



**Friends of
the Earth**

Standing Orders for Conference

Last amended March 2002

Preamble

A Local Groups Conference is held every year, along the following lines.

- * Every licensed group can send a nominated representative to the Conference.
- * Local Groups are also guaranteed a second place at Conference, with four further places on a reserve list.
- * Friends of the Earth Ltd staff may also attend the Conference.
- * Groups have one vote at the Conference, which is exercised through their nominated representative. No representative may hold more than one vote. Board members and staff may not vote.
- * The Chair of the Conference will be appointed by the Board.
- * The Conference shall receive a report from the Board of the past year's work and its agreed plans.
- * The Conference shall discuss Motions submitted by licensed Local Groups and the Board.
- * Motions before the Conference shall be carried upon receiving the assent of a simple majority of votes cast.
- * As the final decision-making authority in Friends of the Earth Ltd rests with the Board, Motions have an advisory function. The Board will, however, undertake at the earliest opportunity to consider the Motions passed and take appropriate action.
- * The Board will give a full report to the following Conference on actions taken regarding Motions and provide reasons for any non-implementation of Motions passed.
- * The Board will establish a Conference Organising Committee of three nominated people and the Returning Officer. Any queries or complaints from Local Groups regarding the Conference should be sent to the Returning Officer, care of the Local Campaigns Department at Underwood Street.
- * The Conference agrees to operate within the Standing Orders agreed by that Conference.
- * A special Conference may be called by the Board as and when deemed necessary. The Conference shall be governed by the same rules and procedures as laid down for the Annual Conference.

Standing Orders for Conference

- 1.** A Motion will only be accepted if it is accompanied by up to five hundred words of background information covering the most important information relating to that Motion. Friends of the Earth Ltd. staff may also provide up to five hundred words of background information to any Motion which, if passed and implemented, might pose difficulties for the work of Friends of the Earth Ltd..
- 2.** Persons entitled to speak to Motions and Amendments shall include members of the Board and staff of Friends of the Earth Ltd., its paid consultants, registered supporters of Friends of the Earth and members of Local Groups only.
- 3.** The Chair has the right to decide who shall speak and to rule speakers out of order. The Chair shall have complete control of the procedure of the debate, including when to take procedural Motions with the exception of a vote of no confidence in the Chair, and except where the procedure is covered by one of the following Standing Orders.
- 4.** The final agenda shall include time limits for speeches. These limits may be reduced by the Chair, if in their opinion the timetable demands it.
- 5.** The Motions Debate will be conducted as follows:
 - a) each Motion or Amendment is to be introduced by its proposer;
 - b) if there is opposition to a Motion or Amendment, a speech against the Motion or Amendment is to be taken next;
 - c) speeches for and against the Motion or Amendment are then to be taken in turn until the issues have been debated sufficiently;
 - d) if there is nobody who wishes to speak either in favour (or against) a Motion or Amendment, the chair will have discretion to call up to three speakers who wish to speak against (or in favour) of the Motion or Amendment;
 - e) if opposition to the Motion or Amendment has been expressed, the seconder of the Motion or Amendment or his or her nominee (who may be the proposer) is to be given the opportunity to make a closing speech in which new matter must not be introduced.
- 6.** If, after a resolution has been proposed and formally seconded, there is no speech against, the Chair may, at his or her option, put the resolution straight to a vote.
- 7.** A resolution or Amendment, once on the final agenda, may not be withdrawn except by leave of Conference.
- 8.** Except as provided for in SO5 no-one shall speak more than once to any resolution or Amendment.

9. Procedural resolutions may only be submitted after opportunities have been given for speech for and against the Motion. They shall then be put to the vote with no debate:
 - a) a Motion to refer back the resolution under debate;
 - b) a Motion to move next business;
 - c) a Motion that the resolution now be put;
 - d) a vote of no confidence in the Chair.
10. Any person may raise a point of order concerning these Standing Orders and shall be entitled to be heard forthwith providing that they:
 - a) state the Standing Order covering the matter they wish to raise;
 - b) do not speak for more than one minute.
11. When a mover of a resolution has summed up, no point of order may be raised until the vote has been taken.
12. Motions received after the deadline may be accepted by the Conference Organising Committee as emergency Motions, only if in the opinion of that Committee they relate to events that have occurred after the original deadline.
13. In the event of there being more Motions to Conference than can be debated in the time allocated, the Conference Organising Committee shall organise a prioritisation ballot whereby all licensed groups eligible to vote can vote on which Motions should be discussed.
14. No more than two Emergency Motions shall be debated. In the event of there being 3 or more such Motions accepted, then there will be a prioritisation ballot.
15. Any prioritisation ballot on Emergency Motions shall be conducted during the conference session on Motions to Conference.
16. No changes will be made to the rules governing the running of the Local Groups Conference without consultation with Local Groups through the Local Groups Conference.
17. The timetable for Conference and Election Process should be organised along the following lines:
 - i) covering notice for Conference and Elections to Board - to Groups 20 weeks prior to Conference;
 - ii) closing date for Motions and nominations to Board - 12 weeks prior to Conference;
 - iii) draft Motions paper and Conference booking form circulated to Local Groups - 10 weeks prior to Conference;
 - iv) closing date for Amendments to Motions and booking for Conference - six weeks prior to Conference;
 - v) distribution of Conference papers including final Motions paper, agenda and prioritisation ballot paper - by beginning of Conference;
 - vi) Close of elections and announcement of results - at Conference.

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