

# Motions to Conference 2010



This is the first draft of the 2010 Motions paper, containing all Motions submitted and the staff response to each one. Motions are listed in the order received by the Returning Officer. This paper will be updated following the close of the Amendments stage of the Motions process, and re-circulated to all local groups for the Prioritisation stage.

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# **Motion 1 – Marine Biodiversity and Sustainability**

**Proposed by Leicester Friends of the Earth**

**Seconded by Muswell Hill & Hornsey Friends of the Earth**

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.

## **Background information:**

This Conference notes:

1. That a paper in Science, in 2006, predicts that marine biodiversity and virtually all fish stocks worldwide will have collapsed completely by the middle of this century, if current trends continue;
2. That a paper in Science, in February 2008, identified the marine environment around the UK as amongst the most degraded in the world;
3. That many fish stocks in the seas around the UK have already collapsed, with cod, for instance, reduced to just 2% of their former abundance and with few fish now surviving long enough to breed.
4. That the 2004 Royal Commission report, "Turning the Tide", recommended that a minimum of 30% of UK waters, out to 200 nautical miles, need to be turned into "no take" marine reserves, in order to halt and reverse the decline in UK fish stocks and in the UK marine environment in general;
5. That the Marine & Coastal Access Act, passed in 2009, gives the UK Government powers that could be used to implement the Royal Commissions proposals, if it chooses to use them, even though MARINET's campaign to get a duty to implement them included in the Act was unsuccessful;
6. That during the Marine and Coastal Access Bill's passage through Parliament Friends of the Earth left it to interested local groups and activists to campaign on their own for it to be strengthened, rather than investing national FoE's authority and some resources in running a national campaign, a decision that some members believe was a missed opportunity;
7. That the EU Common Fisheries Policy has failed to ensure that exploitation of fish stocks is kept within sustainable limits, within EU waters as a whole, including allowing continued unsustainable exploitation of species such as bluefin tuna, which is threatened with extinction;
8. That the EU's Common Fisheries Policy is currently being reviewed;
9. That in the face of declining catches in EU waters the EU has been negotiating access to the fishing grounds of poorer countries, for EU fleets; exposing many other fisheries worldwide to the same over exploitation that has already caused the collapse of many European fisheries and threatening the livelihoods of local fishermen and women.

This Conference believes that Friends of the Earth should be campaigning on marine, as well as terrestrial, biodiversity.

This Conference recognizes that Friends of the Earth has limited resources, but believes that the threat of collapse of many marine ecosystems and the threatened extinction of many species is important enough to demand investment of some of resources in campaigning in this area. Conference also believes that FoE's authority; strong local groups network; and acknowledged experience and expertise in lobbying gives FoE the potential to contribute something additional and valuable to campaigning in this area, over and above what is offered by others already campaigning in this area.

**Please explain briefly how you think your Motion relates to and/or impacts upon the activities already happening or planned at Friends of the Earth:**

The two parallel campaigns proposed are particularly relevant to our aims under the headings of "Biodiversity & Ecosystem Services" (particularly Objectives 1 & 6) and "Sustainable Economies & Resource Use" (particularly Objectives 1 & 2). The second is also in line with our aim under the "International" heading and both in line with our aim under the heading "Reputation & Reach". In addition, by expanding the range of issues covered by our campaigning there is potential for expanding our campaigning capacity by drawing in more activists and for increasing our income by being able to draw on a greater pool of potential donors.

We are mindful that FoE's resources are finite and that most are already committed to existing campaigns; however, we are only proposing a limited input of resources to these parallel campaigns and we have always sought to retain capacity to run lower key campaigns in response to emerging opportunities. We believe that the EU's review of the Common Fisheries Policy presents such an opportunity, as does the passage of the Marine and Coastal Access Act, where it is important not to lose the momentum that was built up by the campaigning for its passage and around trying to get it strengthened. We are also aware that Channel 4 are planning a programme on the state of the UK marine environment, which will present another opportunity to exploit and there is potential for local groups to arrange screenings of the film "End of the Line", to help promote a campaign in their areas.

In terms of the resources required for these linked campaigns, there are also other organizations, such as the Marine Conservation Society and Greenpeace, who are already campaigning in this area and what we envisage is joint work with other organizations, greatly reducing the demand on FoE resources. In terms of expertise in the area, demands on central resources should also be reduced by the fact that expertise is already available in the local groups network, within MARINET. National FoE resources would be required primarily to liaise with other organizations; to set up online "take action" facilities; to mobilize local groups and national members; to provide expertise on lobbying, at both UK and EU level; to exploit existing national FoE contacts with politicians, etc; and to attempt to generate media coverage, in cooperation with other organizations. Some of this could "piggyback" on work already being undertaken.

**Please explain how you expect the work suggested by your Motion to be resourced – i.e. areas of existing work to be cut or reduced to accommodate it, or realistic ideas for securing extra funding for the new area of work you are proposing and how this will be brought about:**

The Co-op were actively involved in campaigning around the Marine & Coastal Access Bill and may be worth approaching.

**Staff response:**

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

Our biodiversity aim states that: *"To halt biodiversity loss and reverse the loss of ecosystem services by 2030 at the global, regional and national levels, in ways that protect the rights of people who depend on ecosystem services and enhance the sustainable use of natural habitats"*.

Within this aim there are assumptions that:

*"We have assumed that the best way that we can halt biodiversity loss and reverse the loss of ecosystem services, in ways that protect the rights of people who depend on ecosystem services, is to focus on our consumption of and trade in products whose production damages biodiversity and ecosystem services – to make our consumption sustainable in a way that is a model to others. Our objectives therefore address the key areas where European consumption is driving destruction of a key natural habitat (tropical forests). However, our analyses will also consider the role of investment in driving trade in these commodities"*.

*“We have assumed that the best way to secure the changes in trade policy that we need to achieve the aim is by focusing on the destruction of an iconic habitat that is critical for biodiversity – tropical rainforests. By doing so, we aim to secure policy measures that can then serve as precedents for other habitats”.*

We have not prioritised working on marine issues as part of the biodiversity aim given our decision to focus on a key natural habitat - tropical forests - where we have a track record, expertise and a unique role to play. This in itself is a significant and challenging area of work and to spread ourselves too thinly would risk being effective in achieving this. In addition marine campaigning is not an area where we have organisational expertise (bar the expertise within the local groups network such as the work being done by Marinet) and there are other organisations with long established track record / expertise and plans in this area.

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

As stated above this is not a priority issue for us. We are giving some limited support to the Marinet network who have a Network Developer assigned to them to provide 5 hours a month light touch support for contact, information, answering questions, providing tips and guidance.

- **If we were to do address this Motion as proposed, what would be the resource implications for existing work?**

Whilst the motion is mindful that our resources are finite it proposes a “limited number of resources” to this campaign. Currently we are operating within severe resource constraints that have resulted in a number of cuts and freezing of vacancies within campaign teams. This has – is – impacting on all campaign teams including the biodiversity team and for all current campaigns resources (both staffing and operational) are limited / constrained. Therefore to allocate any resources away from current campaigns would mean looking across all our campaigns and cutting an area of work in addition to the cuts we have made to campaigns through the change process.

## **Motion 2 – Broad Range of Campaign Expertise and Media Profile**

**Proposed by Nottingham Friends of the Earth**

**Secoded by Leicester Friends of the Earth**

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.

### **Background information:**

This Conference notes that the proposers of the Motion believe that:

1. the media profile of Friends of the Earth nationally, regionally and locally has been much reduced recently, particularly in the diversity of campaign opportunities pursued by Friends of the Earth;
2. this has been caused, at least in part, by a loss of experienced campaign staff nationally and regionally, and also by an overemphasis in both proactive and reactive media comment on a relatively narrow range of priority campaigns;
3. in any future reorganisation or review of strategy, the organisation's campaign structure and media strategy should be rebalanced to maintain a diverse campaigning profile at all levels from local to international.

**Please explain briefly how you think your Motion relates to and/or impacts upon the activities already happening or planned at Friends of the Earth:**

The Strategic Plan includes a wide range of aims and objectives which require a wide range of campaigning expertise.

**Please explain how you expect the work suggested by your Motion to be resourced – i.e. areas of existing work to be cut or reduced to accommodate it, or realistic ideas for securing extra funding for the new area of work you are proposing and how this will be brought about:**

The motion is about prioritising work within available resources.

**Staff response:**

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

Our campaign expertise is critical to our effectiveness as a campaigning organisation, both in terms of the expertise / issue analysis that underpin our campaigns as well as having spokespeople to present our work to external audiences, whether it's politicians, funders or the media.

We share the concerns highlighted in this motion. The whole organisation was impacted on in the Change Process, a painful process which we are still coming to terms with and rebuilding from. One of the key impacts of the Change Process was the loss of a number of long serving high level campaign experts from the Campaigns Department. This has affected morale and addressing this will be a top priority for the new Policy and Campaigns Director starting in September 2010.

In terms of media coverage for Quarters 2 and 3 of 2009 – our figures show reduction of around 10 per cent in overall coverage on the first year of the Strategic Plan, although these figures are only for two quarters and so don't indicate longer term trends, and much bigger variations than this are common in media coverage over any given year. These are not solely attributable to the loss of expertise/work focus in key areas, although this may be part of it. For example while the ED has been doing a number of high profile media interventions, he has been constrained in his availability due to the internal demands of the change process and of other external demands, such as fundraising and maintaining high level relations with government in the absence of a Policy and Campaigns Director. We expect this latter situation – availability of high level spokespeople - to change positively over the next year.

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

Following the Change Process a number of key campaigns staff have chosen to move on to other jobs and / or to pursue a different career path which often happens after a restructuring process in any organisation. Furthermore we are anticipating a resource tight year with Government cuts and the on-going impacts of the recession working their way through to the charity sector. With this in mind we are being mindful of our resource constraints in an on-going uncertain external financial / fundraising environment and are taking steps to ensure we are saving resources where possible. We have therefore frozen some posts for the next two years as well as temporarily deferring recruitment of others, which management regularly review. The Senior Management Team believe this has to be part of a prudent response to the financial situation in order to minimise the risk of further redundancies.

The impacts on campaign teams is that we have some expertise gaps whether created by cuts in team size (within the climate team we no longer have a national energy expert) or by freezing of some posts (for example, currently there are posts frozen or deferred in areas of economics, legal, planning, and biodiversity). (It should be noted that there are a number of posts frozen or deferred in other functional areas of the organisation.) We are managing this situation by trying to bring in consultants / external experts to do critical pieces of work, as well as cut work where we have to, to avoid spreading ourselves too thinly.

