

# Motions to Conference 2011



This is the final version of the Motions Paper for 2011.

The paper details the six Motions prioritised for debate at Conference 2011 by local groups (out of 11 originally submitted).

The proposing groups of each of the six prioritised Motions were offered the opportunity to expand their background information section up to a maximum of 500 words – most groups decided to do this and their new background information sections are detailed here. Staff responses to each of these six Motions have also now been written and are detailed within this final version of the Motions paper.

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## **1<sup>st</sup> prioritised Motion (original Motion 2):**

### **Better planning protection for agricultural land**

Proposed by West Cornwall Friends of the Earth

Seconded by Falmouth Friends of the Earth

#### **Statement of intent:**

This Conference calls upon the Board of Friends of the Earth Ltd. to recognize the importance of agricultural land, and to lobby Government at the highest level to give greater protection to this finite resource through the planning system.

#### **Background information:**

Agricultural land in the UK is currently treated as an infinite resource to be farmed, built on or otherwise used, solely at the discretion of its owner. Climate change, extreme weather events, crop failure, increasing energy costs and a growing world population, all mean that the current situation must change. We cannot go on expecting the rest of the world to make up the shortfall in our own food production. We urgently need tighter planning regulations to stop the cumulative loss of agricultural land, and the loss of the food that could be produced on that land.

#### **STAFF RESPONSE:**

##### **1. How does this Motion fit with Friends of the Earth's new strategy?**

This motion relates to two of the new five new long term programmes of work in the new strategy: Land Use, Food and Water Security, and Fair and Planned transition.

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

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. We are currently campaigning on the National Planning Policy Framework which is extremely damaging in terms of sustainable development. We are pushing for a section on agricultural land to be included through lobbying work, getting local groups to respond to the consultation, and through political campaigning. There will be a debate on the NPPF in the Commons pushed for by Labour and we will be working to get our issues covered.

Currently our specific planning expertise is focussed on commenting on priority issues in relation to climate change to ensure that national, and local planning frameworks support low carbon initiatives. We are currently at a level of one half FTE on planning advice and dedicated campaigner role. This means that we are severely limited as to the amount of work that can be done on planning. We are now currently looking at how we scale up this work up under the Fair and Planned Transition programme.

The Land, Food and Water Security programme is a new ten year programme and we are now discussing priorities / focus of the first two years of the programme. A potential activity under this programme is a proposal to undertake an analysis of how best to manage UK land use to deliver food, water, climate and ecosystem security drawing on work by others.

##### **3. 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". We will be lobbying Ministers and the Government on the National Planning Policy Framework activity at least until December 2011, possibly up until March 2012 depending on how the consultation and political processes develop.

In addition given potential work on this issue under the new Land, Food and Water Security programme it is too early to specify what action needs to be taken to address this issue. We need to first carry out the analysis of issues and potential solutions to then look at what is the best way forward.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> prioritised Motion (original Motion 1):**

### **Environmental improvement of 23 million homes**

Proposed by West Cornwall Friends of the Earth

Seconded by Lizard Peninsula Friends of the Earth

#### **Statement of intent:**

This Conference calls upon the Board of Friends of the Earth Ltd. to consider advocating the following policy to government:

All homeowners and tenants should be offered the option of paying Council Tax on the basis of the score achieved by their home on its 'Energy Performance Certificate'.

#### **Background information:**

1. Council Tax is currently based on a home's price, and not on environmental performance.
2. 'Energy Performance Certificates' are mandatory when selling and renting out properties, and enable comparison of different properties on a simple scale of 1-100. See:  
<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/HomeAndCommunity/BuyingAndSellingYourHome/index.htm>  
[http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/energy\\_bill.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/energy_bill.pdf) (page 3)
3. A strong incentive would be provided to improve the energy efficiency of homes, in return for marginally lower council tax bills over many years.
4. Installing energy efficiency measures would create significant employment for young people.
5. The energy performance of a home will become more important, relative to cosmetic improvements or spacious extensions.

