

**Notes and action points from 4th SECA steering group - Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> May, 7.30-9.30pm,  
Quaker Meeting House, Horsham**

<p><b>1. Welcome</b></p>	<p><b>Present:</b> Geoff Barnard (chairing), Sally Barnard (minutes), Tony Whitbread, Carrie Cort, Nicola Peel, Ronnie Reed, Jay Mercer, Clive Margolis, Pat Smith, Catherine Edminson, Mark Francis, Alison Marshall, Helen Whittington, Rosemary Crouchman, Graham White, Kalyan Tanksale</p> <p><b>Apologies:</b> Pauline Cory, Karen Park, Catherine Labeledz, Kia Trainor, Jonathan Essex</p> <p><b>Welcome</b> and thanks to the generosity of Horsham Quakers for giving us free use of the room.</p> <p><b>Intro:</b> there have been some amazing developments nationally over the past 2 months (Extinction Rebellion, Greta Thunberg, Parliament declaring a Climate Emergency, much more reporting on BBC news). It feels like the wave is really building. So our push on the climate emergency agenda with councils feels like v good timing.</p> <p>So there is some celebrating to do – but also the question of what we focus on over the short and longer term.</p>
<p><b>2. County Councils</b></p>	<p><b>SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Feedback from Dorking</b>, Pat Smith – they have met with the Surrey CC member for Waste and Environment and spoke on behalf of Dorking Solar, Dorking CE and SECA. They felt having SECA behind them gave considerable added gravitas. Paul had prepared a presentation using emissions data from a Govt website to show that the council wasn't doing as well as they thought. The councillor was impressed. <b>PAT will send the powerpoint presentation and the link to the Govt website</b> to Sally and steering group. They are keeping up pressure on the council. <i>For more detail please see her email sent to steering group on May 5th</i></li> <li>• <b>News of Surrey Climate Commission</b> – Cllr Jonathan Essex is helping set up a new Commission, probably launching on 20<sup>th</sup> May, bringing faith, business, University, civil society reps together to look at the climate action that needs to happen.</li> </ul> <p><b>EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sally has heard that a Hastings Labour councillor is planning to start off a Climate Emergency motion in ESCC later in the year. <b>SALLY will put JAY in touch</b> to see whether SECA can offer any support</li> <li>• <b>NICOLA will contact Linklater Pavilion</b>, Lewes to see whether they want to join SECA and help with lobbying ESCC</li> </ul> <p><b>WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reflections on May 5<sup>th</sup> WSCC Climate Emergency debate and the resulting motion:</b> people who went to Chichester on May 5<sup>th</sup> were disappointed that WSCC didn't go as far as declaring an emergency. We agreed that having such a strong public presence at the council meeting was really important. Hattie's letter felt significant when it was read out. With everyone speaking in the debate being so passionate about the urgency it felt odd not to declare. But the council agreed (here's <a href="#">the minutes</a>) on zero carbon target by 2030, reporting back annually, and supporting officers to take climate into account in all policies and operations. So they have agreed to take action. We need to move on and focus on what happens next:</li> <li>• <b>Next steps:</b> Geoff and Sally are in contact with Deborah Urquhart, Cabinet Member for Environment. She is planning 2 groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ An independent review of the Councils green credentials which will highlight areas for focus and action.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ An <b>ADVISORY GROUP</b> – to which one SECA rep will be invited.</li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion about the role of our SECA rep on this WSCC advisory group:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Ideally the rep should be mandated to have a challenge function</b> – it should be set out at the start that the SECA rep will be there to challenge WSCC to go a step further, and be more ambitious, act more urgently. If this role is agreed at the start this would be less confrontational. Deborah Urquhart agrees this is a good line to take.</li> <li>● <b>Act as a consultation channel</b> – drawing on SECA expertise</li> <li>● <b>Act as a communication channel</b> - for programmes or policies WSCC comes up with, provided SECA supports them.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ways to make it work:</b> keep it as light footed as possible; keep a strategic view; the rep is a representative of SECA not a delegate, so should be able to make some decisions quickly at the meeting; avoid too much checking back with SECA unless the rep feels it necessary; don't have a formal arrangement for SECA back up - expect the rep to phone others in SECA for back up /advice as needed; where formal SECA endorsement is needed then check back with steering group.</p> <p>Put papers from the meetings on Google drive (or possibly try Lumio or Slack) so the steering group can read them <b>GEOFF</b></p> <p>Create a summary list of people with expertise/special interests within SECA for consultation <b>GEOFF to set up a simple survey to gather info</b></p> <p><b>Our chief goals on the advisory group are</b> – pushing WSCC to be as ambitious as possible, and facilitating public engagement, using our member groups in particular.</p> <p><b>Networking conference</b> We could suggest that WSCC holds a conference inviting all West Sussex district and borough councillors and officers to share ideas, network and boost joint climate emergency action. SECA would support this and help organise etc. and involve reps from SECA member groups too. <b>GEOFF to propose to Deborah Urquhart</b></p> <p><b>Who should be the SECA rep?</b> Carrie proposed that it should be Geoff, with Tony and Jay in reserve if he can't make it. This was thought to make sense especially as Geoff has been liaising with Deborah Urquhart, and her invitation was directed personally to him. Jay and Tony are known to WSCC and have been at the last few steering groups so are up to speed. Sally said that we do have other people with expertise we can draw on, such as Michele Furtado who has had a lot of experience working with councils.</p> <p>Given that SECA is hoping to engage with other councils in the SE region, and/or support others to do so, it was suggested that we could ask wider SECA members for expressions of interest and draw together a group of people prepared to engage with councils who could support others where needed. <b>SALLY to put in next newsletter</b></p> <p>The first WSCC advisory meeting is likely to be early June.</p> <p>NB We could also ask whether observers could be present at the meetings, and whether recording is allowed.</p> <p><b>GEOFF to feed back to Deborah Urquhart</b></p>
<p><b>3. District/borough councils and the local elections</b></p>	<p><b>FEEDBACK FROM DISTRICT/BOROUGH COUNCIL ELECTIONS MAY 2nd</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Dorking CE group</b> - sent out 93 letters to DC candidates and had 16 positive responses</li> <li>● <b>Horsham DC</b> - letters were sent to all DC candidates in Horsham District and we had 20 individual positive responses (together with blanket support from all Lib Dem and Labour candidates). Includes 2 conservatives.</li> <li>● <b>Worthing</b>- 13 positive responses</li> <li>● <b>Chichester</b> - 3 pledges</li> <li>● NB Steyning and Bramber held a 'meet the candidates' evening. 2 new Green county</li> </ul>

