



**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
National Trust Offices, 32 Queen Anne's Gate, London**

Attending

Attendee	Representing	Attendee	Representing
Derrick Coffee	Campaign for Better Transport – East Sussex	John Bannister	Guildford Environment Forum
Mike Overall	Chiltern Society	Pauline Holmes	Hampshire & IOW Wildlife Trust
Christine Drury	CPRE South East	John Slater	RAISE
Peter England	CTC South East	Chris Corrigan	RSPB SE
Clare Devereux	Food Matters	Alison Walters	SEFS/ Brighton & Hove Friends of the Earth
David Porter	Friends of the Earth – Elmbridge	Richard Partridge	South Downs Society
Kathy Smyth	Friends of the Earth – Guildford & Waverley	Lynnette Leeson	Sussex Wildlife Trust & Chair of SEFS
Ray Cobbett	Friends of the Earth – Havant	Mary Lewis	Sustainability Centre
Caroline Kenward	Friends of the Earth Lewes	Ian Hepburn	Wildlife Trusts South East
Chris Burden	Friends of the Earth – Reading	Ellie Dickson	Woodland Trust
Brenda Pollack	Friends of the Earth – South East	Tony Whitbread	Sussex Wildlife Trust – Speaker
Anton Page	Friends of the Earth – Test Valley	Jane Vaughan	Government Office for the SE – Speaker
John Byng	Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign	Elizabeth Chamberlain	NCVO – Speaker

Apologies

AEF	Friends of the Earth – Isle of Wight
Association of Preservation Trusts SE	Friends of the Earth - Milton Keynes
Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust	Friends of the Earth – New Forest
Climate South East	Kent Wildlife Trust
Edward Dawson	National Trust SE
Environment Agency	RailFuture SE
Friends of the Earth – Blackwater Valley	Surrey Wildlife Trust
Friends of the Earth - Bracknell	Sustainability Action
Friends of the Earth – Chinnor & Thame	WWF

1) Election of Chair & Treasurer

All to note: Ian Hepburn was proposed as chair of SEFS for 2010/11 all were in favour

All to note: Chris Corrigan was nominated to take over as Treasurer of SEFs all were in favour

2) Minutes from AGM 2008

All to note: IH thanked LL for her contribution to ensuring SEFS continued as an effective environmental network during her time as chair of SEFS and AW for her support

All agreed: the minutes from AGM 2009.

3) P&EC Elections

All to note: 10 nominations were received for the 12 seats - Judith Martin (Association of Preservation Trusts), Edward Dawson, (CPRE SE), Peter England (CTC SE), Brenda Pollack (Friends of the Earth South East), Patrick Begg (National Trust SE), Ian McDonald (Railfuture SE), Chris Corrigan (RSPB), Ian Hepburn (Wildlife Trusts SE), Ellie Dickson (Woodland Trust), Lucy Young (WWF).

All to note: Joe McIndoe (Groundwork) and Clare Devereux (Food Matters) stood down from P&EC and IH thanked them for their contribution.

All in favour: of the 10 nominated P&EC members

4) SEFS Accounts

As Treasurer of SEFS Chris Corrigan went through the accounts for 2009/10

All to note: The main point to note is that after March 2011 SEFS is currently dependent on membership for its survival.

All to note: Financial accounting and employment responsibilities were transferred in December 2009 from Surrey Wildlife Trust to the Environment Centre (tEC) in Southampton.

All to note: Because of the workload involved, SEFS is charged a small management fee for its use of tEC employment and financial services.

Questions from the Floor: Members were keen to know who funded tEC – tEC works in partnership with various organisations including, Carbon Trust, DEFRA, Energy Savings Trust, SEEDA, Sustainable Business Partnership, Transition Southampton, Environment Agency, Ordnance Survey, Business Link and the Construction Industry Council.

All agreed: SEFS 2009/10 accounts

5) Overview of the Year – Lynnette Leeson

Key Points

1. SEFS has sought funding from various places during the year but there has been a general lack of ability to commit. A member suggested approaching charities.
2. There is a need to promote sustainability at all levels. **CD** pointed out that the presumption in favour of development had been changed to being a presumption in favour of ‘sustainable’ development.
3. SEFS has developed a set of key messages on sustainable development and aspect of the South East plan that need to be taken forward. These are available from the SEFS website (<http://www.sefs.org.uk/regional-planning/sefs-priorities-for-sustainability/>). They have been sent to the existing regional bodies (SE England Councils, SE Strategic Leaders and SE Strategic Chief Executives) and LL encouraged all to use these in lobbying at local and national levels.
4. It was noted that SEFS is good at mustering information and intelligence and members would like the information flows to keep going
5. **CD** thanked **AW** for the regular updates on planning issues (sent as updates to P&EC but these will also be added as a weekly update to the SEFS website from now on)
6. The Localism Bill will be introduced on 17th or 22nd of November
7. LL encouraged all to make use of the Small Choices Big Difference flyer (available for events from the SEFS Secretariat email: alison.walters@foe.co.uk)