#### **STAFF RESPONSE:**

##### **1. How does this Motion fit with Friends of the Earth's new strategy?**

Friends of the Earth has consistently campaigned on issues of fuel poverty and energy efficiency for well over a decade. We were a core part of the campaign that led to the Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act 2000, giving the UK a statutory definition for fuel poverty and a target to eliminate it by 2016. Since then we have taken the previous administration, in 2008, to the High Court over its failure to tackle fuel poverty and published landmark studies on domestic energy efficiency including most recently on the health impacts of cold homes.

Throughout this time we have called for greater use of fiscal incentives to encourage the update of energy efficiency measures. Using Council Tax is just one example. We have also championed a Stamp Duty rebate system, cutting VAT on refurbishment and raising the tax break for landlords who install energy efficiency measures. We have lobbied ministers, responded to numerous consultations, given evidence to select committees, and there have been campaign actions. However there has not been a major campaign push just on this one issue as we have always seen it as a crucial part of a wider energy efficiency programme which would include regulation and direct government expenditure.

We are currently nearing the end of a campaign to introduce a minimum standard of energy efficiency in rented homes (this has been largely successful though there is still work to do for outright victory).

Our new strategy includes a major strand of work on energy efficiency as part of our new Climate and Energy Security Programme and our new major campaign 'Energy Futures' will have energy efficiency as a key part of its policy demands.

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

We have been campaigning on energy saving over the last year with a focus on minimum standards for homes in the private rented sector. We choose a regulatory approach to this sector as existing financial incentives were not working because they were aimed at the landlord whilst the tenants paid the energy bill. We have also been working with others to strengthen the ambition within the Energy Bill going through Parliament so that the Government does more to improve the energy performance of all buildings (so that the Climate Change Act can be delivered). In the Energy Bill we have also been pushing for local authorities to have a duty to reduce carbon emissions within their area (our Get Serious Campaign).

When the Energy Bill has been passed we will assess what other steps we can take to increase energy efficiency measures. It is likely that a campaign to significantly increase funds for housing renovation will be a significant part of the follow-up, however we will assess whether we have capacity to promote measures such as local authorities offering council tax rebates or similar.

The motion rightly identifies Council Tax as a key mechanism to incentivise energy efficiency.

In terms of the specific policy advocated we have preferred to call for a one off Council Tax rebate rather than a long term reduction in Council Tax for a property. Available evidence suggests that people do not respond to long term marginal price signals as an incentive to make energy efficiency improvements. Basically people tend to disproportionately value a smaller immediate incentive rather than a potentially much larger benefit spread over a long time. For this reason a one off rebate could get as much response as a permanent reduction for a fraction of the cost to the taxpayer.

Council Tax rebates are, in fact, a tried and tested policy. In 2004 Braintree Council in Essex, in conjunction with British Gas (as part of its energy efficiency obligation) started to offer a £100 Council Tax rebate for households installing cavity wall and loft insulation. The programme was highly successful with a much greater response than the £200 off-offer that British Gas had previously been running! It is currently fashionable to call this type policy 'nudge' or 'behavioural economics'. We may not use the term but we have been doing it for years!

We have also called for the rebate to be as a reward for making energy efficiency improvements rather than an incentive to buy a greener house. One reason for this is a concern that the homes with a lower council tax (i.e. better insulated) would be pushed up in price where as those worst insulated properties (with a higher council tax) would fall in price. This could create a situation where better insulated homes tend to be occupied by the better of leaving the worst insulated for the poor who also have to least resources to pay for improvements (though the Green Deal might help here). However our policy thinking on this area is always evolving and we would be happy to review any evidence to the contrary.

In addition changing the legislation on how the Council Tax is devised would be a major undertaking as it is an issue that all political parties are wary of following the poll tax debacle many years ago.

We would also be wary of offering the option to pay according to energy efficiency, as it is unclear why this would have any more impact than offering a rebate (but at considerably greater administrative cost).

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

We have limited resources for energy efficiency work and once the Energy Bill is completed we will consider where we can get most bang for our bucks, including considering the scheme outlined above.

