UK in line with those required for the UK to live within the carbon budget identified by the Tyndall Centre report 'Living within a Carbon Budget' including though ensuring the development and delivery by the Government of a economic strategy focused on the movement to a low carbon economy.

Operationally, what work have we done, are we doing or are planning to do in relation to this issue?

We actively encourage the Government and others to be more robust in telling the story on climate change. For example, we commissioned the Tyndall Centre to produce evidence for the Committee on Climate Change for their report making recommendations for carbon budgets, and we facilitated meetings between Tyndal and key politicians across the UK.

The challenge is that, to date, the Government believes that we can meet carbon reduction goals predominately through technological advances and wants to shy away from issues associated with lifestyle change (meat consumption, transport).

Our Get Serious about CO₂ campaign and our Food Chain Campaign are designed to bring these issues out into the open and generate public and political pressure for change.

If we were to do address this, what would be the resource implications for existing work?

It is not clear what further work we could do here usefully. With very limited resources we can not launch our own major public information campaign, and anyway it would be heavily discounted as "they would say that". We will continue to work with scientists and others to influence Government thinking on this.

Motion prioritised 4th – Population

Proposed by Reading Friends of the Earth

Seconded by Islington Friends of the Earth and Southampton & Eastleigh Friends of the Earth

This Conference calls upon the Board of Friends of the Earth Ltd. to consider promoting, both within the UK and, via the Friends of the Earth International network, globally, the benefits of reduced human population growth, compared with what is currently projected, in view of shrinking natural resources and the colossal value of threatened ecosystems, notably in terms of ecosystem services and irreplaceable biodiversity.

This Conference does not expect Friends of the Earth to devote major resources to this issue. However, Conference does propose that Friends of the Earth

- (i) sets up a working group to develop a comprehensive draft policy,
- (ii) works constructively with other bodies, for example by joining the Population and Sustainability Network;
- (iii) makes reference to the issue as appropriate in future policy briefs and campaigning.

In doing so, Friends of the Earth should make it clear that it does not support racist or eugenicist positions.

Background Information:

This Conference notes the following:

On current trends world population is expected to peak around 2050 at one and half times its current level, which is nine times its level in 1900.

Forecasts also suggest that the population of England will increase by a third over the next 50 years, to become the most crowded country in Europe. Yet this same population is expected, as a consequence of the Climate Change Act, collectively to reduce CO₂ emissions by 80%! Clearly, any increase will increase the difficulty of reaching CO₂ emission targets.

FoE's position paper on population, 2006 (at http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/immigration_population_and.pdf) states "Population growth puts pressure on the world's natural resources. Friends of the Earth does not believe that it is the main cause of environmental degradation" to justify FoE currently having no involvement in population-related campaigning.

Yet FoE's 'Tomorrow's World' book (1998) said "It is self-evident that in a world of finite resources, population must be part of a long-term strategy for sustainability" and cited the 'Ehrlich' or 'Sustainability' Equation (also known as the IPAT equation): $I = P \times C \times T$ where: 'x' signifies multiplication; 'I' is environmental Impact; 'P' is Population; 'C' is average Consumption per person; and 'T' is a Technology factor - environmental impact per unit of 'C'.

Worldwatch Institute's State of the World 2000 report noted "*If we cannot stabilise climate and we cannot stabilise population, there is not an ecosystem on Earth that we can save. Everything will change.*"

Many countries both in the North and South are in ecological deficit, and the UK is in ecological deficit even excluding all its fossil fuel energy use, according to Global Footprint Network 2008, see <http://tinyurl.com/brllu4>, <http://tinyurl.com/ckctft> Continued UK population growth is hindering efforts to reduce the UK's unsustainable ecological footprint, as well as to use water sustainably and avoid using desalination.

Internationally, although last year's 'food shock' came unnecessarily early, owing to the spread of Western-style diets and biofuels, this has demonstrated the tight balance between population and food supplies. We should consider this a warning shot of worse to come. World fishing rates are unsustainable, in terms of both catches and seafloor wrecking, and some farming relies on unsustainable use of water and topsoil..

Global population growth also impacts strongly on emissions control. Suppose we were aiming to cut annual world energy-and-process CO₂ emissions from the current 4.5 tonnes per capita to 1 tonne per capita by 2050. Then a 50% rise in population would reduce this to 2/3 tonne, let alone allowing for the added deforestation and non-CO₂ emissions that may result. (See <http://tinyurl.com/pkuy7p>, http://www.tyndall.ac.uk/publications/journal_papers/fulltext.pdf)

The longer addressing the population issue is postponed, the worse future 'food and land crunch' the world will face with the coming agricultural impacts of oil and phosphorus fertilizer depletion, water scarcity, temperature and sea level rises and topsoil erosion.

With media coverage of population issues increasing, FoE is likely to be asked to make a contribution to the debate.

Relation to the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan:

Which of the 11 Aims does it relate most closely to?

#1 – Biodiversity; #2 - Climate Change; #5 - Delivering Sustainable Development; #6 – International; #7 – Reputation and reach

Please explain briefly how you think your Motion relates to and impacts upon the activities already planned under that Aim(s). If your Motion is suggesting new or additional work, you must also include your views on which areas of work could be cut or reduced to accommodate it.

#1 - Biodiversity and #2 - Climate Change

This Motion's suggestions would lead to FoE making reference to the benefits of reduced human population growth, compared with what is currently projected, in its approaches to these campaign areas.

#5 - Delivering Sustainable Development

Population growth in South East England will bear critically on the consequences of imminent water scarcity, namely the extent of water efficiency measures or rationing needed if we are to avoid using desalination.

#6 – International

As with climate change any international campaigns will require a well-founded understanding of population growth and its impact on the environment.

#7 – Reputation and reach

If FoE is to be recognised as “the leading organisation that involves people in campaigning for solutions to the global sustainability challenges and makes life better for people” it will require a well-founded understanding of population growth and its impact on the environment. Other organisations appear to be ahead on this issue which is getting higher public recognition.

In terms of resourcing:

The setting up of a joint working group of staff and interested volunteers should have minimal impact on FoE staff time as it could be conducted online, including via Skype meetings, with interested volunteers chairing and minuting/draft writing. Such staff time as is needed in policy development could come by delaying updates to other policy position(s), in view of the considered importance of the Population issue.

Staff response:

Where does this motion fit in relation to the strategic plan 2008-2013?