The Senior Management team and all staff strongly wish to emerge from these constraints as soon as we can be confident that it would be sustainable financially. The Senior Management Team is therefore working on priorities for staffing when our resources are less restrictive. The issue of gaps in our campaign expertise will be an important consideration.

In terms of media profile we have recently changed our approach to have the comms and media team work on a broader range of issues (within the constraint that they have also had to accommodate a reduction in resources). Our intention is to make much better use of the range of expertise we have in the organisation, responding to items in the media from a position of our own expertise, and linking it back to all of our campaigns – large and small. This will include using a broader range of spokespeople. But because of the very real resource constraints for media and comms teams, we are focusing their work more on *responsive* news management and online work across our issues. There is currently not the resource to provide *long-term* communications planning and *proactive* media across every campaign issue.

- **If we were to do address this Motion as proposed, what would be the resource implications for existing work?**

If we were to protect the broad base of campaign staff as a priority as suggested by this motion this would imply the prioritisation of campaign posts in any future recruitment as well as the need to find any further savings from other parts of the organisation first.

If we were to provide full *proactive* and reactive media and communications across all of our areas of work all of the time we would need to bring additional resources into the comms and media team. This resources is currently not available and hence our focus in on maximising opportunities for profile, regardless of whether it is a priority campaign or not.

## **Motion 3 – Protection for Agricultural Land**

**Proposed by West Cornwall Friends of the Earth**  
**Seconded by Lizard Peninsula Friends of the Earth**

This Conference calls upon the Board of Friends of the Earth Ltd., to recognize the importance of agricultural land and, in the light of global climate change and other adverse factors, to lobby Government at the highest level to give greater protection to this increasingly finite resource.

### **Background information:**

This Conference believes agricultural land\* in the United Kingdom is currently regarded as an infinite resource to be farmed, built on or otherwise used solely at the discretion of its owner(s).

Depending on whose statistics are used, the UK currently imports between 50% - 55% of the food it consumes. While currently some 70% of the country is agricultural land, in *per capita* terms, land devoted to agriculture is shrinking rapidly.

As with other commodities, such as oil, issues such as ‘peak land’ and ‘peak food’ have to be addressed sooner rather than later. Yet there is no sign from successive Governments that the issue is being taken seriously.

Issues such as global climate change, extreme weather events, crop failure, diversion of grain yields to livestock or biofuels, water shortages, increasing energy costs and, above all, a growing world population, mean that we cannot expect the current situation to remain unchanged. In short, we cannot go on expecting the rest of the world to make up the shortfall in our own food production especially when newly emerging world economies are entering the food purchasing market.

The United Kingdom needs, as a matter of urgency, tighter planning regulations to stop the cumulative loss of agricultural land and, by implication, the food that would have been produced from it.

The greatest threat at the moment is the so-called ‘Exception Site Policy’ which means that agricultural land once considered untouchable can now be developed for affordable housing provided certain criteria are met. Since this Policy was first introduced in 1989, some 3000 ‘exception sites’ have been developed (source: The Rural Housing Trust). Regrettably, this Policy has become increasingly popular as the demand for cheap rural housing remains undiminished and, in some areas, is actually growing.

Taken together with demands for roads and various other public and commercial uses, the future for agricultural land looks bleak unless urgent action is taken now.

\* While the Motion is primarily about ‘farmland’ it could also include land (football pitches, green open spaces etc., etc..) with the potential for food production

### **Please explain briefly how you think your Motion relates to and/or impacts upon the activities already happening or planned at Friends of the Earth:**

We believe the Motion enhances FoE’s position as an environmental organisation that is looking beyond the short term and, as such, the Motion could be viewed as an adjunct to existing activities

**Please explain how you expect the work suggested by your Motion to be resourced – i.e. areas of existing work to be cut or reduced to accommodate it, or realistic ideas for securing extra funding for the new area of work you are proposing and how this will be brought about:**

There would be no financial costs resulting from this Motion other than that needed to raise the issue with the Secretary of State and other Ministers within the new UK Government.

**Staff response:**

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

A similar motion was raised on this issue in the 2008 motions process which was more specific on the issue of greenfield land. As we stated then there are no specific aims or objectives in the Strategic Plan that focus on agricultural land in the UK. Instead we are focussing on the two major global challenges that threaten human well-being – climate change and biodiversity loss.

Land use has an important function in the climate system but the protection of agricultural land in the UK is a tiny part of the problem compared to global deforestation.

Our campaign on biodiversity does focus on the consumption of goods that come from the land – food, timber, biofuels - and explicitly addresses land conversion, as this is a major driver of deforestation and biodiversity loss. However, these are different concerns to those raised in the motion.

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

Our biodiversity work does have a UK farming component in that we are looking at ways to ensure the UK farming economy is supported by alternative locally grown feed for livestock, rather than rely on the imports of animal feed that is a driver for deforestation. We are also putting the argument to Government that land for food production must take priority over energy crops given the push for biomass from energy crops.

Through our rights and justice work we provide generic resources to local campaigners to understand how to use the planning system to oppose negative developments as well as support positive developments. This will continue to be the case.

Currently our specific planning expertise is focussed on commenting on priority issues in relation to climate change to ensure that national, regional and local planning frameworks support low carbon initiatives. We are currently without a Senior Planner which has created a further strain on resources on this area.

• **If we were to do address this Motion as proposed, what would be the resource implications for existing work?**

While the motion says that there would be no financial costs resulting from this motion other than the need to raise this issue with the Secretary of State and other Ministers within the new UK Government this appears to be at odds with the stated intention of the motion “to lobby Government at the highest level to give greater protection to this increasingly finite resource”. Any such lobby would require diverting resources away from a current campaign area and would therefore distract from priority climate or biodiversity work.

## **Motion 4 – Renewables Programme for Public Buildings**

**Proposed by Bromley Friends of the Earth**

**Seconded by Croydon Friends of the Earth**

This Conference calls upon the Board of Friends of the Earth Ltd. to consider, as part of the Get Serious campaign, to persuade the Department of Energy to instruct all public bodies to use renewable energy in their buildings, the programme to be supported by directives or legislation to ensure compliance.

**Background information:**

This Conference believes that this resolution fits in with what we have been campaigning for since the early days of calling for energy-saving: tackle the basics first – aim first for simple solutions such as better insulation for homes.

The number of public buildings in the UK runs into tens of thousands, from schools and libraries to huge national and local government blocks. By making the use of renewables compulsory, government and local authorities can set an

example to the nation and, very much to the point, they have the power to enforce the change. Leading by example will allow the Government to claim the moral high ground in persuading other public bodies to act.

As we have seen from the Get Serious campaign, many local authorities are already saving energy – and money – by switching to energy-saving devices. So, why not go a step further by insisting that they use renewables? A ‘no brainer’ if ever there was one!

**Please explain briefly how you think your Motion relates to and/or impacts upon the activities already happening or planned at Friends of the Earth:**

The Get Serious campaign is now well under way and staff resources can be obtained from that campaign. Plus, there is the bonus that implementing this resolution requires skills similar to those used in Get Serious.

**Please explain how you expect the work suggested by your Motion to be resourced – i.e. areas of existing work to be cut or reduced to accommodate it, or realistic ideas for securing extra funding for the new area of work you are proposing and how this will be brought about:**

See the response above re providing the resources to work on this campaign from the Autumn.

**Staff response:**

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

Our strategic plan rightfully commits us to ensuring the delivery of low carbon solutions locally and the Get Serious Campaign is geared up to do this. Encouraging the use of micro-generation is a key part of that.

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

We secured the introduction of the Feed-in tariff in the Energy Act in 2008 and have worked since to ensure the detail of the scheme and the rates set are good enough. In advance of the General Election we also successfully lobbied the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats to promise extending the Feed-in tariff scheme to larger-scale renewables.

In May we worked with the Energy Savings Trust to run seminars for local authorities and housing associations on how to use the Feed-in tariffs to increase the use of renewable technologies for their own properties but also others within their area. In addition, in July, we published positive case-study research by Arup demonstrating how the Feed-in Tariff can be used in a variety of locations and scales, on commercial and public buildings, as well as on homes. In addition, we have hired as a consultant Alan Simpson, former MP who worked with us to secure the legislative changes, to amongst other things promote the use of the Feed-in tariff to councils, housing associations etc.

We have worked closely with the high command of the Conservative Party to get them to agree to introduce local carbon budgets which would require local authorities to drive the implementation of low carbon solutions within their areas. Local carbon budgets are not prescriptive on how reductions should be made, in the same way that the Big Ask Campaign for a Climate Change Act was not prescriptive on how the changes should be made. The staff's view is that local carbon budgets are the stick to drive action and feed-in tariffs are the carrot to drive small-scale renewables. Our conversations with both Conservatives and Liberal Democrats in Government strongly suggest that they are willing to deliver local carbon budgets because they know local action is necessary to deliver the Climate Change Act, but that there is no appetite for telling local authorities how they should deliver the changes.

• **If we were to do address this Motion as proposed, what would be the resource implications for existing work?**

We hope that the motion proposers understand that we are working to achieve the same ends but using local carbon budgets and feed-in tariffs to do so rather than seeking Government dictate. If we were to try to force the Government to require local authorities and others to install renewable technologies on all public building we fear that a) we would lose because the Government is dead-set against micro-managing what local Government do, and b) as a result of distracting we would lose the opportunity of winning the hearts & minds of local authorities, housing associations, etc for action on climate change because inevitably we would have to scale-back of the promotional work on feed-in tariffs we want to do.

# Motion 5 – Dialogue, Participation and Governance

Proposed by Birmingham Friends of the Earth

Seconded by Nuneaton & District Friends of the Earth

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

- Putting in place mechanisms to be in closer dialogue with the other constituent parts of FOE EWNI, namely local groups and the staff body, and championing participatory decision-making in accordance with FOE's values.
- Clarifying elected board members' role in listening to local groups and *considering* others' perspectives in their Board engagement, on the grounds that this is a grassroots and participatory organisation, and initiating consistent methods for this
- Being clear about sources of evidence for decisions, both in responses to motions and in other communications, to help local groups and staff understand the rationale of decision-making.
- Developing a set of criteria for assessing progress/setbacks towards Sustainable Development objectives, in collaboration with staff and local groups.

## Background information:

### Participation

This conf notes that "Involvement" is one of FOE's key values (strategic plan), saying that "We believe the best way to achieve positive change is for people to be involved in the decisions that affect them." This must be true internally as well as externally. Shortage of time or money might cause temporary decisions without involvement but longer term and strategic decision-making should follow the principles we say we believe in.