The motion does not call for us to mount a major campaign on this issue, however, simply to advocate it to Government and the idea of using Council Tax to incentivise energy efficiency measures is established Friends of the Earth policy already (though with the nuances outlined above).

### **3<sup>rd</sup> prioritised Motion (original Motion 5):**

#### **Campaign for short public information films about climate change on television**

Proposed by Brent Friends of the Earth

Seconded by Sheffield Friends of the Earth

#### **Statement of intent:**

This Conference calls on the Board of Friends of the Earth Ltd to consider running a campaign to persuade the Government to delegate to the Advisory Committee on Climate Change the task of commissioning frequent short (3 minutes?) films on all aspects of the issue, to be shown on all UK based channels at least once or twice a week at peak viewing times. The channels should be required by law, if necessary, to show these films.

### **Background information:**

The facts about climate change are very complex. Most people need much more knowledge and understanding if they are to take significant actions to mitigate climate change or equally if they are to demand and/or accept serious measures from the Government.

We need people to act on the understanding that climate change is an issue of overwhelming and urgent importance.

Most people have taken some action in relation to climate change - but not much. A majority in the UK have said that they want more Government action - but it hasn't been a crucial issue in UK elections. Most people seem uncertain about what they or the government can do and don't act as if they are particularly concerned.

At present many people are more worried about unemployment and their household budgets. And some ask "if this is a serious issue, why aren't politicians taking it more seriously?"

The media often give the impression that only a minority are concerned about climate change. This is not true, but is likely to strongly influence behaviour. If people believe that they are in a small minority, they are less likely to act.

Most people do see climate change as a current or imminent threat despite being generally sceptical about what they are told by Governments and scientists. But the number of people who say they are concerned has fluctuated over the years, influenced by events such as "climate-gate" and by the fact that recent winters have been cold. And people appear to have become "desensitized" to unseasonal weather and dramatic events like flooding.

We want us to campaign for something that aims at Climate Change issues getting talked about much more widely. Something that would make dealing with Climate Change a high priority when people decide how to vote. And something that would have a strong influence on the actions people take.

We think that short regular mini-films on TV could have a significant influence.

These films should be commissioned by a body that is seen as independent of the government. The details of the format and the content would need to be worked out but obviously the films would have to be made with a careful eye as to what is likely to motivate people rather than to cause them to turn away. They should be brief, clear and easy to understand.

We think that, over time, they should cover a variety of climate change topics and be varied in terms of format. Each one should focus on one clear and specific aspect. e.g., the greenhouse effect, home energy possibilities, how do we know what's true, does being careful about climate change mean leading a gloomy life, how does what you eat affect the climate?, etc etc.

### **STAFF RESPONSE:**

#### **1. How does this Motion fit with Friends of the Earth's new strategy?**

We understand the concern behind the motion, however we do not feel the priority for Friends of the Earth is to educate and inform the public about the importance of climate change. As the motion itself states the vast majority of the public are aware and agree climate change is a current or imminent threat. Our job is to move people beyond awareness to action.

Communications research has shown that providing information can raise awareness but it is unlikely to lead to attitude or behaviour change. Choosing the right messenger is also important, indeed messages from governments, exhorting people to drive their cars less or admonishing them for buying products that cause environmental damage, appear not to be working.

The statutory duties of Climate Change Committee do not include education and awareness -raising. In May 2011 the Coalition Government sent out a clear signal about the extent of their commitment to communicating and promoting environmental and energy-saving best practices when they announced that the Carbon Trust and the Energy Saving Trust will no longer receive core grant funding and will have to take part in competitive tenders for

government projects from next year. Requiring TV channels by law to broadcast these films might be perceived as State control of the media, although we recognise the State already does play a role in public health broadcasting.

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

Our new public campaign on energy sets out to achieve a significant shift in public opinion around energy in order to secure the measures necessary to achieve substantial reductions in emissions. Our strategy and the Climate and Energy Security Programme conclude that the best way to do this is to champion positive solutions that are relevant to people's everyday lives.