There are no aims or objectives relating to population in the 2008-2013 strategic plan, although the introductory statement mentions “growing population” alongside “massively expanding consumption” as “quickly undermining the natural systems on which all life depends”.

Operationally, what work have we done, are we doing or are planning to do in relation to this issue?

Our strategic judgement has been that it is more effective, in the short-time we have to achieve change, to try to influence consumption and technology rather than population.

This reflects our recognition that new births are only one factor in population increase. A significant proportion of the projected global population rise results from people living longer. Moreover, populations can rise even as birth rates fall because of the follow-through from past population increases (as more people enter the child-rearing age group). In the long run, policies to influence birth rates can help to reduce environmental impacts. Successful policies include better education and the economic emancipation of women and greater availability of family planning services.

Our last policy statement on population dates to 2006 – see

http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/immigration_population_and.pdf . We intend to update this but have yet to schedule a project for doing so.

If we were to do address this, what would be the resource implications for existing work?

Previous experience suggests that significant staff time would be required, even if much of the work was delegated to a working group of local group activists. A relatively senior campaigner might have to spend a quarter of their time for three months to research and develop a comprehensive policy on population. Thereafter, there would be an on-going commitment but this would not be significant.

Motion prioritised 5th – Local Group Information and Support

Proposed by South Bedfordshire Friends of the Earth

Seconded by Birmingham Friends of the Earth

A note from the Chair of Motions on Motion 5:

Although three successive versions have been submitted, it was not possible within the time available to agree with the proposing group a form of words for the Additional Information section of this motion that met the Motions Criteria, either in terms of content or length. Rather than reject the Motion entirely because the Additional Information was unacceptable, the Chair of Motions has elected to allow the Motion to be put to Local Groups for prioritisation with the disputed content deleted, ensuring both content and length are acceptable and the Motion meets the criteria, but without being able to obtain the approval of the Proposing or Seconding Groups. It should be emphasised that the Motion itself has not been edited, only the Additional Information. Those areas edited are noted in [square brackets]. Should the Proposing Local Group find this unacceptable and opt to withdraw the Motion, those Motions below it in Prioritisation will each be promoted by one place.

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

1. Conducting an open and transparent discussion of gatekeeping and capacity building to genuinely build the capacity of groups to campaign at all levels.
2. Following this open discussion, trialling new flows of information and contact between staff and local groups, and review these within the year to ensure that they meet the variety of local group needs (not FOE management's view of those needs).
3. Ensure that features of the trial include:
 - respecting the relevance of local campaigns in supporting the objectives of national and wider campaigns
 - Understanding the importance of local campaigns in relation to building the capacity of a group
 - Supporting and helping local groups with the local campaigns for this reason.

- Understanding that local groups' needs are too different to suit a one size fits all approach.
- allowing all relevant staff to contact local groups with information,
- allowing campaign teams to be able to directly contact local groups with background information and information on actions and opportunities,
- respecting the ability of local groups to make decisions for themselves and to support local groups in making those decisions and prioritising.

Background Information:

A system of 'gatekeeping' of information, services and calls for action for local groups is in operation. This system has not been clearly explained to local groups.

Quality, well-timed information is vital in local groups' ability to influence local, regional and national decision-makers and showing that they are credible representatives of the organisation, its policies, issues and reputation. Information and support and actions on a wide range of issues is often crucial in attracting new members and building the capacity of a group.

The effect if not the intention of the way the gatekeeping and 'capacity building' functions are handled within FOE is that groups are being channelled into one or two tightly controlled national campaigns and away from wider, knowledge-based campaigns and local and regional activities that build local/regional credibility and attract active members.

There must be a significant financial cost to the current heavily controlling approach to information flow and contact. Different groups have different needs for levels, frequency and detail of information and contact. Local groups are able to make decisions for themselves and should be supported to do so.

In 2008 the amendment on Climate Change to the Planning Reform Bill was rejected by only 15 votes. If 15 MPs had been lobbied the new Planning Commission would be required to consider climate change when it approved large projects like power stations, airports and other carbon intensive development.

This campaign opportunity was gate-kept: the campaign team were not able to directly contact local groups to notify them as to the threat and opportunity. As a result many local groups were unaware of it. Many would have been happy and had time to lobby their MP but were unaware of the need.

[Paragraph deleted]

Many local groups campaigners are not members of the Waste network as this is not their major campaign and they do not have time to read all the information on the waste network, but contained actions [deleted] or just news and pictures of the action, could help enormously a local group who are not experts but who have an incinerator campaign on their doorstep. It could help them profile-wise and in attracting new members and building the capacity of the group.

[Paragraph deleted]

Many people join local groups for local issues and go on to support national campaigns. Groups being enabled to do BOTH by information flow, contact with staff and capacity building arrangements is important in attracting new members and keeping them involved.

Local group members are frequently asked to do media interviews or talk to politicians and others on a wide range of issues, often at short notice, and need up-to-date information on those issues. Good information flow from FOE assists this without major resource implications.

Not everyone has time to participate in the more detailed specific campaign networks. A balance must be found where all groups can have access to headline info, bullet points, calls for action on any and all campaign areas.

Relation to the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan:

Which of the 11 Aims does it relate most closely to?

All of them, and particularly 4, 5 7,8, 9.

Please explain briefly how you think your Motion relates to and impacts upon the activities already planned under that Aim(s). If your Motion is suggesting new or additional work, you must also include your views on which areas of work could be cut or reduced to accommodate it.

This motion is about enabling local groups and campaigners to work to the greatest possible effectiveness and the best and most efficient use of resources, in order to support all the aims of the strategic plan, especially the Activism Aim no 9. Objective 1 – Group Action: “Local groups are empowered to campaign highly effectively from local to global levels, as a stronger and more diverse network.”

Staff response:

If we are already addressing or planning to address this issue as part of the 5-year plan, please give the strategic rationale for why.

The main reason for needing to co-ordinate and manage the breadth and volume of communication between staff and activists is to ensure that busy group members have the best chance of staying informed of news, opportunities and support that will help them campaign most effectively; and to ensure a sensible volume of requests going to our campaign targets – e.g. MPs. However, the organisation has already acknowledged that systems need improvement, to address the points in this motion and other issues. This is crucial work and is already underway within planned projects across the organisation as set out below.

Operationally, what work have we done, are we doing or are planning to do in relation to this issue?

