



Guidance for prospective election candidates

2010 Board Elections (North West, Midlands, South East)

Are you committed to Friends of the Earth's strategic aims and objectives?

Would you like to use your qualities and skills to help us deliver our strategic vision?

Do you want "Board Experience" on your CV?

Then why not stand for election to become a board member?

Friends of the Earth is a grassroots, environmental justice organisation. We are committed to reflecting these principles at all levels of our organisation, including our Boards. The majority of Board members are elected by local groups in their region. Elections for each region happen every three years so we regularly need candidates to stand for election. If you are committed to our aims, keen to apply your skills at board level and able to attend meetings regularly then please consider putting yourself forward for election.

Being a Friends of the Earth Board member is a highly rewarding experience, personally and professionally. As a Board Member you will be part of the governance team of Britain's most successful and vigorous environmental organisation.

Being elected to the Board means you are then available to be appointed by the Board to be a legal director under the Companies Act.

Friends of the Earth greatly values the contribution our Board members play by volunteering for Friends of the Earth. We are keen that our Boards should benefit from a diverse membership including a good gender and age balance. We encourage all nominations regardless of race, ethnic origin, class, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, marital status, or religion.

If you are interested in becoming an elected Board member, please read the guidance below:

Please also take a moment to read the Rules of Election.

The deadline for nominations is **12 noon on Friday 28 May 2010**.

Contact: If you have any queries about the election process after reading the guidance, then please contact Fiona Davis (the Returning Officer). If you would like to know more about what it is like to be on the Board, Fiona can put you in touch with a current Board member.

Tel: 020 7566 1631

E-mail: fiona.davis@foe.co.uk

1. The Boards and Your Role

Regional Board members are nominated by local groups in their region and elected at Conference and serve a three year term of office.

As a Board member you can play a vitally important and challenging governance role by:

- Determining Friends of the Earth's strategy and monitoring progress against our Strategic Aims and Objectives
- Monitoring our financial performance and managing the risk to and reputation of the organisation.

Who are the Boards?

Friends of the Earth consists of two separate organisations which work closely together. Friends of the Earth Trust Ltd is a charitable trust. Friends of the Earth Limited is a non charitable company. The Boards consist of 10 elected members and about 7 co-opted members (see table below). As a regionally elected member you will then be appointed to the Board as a legal director at the next Board meeting. On joining the Board you will also be invited (coopted) to join the Board of Friends of the Earth Trust as a legal director of that company. The other (non-elected) co-opted members bring additional skills and experience to the boards and are selected as people who have experience and the aptitude for working at this level. These coopted members are only directors of one of the companies to ensure each company can act independently of each other.

The Boards of Friends of the Earth	
Limited Chair (Coopted) 10 regionally elected members 2-3 coopted members	Trust Chair (Coopted) 3-4 coopted members 10 coopted regional members (these are the elected members of Limited who are invited to join the Trust)

What is expected of Board members?

We are looking for candidates with:

- An understanding of Friends of the Earth's work and a commitment to our aims
- An ability to articulate your views and concerns clearly
- Confidence and independence

As a regionally elected Board member you are expected to:

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

As an elected board member your job is to work as an individual to do your best for the whole organisation, not one part or area. You should **not**:

- direct or manage staff
- favour your region above others
- represent the views of your region
- promote your personal agenda to the board
- speak in public as a board member

The Time Commitment

Board meetings take place quarterly. In January, April and October meetings take place on Saturdays in London and in July we hold a residential Board weekend to discuss issues and plan our business.

Committee meetings are also held quarterly. The Committees are Operational Excellence Committee, Campaigns Committee and Engagement Committee.

In addition to attending meetings you will need to make time to:

- read papers prior to each Board and Committee meeting and prepare to comment at the meeting;
- read and respond to emails from the Chair, other members and staff between meetings;
- lead discussions on particular issues from time to time, including liaising with staff and other Board members to become involved in particular projects depending on your specialist skills; and
- attend the annual conference of Friends of the Earth .

Induction

If you are successfully elected you will attend an induction session. In addition you will receive

1. An induction pack
2. Notes on duties of directors and trustees
3. Board code of conduct
4. Contact details of all other directors
5. Meetings timetable
6. Details of how to claim reasonable travel, accommodation or caring expenses

2. The Election Process Explained

Nominations

To stand for election as a Board member, you must be currently eligible to be a company director, a current supporter of Friends of the Earth and a member of a licensed Friends of the Earth Local Group. You must be nominated by one Friends of the Earth group and seconded by one other, using the enclosed nomination paper. A group cannot nominate more than one person, and cannot second more than two. A group can only nominate or second a prospective Board member for the region in which that group is based.

Eligibility to participate

All groups wishing to take part in Board elections (whether nominating, seconding or just voting), must be currently licensed, and must have licensed as a Friends of the Earth Local Group by 1 September 2009.

Election statements

You are invited to supply an election statement of no more than 500 words with your nomination. The statement is your opportunity to express your suitability to be a Board member for Friends of the Earth. It is recommended that you address the following points in your election statement:

1. your involvement in Friends of the Earth, and/or other environmental organisations, especially with reference to Local Groups;
2. your objectives in standing for the Board;
3. any special skills or knowledge you have;
4. any relevant experience of working on Boards, committees or with other decision making bodies;
5. any potential conflict of interest (e.g. directorships, shares, political involvement).

Please be aware that the Returning Officer may ask you for further information about your election statement.

How to submit your nomination

Please note that we will not be able to accept any nominations after **28th May**. To make absolutely sure that we receive all the nominations in time, we would recommend that you either:

- Send it by registered post; or
- Call Fiona Davis on 020 7566 1631 (email fiona.davis@foe.co.uk) and let us know that you have sent a nomination via normal post.

Election statements will be circulated to the local groups in the relevant region on **18th June**. It would be appreciated if you could submit your statement as early as possible, to allow the Returning Officer sufficient time to check it meets the necessary requirements.

Please also note that a photograph should *not* be provided with the statement.

Checklist

For all nominations, the following documents must be received by the Returning Officer by the close of nominations (28th May):

1. a completed Nomination form;
2. a completed Acceptance of Nomination form;
3. an election statement;
4. also note that to stand for election to the Board, you must be a current supporter of Friends of the Earth and eligible to be a company director.

What happens next?

Election statements will be circulated to the local groups in the relevant region on **18 June**. The votes will be counted and results announced at the Friends of the Earth Conference on 10th to 12th September.

If you have any questions, or need further guidance, contact the Returning Officer (Fiona Davis) at Underwood Street on 020 7566 1631, or by e-mail to fiona.davis@foe.co.uk. All paperwork can be found on the Community website here <http://www.foe.co.uk/events/conference.html>