Our audience research shows that most people feel disillusioned and angry about the UK's current energy set-up. But they feel unable to challenge and change it and lack confidence in the alternatives - including renewable energy. Our response to this is a simple, bold and visible campaign that brings down 'business as usual' by harnessing people's disenchantment.

Our long-term campaign will engage hundreds of thousands of people in a simple powerful act that feels easy and obvious to people who encounter our campaign online and on the streets. The first phase will bridge towards a more involved action (The Big Switch tariff switch) that meets people's desire to make lifestyle changes and that helps boost confidence in renewable energy.

We also know from audience research that Friends of the Earth is a trusted voice and that people want us to help them - and speak for them - on the energy issue. The people who aren't currently engaged in our work want simple and relevant ways to get involved with us. Our supporters want us to run campaigns that they can tell their friends about.

We believe this strategic response to be a more effective approach than awareness-raising.

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

Friends of the Earth is addressing many of the issues in the motion. However we are responding to the challenge with a different strategic approach which is about moving beyond awareness-raising to action and positive engagement. We believe this will be more effective than diverting resources to work on the campaign proposed by the Motion.

## **4<sup>th</sup> prioritised Motion (original Motion 7):**

### **Campaigning on polar climatic changes as a driver for attitudinal change**

Proposed by Mon A Gwynedd Friends of the Earth

Seconded by Swansea Friends of the Earth

#### **Statement of intent:**

This Conference calls upon the Board of Friends of the Earth Ltd. to consider the implementation of a national campaign to draw public attention to the latest evidence regarding climatic changes in the polar regions, with a view to strengthening support for measures to mitigate climate change, including further development of renewables.

#### **Background information:**

Scientific research conducted since the Fourth IPCC Assessment Report (AR4) indicates that climate change impacts, such as sea level rise, are occurring faster or are likely to be more severe than previously indicated by climate models. Despite these findings, and the well-established scientific consensus regarding the anthropogenic nature of current climate change, public attitudes appear to be becoming more sceptical or complacent. For example, the Ipsos MORI publication "Public Attitudes to Science 2011" observed that whereas in 2005 91% of adults in Britain believed the world's climate is changing, in 2010 the percentage had declined to 78%. Similarly, the proportion of people who agreed that there are risks to people in Britain from climate change had fallen from 77% to 66% over this period.

Such trends in public attitudes make it harder to persuade politicians that tackling climate change must be among their highest priorities. They also make it less likely that appropriate fiscal or other measures will be adopted to combat greenhouse gas emissions, and less likely that renewable technologies will receive the level of support required to ensure the rapid transition to a low-carbon economy.

The polar regions, and especially the Arctic, are recognised to be the “canary in the coal mine” with regard to climate change. The most recent news on changes in these regions is alarming. Average temperatures in the Arctic are rising twice as fast as elsewhere in the world. During 2007-2009, the area of summertime Arctic sea ice was about 40% less than the average prediction from IPCC AR4 climate models. Furthermore, the annual net loss of mass from the Greenland Ice Sheet has quadrupled within a period of little more than 10 years, reaching ca. 200 Gt per year -- enough water to supply more than one billion city dwellers. Melting permafrost in the Arctic region threatens to act as a massive feedback loop that will exacerbate temperature increases. In the Antarctic Peninsula dramatic ice shelf loss and glacial thinning are occurring, and it is now recognised that significant warming is occurring in winter and spring in large areas of both East Antarctica and West Antarctica. These findings are reflected in the recognition that IPCC AR4 severely underestimated the potential sea level rise up to 2100.

The changes occurring in the polar regions offer an iconic narrative that emphasises the urgency of combating climate change and can be used to achieve attitudinal change. A campaign to highlight these changes could be delivered at a reasonable cost by utilising internet opportunities, local group actions, cinema advertising and, potentially, public information films (cf. Motion 5).