A short document – “supporting groups” – was sent out with the relicensing and survey mailing to all local groups earlier this year, setting out many of these issues and staff plans for action

(http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/organisational_policy/supporting_groups.pdf). Since then much work on a number of different fronts has begun in parallel:

- Review of campaign networks to increase the amount of information available for local campaigners to opt into on all issues we work on and to improve channels between groups and staff and between groups. To participate in this review, go to: http://www.foe.co.uk/community/local_groups/feedback/cn_review_20493.html
- The new Change Your World magazine that aims to celebrate more the activities of local groups on all issues they work on (through more in-depth articles on local group projects) and to provide a mouthpiece for local groups (in a new letters page):
http://www.foe.co.uk/community/local_groups/resource/change_your_world.html
- Knowledge Management:
Personalised website Login: Work is already under-way with experimental pilots for a “personalised membership” - allowing individuals to “login” to Friends of the Earth and customise their online experience so that the information they receive suits them better.
Information Availability: Staff are working to make as much of our existing information as possible available to appropriate audiences online, albeit with a level of overview to ensure information is still current. Methods of doing this are already being actively worked on.
Microsites: (http://www.foe.co.uk/community/local_groups/resource/websites.html) These are websites hosted by and linked to the Friends of the Earth website, managed by local groups as a local online presence for them. By the end of 2009 well over 100 of these Microsites should be live and over time these will be another tool that can help to increase information flow between staff and local groups. For an example of these sites see: <http://www.foe.co.uk/groups/warrington/index.html>
Publications: Every month the organisation produces reports and papers of high quality. Each quarter the Board receives a report listing and linking every substantial piece of work the organisation has put into the public domain in the previous three months. Staff are exploring the best way to make this resource available, possibly through the monthly emails. There also continues to be an online search facility for all our publications: <http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/index.shtml>
- Supporter Journeys. Under the Supporter Development aim, work is under way to increase the support levels of new and existing supporters by maximising their opportunities to support us – financially and actively. This is with the aim of delivering the maximum amount of campaigning from the people who we interact with.
- Continued review/update/re-grouping of information on Community to make it easier to find and access (e.g. new policies and procedures section - http://www.foe.co.uk/community/local_groups/resource/policies.html);

All these pieces of work should improve how we communicate with local groups to make our approach as helpful as possible to as many groups as possible, strengthening our capacity building work. All of the work described above should significantly improve our ability for individuals to define and opt into the correct volume and type of

communications for them, and if as successful as intended should lessen the need for some of the proactive management of communication currently perceived as gate-keeping.

Staff are also about to start setting up a new activism forum, to ensure that the approaches adopted by staff address as many of the needs of local campaigners as is possible within available resources now and in the future.

We would also emphasise that, should any local group member ever want to get in touch with any member of campaign staff, they have always been free to do so. Indeed network developers often refer local group members to campaign staff when their expertise is needed.

Our challenge is always and will continue to be to manage our communication so that the vast majority of local groups get what they need, with minimal numbers of groups who feel they are being hindered by too much or too little, without processes of management or communication becoming unwieldy. We will never be perfect at this but in light of all the improvements above, we believe we are moving toward a good balance.

If we were to do address this, what would be the resource implications for existing work?

The work outlined above is already directly addressing the points within the Motion. If different approaches were requested in light of this Motion to address these points in other ways, some or all of the above work and/or other existing work that supports local groups with their campaigning would have to be deprioritised to make space for the alternatives.

Motion prioritised 6th – Strategic Plan and Organisational Direction **Proposed by Birmingham Friends of the Earth** **Seconded by Penistone Friends of the Earth**

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

- re-assessing the rationale for Friends of the Earth's narrowing agenda against our sustainable development principles and our values.
- Keeping the broad base of campaign areas that were implied in the 2 strategic plans and to consult fully before any changes are made to this.
- Re-entering a process of consultation and strategic planning, on the grounds that even the existing strategic plan is not being followed and that our fundamental principles risk being lost. The process should involve the whole organisation, should be rebuilt around agreed sustainability principles, and encourage freer and more flexible communication between staff and local groups which is the basis for re-building the kind of trust and respect between local groups, staff, Directors and the Trustees (the Board) which are needed to create a successful and stable organisation.

Background Information:

This Conference notes and / or this Conference believes...

- FOE's strategic plans were built on a 'sustainability' foundation agreed by the whole organisation: living within environmental limits; environmental justice; achieving a sustainable economy.
- FOE's strategic plan 2008-2013 states: 'FOE's long-term strategic goal is to deliver sustainable development which improves the quality of life of all people, promotes justice and equity, respects environmental limits and maintains the ability of future generations to enjoy a similar quality of life.'
- To achieve this, we need to keep a broad campaigning base. Environmental issues are so interlinked that cutting out some of them affects our ability to work on the big environmental picture at local and global levels
- Other organisations 'do' some of these campaign areas, e.g. Campaign for Better Transport, GM Freeze, but FOE's strength was always that we could pull all of these areas together and tackle the whole problem and its solutions.
- From answers given at the Northern Gathering 2009, and in trends over the last 2 years, it seems that FOE's direction is heading away from this, stripping down to a prioritised set of campaigns that is narrower, shallower and less grounded in the above principles.
- These narrow priorities are also negatively affecting many local groups' capacity to campaign intelligently and their relationship to the organisation.
- There is a considerable risk to our reputation, reach, alliance-building potential and principles through this different approach, which has not been subject to whole-organisational discussion:
- Our partnership agreement (involvement framework) states '*For decisions that change the priorities or direction*

of the strategic plan, the Board makes final decisions...’ However, as it also states ‘*generally we would want to make a particular effort to involve as many of our stakeholders as possible in bigger decisions*’ this surely implies that we will have been consulted before this point, because nothing else will impact on the organisation as much as the strategic plan. Although there was a wide consultation on the initial stages of the strategic plan, the narrowing down of our campaigning base was not evident at this point but seems to have evolved since, including in the current change process (beyond unavoidable cuts) on which groups were not consulted at all.

- FOE may justify this changed approach as ‘prioritising’, particularly of the urgency of climate change. Prioritising is important, but an overly centralised, controlling, managerial approach is not, and threatens much of the spirit, trust and ethos which has made FOE successful and respected.
- Our environmental justice work, our proactive work on economics and sustainable development across the local/regional/global spectrum, is our unique selling point in a sector otherwise dominated by climate/environmental communication NGOs.
- As an example, one Local Group asked to bring Climate Change info to their local Fairtrade and Oxfam groups’ Age of Stupid screening, but were told “Oxfam is working on climate change as its main campaign, so why do we need FOE?” Our relevance is lost if we are not seen as an organisation with a broad sustainability vision.