### Elected members

This Conference notes that the overriding legal and moral "Fiduciary Duty" of Board members to put the interests of Friends of the Earth Ltd and/or Friends of the Earth Trust Ltd respectively above their own or any others, and therefore understand why elected Board members do not directly represent local groups in their region. However, much of FOE's collective impact depends on local group activity, and as a grassroots organisation with elected members, those members should have a recognised role in being aware of and interested in local group views. The ability to communicate these views in the course of Board business should surely be seen as useful to, rather than incompatible with, the interests of the national organisation.

### Transparency of evidence

On recent occasions (e.g. in the Board's response to last year's Information motion), the board's responses to motions and in other correspondence have included the phrase "evidence shows ..." without actually referencing anything to back up their position. It is essential for the transparency of decisions to be recognised for board members or management to be able to signpost to reports or data that decisions are based on, particularly during difficult periods such as our current one.

Freedom of information regulations are vital to many campaigners. FOE should be an example of an open and transparent organisation.

### Sustainable development

Our strategic plan says "We will campaign for sustainable development to be delivered at every level of activity – local, regional, national, European and international." – defining the elements of SD as "living within environmental limits, environmental justice, sustainable economy".

There is a concern that unless the organisation, led by the Board, has agreed criteria for recognising how sustainable development is reflected in FOE's activities, it is easy to lose sight of the bigger picture of our aims and to take steps in the wrong direction.

This conference believes that FOE should have a commitment to assess its decisions about staffing, campaigns, finances etc - however short we are of money - on the basis of 'sustainable development' principles as defined above to ensure that our activities deliver on all aspects and at all levels. This is a decision-making process that we ask of our local authorities in identifying 'sustainability' and would help build a coherent and solid organisation.

We can show leadership to other organisations by having the best possible governance based on the principles that FoE was built upon. If we can all be proud of the way the organisation is run and sustainability built into the way all our work is carried out, we can demonstrate what we believe in by our own practices.

**Please explain briefly how you think your Motion relates to and/or impacts upon the activities already happening or planned at Friends of the Earth:**

Not applicable.

**Please explain how you expect the work suggested by your Motion to be resourced – i.e. areas of existing work to be cut or reduced to accommodate it, or realistic ideas for securing extra funding for the new area of work you are proposing and how this will be brought about:**

Requires no changes in resourcing as can be carried out within standard Board activities.

**Staff response:**

- The Board recognises the importance of mechanisms for dialogue with the constituent parts of Friends of the Earth. We have recently been reviewing, through dedicated working groups, both the Board election process and the Motions process with a view to increasing meaningful participation.
- The Board itself shows its commitment to participative decision-making by ensuring that local group elected members are in the majority on the Board, and that decisions are taken, wherever possible, on a consensual basis. However, ‘participative decision-making’ should not be confused with *collective* decision-making. We are not and have never been an organisation based on collective decision-making. A review of the culture of participative decision-making within the central organisation undertaken in 2007-08 found that there was considerable misunderstanding and confusion about how the policy worked, revealed that it was not working particularly well, and was causing some frustration and difficulties in making important decisions. The Board believes that the organisation needs effective mechanisms for making decisions, and has asked management to revisit the earlier review and to consider any changes that might be needed.
- Arguably, other ‘stakeholders’ in the organisation – such as our national supporters, individual activists, and major financial donors – are seriously under-represented in the governance structures of Friends of the Earth. Ensuring their better representation or participation in the organisation should probably be considered as a high priority.
- We welcome suggestions from local groups and the staff body as to specific and workable mechanisms for better dialogue and consultation, without incurring undue cost or requiring highly time-consuming events which would detract from the overriding priority of carrying out and communicating effective campaigns.
- The Board is very aware of the need for clarity over the source of evidence for decisions, responses to motions and other communications etc.
- The Board is not convinced of the need or usefulness of a set of criteria to assess the progress towards Sustainable Development objectives. The pursuit of sustainable development is embedded integrally throughout all the relevant parts of the current Strategic Plan. Progress towards achievement of the relevant objectives is monitored on a quarterly basis through assessment of defined indicators – indeed this is one of the key purposes of the Board.

## **Motion 6 – Staff Resources for Local Group and Local Group Network Development**

**Proposed by North Wiltshire Friends of the Earth**

**Seconded by Beverley Friends of the Earth**

This Conference calls upon the Board of Friends of the Earth to consider the allocation of increased resources, specifically in terms of staff time and involvement, in the development of the capability of the Local Group structure which consists of Local Groups and geographically-based and issued-based Local Group Networks.

**Background information:**

This Conference believes that Friends of the Earth could operate far more effectively if there were to be a greater commitment by FOE of its staff, in terms of time and involvement, to the development of the capability of the Local Group structure which consists of Local Groups and geographically-based and issued-based Local Group Networks.

In the case of issue-based Local Group Networks, these are licensed FOE Networks where a number of Local Groups agree to work together in order to promote and campaign on a particular interest. Such Networks are few in number at present, and examples are MARINET which deals with marine issues and the Youth and Education Network.

This Conference believes that Local Group Networks based on specific areas of activity (e.g. transport, air pollution, GM, nuclear power, etc) would enable Local Groups to come together to assist each other, and the FOE organisation as a whole, by campaigning and informing the public about important environmental issues which the FOE

organisation currently does not have the resources to do. As a result, the breadth of activities within FOE would be broadened and strengthened.

This Conference believes that Local Group Networks are a highly cost effective way of campaigning. For example, MARINET delivered during 2008 and 2009 with just £6,000 a major national campaign for the strengthening of the UK Marine and Coastal Access Act.

To enable Local Group Networks to operate to their full capability, they do need to be able to access staff within FOE, and to receive assistance from staff in the development of the Networks and their objectives. Such staff involvement by each Network would probably not amount to more than one half day per week, based on MARINET's experience.

At the present time, there is a very minimal allocation of staff time to Local Group Networks.

This Conference also believes that Local Groups themselves would benefit greatly from greater involvement of staff in their development, and that the various Regional Network Developers should have within their job definition, and time allocation, sufficient time to visit each Local Group at least once a year to discuss the Local group's needs and development.

This Conference believes that staff should promote the campaigning capability of FOE as a whole via Local Groups. Stronger, better informed and more skilled Local Groups can be a significant, cost effective campaigning resource. Therefore, time spent by professional staff in increasing the capability of Local Groups, and increasing their relevance in the eyes of those members of the public who are activist-minded, is time well spent. For example, staff can arrange a series of public meetings with prominent public speakers which highlight key issues. The result is that this not only enthralls and incentivises the Local Group where the public meeting is being held, but also draws in new members of the public to Friends of the Earth.

Therefore, this Conference believes that the Local Group framework needs greater commitment and involvement from staff, and that such involvement should include not just junior staff but the senior management team as well.

**Please explain briefly how you think your Motion relates to and/or impacts upon the activities already happening or planned at Friends of the Earth:**

Local Groups are central to FOE and the whole concept of the organisation as a campaigning force. We believe they are a hugely cost-effective resource which, if properly assisted by staff, can realise their full potential. We further believe that this potential is currently not being made the most of due to an under-commitment of staff time by the organisation.

Local Group Networks can greatly extend the range of activities and subject areas with which FOE is concerned, and can do so on a highly cost-effective basis. Each Local Group Network is the centre of the campaign, rather than the professional organisation, and all they essentially require is logistical and administrative support from staff.

**Please explain how you expect the work suggested by your Motion to be resourced – i.e. areas of existing work to be cut or reduced to accommodate it, or realistic ideas for securing extra funding for the new area of work you are proposing and how this will be brought about:**

There is a financial commitment in terms of staff time, but if each Network requires just one half day per week of staff time, one member of staff can meet the needs of around six or more Networks. If this Motion is implemented, we believe it is for existing staff to determine the best way of reallocating staff time to provide for this new role.

Most Networks would be largely self-financing in administrative terms by donations from their members. For example, MARINET runs on an annual administrative budget of around £850 which is met by its members, and we believe the same principle is and would be observed by other Local Group Networks. In campaigning terms, MARINET has delivered a national campaign for £6000 by means of a FOE grant, and we believe this is extraordinary good value. For example, if the national turnover is £8 million per annum, this national campaign represents just 0.0375% of the national organisation's turnover over a two year period (2008/2009).

**Staff response:**

We always welcome motions that reflect such commitment to Friends of the Earth and its aims and ambitions. This staff response aims to provide information on current work and capacity in Friends of the Earth to help groups react to the motion. The response doesn't aim to steer group members to a particular decision. We hope it's helpful to inform the debate.

It is very important to note that this motion comes and is being responded to at a time when we are running a consultation with groups on the ways that we provide support and information to groups and how we could do so better. That consultation has gathered input from a substantial number of group members and a draft report and recommendations are expected to be ready for reading at conference.

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

This motion relates to a number of areas of the Strategic Plan. Primarily it relates to the Activism Aim, which covers work around supporting and developing local groups and local group networks. It also has some relation to the Campaign aims in as much as it requests capacity from the staff in these areas and also the Regions and Nations aim for the same reason. As a request for increased resource for particular work it also relates to high level prioritization.

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

**Local Group Networks:**

An appetite for an increase in the number of local group-led networks is very welcome and work is going that plans to lead to that very outcome, along with significant improvements to the ways that support is provided for these networks. Whilst that work, mentioned at conference last year, has been progressing, its delivery has been delayed as a result of capacity issues in the IT department where some of the tools are being developed. The plans for the networks relaunch, which have been developed in consultation with a local group advisory group, are as follows:

Following an extensive review and consultation with groups including hugely helpful input from a groups advisory group, we have started work on developing a new web presence for all local group networks. Whether the network is linked to and managed by a Campaign Assistant in a campaign team (such as the Waste list) or managed and run entirely by local group members (such as the Youth and Education network or Marinet) a special high profile presence will exist that provides:

- News and information about the network and its activities
- A place for sharing resources, documents, briefings and information
- Ways to sign up to the network easily there and then
- A discussion email list to sign up to (securely if required by the network) to share more in-depth information and discuss issues with others

Supporters will be able to visit the web page to get available information, sign up to the network officially and join the discussion list to get fully involved and/or sign up to a general alert system where they will be told about important opportunities for action on all networks without having necessarily to join them all.

All local group networks that have a public role or campaign as a network will be asked to license to make full use of this system and allow full records to be maintained on the existence of networks operating in FOE's name.