#### **STAFF RESPONSE:**

##### **1. How does this Motion fit with Friends of the Earth’s new strategy?**

The weight of our own and other specialist communications research shows that presenting people with distant and intangible global threats can be counter-productive – it alienates the wider public, provoking apathy, hopelessness or indifference. It can also be perceived as scare-mongering, leading to automatic ‘switch-off’ from our messages because people fear they can’t digest the scale of the threat or do anything about it.

Instead, research shows we need to talk to people about issues that seem real and important to them, to trigger a response and action. This is why our communications approach is about connecting with people where they are at, linking wider environmental issues to their own lives and concerns. We also help them to see their actions can make a difference and give them a sense of hope and agency.

However we do know that for some audiences, particularly ‘darker green’, well-educated audiences, this powerful and emotive story-telling about global threats like arctic ice melting does convey urgency and provoke concern, and we do think carefully about how to use it in our campaigns and communications mix.

We also use the latest scientific research to give credibility to our strategic programmes and campaigns, and so clear evidence on the destruction climate change and habitat and species destruction is causing to our planet is vital for this.

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

In the UK we have not focussed on the changes to the arctic as a method for driving greater public concern on climate change. Our current assessment in the UK is that changes in the arctic are too removed from most people’s experiences to be a major driver for change. Issues of energy prices and energy security are stronger because they are rising up the political and media agenda and touch people’s everyday lives, allowing us to trigger action and link their concerns to wider climate and energy issues.

In addition, although it is possible that the arctic ice will reach record lows this year, we are also aware of scientific speculation that it may stabilise over coming years despite a warmer world.

Greenpeace has been able to use the arctic region to greater effect in their campaigning because they have their iconic Rainbow Warrior boats and the staff and technological resources to chronicle their seafaring campaigns, which allow them to create a powerful first-hand narrative and images around this region of the world which appeals to some audiences.

We have discussed the idea of an arctic campaign with colleagues in Friends of the Earth Europe. Ideas are being generated by Friends of the Earth groups in Norway, Denmark and elsewhere. We will keep in touch with these developments and will consider if and how we can take part as the ideas develop further.

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

Our public campaign on climate and energy is focussing on energy prices and energy security, and planning is well underway now for an October launch.

Refocusing our climate work to arctic sea ice would mean delaying the launch of our public campaigning on climate significantly and being unable to put significant campaign or programme resource into energy issues, which we know are going up the news agenda and have deep resonance with the public. As such they are a great 'lever' for action and awareness to help tackle climate change.

### 5<sup>th</sup> prioritised Motion (original Motion 3):

#### Climate change international boycott campaign

Proposed by Muswell Hill and Hornsey Friends of the Earth

Seconded by Tottenham and Wood Green Friends of the Earth

#### Statement of intent:

This Conference calls upon the Board of Friends of the Earth Ltd. to consider an international boycott campaign, in collaboration with other NGOs, aiming to make investments in particularly high emissions activities, including coal and tar sands oil, become socially, morally, economically and commercially unattractive with the underlying goal of encouraging a switch of such investment to renewable energy. The success of the campaign would encourage consumers to make other green choices, and also influence governments by showing the strength of opinion about the need to tackle climate change urgently.

#### Background information:

Unless emissions start declining within ten years, we risk hitting tipping points which will accelerate warming and make catastrophic climate change irreversible. Such feedbacks include the Amazon droughts of 2010 and 2005, and the increased flow of many Greenland glaciers. Therefore we must **analyse carefully** how we campaign. Experts Jim Shultz and Chris Rose emphasise that we need to target those who **can actually** make the decisions we want. The UNFCCC has said that the "commitments" nations have made under Cancun amount to only 60% of what is needed to keep temperature rise below 2 degrees. A three nation poll found that only one person in six thinks the Copenhagen Accord will become a **binding** treaty in the future. This scepticism shows why the influence we can currently exert on governments may be insufficient. Therefore while maintaining pressure on governments, we must consider the other culprits. In a recent survey 45% of consumers said they would avoid brands that failed to cut their carbon footprint. A 2008 poll got a similar result. This constitutes a vast reservoir of people whom we can stimulate to weaken greenhouse polluters.