Relation to the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan:

Which of the 11 Aims does it relate most closely to?

All of them, particularly delivering sustainable development in nations and regions; reputation and reach; rights; and of course organisational development.

Please explain briefly how you think your Motion relates to and impacts upon the activities already planned under that Aim(s). If your Motion is suggesting new or additional work, you must also include your views on which areas of work could be cut or reduced to accommodate it.

It would enable us to deliver the strategic plan and deliver on our overarching aims more closely.

Staff response:

Taking each of the three points of the Motion in turn, staff offer the following response:

- **re-assessing the rationale for Friends of the Earth’s narrowing agenda against our sustainable development principles and our values.**

We cannot afford to continue all activities at the level that was envisaged at the time the strategic plan was devised. Given the financial constraints which we are currently under, the choice is to do fewer things well, or more things possibly ineffectively. Being an ineffective organisation would not contribute to our sustainable development principles or our values.

- **Keeping the broad base of campaign areas that were implied in the 2 strategic plans and to consult fully before any changes are made to this.**

As above, it is not an option to keep things unchanged; staff are trying hard to maintain diversity and flexibility for the longer term. There has been wide consultation amongst staff and Board about the proposed changes. The Board has accepted the case put forward by senior management of the need for a focusing of our national work in the short-medium term mainly, but not exclusively, onto 3 main campaigns, though with the scope to keep other smaller campaigns ‘on active watch’ and to increase space for smaller campaigns as from mid 2010. Policy work continues on a broader range of issues still, though reduced from previously.

- **Re-entering a process of consultation and strategic planning, on the grounds that even the existing strategic plan is not being followed and that our fundamental principles risk being lost. The process should involve the whole organisation, should be rebuilt around agreed sustainability principles, and encourage freer and more flexible communication between staff and local groups which is the basis for re-building the kind of trust and respect between local groups, staff, Directors and the Trustees (the Board) which are needed to create a successful and stable organisation.**

Most parts of the Strategic Plan are still very much valid and are being implemented, despite the changes that are required internally, and our ‘fundamental principles’ as reflected in the plan are still intact. The current strategic plan was devised through an extremely wide and inclusive process, including consultation with local groups, which extended over nearly 2 years. To attempt to prepare a new plan at this time would almost certainly result in the organisation lacking strategic direction for a considerable period of time and would require a substantial undertaking of time and effort from across the staff body, the Board and wider stakeholders. It would also seriously destabilize the

organisation and create a significant further financial impact, after what has already been an incredibly challenging period.

Issues and present staff projects relating to flexibility of communication between staff and local groups is covered further in the staff response to the Motion on Local Group Information and Support.

Motion prioritised 7th – Geo-engineering

Proposed by Milton Keynes Friends of the Earth

Seconded by Lambeth Friends of the Earth

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

1. Whether or not geoengineering could be a necessary or desirable part of the solution to climate change
2. The merits and shortcomings of various notable geoengineering techniques (e.g. bio-energy with carbon storage, stratospheric sulphur aerosols, carbon air capture, etc)
3. Establish a publicly-stated and scientifically robust position on both geoengineering field experiments and on the full scale-implementation of geoengineering

[The National Academy of Sciences defined geoengineering as "[...] large-scale engineering of our environment in order to combat or counteract the effects of changes in atmospheric chemistry."]

Background Information:

This Conference notes ...

- The current failure to control emissions of greenhouse gases
- The rising global temperature
- The ever worsening risk of breaching the 2C limit suggested by scientists
- The commencement of feedback effects such as Arctic shrinkage and Arctic methane release
- The emerging discipline of ‘geoengineering’, which seeks to directly reduce global warming
- The belief held by some scientists that climate change cannot be safely controlled without geoengineering
- That geoengineering consists of two distinct disciplines: carbon sequestration (e.g. biochar burial) and solar radiation management (e.g. stratospheric aerosol injection)
- The controversy surrounding some geoengineering techniques (e.g. ocean iron fertilisation)

Relation to the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan:

A credible position on geoengineering is a vital part of our stand on global warming.

Which of the 11 Aims does it relate most closely to?

Global warming

Please explain briefly how you think your Motion relates to and impacts upon the activities already planned under that Aim(s). If your Motion is suggesting new or additional work, you must also include your views on which areas of work could be cut or reduced to accommodate it.

This motion does not impose any notable costs or demands on the organisation – it is simply a matter of writing a position paper. A position on geoengineering will help clarify our work on global warming, and guide activists who are asked to comment on it by the media or others.

Staff response:

Where does this motion fit in relation to the strategic plan 2008-2013?

It fits within the Climate Aim, and particularly but not wholly into the following objective:

- *Promote and secure a the energy policy solutions and technologies, including at a local level, required to reduce carbon dioxide emissions in the UK in line with those required for the UK to live within the carbon budget identified by the Tyndall Centre report ‘Living within a Carbon Budget’ including though ensuring the development and delivery by the Government of a economic strategy focused on the movement to a low carbon economy.*

Operationally, what work have we done, are we doing or are planning to do in relation to this issue?

In strategic discussions earlier this year we identified the need to produce a clear position paper on this issue. We would hope to have an initial paper completed around conference time.

There are of course challenges in producing a clear position because it not only needs to be informed by technology, science and economics, it also has to be informed by politics (e.g. we do not want to give any suggestion that geo-engineering means that politicians don't need to worry about mitigation).

If we were to do address this, what would be the resource implications for existing work?

n/a

Motion prioritised 8th – International Carbon Emissions Trading

Proposed by Leeds Friends of the Earth

Seconded by Elmbridge Friends of the Earth

This Conference calls upon the Board of Friends of the Earth Ltd. to consider strengthening the position of Friends of the Earth EWNI (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) at the United Nations Climate Change Conference at Copenhagen (December 2009) by opposing international carbon emissions trading (often known as “cap and trade”). As part of this, the Board should consider joining Friends of the Earth International and Friends of the Earth Australia in signing the Durban Declaration on Carbon Trading (<http://tinyurl.com/durban-declaration>).