**Staff support to networks:**

Recognising the need for some contact and link role between staff and groups, whilst in times of very limited staff capacity, two decisions have recently been made, which occurred before the presentation of this motion:

- Every issue network will have a Network Developer linked with it that can provide a light-touch support role amounting to about four to five hours a month. Whilst a small amount of time, this aims to provide the network with a clear route in to the organization for requests for support, information and guidance. The Network Developer will regularly check-in with the network, link them to appropriate staff that can help with specific issues or provide information or guidance as needed. Geographical networks are already under the remit of the Network Developer for that area and will continue to be linked with and supported by those Network Developers.
- We are also investigating ways to better link issue networks with relevant campaign staff (or possibly Board members), to provide guidance and information on policy issues and the relations between the network and FOE's priorities and policies. This is still being looked at at the time of writing due to capacity issues.

This provision of staff time is less than the half a day a week loosely suggested in the motion but is a significant amount and we would struggle to supply more in current circumstances. This approach is in line with Friends of the Earth's desire to support the development of relatively self-sustaining grassroots networks and groups which can become increasingly self-sufficient, making use of a limited level of support and guidance when needed but not relying totally on it to survive.

For those local group networks that are linked directly with an existing campaign team, such as Waste, we will as part of the launch of the new network support and online tools, be providing further guidance to staff on the support they

should provide. We will suggest that regular communication with and information provision to the network is essential, including updating of the web space. However, also important will be interaction with the network face to face, including a suggestion of network meetings at least annually in order to network, share ideas and provide information.

Along with the launch of these improved network support systems, we will promote the existence of networks and how to get more involved to groups and other supporters through a number of available channels on an ongoing basis, including face to face through staff:

- We hope that these new, improved and empowered networks will achieve a few things:
- They will help existing networks to raise their profiles, increase their memberships and share and network between them more easily and effectively
- They will encourage the development of new networks tackling more issues not currently being worked on by FOE staff
- They will provide a way for local groups more generally to get involved in a full range of issues, whether led by staff or groups, at an in-depth or lighter level, providing more scope for choice, breadth and variety.

This amounts to a planned and progressing substantial improvement to the way we run, support and promote local group networks.

### **Local Group support:**

The motion seems primarily interested in the improvement to local group networks but does make some recommendations around more general improvements to local group support which are responded to here:

**“that Local Groups themselves would benefit greatly from greater involvement of staff in their development, and that the various Regional Network Developers should have within their job definition, and time allocation, sufficient time to visit each Local Group at least once a year to discuss the Local group's needs and development.”**

Support for groups is provided in various ways from a large number of staff. It may help though to provide some detailed information on the role of the staff most closely associated with groups support on a day to day basis – the Network Developer (ND), especially given that it is referred to above. NDs have a substantial amount of their full working week dedicated specifically to working directly with and supporting local groups. This is split up broadly as follows:

- Providing direct support & development to individual existing and new groups (25%)
- Networking groups together (10%)
- Planning and running regional group events and training (9%)
- Working directly with groups on the roll out and coordination of national campaigns (28%)

Within that allocated time is included the work to produce the monthly news bulletins and responding to and dealing with queries from groups. Other time is spent inputting to specific projects (such as the local group consultation or conference), and on internal team, management and personal development work. These amounts obviously vary throughout the year depending on demand.

With a substantial workload and ever-competing priorities and demands, staff have to use their time as efficiently as possible. It is not always the best use of either the group's or the staff's time to visit a group on a one-off basis and often more can be achieved through ongoing communications with one or more group members by phone and other channels. We tend to find that time spent working with a smaller number of groups with specific needs on a more sustained basis leads to significantly better results in terms of group development and support. It does mean that not all groups can get that level of support but with limited resources we have had to find the most effective use of time. As an example, the Network Developer for the South East is responsible for 44 groups and visiting them all in a year (and dealing with the work that comes as a result of those visits) would mean they would have very little time at all to work on a sustained basis with groups that particularly need development or to take on the other work organising events, setting up new groups, coordinating major campaign roll out, providing training and information or being reactive. This is similarly the case across the country.

To tackle this issue, the Activism team has done some work this past year and agreed some broad objectives for Network Developers to work by in terms of the amount of support provided to groups so as to make best use and get the correct balance of that time. These include that Network Developers should aim to visit around 16-20 - or around 50% per region - different groups in a year. We have also set an expectation that Network Developers should consider reducing the number of one-off visits to groups, though by no means stopping them altogether. Instead, we

recommend that Network Developers aim to use a variety of approaches to supporting and maintaining links with groups, depending on need:

- Network Developers should aim to speak to group coordinators at least 2-3 times a year by phone (this is the minimum for all groups. Obviously in very many cases it will be much more than that but for those groups that are much less engaged or communicative, this is a necessary minimum).
- Network Developers will aim to host some bespoke training/workshop sessions per region annually (in addition to regional gatherings) where capacity allows and there is demand
- Network Developers will aim to focus on developing and supporting more sub-regional face-to-face meetings (such as those in Greater Manchester), running Campaign-focused information/planning sharing sessions via FOE-paid-for conference calls and provide more provision of networking between role holders (such as treasurers or coordinators) to build support networks.
- Network Developers will aim to promote and encourage group planning/trouble shooting sessions to take place via conference calls, facilitated by an ND where that will be beneficial
- Network Developers will look to recruit and train a network of volunteers nationally to act as ambassadors for key national campaigns and to support groups in putting on events (such as screenings, public meetings etc) and use volunteers as effectively as possible to support NDs in information gathering/promotion to groups
- Network Developers will continue to put on bigger events in January and May and will meet many groups there and continue to provide information and support through email lists and bespoke communications with groups.

By taking this clarified (but not wildly different) approach we aim to provide sustained and useful support to all groups whilst making the best use of staff time travelling out to see groups. However, some one-off visits will absolutely still occur, both to ensure that Network Developers retain links and connections with groups and that groups continue to interact with staff in a face to face way.

It is important to note that the work of Network Developers is augmented by a significant amount of support provided by the Activism team's other staff too. Provision of information, handling of enquiries, development, improvement to and organising of events, including Conference and the major gatherings, development of campaign resources and guides and strategies, production of Change Your World and the development of new ways to provide support and access to campaign activities are just some areas that have input to or leads from others both in the team and indeed across the organisation.

This support, development and information provision work provided, particularly by Network Developers, aims to help groups network with each other, build skills and capacity, function well as groups, run effectively as campaigning entities, get new groups going and help groups that are struggling. Other support is also provided to groups in the following ways elsewhere too:

- Regional and Local Campaigners can provide groups with information on regional and local policy issues and advice on local campaign strategy. They focus most of their time at present on the Get Serious campaign but have some time set aside for other work. RLCs also visit groups, communicate regularly with them and provide information through various channels including at group events, through regional emails and on an ad hoc basis.
- Campaign Assistants provide information and advice on the issues they are responsible for, though the campaign email lists, campaign networks and on an ad hoc basis.

**That “staff can arrange a series of public meetings with prominent public speakers which highlight key issues. The result is that this not only enthuses and incentivises the Local Group where the public meeting is being held, but also draws in new members of the public to Friends of the Earth.”**

Network Developers, campaign staff and regional campaigner do organise public meetings on occasions with different aims. In terms of promoting groups and recruiting to groups, this is an approach that is often taken by Network Developers when helping to attract new supports to struggling groups or when setting up new groups. It tends to involve contacting existing supporters in an area as well as local publicity and media work. It is a hit and miss approach, with some real successes and some failures. It is one of many approaches that staff and groups can work on together to help promote groups. RLCs and Campaigners organise and speak at public events regularly for campaign reasons or at the request of groups.

The Activism team has recently asked to become more fully involved in the brand and profile areas of work at Friends of the Earth so as to develop far more effective ways of integrating our activism and grassroots work in to the work we do to promote the organisation and what it stands for as well as promoting groups more strongly. As that develops we would hope to find more opportunities to promote activism and grassroots campaigning as part of what Friends of the

Earth is about but this is still at early stages at present. Some thought has also been given recently to a speaker tour to help promote groups' own campaigns around the country and to raise the profile of groups and we would be interested to hear if there is an appetite to follow this through.

**That “the Local Group framework needs greater commitment and involvement from staff, and that such involvement should include not just junior staff but the senior management team as well.”**

There is substantial support and respect for the local groups network across the staff body and many staff are involved in working group support issues. For example, as well as Network Developers, Campaign Assistants and Regional and Local Campaigners mentioned above, campaigners and communications staff work on resources, tactics and briefings for groups for the campaigns they cover. However, without knowing quite what is specifically meant by “greater commitment and involvement from staff” it is hard to give any further information on whether anything may be occurring that needs clarification.

**• If we were to do address this Motion as proposed, what would be the resource implications for existing work?**

We believe that we are working to deliver on most of the proposals made in this motion and that substantial improvements will be seen over the coming months. We are also planning to respond more generally to improvement to local group support as a result of the consultation that is currently ongoing. The only area that is not being fully responded to is as full an actual increase in staff time to supporting the development of local groups and local group networks as requested. As with any request of this nature, to deliver it as set out would require other work to be dropped or more staff time to be provided. Some things that may need to happen would be:

- Network Developers doing less work on organising group events, networking, providing information, handling local group queries and ad hoc requests or supporting groups in their running of national campaigns
- Campaign staff re-prioritising by inputting less time to the running and development of campaigns at the national level to divert that time in to issue networks
- More staff capacity being provided through an increase in hours of certain staff or the recruitment of new staff (given Friends of the Earth's difficult financial situation this would be highly unlikely in the shorter term)

The motion does state that “Most Networks would be largely self-financing in administrative terms by donations from their members. For example, MARINET runs on an annual administrative budget of around £850 which is met by its members, and we believe the same principle is and would be observed by other Local Group Networks” and quite how this is interpreted depends on what is meant by “administrative terms.” Either way, there would in truth be a substantial additional financial cost to responding to the motion as currently proposed as the cost of allocated staff time would need to be added to the budget. An administrative budget for MARINET of £850 a year, met by membership would then be subject to an addition of several thousand pounds a year salary costs for the staff member's work, with the exact figure depending on the amount of time allocated.

## **Motion 7 – GM Campaigning**

**Proposed by Penistone Friends of the Earth**

**Seconded by Worcester Friends of the Earth**

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.