Boycotts have a long record of success, and business considers them more effective than other campaign tactics. Banks are increasingly wary of financing polluting activities, and a boycott campaign could make the vital difference. A relatively small cut in sales can reduce a company's share price significantly and seriously hit executives' income. Companies are anxious to avoid reputational damage. The Tck Tck Tck petition gained a remarkable 17 million signatures for an effective climate treaty. Opinion polls continue to show that globally most people consider climate change serious. A boycott campaign could harness this concern, and the widespread hostility towards big business and the banks, and make a huge impact. Since Copenhagen many people lack confidence in other campaigning options. But boycotting products on a campaign's list is a simple action, which millions of people would find both convenient and attractive. For most people, striking an immediate economic hit on a major polluter is much more appealing than a politician-focused action whose results will not be known for a considerable time. Activists could enlist support for the campaign at any time, anywhere significant numbers of people are accessible. Therefore many more people would become active, beyond the minority who are prepared to travel to a demonstration.

The campaign would fail if perceived as opposed to modern Western life. Therefore it should **carefully** choose products which are seen as **particularly** polluting, but which people perceive as **susceptible** to consumer pressure. Some companies could be warned so they could switch to less harmful activities before being targeted. Targets could include: high performance cars from companies who oppose tougher emission standards; selected high-carbon products from Canada and the USA, due to their exploitation of the Alberta tar sands, and from Australia, the world's major coal exporter; and the very valuable exports of cars, beef, and lamb from, and tourism to, these three nations.

For sources: [www.timroot.net/?q=articles](http://www.timroot.net/?q=articles)

## STAFF RESPONSE:

### 1. How does this Motion fit with Friends of the Earth's new strategy?

This approach is not explicitly covered within the new strategic plan as the plan instead focus on achieving global political agreements on carbon emissions reductions and also in favour of a global feed-in tariff to enable the fast roll-out of renewable energy in developing countries. However this approach, at least in the future, is not ruled out within the strategic plan as a method for getting greater international effort on carbon reductions.

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

We've worked with Stop Climate Chaos in getting companies to push for greater political efforts at a UK level (4<sup>th</sup> carbon budget) and at an EU level but we have not run any boycott campaigns in recent years (and nor have the other main NGOs). The last significant boycott campaign we worked on was (unsuccessfully) against Esso/Exxon to stop them lobbying against action on climate change.

In the UK we would only be able to have an impact if this were in association with the other main NGOs and none, as far as we know, are considering this approach. Internationally we would need to work with sister groups in Friends of the Earth International, none of which are adopting this approach.

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

It would divert very limited resources away from our current international work and also by its very nature would divert resources away from the 3 prioritised public campaigns on Energy, Greener Products and Bees.

## 6<sup>th</sup> prioritised Motion (original Motion 8):

### Personal allowances and fair shares

Proposed by Barnet and Enfield Friends of the Earth

Seconded by Camden Friends of the Earth

#### Statement of intent:

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

1. Supporting the principle of personal allowances both as a way to clear impasse over carbon- and resource-cutting efforts, and further as a key indispensable building block to success on those fronts;
2. Supporting a wider principle of 'Fair Shares', and working towards building a joint worldwide campaign on this theme (to follow Make Poverty History and Live Earth), for fiscal and regulatory frameworks to be introduced by which both individuals and nations have fair access to resources, in a manner numerically guided by long-term planning for the environment and availability of resources, which need not be incompatible with self-betterment, enterprise or any country's competitiveness.

#### Background information:

The second Rio Earth Summit takes place next year. Where are we since the first in 1992? World carbon emissions are now higher than ever, having risen almost every successive year. This July, a record 6.9 million used Heathrow Airport. Amid peak conventional oil extraction, total liquid fuel use is still rising thanks to tar sands, agrofuels and coal-to-liquids, mostly worse for the environment. Compressed natural gas, shale gas and the 'roll-to-coal' worsen things further. Media coverage of climate change and flood/drought disasters has fallen. Climate change/environment is still down the list of most lay public and politicians' concerns.