Background Information:

This Conference believes that:

- Friends of the Earth is rightly opposing carbon offsetting at Copenhagen. Offsets have environmentally unjust consequences for the global South, while allowing the continued carbon dependence of the North.
- Copenhagen will be a key international agreement, which will have a major impact on UK climate policy – for instance regarding feasibility of coal and airport expansion.
- The EU Emissions Trading Scheme has failed to cut carbon emissions.
- International emissions trading is fundamentally flawed because it:
 - Favours cheap and quick “optimisations” of fossil fuel industry at the expense of urgent and fundamental infrastructure and social changes required to break carbon dependence (“lock-in”). There is even evidence that the government is reluctant to pursue renewable energy targets because they present a “major risk” to carbon prices (<http://tinyurl.com/leaked-briefing>), threatening London’s growing carbon trading industry.
 - Allocates or auctions permits to large corporate emitters, creating valuable de-facto property rights (a legal entitlement to pollute) and privatising the Earth’s carbon cycling capacity. This process harbours potential for political conflict, and risks undermining Friends of the Earth’s commitment to “an environmentally just society: in which inequalities of power and resources are reduced” (Strategic Plan 2008-2013, p3).
 - Fails to differentiate between the social, environmental and technological context of cuts. “Survival emissions” and “luxury emissions” become interchangeable; optimisations to “dead-end” technologies become comparable with developments in entirely new technologies (that can spawn multiple future cuts, as well as other environmental and social benefits).
 - Diverts political energy into creating and maintaining a contrived and unwieldy market infrastructure, with carbon consultants, brokers and industry lobbyists seeking to influence market design and emissions rights for commercial advantage.
 - Is vulnerable to economic downturn. The current recession has caused a collapse in manufacturing, depressing carbon prices.
 - Relies on scientifically dubious equivalences between different greenhouse gases, which have different atmospheric behaviours and residence times.
 - Is unable to reflect climate uncertainty. How do you price the tonne of carbon that pushes the climate beyond a “tipping point”?
- Governments can use traditional regulatory approaches and public investment to reduce carbon emissions, for example:
 - Moratoriums on coal and airport expansion;
 - Tough emissions requirements for vehicles and household goods;
 - Planning laws and building regulations;
 - Home insulation schemes, tackling fuel poverty;
 - Subsidies for renewables not fossil fuels, for instance using feed-in tariffs.

- Regulatory approaches to pollution control are proven. Germany reduced sulphur dioxide emissions by 90% using regulation, whereas the US only reduced emissions by 35% over a similar period using trading.

“The oil price shocks of the 1970s didn’t wean us off oil, so why should we believe that a high carbon price will wean us off carbon?” (Jim Watson, University of Sussex Energy Group)

“‘Giving carbon a price’ will not prove to be any more effective, democratic, or conducive to human welfare, than giving genes, forests, biodiversity or clean rivers a price.” (The Durban Declaration on Carbon Trading)

Relation to the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan:

Which of the 11 Aims does it relate most closely to?

- 2 – Climate Change
- 4 – Rights
- 5 – Delivering Sustainable Development

Please explain briefly how you think your Motion relates to and impacts upon the activities already planned under that Aim(s). If your Motion is suggesting new or additional work, you must also include your views on which areas of work could be cut or reduced to accommodate it.

2 – Climate Change

Objective 1: An agreement at Copenhagen that includes international carbon emissions trading will be weak (ineffective at reducing emissions) and unjust. Pollution trading has a poor record of success, which will be exacerbated at the global level. See motion “Background Information” for further explanation.

Objective 4: An international emissions market will undermine tax, spending and regulatory approaches to cutting carbon. Emitters empowered by carbon permits (de-facto property rights) will present legal obstacles to, and lobby harder against, regulatory (“market distorting”) efforts to cut emissions.

Objective 5: There is already evidence that the UK government is reluctant to pursue renewable energy targets because they present a “major risk” to carbon prices, and London’s growing carbon trading industry (‘Leaked Note Reveals UK’s Renewables Angst’, Environmental Data Service Europe Daily 2373, 15 August 2007).

4 – Rights

Objective 2: The industries most likely to hold and buy carbon permits (pollution rights) are those most firmly “locked-in” to fossil fuel exploitation. These industries have a disproportionately adverse effect on environmental justice, climate change and biodiversity. Legal methods of holding fossil fuel industry to account will come up against legal entitlements to emit carbon gained under an international emissions trading system.

5 – Delivering Sustainable Development

Objective 2: Emissions trading will postpone a move towards a low-carbon economy by maintaining investment and innovation in fossil fuel technologies (see motion “Background Information” for explanation). Additionally, the overhead required to report emissions and obtain carbon permits favours the economies of scale of large corporate emitters, militating against smaller scale community carbon reduction schemes.

Staff response:

Where does this motion fit in relation to the strategic plan 2008-2013?

It fits within the Climate Aim, and particularly but not wholly into the following objectives:

- *Promote and secure a the energy policy solutions and technologies, including at a local level, required to reduce carbon dioxide emissions in the UK in line with those required for the UK to live within the carbon budget identified by the Tyndall Centre report ‘Living within a Carbon Budget’ including though ensuring the development and delivery by the Government of a economic strategy focused on the movement to a low carbon economy*
- *To get a sufficiently strong and just international agreement on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2010 to prevent global average temperatures exceeding 2 degrees C above the pre-industrial average.*

Operationally, what work have we done, are we doing or are planning to do in relation to this issue?

Friends of the Earth (England, Wales & Northern Ireland) is campaigning at an international level on climate change in-line with Friends of the Earth International’s policy on carbon trading which in summary is:

- Opposition to trading between developed and developing countries.
- Acceptance of trading between developed countries (e.g. European Union Emissions Trading Scheme [EU ETS])
- Opposition to extending carbon trading into forests.

Our recent report, *A Dangerous Distraction, why offsetting is failing the climate & people*, confirmed our position in these areas.

On Emissions Trading within Europe we believe that the EU ETS is in need of massive reform. Its caps are too weak, and it is further weakened by massive volumes of very low quality offsetting schemes. We believe that EU ETS has a future as useful tool to help give developed countries some flexibility between themselves about how their targets are met, but it is not the global panacea that Governments currently believe it is. Other policy instruments - on tax, regulation and spending in particular – will be essential.

We do not take an ideological position on developed country trading, for example, on “*creating valuable de-facto property rights (a legal entitlement to pollute) and privatising the Earth’s carbon cycling capacity.*” Whilst we recognise that these ideological debates exist, we believe that the problems identified are not greatly dissimilar to using carbon taxation or regulation and that, in any case, there is so much political capital tied-up in the EU ETS that there is zero chance of it being abandoned.

If we were to do address this, what would be the resource implications for existing work?

If we were to go strongly against the existence of developed country carbon trading we would be a lone voice amongst European green NGOs. If we wanted to follow through on this we would need to develop a significant campaign to scrap the EU ETS, a campaign that would probably be doomed to failure. The opportunity costs of taking this course of action could be significant.