### **Background information:**

Friends of the Earth's campaign on GM crops and food was enthusiastically adopted by local groups and other networks and succeeded in preventing further escalation of intensive agriculture. However, because no GM crops have been grown nor very little sold in the UK, the public and sympathetic media has assumed that GM crops are no longer a threat. This is not the case. The "food crisis" in 2007 was used by GM proponents have been attempting to

re-habilitate GM crops in the eyes of the public using projected food shortages by 2030. The Government's view on GM crops is not at all clear but the DEFRA ministerial team suggests that the pro-GM NFU will be influential.

Cynical attempts to manipulate public opinion need to be challenged and our alternative vision based on agro-ecology needs to be promoted.

In 2010, there have been worrying developments on GM policy in the EU and retail policy in the UK. The pro-GM European Commission has adopted an aggressive stance and have approved the first GM crop (a potato to produce industrial starch) for cultivation since 1998. They are also proposing measures which would enable member state to make the final decision as to whether GM crops will be grown in their country. This could lead to Members States being less vigilant in their scrutiny of GM crop applications, knowing they could later ban them at national level. This could result to GM crops being approved in the UK by from 2014/15.

Asda has announced that their policy of sourcing non-GM animal feed for their poultry meat and eggs has been abandoned. Other companies may follow, especially as they could use the 'inclusive of GM' soya under the criteria agreed by the Roundtable on Responsible Soya to justify their policy change. GM soya production is mainly used in animal feed and agro-fuels and is the most intensive and destructive form of soy production (about 99% of Argentine production is currently Monsanto's RR soya) and is a major threat to habitats in South America. Further growth in GM soy production could be paralleled by growth in GM maize in Europe and South America which could increase dependency on imported animals feed.

Friends of the Earth have rightly targeted intensive livestock and poultry as the root of the problems but GM expansion will increase the monopolistic control over animal feed exerted by a handful of companies and make it more difficult to reform production systems and reduce dependency of imports. The new breed of corporate livestock farming, epitomised by the proposed 8100 cow unit in Lincolnshire will depend on GM soya and maize.

We need the ability of Friends of the Earth to mobilise local groups, supporters and activists to prevent our gains in the last 10 years being reversed in the next 5 and propose that one existing member of staff is given the job of co-ordination GM policy and campaigning on a fulltime basis.

**Please explain briefly how you think your Motion relates to and/or impacts upon the activities already happening or planned at Friends of the Earth:**

This motion relates directly to the Food Chain Campaign because further expansion of GM soya and maize will undermine our ability to win the campaign.

**Please explain how you expect the work suggested by your Motion to be resourced – i.e. areas of existing work to be cut or reduced to accommodate it, or realistic ideas for securing extra funding for the new area of work you are proposing and how this will be brought about:**

We are calling for an existing member of the food team to work full time on GM issues. Although this means fewer people on other campaign issues the threat posed by GM expansion fully justifies it.

**Staff response:**

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

This motion sits within the Biodiversity aim in the current strategic plan. However it also relates to aims on international climate – as GM companies are some of the major beneficiaries of carbon trading mechanisms and are also doing heavy lobbying at the UNFCCC for false solutions such as biofuels and CDM for plantations. And the international aim – as many of our international partners are actively campaigning on GM and EWNI plays a role in strengthening the network through GM expertise.

As a part of the Food Chain campaign we are actively exposing the role of GM in expansion of soy plantations in South America. The GM issue is an integral part of the food chain campaign as the vast majority of soy grown in South America is GM. One of the main ways that GM enters Europe is through animal feed therefore it is imperative that we tackle the UK and Europe's dependence on GM animal feed. In fact the European environment Commissioner when asked about GM imports recently replied "The reality is that we import a great deal of GM protein and we cannot possibly produce all that protein within Europe, so we need to be clear and transparent in what we are doing," (i.e. be pragmatic because we need GM animal feed).

However we identified that to deal with the impacts from GM we need to campaign to change the industrial livestock system as a whole as it is inherently unsustainable and not possible to reduce GM soy without reducing demand for it from European factory farms. Therefore the main focus is on the Food Chain campaign.

As part of the current strategic plan we had also planned to work on the issue of Co-existence between GM and conventional crops in the UK, which we have campaigned on successfully in the past and might come up again, also on the GM debate of the Food Standards Agency, if it goes ahead.

However post the restructuring in the change process and decreased capacity in the campaign teams it would be more difficult to work on any GM issues that are not directly related to the Food Chain campaign.

We did not plan for any capacity to work at European level on GM campaigning except for a bare minimum of support and tracking. This was because of lack of capacity in the team to launch a new campaign as well as continue with all areas of previous work. Also because there is an existing and extremely effective network of groups (FoEE and wider) working on GM at European level. However we have always reserved the capacity to be flexible enough to work on major threats as and when they arise.

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

The food chain campaign last year highlighted the impacts of GM in the film Killing Fields released last year.

[http://www.theecologist.org/trial\\_investigations/336873/killing\\_fields\\_the\\_true\\_cost\\_of\\_europes\\_cheap\\_meat.html](http://www.theecologist.org/trial_investigations/336873/killing_fields_the_true_cost_of_europes_cheap_meat.html)

In February we released our yearly report 'Who Benefits from GM Crops' to counter annual figures from the industry which claim the success of GMO crops globally. Our report showed that GM crops were not the solution to the food or climate crises. This was co-ordinated from FoE EWNI. Press release and link to the report:

[http://www.foeeurope.org/press/2010/Feb23\\_new\\_report\\_GM\\_crops\\_failing\\_to\\_tackle\\_climate\\_change.html](http://www.foeeurope.org/press/2010/Feb23_new_report_GM_crops_failing_to_tackle_climate_change.html)

We ran an online action after the decision of the EC to allow planting of GM potatoes in Europe along with the GM-free regions network, demanding a moratorium on any new plantings of GM crops pending an overhaul of the approvals process.

We are currently running an online action targeting supermarkets demanding that they stay firm on using GM-free animal feed and demanding that they resign from the Round Table on Responsible soy as this move from the supermarkets is a major threat to the success of the food chain campaign:

[http://www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/biodiversity/press\\_for\\_change/asda\\_rolls\\_back\\_on\\_gm\\_23592.html](http://www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/biodiversity/press_for_change/asda_rolls_back_on_gm_23592.html)

We have written an open letter to the Gates foundation to denounce their promotion of GM in Africa.

We also continue to use the media to raise awareness of the impacts of GM and keep public pressure against GM strong. Below are a few examples of media work we have done recently:

- We are organising a press trip for journalists to Paraguay to see impacts of GM soy
- We are to release a report and briefings on the impacts of GM soy in South America
- Daily Mail:
  - <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-1284953/Field-trial-Frankenstone-crops-goes-ahead-secret-location-anger-anti-GM-campaigners.html?ITO=1490>
  - <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1284941/Labour-boss-food-watchdog-condemned-calling-opponents-GM-food-anti-science.html?ito=feeds-newsxml>
  - <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2010/may/13/gm-crops-pests-cotton-china>
  - <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1286012/Do-governments-GM-friendly-plans-make-biotech-lobbyist-Caroline-Spelman-Minister-Conflicting-Interests.html?ito=feeds-newsxml>
- BBC: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/norfolk/10261874.stm>

- **If we were to do address this Motion as proposed, what would be the resource implications for existing work?**

“Reallocating one full time member of existing staff to work on this issue as soon as possible” - If this role came from the Food Team it would mean downsizing / reallocating other areas of our current work or that one or more staff members in the team would share work on the GM campaign and reduce work on other areas.

“Encouraging local group members, activists and supporters to lobby whenever it is strategically appropriate to do so.” - This is happening already to some extent and could potentially be increased in the future if well planned for.

# Motion 8 – A National Eco-literacy Campaign: Youth & Education Network

Proposed by Wanstead & Woodford Friends of the Earth  
Seconded by Rutland Friends of the Earth

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.

## Background information:

This Conference believes that Friends of the Earth EWNI have a social and environmental duty towards children and young people: to foster the development of a clear understanding and a positive and structured response to the ever-more fragile relationship between humankind, and the global hinterland that supports our existence. Recent events in the oil industry amply demonstrate that these problems have already started to balloon out of our control.

The National Curriculum should be emphasising at every opportunity that the planet is a complex organism of which our species is a sector grown out of control. It should encourage an attitude of care, custodianship and respect for natural resources and all life forms. Yet it is doing no such thing: our group have had first-hand reports from children of GCSE age, that the teaching of sustainability is compressed into short 2-week modules, after which no further reference is made to the difficult issues raised. There is currently little that Friends of the Earth can do to rectify this situation, with the Youth & Education Network deprived of funding since June 2009, and struggling to survive on an entirely voluntary basis.

Y & E should be working with educational psychologists, scientists and teachers on developing eco-literacy as the core curriculum subject. There are opportunities for this within the new government's agenda for schools and the existing schemes of Eco Schools and Sustainable Schools.

The Climate Change Lead Schools project <http://www.slcn.org.uk/ccsp/intro.php> is an example of what the National Curriculum should be aiming for across the board, with all sustainability topics.

In addition to helping to frame a new, eco-centric National Curriculum, Y & E should also be empowered to run workshops in every part of the country to help Local Group members get up to speed in communicating all green issues to children. At present there are only 3 such training workshops scheduled for 2010 in Birmingham, London, and Leeds.

Our Motion is fully in keeping with the Strategic Plan, as quoted here:

- We will ensure governments and economies enable everyone to meet their needs – *including children* - and enjoy their fair share of a healthy environment while looking after it for future generations - *children are essential as they will be the ones running the world in future generations*
- We will inspire people to act together to influence the decisions that affect communities and the environment - *young people's voices need to be part of this*
- We will drive solutions that tackle the root causes of environmental problems – *there are considerable impacts directly from young people, and if the wrong habits are established in childhood they are much harder to break later.*

Our challenge and responsibility is to permanently *raise environmental awareness* amongst our children whilst simultaneously *motivating* them to protect the planet for the remainder of their lives – a very big ask.

Compartmentalising the teaching of sustainability is no longer an option.

**Please explain briefly how you think your Motion relates to and/or impacts upon the activities already happening or planned at Friends of the Earth:**

Our Motion, if passed, could result in *The National Eco-literacy Campaign* being initially and immediately integrated into current campaigns via a linkage with *Get Serious*. Local Authorities could be provided with, and/or encouraged to develop resources for schools that fitted in with and reflected the carbon reduction measures that they were taking themselves. Young people could be enabled to get involved in carbon reduction plans and schools could be seen as important partners in the process.