In the face of all this, what is there about our campaigns, present and planned, that is going to deliver the intended results where others have fallen short in the past? And even if they did, would it be enough? We need to face up to:

1. The elephant in the room. **We need to consume less, not just differently.** FoE [has admitted](http://www.foe.co.uk/cymru/english/news/manifesto_greener_wales.html)<sup>1</sup> that the UK needs to cut carbon emissions by 9% annually. Professor Kevin Anderson, director of the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, [told a London public meeting this year](http://www.campaigncc.org/frackingmeeting)<sup>2</sup> that we should be making even steeper cuts than this. He has repeatedly said that 'greening' investment will not do nearly enough, [we need to cut consumption/demand](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/environment/climatechange/8165769/Cancun-climate-change-summit-scientists-call-for-rationing-in-developed-world.html)<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.foe.co.uk/cymru/english/news/manifesto\\_greener\\_wales.html](http://www.foe.co.uk/cymru/english/news/manifesto_greener_wales.html)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.campaigncc.org/frackingmeeting>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/environment/climatechange/8165769/Cancun-climate-change-summit-scientists-call-for-rationing-in-developed-world.html>

It is not merely about embodied carbon. Our animal protein consumption is unsustainably/unjustly high, considering not just world biodiversity but also diminishing world fresh water and mineral phosphorus (fertilizer) reserves.

2. The sauropod dinosaur in the room. **Gentle persuasion won't do enough.** We don't see people driving or flying much less, only new roads and runways. Most people will continue to copy their peer group and aspire to high levels of material consumption unless there are radical measures to discourage consumption. There is a 'rebound' effect whereby money saved from emissions cutting measures causes emissions as it is spent elsewhere, typically 34% of the emissions supposedly saved, according to [a paper published this year](#)<sup>4</sup> in Energy Policy.
3. The great whale in the room. **Simple radical green tax rises are virtually unworkable.** They are regressive, hitting many poor/struggling people hard while many wealthier people can still afford their same material comforts. Which major party would now propose further simple petrol/energy tax rises?

Where does this leave us? We need to be highlighting that consumption needs to fall, but that there are many possible fiscal instruments to bring this about that are not regressive, that increase fairness. Many involve personal allowances. For example every citizen could have a personal carbon allowance above which he/she is taxed much more heavily per unit of embodied carbon consumed.

This 'Fair Shares' principle could be central to a new super-campaign to break the political ice, uniting campaign groups, faith groups, trade unions and academics. Politicians are sometimes asked what they are doing for 'the environment', 'climate change', 'poverty'. Following this campaign, they could simply be asked "what are you doing to implement Fair Shares?"

#### **STAFF RESPONSE:**

##### **1. How does this Motion fit with Friends of the Earth's new strategy?**

Reducing carbon emissions reductions and resource use are covered by the new strategy. The use of this particular economic tool is not explicitly mentioned.

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

This economic tool (personal allowances or tradable quotas) has been discussed a number of times at Conference and rejected as a policy tool to push for.

Sadly the idea of rationing, even if tradable, is a political non-starter for the three main political parties as it would create a huge backlash from the media, especially those on the right or centre-right. It would be portrayed as an attack of freedom. It may even lead to an increase in the numbers of the public questioning the need for action of climate change or resource use.

To gain traction in our campaigns we have to bring people from across the political spectrum with us in campaigns that intuitively make sense. So for our climate and energy work we need to also point to reduced energy bills in the medium term and greater energy security. In resource use we are starting with the basic need to measure our resource use (Land, Water, Carbon and Material Footprints) - something that is already well established in the climate debate - and then we are pushing for commitments to reduce resource use, increase resource efficiency and reduce our dependence on overseas resources.

Therefore whilst in theory this economic tool could work and may even be one of the best tools to enable equitable sharing of limited resources it has virtually zero chance of gaining the political support needed to become a policy tool used in practice.

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

It would distract from other policy work, such as influencing the forthcoming energy market review the government is carrying out or work we are carrying out on EU resource efficiency legislation.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/jun/03/energy-saving-rebound>