Motion prioritised 9th – The Role of the Boards of Friends of the Earth

Proposed by Swansea Friends of the Earth

Seconded by Birmingham Friends of the Earth

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

- setting out in a paper what its role and responsibilities are and the criteria on which members are co-opted
- explaining the decisions / actions which led to the present financial crisis
- explaining how the outcome of the current Change Process agreed by the Board relates to the agreed Strategic Plan, what the process was for Board agreement, and the process by which the Board was made aware of staff views and the implications of the changes (i.e. whether at whole Board meetings and communications or through Board sub-committees)
- regularly publishing their minutes or decisions (within commercial/HR confidentiality requirements)
- initiating a formal and consistent method for elected Board members to feed back to, hear and report the views of local groups in their area.

Background Information:

This Conference notes and / or this Conference believes...

1. The Board has ultimate responsibility for the strategic direction of Friends of the Earth.
2. Decisions, actions and minutes of Board meetings are not public and there is not a formal procedure for elected members of the Board to feedback to their electorate or listen to their views.
3. The Board is local groups’ ultimate/only ‘check and balance’ on financial and strategic decisions and local groups are concerned about what aside or prior to the recession led to the FOE 2008-9 financial crisis.
4. The Board has supported changes in the style of campaigning and campaigns management in Friends of the Earth over which several local groups have expressed concerns in writing because they are experiencing the negative effects of this and fear that this will, in time, affect the rest of the network in part or wholly.
5. The role and accountability of the Board is not made clear to local groups.

In the past Board members have been diligent: they have ensured that they communicated with local groups in their region, attended regional meetings to present on Board and strategic matters, and gained feedback. [In the opinion of the proposers]* this no longer happens in a consistent way in all regions.

*inserted by the Chair of the Motions

The strength of the FOE community is the way the network and the central organisation are mutually supportive, and whether or not a particular local group has concerns over the direction of FOE and its recent decision-making, a better reporting and accountability structure is going to benefit our unity and effectiveness as a movement.

Relation to the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan:

Which of the 11 Aims does it relate most closely to?

It fits in with aims on supporter development, activism, fundraising and organisational development.

Please explain briefly how you think your Motion relates to and impacts upon the activities already planned under that Aim(s). If your Motion is suggesting new or additional work, you must also include your views on which areas of work could be cut or reduced to accommodate it.

Not entirely applicable. The motion is intended to better link local groups, staff and Board and to provide a more effective scrutiny mechanism on organisational decision making.

Staff response:

Please note, as this Motion concerns the actions and remits of the Board as much as staff, the response below has been written by staff and Board members together.

Where does this motion fit in relation to the strategic plan 2008-2013?

Most of the Motion relates to governance processes falling outside of work in the strategic plan; the points have however been addressed, either by the change process itself or through the existence already of processes or points of information as outlined below.

Operationally, what work have we done, are we doing or are planning to do in relation to this issue?

Taking each point in the Motion in turn:

- 1) Setting out in a paper the Board's role and responsibilities and the criteria on which members are co-opted.

To clarify, all members of the Board are actually co-opted – non-elected and elected alike – but we assume that this point relates primarily to non-elected members. Roles and responsibilities are defined in existing documents as set out by Company Law (appended for information). Non-elected Board members are co-opted through a transparent advertised recruitment process according to the requirement for specific skills and experience that will contribute to the effective functioning of the organisation – though always within the limit that non-elected members must not outnumber elected members. A skills audit for the Board was recently undertaken, and is being used to help identify what further Board development might need to be undertaken in order to further complement the skills of the existing Board.

- 2) Explaining the decisions / actions which led to the present financial crisis

This has been done in the communications to local groups by Andy Atkins and the Board concurs with these explanations. There are further opportunities to talk to Andy about the planned changes at the meetings he will attend shortly - for more information see: http://www.foe.co.uk/community/local_groups/feedback/financial_situation.html

- 3) explaining how the outcome of the current Change Process agreed by the Board relates to the agreed Strategic Plan, what the process was for Board agreement, and the process by which the Board was made aware of staff views and the implications of the changes (i.e. whether at whole Board meetings and communications or through Board sub-committees)

The change process aims to ensure that we can effectively implement as much of the strategic plan as is now achievable. Without a change process of the scale proposed by management, we would not be able to implement any of the strategic plan beyond 2009, as the organisation would be moving towards bankruptcy.

The full Board read and endorsed the draft change proposal for staff consultation. The full Board also agreed that the final change document would be signed off by the Board Chairs and would only return for wider discussion in full Board if the document were altered substantially. The final document does not differ substantially from the draft and so the Board chairs have now signed it off for implementation.

During the formal consultation period concerning the change proposal, various individual Board members became aware of some staff members' concerns, but as the process is subject to formal consultation between management and Union, Board members were unable to comment without breaching the terms of confidentiality for the consultation and possibly employment law. In any case this would not have been an appropriate level of discussion for individual Board members to take part in, particularly given the agreements already reached in full Board.

The Chairs of the Board and full Board were informed by management that there have been extensive staff responses to the change proposal. They believe this indicates that there has been a full consultation process that can only strengthen the final change document. It is not the job of the Board to respond to these submissions and neither would this be practically possible. The complex task of inviting and responding to staff input is the job of the management and the staff's trade union and they have done this.

4) regularly publishing their minutes or decisions (within commercial/HR confidentiality requirements)

The Boards' minutes are a detailed record of decisions and actions to be taken, not deemed appropriate or tactically wise to be made publicly available in every case (as the Motion acknowledges). In the interests of transparency an additional summarised set of minutes could be prepared although this would require some hours of staff and Board time to edit, agree and publish. This has not been done in the past as very few local groups have expressed an interest in this.

5) initiating a formal and consistent method for elected Board members to feed back to, hear and report the views of local groups in their area.

The role and remit of elected Board members is specifically defined as not formally representing the views of their region. To do so would create a more complex and time consuming role, which most volunteers could not be expected to fulfil and which would be very challenging to undertake consistently across the ten elected areas with the resources available. Elected members are expected to bring to their role their own perspective of being local group members, while also taking account of views expressed by local groups in their region, attending regional gatherings in particular to assist with this. Within these activities they also try to build awareness of the Board's role. The more that local groups can take an interest in nominating, electing and interacting with elected Board members, the more likelihood there is that elected members will be able to fulfil their role effectively.