As regards the fuller aim of *The National Eco-literacy Campaign*, to develop and establish eco-literacy as the core curriculum subject, it will be necessary for the time being to delay action until the new government has revealed its plans for the National Curriculum. We already know that the Qualification & Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA) is to be scrapped, and that the curriculum itself is to be 'slimmed down'. Once this has happened, a decision could be made as to whether the campaign targets should be individual schools, Local Authorities or some other overseeing authority.

It would also be necessary to consider how to influence teaching at the new 'academies', which would be able to opt out completely from the National Curriculum.

Once *The National Eco-literacy Campaign* is up and running, information would be transmitted to Local Groups and Supporters at strategically important times, asking them to take online action. This information could be delivered via e-news or via the Youth & Education Network.

**Please explain how you expect the work suggested by your Motion to be resourced – i.e. areas of existing work to be cut or reduced to accommodate it, or realistic ideas for securing extra funding for the new area of work you are proposing and how this will be brought about:**

We do not expect any areas of existing work to be cut or reduced to accommodate this work. We have asked that specific outside funding be found for this campaign, to cover a dedicated member of staff for the period of the campaign. We would suggest that funding be sought by approaching already established and well-known organisations, listed on the website 'GreenFunders'. So the ask in terms of staff time and resources is to investigate funding and put in a bid – this may mean that one of the fundraising staff create a new and separate funding bid for a member of staff to research, coordinate and deliver the National Eco-literacy Campaign. Other, less specific and more general funding applications might have to be delayed to allow this application to proceed with all urgency.

**Staff response:**

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

Youth and Education work was not a lead priority in the Friends of the Earth Strategic Plan 2008-13. It did recognise the value of engaging with young people, but as in the Brand Strategy, they were seen as a secondary audience (primary being mid and dark greens, opinion-formers, media and decision-makers) in terms of delivery of our key campaign outcomes. During 2009 when the organisation had to make some very painful savings and cut areas of work, this was one which with enormous regret it was decided to cut back upon. We now have much more constrained resources than were expected when our Strategic Plan was drafted (approximately £2 million less income this year than expected in that Plan), so savings and deprioritising areas of work are unavoidable.

The main saving was in cutting the post of Youth and Education Coordinator. None of the decisions to make savings were taken with anything other than a heavy heart, but it was felt that our Strategic Plan was clear that change was needed urgently in the response to climate change, biodiversity loss, economics and rights, and that whilst work with children is a critically important investment for the future, Friends of the Earth had to prioritise its scarce resources around rapid changes in these key areas highlighted by the Strategic Plan given the urgency of the need for change. It was also felt that there had been a dramatic increase in mainstream educational opportunities around climate change and biodiversity loss since Friends of the Earth first started having full time staff working on this. Given the organisation's still challenging medium term financial situation it is not practical to predict whether this will be reprioritised in the future for funding

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

When the funding for the Youth and Education network was withdrawn work was done by the Activism team with the Youth and Education network to try to help it to become sustainable in the longer term without staff support, including the development of a volunteer post and provision of office space. We have organised our Network Developers so that each one is a principal contact for each of our main campaigner networks, including the Youth and Education Network and on this network in particular, the Network Developer will be giving some extra time from October 2010 onwards to further support the network to become more self-sustaining and to provide some support for the

development of project ideas such as this one proposed. However that Network Developer's main responsibility remains to work with and support the groups network for their regions, so they would not have the time or remit to work on a significant campaign (although that is not proposed in the motion).

- **If we were to do address this Motion as proposed, what would be the resource implications for existing work?**

The Motion asks that we secure specific extra funding for this work. Our fundraisers have to work extremely hard to raise the funds for the items which are within the organisation's existing budget. In order to raise funds for items which are outside the existing budget takes their time (and this would consume considerable time, there are no fundraising guarantees), and therefore takes their time away from the fundraising for items within the organisation's budgeted expenditure. A budget represents the organisation's priorities in line with the Strategic Plan, and there is no extra time left for fundraisers to raise money for items outside it, particularly in the current economic circumstances. Being ambitious we seek to do as much as we can in any one year (and this is reflected in our budgeted expenditure), which means the fundraising team are fully stretched (ie it takes all their time – and more) to raise funds for the existing budget.

So if we did address this Motion as proposed it would be very likely to mean the fundraising team would not be able to raise funds for another part of our campaigning work which is prioritised in the Strategic Plan and organisational budget. This would be work campaigning directly for policy change and development across the priority areas of the Strategic Plan.

It is also worth pointing out that a proposed campaign like this would not just take fundraising staff time, and the time of a dedicated member of staff to run the campaign, but also the time of staff in the communications, activism and IS teams – all of which is currently prioritised for other campaigning work – so could only be switched at the expense of those other campaigns.

## **Motion 9 – Participatory Democracy for FoE motions**

**Proposed by York & Ryedale Friends of the Earth**

**Seconded by Friends of the Earth**

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

- Developing the current motions process and motions session at conference to make it more participatory to enable the input of a varied range of opinions. The current motions session does not encourage full discussion between groups and members, and many members will feel intimidated speaking in front of the full conference.
- Whether current regional gatherings could involve some decision-making to feed into the national gathering. The current national conferences do not have any process whereby regional gatherings and local groups can have a say over the content, although the ad-hoc breakout sessions allow individuals to create their own discussion groups, which is a positive step.

### **Background information:**

This Conference notes the high value placed on involvement in decisions in the strategic plan and that Friends of the Earth enables groups to put forward areas of importance that the network wishes the Board to address through motions. This conference also notes the strong emphasis in group capacity building and training on involving everyone in discussing objectives, prioritising ideas, facilitated discussion, innovative engagement methods and building consensus. However, this Conference believes that at motions these tools and facilitation techniques are replaced with a more adversarial system where we can either be 'for' or 'against' a motion. It also appears to pitch the network against the staff in the format of the pre-motions papers. Instead, we could have a participatory system where we can begin to understand the full range of opinions and ideas around particular motions. We could discuss ideas, we could brainstorm, we could prioritise and use all the facilitation tools that we embed into our usual campaigning – this would be real participatory democracy.

This Conference also notes that other similar campaign organisations, particularly People & Planet, use participatory democratic methods to make decisions about future campaigns, improving the network and any other issue at The Forum.<sup>1</sup> This enables groups to put forward ideas, discuss them in detail, and decide where their priorities lie. It gives the Board and staff a real idea of where feelings and opinions lie within the network and can engage the whole organisation. This could benefit the whole of Friends of the Earth and make motions a much more valuable process.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.peopleandplent.org/forum>

**Please explain briefly how you think your Motion relates to and/or impacts upon the activities already happening or planned at Friends of the Earth:**

- Friends of the Earth already holds motions. This motion would only influence the structure of this session at conference. It would require more staff or network member time to prepare in order to facilitate the session and might require longer time to discuss if we wanted to discuss as many different motions. However, since several motions are often on similar topics e.g. campaigns we could discuss several campaign motions together and find out the priorities around different campaign proposals.
- Time would need to be devoted to giving members the opportunity to discuss what the content should be at national conferences. This could also go as an email to local groups to ask for their opinions, or perhaps just an extra form field on the booking form.

**Please explain how you expect the work suggested by your Motion to be resourced – i.e. areas of existing work to be cut or reduced to accommodate it, or realistic ideas for securing extra funding for the new area of work you are proposing and how this will be brought about:**

- As stated above, motions is already part of conference, this would be merely a change to the structure of it. Some time would need to be given by national staff at the event, but much of the facilitation could be done by members of the network to minimise additional staff time needed for planning it.
- When planning the national conference, time would need to go toward reading responses and considering them.

**Staff response:**

- The Board agrees that the current motions process is deficient and not serving the organisation particularly well. With that in mind, we earlier this year initiated a working group to consider possible changes to the Motions process to enable it to play a more meaningful role in terms of accountability and participation in organisational decision-making. The working group has already proposed a number of changes that could be made to the Motions process to improve its meaningfulness, and the Board will be considering these at the earliest opportunity.
- The idea of the Regional Gatherings playing some kind of role in the governance process of Friends of the Earth is an interesting one, and we will seriously consider this.
- The Board would welcome any serious and creative suggestions from local groups as to how to reform the motions process such that it better meets all of our expectations and needs.

## **Motion 10 – Will today’s campaigning lead to tomorrow’s world?**

**Proposed by Swansea Friends of the Earth**

**Seconded by Penistone Friends of the Earth**

In the light of two different (but not mutually exclusive) models of campaigning:

- A small number of national big win campaigns, with the addition of unconnected local group activity
- A strong and meaningful sustainable development agenda promoted by FoE centrally, which the whole spectrum of local group and staff campaigning feeds into

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

- whether they can demonstrate **with objective evidence** that the first model is the most effective way of achieving Friends of the Earth’s vision: ‘a thriving planet and a good life for everyone on it, now and for the future’ (i.e. sustainable development)
- whether they can also demonstrate **with objective evidence** that the first model strengthens FOE’s fundraising, reputation and appeal
- that if there is insufficient evidence to support the first model, then finding the right balance between the two models should be an element of the mid-term review of the current strategic plan, any changes being implemented once the current big campaigns are finished

**Background information:**

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

## **Effectiveness**

In the board's response to last year's motions, they state: "...experience has shown that Friends of the Earth is most effective when we focus on a small number of "big win" national campaigns, and bring together both national action and local action in mutual support around these priorities..." This statement is based on just one experience - the 'Big Ask'. This was successful but that in no ways proves that the same approach will work for other campaigns.

We cannot see that running climate change campaigns without tackling the core problems of unsustainable consumption, economies and inequality can ever achieve our vision.

## **Fundraising**

FoE obviously needs to make money, but we also need to tackle the roots of the problem. We would like to see evidence for the assertion that the first model brings in more money, as it seems likely that supporters and major donors would be interested in environmental justice, the diversity of what we do and the ways in which we are unique. We shouldn't let our campaigning be dictated by funders – is there evidence that if we are convinced by the strong campaigns we are running (big or small), that we cannot enthruse others to join us?

## **Appeal**

Any evidence of why people sign up to give money to FoE is skewed by the options they are given to respond to. An individual supporter who signs up on the FoE website is asked 'what prompted you to give?' but the only options are big campaigns and advertising pushes – there is no option for local group stalls, site battles or local media stories. So it can never be proven from this source that these things do increase supporter numbers.

## **Reputation**

We think that FoE's reputation comes from being able to respond knowledgeably and campaign effectively on current and varied environmental issues and explain how they relate to social and economic problems.