6) The Big Society – Elizabeth Chamberlain, NCVO

Key Points

1. Environment is not seen as a frontline service so is easy to cut.
BUT
2. Mentions in the Comprehensive Spending Review of a Green Investment Bank (£1bn funding)
3. Many environmental organisations exemplify the Big Society
4. There is a need to ensure Big Society initiatives include the principles of environmental sustainability

Questions from the Floor

ML – Concerned about red tape and the need to ensure sustainable financing for charities – NCVO has a sustainable funding team. The government has also agreed a new Compact (see <http://www.thecompact.org.uk/> for more details)

KS - There is concern that the Charity Commission needs to be overhauled – The CC is being reviewed, there is a need for a charity regulator but it must be focused, effective and proportional

JB – raised the issue of the tension between overheads and sustainability – Voluntary sector organisations must not sell themselves short and must ensure that full costs are covered (all overheads) and attach a market price on expertise.

CDrury – asked for clarification over the Big Society network - This was set up by Lord Wei, though he has now left. There are some issues over its independence as it is mainly staffed by seconded civil servants.

There was also concern – over the issue of maintaining ability to challenge/campaign/advocate and remain independent if there is a move towards being delivery bodies.

7) The Future of SEFS – Brenda Pollack

Key Points

1. **All to note:** P&EC recommended to the AGM that members approve taking SEFS forward under Option Two as outlined in the Future of SEFS paper (circulated to members and available on request from the SEFS Secretariat)
2. The detail of Option Two needs to be worked out – e.g. should we keep the bank account, where will the administration sit (RSPB may be able to provide this service as it is similar to the method of working used for the SE England Biodiversity Forum)

3. Under Option Two core members will continue to make membership contributions, this however does not preclude other organisations making donations.
4. **There was concern** – that without a paid coordinator the organisation would slowly disintegrate. **CC** advised that Option Two was supported by P&EC because whilst it would provide a lower level of administrative support it would allow SEFS to continue in an organised manner and with a solid base, until such time as the political landscape changed, the situation became clearer, or there was sufficient need and financing to re-expand.
5. **LL** – advised she had been given a mandate from Judith Martin (Association of Preservation Trusts SE) to support Option Two **JM** asks for SEFS to review the issue of the coordinators redundancy.
6. **JByng** advised that the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign is supportive of Option Two and is prepared to make a contribution.
7. **LL** – Outlined there was a need for certainty for **AW** and thanked her for all her support for SEFS.
8. **JS** – Gave an overview of the current situation within RAISE. Their project funding runs out in March but have reserves for a further 18month of operation. They are reviewing their situation and are expecting a consultants report in the new year on their future. RAISE believe it is important to combine strengths and competencies so it is possible that RAISE may be able to give SEFS some support in the short term.
9. **All to note** – Under Option Two SEFS would cease to operate in it's current form in March 2011
10. **It was confirmed** – That whilst Option Two would be the principle approach for the coming year if funding or partnerships were acquired or developed in the meantime SEFS would pursue these other options.
11. **All to note** – SEFS will continue to explore partnerships with other organisations (RAISE, SEEBF, Climate South East etc.) during the coming months.
12. **IH** – moved to a vote in support of Option Two
13. **All agreed** – SEFS should pursue Option Two whilst maintaining regard for other opportunities to continue in its current form.

8) Eco Systems Services – Tony Whitbread (Sussex Wildlife Trust)

TW - outlined the importance of Eco Systems services for basic human survival and introduced the concept of an economic model where the benefits from eco systems were recognised (cost) and were replaced rather than depleted.

9) Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) – Jane Vaughan (Government Office for the South East)

JV – outlined the current situation regarding LEPS.

Questions from the Floor:

BP – Raised the issue of engagement – LEPs have been developed at a fast pace and issues of engagement or the implications of the Big Society have not been worked out. However it is hoped these will follow.

RC – was interested in the variety of size and shape – There was debate about what constituted an economically viable unit, however whilst some decisions were political, bigger was seemed to be better.

JBan – Raised the concern that it was economic led and where did that leave us with regard to overheating and biodiversity loss. Has the logic of economic growth been questioned? – DECC has been asking questions.

JByng – Was horrified to learn that Gatwick Diamond are part of the Capital to Coast LEP because they tend to support aviation rather than more sustainable economic activity. **BP** confirmed that businesses in the surrounding area support airport development.

JV – Emphasised that Government is expecting to hear from the voluntary sector as to how things should be shaped, rather than to dictate structures.

BP – Queried who to contact over the make-up of LEPs – These should be in the proposal documents.

Action – **JV** to assist in identifying lead contacts for the LEPs in the South East.

CB – asked if this was just a mechanism for certain types of business to get together to ensure pet schemes progress through the system? That is a possibility but it depends who gets involved with LEPs and also it should be noted that there isn't much money attached to LEPs.

10) Looking Ahead – Ian Hepburn

IH – gave an overview of the future for SEFS and encouraged members to continue sharing information.

ED – Is particularly keen to know who is engaging with their local LEPs

JS – RAISE is working on the issue of engagement (or lack of it) and is happy to share information and involve SEFS.