If we were to do address this, what would be the resource implications for existing work?

As is hopefully clear, most elements of the Motion have been addressed throughout the change process and/or by the existing written remit of the Board and its members. Parts 4 and 5 would require resources to implement and maintain to an effective standard, at a time when the Board is trying to reduce its demands on staff time rather than increase them.

Appendix to staff response:

1) Director's duties

N.B. Since all Trustees of Friends of the Earth Trust are also directors, this list applies to all directors and trustees.

Director's duties have been codified by the Companies Act 2006. There are 7 general duties:

- (a) to act within the company's powers
- (b) to promote the success of the company for the benefit of the members as a whole, including:
 - i. considering the impact of a company's actions on the interests of the employees
 - ii. the need to foster business relationships with customers/suppliers
 - iii. considering the impact of the company's actions on the community and environment
- (c) to exercise independent judgement
- (d) to exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence
- (e) to avoid conflicts of interest
- (f) not to accept benefits from third parties; and

(g) to declare an interest in proposed transactions or arrangements. This is new and is in addition to the existing duty to declare an interest in existing arrangements. Failure to declare an interest in existing arrangements is an offence punishable by a fine (s183). Sole directors must record the declaration in writing.

2) Director's 'role profile'

a) Role Profile for Non-elected Members:

The organisation

Friends of the Earth consists of two distinct organisations, a charitable trust and a non charitable company. They work closely together to implement solutions to the pressing environmental and sustainability needs of the day. The Boards are complemented by four sub committees which exist to scrutinise the work in greater detail.

The job

The Boards consist of 10 elected members and 6 co-opted members. The elected members are nominated by local groups in their region and elected for terms of three years. They are mostly active campaigners at local level; current elected members have a wide variety of backgrounds including architecture, law, academia, IT and local government. The co-opted members are chosen to add additional skills and experience to the Boards and are selected as people who have experience or the aptitude for working at this level.

The task of a co-opted Board member

- To regularly attend all Board meetings and the meetings of at least one sub-committee
- To play a full part in the work of the Board and sub-committees
- To participate in Board working groups on specific issues from time to time as agreed
- To very occasionally support our fundraising efforts through attendance at relevant events
- To use your experience to constructively challenge issues within the Board and at committees, and to propose constructive solutions of benefit to the organisation.

The qualities required

- Substantial knowledge and experience in a relevant field. At present we are particularly looking for co-optees with experience in fundraising, communications and branding (especially the use of new media), and academia/research (especially in a policy-driving context).
- A commitment to Friends of the Earth's aims
- An ability to articulate your views and concerns clearly
- Self confidence, standing and independence

And preferably

- Existing understanding of Friends of the Earth's work
- Previous experience of working on a non-executive governing Board

What your job is not

Board members role does not include any of the following unless specifically agreed

- to direct or manage staff (this is done by the line management)
- to promote a new personal issue or agenda to the Board
- to speak in public or contact the press as a representative of Friends of the Earth , other than by clear agreement with the Executive Director

The time commitment

Board meetings take place in London on three Saturdays through the year running from 10.30-5pm. There is also a residential Board weekend during January. Sub-committees are held four times a year, usually in the weeks preceding a full Board meeting: three (Resources, Strategy and Performance and Governance) are currently in London on a Friday and the other (Activism) is held on a Saturday in a different region each quarter.

In addition to attending meetings Board members will need to have time to:

- read papers prior to each Board and sub-committee meeting and prepare to comment at the meeting;
- read and respond to emails from the Board and sub-committee Chairs and other members between meetings;
- take the lead on discussion of particular issues from time to time, including liaising directly with staff and other Board members

- become involved in particular Board working groups from time to time depending on their specialist skills (as an example Board members have recently assisted with putting in place new IT contracts and overseeing their implementation, re-launching Friends of the Earth Ireland and advising on Friends of the Earth's requirements for premises); and
- attend the annual conference of Friends of the Earth in September when possible.

The reward

The reward comes from being a central part of the governance team of Britain's most successful and vigorous environmental organisation. This has been very significant for many previous Board and committee members. Reasonable expenses are of course met.

b) Role Profile for Regionally-elected members:

We are regularly needing a number of board members to work for Friends of the Earth to offer themselves in one of the regions. This will require commitment to our aims, regular attendance and an ability to apply your skills at board level.

The organisation

FoE consists of two distinct organisations, a charitable trust and a non charitable company. They work closely together to implement solutions to the pressing environmental and sustainability needs of the day. The boards are complemented by a small number of sub committees which exist to scrutinise the work in greater detail.

The job

The boards consist of 10 elected members and 6 co-opted members. The elected members are nominated by local groups in their region and elected for terms of three years. They are mostly active campaigners at local level and current elected members have a wide variety of backgrounds including architecture, law, academia, IT and local government.. The co-opted members are chosen to add additional skills and experience to the boards and are selected as people who have experience or the aptitude for working at this level.

The task of the elected board member

- To attend all board meetings
- To play a full part in the work of the between one and two sub- committees
- To work on specific issues or projects from time to time as agreed
- To provide support to the regional campaign co-ordinator and network developer in their region
- To attend relevant regional meetings from time to time
- To provide feedback to local groups or other activists on board business

The qualities required

- An understanding of FoE's work and a commitment to its aims
- An ability to articulate his or her views and concerns clearly
- Self confidence, standing and independence

The minimum time commitment

Board meetings take place in London on three Saturdays through the year running from 10.30-5pm. There is also a residential Board weekend during January.. Sub-committees are held four times a year: two (Resources and Strategy & Performance) are currently in London on a Friday and the other (Activism) is held on a Saturday in a different region each quarter. There is also a Governance Committee, currently meeting monthly but which is likely to meet six monthly from 2006

In addition to attending meetings Board members will need to have time:

- to read papers prior to each Board and sub-committee meeting and prepare to comment at the meeting;
- to read and respond to emails from the Chair and other members between meetings;
- to take the lead on discussion of particular issues from time to time, including liaising with staff and other Board members to become involved in particular projects from time to time depending on their specialist skills (as an example Board members have recently assisted with putting in place new IT contracts and overseeing their implementation, relaunching FoE Ireland and advising on FoE's requirements for premises); and
- to attend the annual conference of FoE .