## **The second model**

In 1998, a book called 'Tomorrow's World, Britain's share in a sustainable future' was published by FOE and provided a vision of how the UK could live within limits based on the carrying capacity of the planet and an equitable distribution of resources. We are the only organisation willing and capable of pulling all these strands together and we should be doing it. It is what makes us Friends of the Earth instead of another climate change NGO.

Every campaign that local groups could think of would fit somewhere into the sustainability agenda described in 'Tomorrow's World'. Having all of the areas that need working on described and linked together to show the big picture would mean people could look at it and be inspired for their next campaign. Local groups could pick areas they were interested in to develop, along with other local groups via the new campaigner networks.

## **Please explain briefly how you think your Motion relates to and/or impacts upon the activities already happening or planned at Friends of the Earth:**

This motion concerns whether our current model of campaigning will deliver sustainable development and is therefore fundamental to every part of SP2.

## **Please explain how you expect the work suggested by your Motion to be resourced – i.e. areas of existing work to be cut or reduced to accommodate it, or realistic ideas for securing extra funding for the new area of work you are proposing and how this will be brought about:**

There is very little resource needed for this motion if the evidence exists, as it can be provided. If the evidence does not exist, we need to look into this immediately or risk being ineffective at a crucial time in our history. This would be a huge waste of our resources.

## **Staff response:**

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

This motion is about the model of delivery of campaigns within the Strategic Plan. It follows on from a motion to conference last year which raised the question of the rationale for Friends of the Earth's narrowing agenda against our sustainable development principles and our values. The Board clearly stated in its response to that motion: "*The promotion of sustainable development is one of the three charitable Objects established for Friends of the Earth Trust. The position of the Board and the organisation has not changed since the Strategic Plan was formally approved in November 2008.*" The Board also recognised that there was a real tension created between the breadth of a potential sustainable development agenda and the resources available to the organisation and agreed to keep the issue under close attention whilst undertaking the planned mid-term review.

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

One of the key lessons we learnt from the Big Ask was that we could achieve a big real world impact – such as we did with the Climate Change Act – by focussing our efforts on a big sustained push at the right time.

Currently we are running three priority campaigns on Get Serious, Food Chain and International Climate. These are the three campaigns we have decided to focus our organisational effort on to tackle the global problems of climate change and biodiversity. In addition we have a number of smaller campaigns on biofuels, recycling, EU resource use and rights and justice empowerment and legal work. We also have issues which are being tracked / scoped to ensure we maintain a hand in issues going down the agenda as well as identify emergent issues. The priority of a campaign determines what resources we allocate to it internally. By resources we mean bringing together different expertise from within the organisation from campaigns, communications and activism teams as well as operational budget.

This allocation of resources is reviewed quarterly and annually to ensure we are effective / efficient in where we are placing resources to make the greatest external impact.

In terms of how these campaigns are worked up – there is (as there should be) flexibility to develop the right approach / style appropriate to achieving the campaign. Given the importance of local groups we also ensure campaigns are developed with the needs of local groups in mind. Hence the priority campaigns on Get Serious campaign, Food Chain and international climate have all been developed with clear plans for the involvement of local groups and activists, in addition to other campaigns opportunities within the broad range of campaigns we run.

We are committed to sustainable development which underpins the current strategic plan, but within that framework have to make hard strategic choices about where we put our resources. This is an even greater challenge right now with both the urgency of the issues we face as well as the on-going resource constraints we are operating in.

- **If we were to do address this Motion as proposed, what would be the resource implications for existing work?**

The motion calls for “objective evidence” based around an assumption of a model of campaigning “*A small number of national big wins, with the addition of unconnected local group activity*”. As outlined above while we prioritise our resources around a small number of campaign areas this is grounded within a wider strategic context / range of other work. Furthermore a priority campaign means just that: a collective effort to bring about change including the vital role the local groups network play in bringing about such change. This means having good, joined up and integrated campaigns, not as this motion suggests “*the addition of unconnected local group activity*”. This is not our approach and therefore addressing this motion would not be a good use of our resources or time. We do have to choose between doing a few things well or more things possibly ineffectively. Being an ineffective organisation would not contribute to our sustainable development principles or our values.

## **Motion 11 – Developing the Human Rights and Justice Component of Environmental Campaigning**

**Proposed by Manchester Friends of the Earth**

**Seconded by York & Ryedale Friends of the Earth**

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.

### **Background information:**

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

- that FoE International promotes human rights issues as key campaign messages, however, FoE England Wales and Northern Ireland does not communicate this message adequately, despite human rights being one of our core principals.

- that FoE EWNI could use the work of FoEI as a basis for putting human rights messages within their own campaigns, and reuse FoEI information and actions where appropriate. Such information includes pages within their website and specifically outlines how fundamental human rights are to each campaign. The study ‘Our Environment, Our Rights’ at [http://www.foei.org/en/resources/publications/climate-justice-and-energy/2000-2007/human\\_rights.pdf](http://www.foei.org/en/resources/publications/climate-justice-and-energy/2000-2007/human_rights.pdf) is particularly good.
- that Manchester Friends of the Earth has successfully experimented with human rights letter actions in meetings, which have been educational about the issues as well as an effective tool. The feedback from members has been highly positive.
- that human rights brings a human voice to campaigns that can sometimes be dry and technical and this could broaden the reach and interest of FoE EWNI campaigns through adding an engaging, emotional perspective.
- that the human rights aspect of a campaign should be considered at the planning stage of every campaign, and then considered on an ongoing basis
- that there are strong links between campaigns on climate change and biodiversity, and human rights, which are currently not promoted significantly. For example the Copenhagen Accord has little on human rights, while the alternative statement from the World People’s Movement has significant consideration of human rights.
- that links between the environment and human rights are particularly strong around gender issues, partly because women undertake most of the world’s agriculture, and that therefore defending women’s rights can frequently support sustainable lifestyles and adaptation efforts.
- that campaigns such as the Tar Sands have significant local human rights perspectives that can and should be developed.

**Please explain briefly how you think your Motion relates to and/or impacts upon the activities already happening or planned at Friends of the Earth:**

Activities that could result from this motion should it be passed:

- the organisation could create an interest group for groups and members interested in human rights
- at the planning stage of every campaign, human rights could be considered and could be included as a strand within every campaign to continue to promote this message. This could add extra levers to campaigns and may improve the chances for successful outcomes.
- the implication would be that human rights are more strongly emphasized as a core part of the organization.
- the implication is that there would be ongoing actions related specifically to human rights. Actions from FoEI could be promoted more extensively through FoE EWNI communications.
- the work on human rights and with FoEI may have the potential to strengthen international relations and so the broader group of partner organisations.

**Please explain how you expect the work suggested by your Motion to be resourced – i.e. areas of existing work to be cut or reduced to accommodate it, or realistic ideas for securing extra funding for the new area of work you are proposing and how this will be brought about:**

Should the motion be passed:

- during campaign planning some time would need to be devoted to integrating human rights issues. This would not require a significant additional amount of time to that already taken with planning.
- during campaigns there would need to be active updates to human rights elements of the campaign. This should not result in significant extra costs as it would be no different to incorporating other sorts of actions as opportunities arise. This may also enhance the opportunity to keep campaigns feeling fresh, which benefits both the campaign and requests for funding in general.
- potential research costs are mitigated as much of the work is already present within Friends of the Earth International and other NGOs.
- it may be that increased emphasis on human rights work presents FoE EWNI with novel opportunities for strategic partnerships that otherwise might not take place. This may in turn result in new funding streams that were not previously available.

**Staff response:**

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

One of the four campaign aims of the strategic plan is the Rights Aim: *“To secure a substantive right to a healthy environment in UK law, strengthen the Aarhus procedural rights; and empower people to use their environmental rights”*.

This aim is mainly undertaken by the Rights and Justice and the International team who work to strengthen the environmental rights people already have, campaign for new rights and empower and give communities legal support to uphold their rights. The team undertakes this work both here in the UK and internationally.

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

We are working with communities in Indonesia - supporting them to resist oil palm expansion. This involves ensuring that communities are aware of their land-rights. This year we have started a new project in Paraguay to ensure that communities are empowered to resist soy expansion.

In order to protect the individuals, communities and peoples most vulnerable to climate change we are working with FoEI to ensure that human rights are incorporated into the international climate framework. This is also a way of ensuring that the scientific and technical debates around climate change do not obscure its human dimension. We are part of the human rights and climate change working group, a group of lawyers that has been making proposals for incorporating human rights language into the negotiating text. These references were included in the text at Copenhagen but most have now been removed from the text, although the introductory section, or preamble, notes a Human Rights Council Resolution on human rights and climate change. This resolution recognises that the adverse effects of climate change have a range of direct and indirect implications for the full and effective enjoyment of human rights and that the effects of climate change will be felt most acutely by the segments of the population that are already vulnerable. Work will continue this year to build upon and strengthen the language on human rights in the text.

The Empowerment work the team undertakes targets communities and individuals who are already trying to bring about sustainable development where they live. And we build on their skills and knowledge to ensure that they are able to fully use their environmental rights by providing training and support.

Friends of Earth has just written and published a new information booklet and webpages that specifically covers and introduces people to environmental justice and our rights work.

The team had planned to start a campaign for a right to a healthy environment in 2009. However due to resource constraints we have not been able to take this forward this work. However it remains in our future plans. The team is also exploring a new campaign idea around Children’s rights and Climate Change and we are scoping a first piece of work with UNICEF UK.

The Rights and Justice team has in the past had a campaigner network and also an advisory group for local group members to be involved in to discuss rights and justice issues. This network has been on hold but the team are hoping to resurrect it soon.

Also in development is an international network for local groups. This would share news about our international colleagues, their campaign and solidarity actions that local groups could take to support them. Once the campaigner network review is finalised we hope to be able to launch this new network for groups.

- **If we were to do address this Motion as proposed, what would be the resource implications for existing work?**

Friends of the Earth is already addressing many of the issues in the motion, but the on-going resource constraints we are operating in will continue to impact on our ability to do much more on this important issue.

## **Motion 12 – Social Media**

**Proposed by Manchester Friends of the Earth**

**Seconded by Liverpool Friends of the Earth**

This Conference calls upon the Board of Friends of the Earth Ltd. to consider that Friends of the Earth’s presence on social media is currently small in comparison to other groups. Reviewing the use of social media by Friends of the Earth could have a huge impact on the ability for the whole organisation to be successful in meeting the aims in the

strategic plan. We ask that Friends of the Earth consider the most effective means of using social media tools to meet these aims, to improve fundraising, and to provide local groups with more knowledge and skills to use them.