What your job is not

Elected members of the board come to the board as individuals whose job is to do their best for the whole organisation, not one part or area. Thus they should not expect

- to direct or manage staff (this is done by the line management)
- to favour their region above others
- to represent the views of their region
- to promote a new personal agenda to the board
- to speak in public as a board member

Other relevant information

Induction will be provided for new members. In addition new members should expect to see:

- i. An induction pack
- ii. including notes on duties of directors and trustees
- iii. Our board code of conduct
- iv. Contacts details of all other directors
- v. Schedule of meetings
- vi. Expense payments

The reward

The reward comes from being a central part of the governance team of Britain's most successful and vigorous environmental organisation. This has been very significant for many previous board and committee members. Reasonable expenses are of course met.

Motion Prioritised 10th – Personal Carbon Trading Scheme

Proposed by Mon A Gwynedd Friends of the Earth

Seconded by Shrewsbury Friends of the Earth

This Conference calls upon the Board of Friends of the Earth Ltd. to consider organising a national campaign aimed at bringing about the introduction, at the earliest possible date, of a personal carbon trading scheme that would encompass domestic energy consumption, road fuels and air travel and might be extended subsequently to include public transport on buses and rail.

Background Information:

This Conference notes that, as affirmed by the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee (EAC), the Government will be unable to meet its 2050 carbon emissions target if it neglects the domestic and personal sector, and that existing initiatives are unlikely to bring about behavioural change on the scale required.

This Conference also notes that personal carbon trading (PCT) would (a) guarantee a reduction in emissions by placing a ceiling on the carbon available for consumption, (b) incentivize behavioural change and promote understanding of the true cost of our fossil fuel use, (c) be broadly redistributive; and (d) complement the EU Emission Trading Scheme, which covers installations in the energy and industrial sectors.

Carbon emissions from households and personal transport account for 40% to 50% of all UK emissions depending on whether aviation and public transport are included. Under a PCT scheme, individuals would be allocated an allowance of carbon based on an overall national cap on the quantity of carbon emissions produced by individuals. These allocations, or credits, would be surrendered as purchases are made that result in emissions, e.g. electricity and fuel. Individuals wishing to emit more than their allowance would have to buy allowances from those who are able to emit less than their allowance. Over time, the overall emissions cap would be reduced in line with national and international agreements.

It has been confirmed by the EAC and DEFRA's pre-feasibility evaluation of PCT that existing technologies would be capable of meeting the requirements of a PCT scheme. In his evidence to the EAC, Richard Starkey of the Tyndall Centre pointed out, "technologically you are using a well-established tried and tested credit card system".

Unlike carbon taxes, PCT provides a "carrot" (the financial reward of low carbon use), not just a stick. By raising personal awareness of the true cost of fossil fuel use, it will foster a carbon-literate society. Furthermore, evidence clearly indicates that PCT would represent a financially progressive (redistributive) policy instrument [<http://www.cse.org.uk/pdf/pub1106.pdf>]. Certain groups, such as those at risk of fuel poverty, would need to be protected from unintended adverse consequences.

While acknowledging PCT's feasibility, the DEFRA evaluation effectively rejected PCT as an "idea ahead of its time" owing to limited public acceptability and high costs. The likely set-up costs were estimated at £700 million to £2 billion, with running costs of £1-2 billion per annum. It has been suggested that these figures may be rather overstated (e.g. <http://www.teqs.net/DEFRAPFSresponse.pdf>). In addition, the costs of the scheme have to be considered in the context of the immense costs of failing to take effective action, as outlined in the Stern Review.

The "limited public acceptability" found in the DEFRA evaluation reflected the very first reactions of 92 participants in 12 focus groups [<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/uk/individual/carbontrading/pdf/pct-synthesis-%20report.pdf>]. This snapshot approach was obviously less than optimal. By contrast, the Lean Economy Connection found "overwhelmingly positive" attitudes following full explanation of the concept [<http://www.teqs.net/DEFRAPFSresponse.pdf>]. The EAC acknowledged that early caps might need to be relatively lenient to promote initial public acceptance.

Relation to the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan:

Which of the 11 Aims does it relate most closely to?

Aim 2 re Climate Change, and in particular, objective 4: "To ensure that by 2012 the UK and its component parts has produced and has begun implementing a clear economic strategy that delivers the changes in tax, spend and regulations that deliver the required annual cuts in carbon dioxide."

Please explain briefly how you think your Motion relates to and impacts upon the activities already planned under that Aim(s). If your Motion is suggesting new or additional work, you must also include your views on which areas of work could be cut or reduced to accommodate it.

We regard the motion as complementing the Big Ask campaign insofar as it aims to help ensure that the UK target of an 80% reduction in CO₂ emissions by 2050 is achieved. The motion focuses on an apparent gap in campaigning: it targets individuals' behaviour, unlike, for example, the Renewables Campaign and Get Serious About CO₂. We would not consider that other areas of work would need to be cut in order to accommodate additional work. We would anticipate a low-cost campaign aimed at securing an EDM, followed by lobbying of MPs etc.

Staff response:

Where does this motion fit in relation to the strategic plan 2008-2013?

This motion fits with the Climate Aim, particularly the following objective:

Promote and secure a the energy policy solutions and technologies, including at a local level, required to reduce carbon dioxide emissions in the UK in line with those required for the UK to live within the carbon budget identified by the Tyndall Centre report 'Living within a Carbon Budget' including though ensuring the development and delivery by the Government of a economic strategy focused on the movement to a low carbon economy.

Operationally, what work have we done, are we doing or are planning to do in relation to this issue?

We have considered this issue in the past, including at Conference debates, and dismissed it as a campaign because:

- We think that the chance of the Government introducing such a scheme in the short-term is extremely low.
- It will generate significant media and public hostility (witness hostility to pay-per-throw for waste)
- That it is not essential for the short to medium term changes needed in e.g. energy supply, low carbon vehicles.
- That equity and fairness issues make it complex (for example, do people living in 100 year old house get larger allowance because even with insulation it will not perform as well as a new house)
- Awareness of the need for action on climate change and its severity are not great enough yet to introduce a type of rationing.

Instead we have chosen to focus on other campaigns such as the Climate Change Act, and now Food Chain and Get Serious about CO₂.

If we were to do address this, what would be the resource implications for existing work?

It would need to be a very significant campaign to have success because the set-up costs of the scheme would be very large (think ID cards), the opposition would be significant, and the backlash from those they feel they are being discriminated against would be difficult to deal with. To run such a campaign would in practice mean running a campaign as big as The Big Ask, which would mean scaling-back or closing down existing campaigns (Food Chain, Demand Climate Change, Get Serious about CO₂). It's time will come but not for at least a few years.