### **Background information:**

This Conference notes that social media is increasingly powerful as a way to engage and influence. Currently, the most popular social media site is Facebook, which currently has 400 million active users<sup>1</sup> – about 7% of the world's population. Around 200 million users login on a given day<sup>1</sup>. In March 2010, the Financial Times reported that Facebook is now used more than Google.com<sup>2</sup>. Given this, many organisations are investing into using social media, but Friends of the Earth has not yet done this sufficiently.

To demonstrate: in the UK, Rage Against The Machine got their single to be Christmas number one on the strength of a campaign on a Facebook group set up by a fan<sup>3</sup>. In America, many people credit Obama's 2009 election victory to his use of social media to reach voters<sup>4</sup>. Other campaign groups have had successes, such as the Robin Hood Tax Facebook page, which now has four times more fans than any of the UK's political parties<sup>5</sup>. This has enabled the group to get a significant media profile and helps them organise actions.

FoE is already increasing investment in fundraising, and it is essential that FoE uses social media as a significant tool to achieve this. A case study from blogger MacswellHouse, whose fundraising showed the money raised from social media was far greater than direct mailing, emails, and one-to-one conversations<sup>6</sup>. Although this was small scale, Avaaz is a large organisation that does this successfully, providing a web form to donate money each time someone signs up to a campaign.

Twitter is another powerful tool, particularly as a way of propagating information across the internet to a large range of people. Users often re-post interesting information to their friends, which is shared with friends of friends, and so on. Information from FoE could potentially reach an enormous amount of people this way. To demonstrate, within a few hours, outraged Twitter users managed to completely nullify an injunction on behalf of multi-billion dollar company Trafigura by continually posting information about their injunction<sup>7</sup>.

With the vast number of social media tools available, we urge FoE to investigate thoroughly which tools are the most effective ones to use for achieving our aims. There are new tools being developed all the time, and FoE needs to keep informed of these. There is plenty of consultancy already freely available on the web that introduces how to use social media as campaign tools, which FoE could use as a basis<sup>8</sup>, so as to avoid reinventing the wheel.

### References

<sup>1</sup> Facebook.com statistics <http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>

<sup>2</sup> FT on Google and Facebook usage <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/67e89ae8-30f7-11df-b057-00144feabdc0.html>

<sup>3</sup> Rage beats Simon Cowell <http://thenextweb.com/uk/2009/12/20/rage-machine-beats-simon-cowell-uk-christmas-number-1/>

<sup>4</sup> How social media won Obama the election <http://www.marketingmag.com.au/blogs/view/how-social-media-won-obama-the-us-election-865>

<sup>5</sup> Four times more fans than political parties <http://www.journalism.co.uk/66/articles/537701.php>

<sup>6</sup> Case Study: Fundraising and Social Media [http://macswellhouse.com/2010/04/29/fundraising\\_and\\_social\\_media/](http://macswellhouse.com/2010/04/29/fundraising_and_social_media/)

<sup>7</sup> Guardian victory after Twitter frenzy [http://www.politics.co.uk/news/culture-media-and-sport/guardian-gagging-order-sparks-twitter-frenzy-\\$1333687.htm](http://www.politics.co.uk/news/culture-media-and-sport/guardian-gagging-order-sparks-twitter-frenzy-$1333687.htm)

<sup>8</sup> Why charities need to use social media

[http://www.charitycomms.org.uk/articles/insider\\_secrets/why\\_charities\\_need\\_to\\_use\\_social\\_media](http://www.charitycomms.org.uk/articles/insider_secrets/why_charities_need_to_use_social_media)

### **Please explain briefly how you think your Motion relates to and/or impacts upon the activities already happening or planned at Friends of the Earth:**

Activities that would result from this motion:

- Short Term Actions:
  - FoE would promote the organisation's Facebook page and Twitter accounts prominently, and to create a Facebook URL such as [www.facebook.com/friendsoftheearth](http://www.facebook.com/friendsoftheearth)
  - FoE would create Facebook pages for each campaign, and keep these updated with news as is done with the website, and these pages would have a memorable URL such as [www.facebook.com/getserious](http://www.facebook.com/getserious). Campaign material such as postcards would include links to this page.
- Long Term Actions:
  - A guide for staff and campaigners would be created to explain why and how social media is so effective, and to help people learn to about the tools available. Campaign guides for local groups will contain information

about how to best use social media in that campaign. FoE would provide training for staff and campaigners who wish to learn how to use social media.

- FoE would consider the levels of return from investment in social media, and use this as a basis for considering how much resource to invest.
- FoE would review the social media tools available regularly to identify the ones that may be effective to use in the next period of campaigning.
- FoE would rethink how best to use social media as an organisation. Each major campaign would consider how to use social media at the planning stage. This will be done per campaign as each campaign has different needs. FoE will also invest in using social media as a method of fundraising.
- FoE would recognise the influence that local groups have with their own social media groups. Where appropriate, FoE would coordinate social media actions across group, and provide resources and campaign materials that help achieve this.

**Please explain how you expect the work suggested by your Motion to be resourced – i.e. areas of existing work to be cut or reduced to accommodate it, or realistic ideas for securing extra funding for the new area of work you are proposing and how this will be brought about:**

- Fundraising staff would devote time to developing social media fundraising tools, and FoE will create training sessions for staff who want to improve knowledge and skills in using them.
- FoE would need to redirect staff time and budget from existing areas.
- FoE would seek pro bono consultancy in social media. There should be plenty of consultants who are happy to work with a major group like FoE to boost their own reputation.
- FoE would make direct fundraising asks using social media to raise money to help cover the financing of these changes.
- FoE would seek to capitalise upon the existing knowledge and local activist interest in social media.

### **Staff response:**

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

New media - and in particular social media channels - is a hugely expanding field. And for an organisation the size of Friends of the Earth it is always going to be a challenge to keep up. The change process at Friends of the Earth recommended we put more organisational resources into new media over the past year. As a result the organization has invested heavily in 3 main areas over the last year:

- **Website redesign**  
which attempts to showcase our social media channels more prominently than previously
- **Better email pilot programme**  
the general election campaign which also utilized our twitter channel in particular
- **Cross-organisational new media skills/development**  
our media team in particular have been showing strong leadership and enthusiasm for social media.

But this follows a number of years where Friends of the Earth dedicated staffing in the area of new media has actually reduced (it stands at 2.7 staff - previously 3). The team have faced further challenges in the past year as new media staff have also helped to cover other crucial areas of work due to team maternity and sabbatical leave. In addition we have had a highly ambitious programme of work over this last year. As well as helping to run and contribute to the areas already mentioned above we have provided micro-sites for every local group, worked with other teams on the online campaigns for Fix the Food Chain, Get Serious and Demand Climate Change as well as online fundraising initiatives like The Big Give.

Further new media recruitment is planned - in particular a new media developer and video officer but we are not yet sure when it will take place. New media resources are also increasing in other areas of the organization through hiring of staff with existing new media skills eg in Fundraising and developing other staff.

Taking the above into consideration - our social media strategy can be currently be summarised as follows:

- **Target mainstream social media channels**  
ideally just before they take off in a big way. We are on Twitter, Facebook, Myspace and YouTube.
- **Partner where possible to maximise impact**  
We have partnered with YouTube and Myspace to great effect in the past
- **Create a sustainable presence**  
we only create one account on each channel and automate as far as possible.
- **See the channels as a means to an end**  
we use social media channels primarily to drive action on our own channels – particularly our site.

- **Distribute the work load**  
by encouraging and developing enthusiastic and skilled staff.

We are currently in the process of reviewing our social media strategy.

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

We are highly constrained by our resources in terms of what we can achieve. It is worth bearing in mind that some much larger charities have staff dedicated to managing their social media profiles. But over the last few years we have made some investment in social media which we believe has given us very respectable results:

**YouTube** – <http://www.youtube.com/friendsoftheearth>

For 2 years running we ran a successful green film competition on YouTube generating more than 150 entries which were judged by respected supporters such as Aardman Animations. One of the entrants later produced the successful viral video - Soy Story - for us. We partnered with YouTube for the launch of their non-profit scheme in the US (we were the only non-US charity invited to do so). This resulted in more 1m views of one of our videos and more than 4,000 comments. We later participated in their UK launch which featured our Head of Climate Mike Childs talking about the campaigning benefits of social video.

**MySpace** – [http://www.myspace.com/friends\\_of\\_the\\_earth](http://www.myspace.com/friends_of_the_earth)

We partnered with MySpace for the UK launch of the non-profit scheme and added 5K friends to our profile over a weekend.

**Twitter** – <http://www.twitter.com/wwwfoecouk>

We launched our twitter profile in Feb 09 and by the Copenhagen talks in Dec of the same year had over 15,000 followers. This compares very favourably with even much larger charities. During the talks one of our tweets was retweeted over 80 times and up to 14% of the actions taken during the talks came originated from Twitter. Our profile regularly appears in top green twitter lists and we were recently second most influential twitterer on climate change according to Wefollow.com. We have also used it to provide up-to-the-minute commentary during the Copenhagen talks, to promote The Big Give fundraising initiative as well to proactively deal with supporter feedback.

We recognise we have more to do with **Facebook** - <http://www.facebook.com/wwwfoecouk> (and are in the process of migrating our group to a page which should give us more profile). We already have a Facebook application in the form of the Mean or Green quiz. Crucially though - Facebook's support for UK charities is much more limited than for US ones. For example - the fundraising application - Causes is not open to UK charities.

In addition over the last year - we have encouraged staff across the organisation to make greater use of social media and each of the following teams have done so: Media, Activism, Fundraising and Campaigns. Some staff regularly get together to share insights and experiences as well as reviewing training they have been on. The Communications team intranet blog regularly carries postings relating to social media and the organisation's regular horizon scanning process includes trends in new media (including social media). We have also recognised the need to more prominently promote our social media channels on our own website - and we think the new site design now does this. Finally our social media strategy will outline our future work in this area.

- **If we were to do address this Motion as proposed, what would be the resource implications for existing work?**

We believe we are already making progress on and actioning many of the recommendations made in the motion.

We would probably not create separate Facebook profiles for individual campaigns until we are able to allocate much more resource to this area (at this stage it would probably mean we would have to close at least one other profile on another channel).

The point around promoting our social media profile urls more widely is an excellent one (unfortunately the equally excellent url suggestions have already been taken) and we will progress this.

We are pleased and encouraged that local groups are engaging with social media channels themselves. Our Electronic Activism Coordinator will work to pull together some links to best practice and general guidance on social media on a dedicated page on Community to further support and encourage this.