councillors were elected

- **Burgess Hill** - 5 Green councillors have been elected

### **NOW HOW DOES SECA ENGAGE WITH THE NEW DISTRICT/BOROUGH COUNCILS AND COUNCILLORS?**

**SECA needs to build a reputation for both supporting and challenging councils. Keep CE in forefront of their minds.**

- Dorking Climate Emergency is posting a letter to every District Councillor elected in all districts in Surrey (411) asking them to support a Climate Emergency motion and giving examples of motions (Lancaster and Stroud) **PAT will send a copy of this letter to Sally** to be shared – it could be adapted for others.  
  
(They are also planning to hold a networking event for as many environmental groups in Surrey as possible, similar to the World SOS event where SECA was born in January, to build up the base of campaigners and volunteers. **PAT will keep us posted how this goes.**)
- Horsham DC- we discussed and agreed that we would write to all the Horsham DC candidates who have been elected, congratulate them, remind them of their pledge re climate emergency and ask for their suggestions on next steps. Also ask if they have areas of special interest in environmental matters eg transport, ecology, green energy etc. **GEOFF and SALLY to draft letter and send** . We could share it as a template for other SECA groups to adapt and use. Also we will write to Jonathan Chowen and make contact again. We feel we need to tread carefully to judge when is the right time to push for CE action. Some of the new Green Councillors, for example, have asked for some time to get their feet under the table before taking on a big campaign.
- Help councillors with networking re climate emergency - as above- SECA will suggest that WSCC runs a CE workshop for councillors and SECA helps.

**\*\*\*\*NB For anyone planning to go along, Eastbourne Borough Council climate emergency motion has been postponed from 22<sup>nd</sup> May until July 17<sup>th</sup> \*\*\*\*** Eastbourne FOE say they have been working closely with the council on the motion, and hope that as they have a Lib Dem majority the motion will get passed.

#### **4. SECA in the future**

##### **What else do we want SECA to be/do in the future?**

Building on suggestions from our last meeting we discussed where do we focus, how do we organize ourselves and how much can we realistically take on?

We started by sharing feelings on what our key strengths are:

- Giving member groups added impetus (even well established groups like Sussex Wildlife Trust & CPRE have appreciated this).
- SECA gives power of numbers, adds gravitas. Being in an alliance makes groups feel part of something bigger, feel stronger, better able to influence, and inspires them to carry on.
- The fact that we cover a wider geographic area is an important part of this.

We agreed we should prioritise activities in future that build on these strengths, rather than being things other groups could equally well do.

##### **POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTIVITIES:**

- **Lobbying, supporting and challenging Councils** SECA was established with a very clear initial focus – lobbying Councils to declare a CE. This will remain a core priority. As Councils agree to take action, we are adding a important and demanding new role – supporting and challenging Councils in following through on climate action.

	<p>Various SECA members have been making the case for some time that SECA has potential to expand its remit beyond this, particularly around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Education and awareness raising</b> - <i>Nicola and Carrie are keen on this, using the Climate Reality leaders network. Pauline has made similar suggestions.</i></li> <li>• <b>Sharing news and events</b> – <i>Clive has raised this as a potentially useful function. Publicising what groups are up to, supporting and socialising</i></li> <li>• <b>Supporting member groups’ activist work</b> - <i>eg Rod Thick has suggested getting behind Billingshurst action against drilling.</i></li> </ul> <p>Sally sketched out a diagram showing how these could potentially be accommodated within our current organisation structure, with each activity area being led by a working group of enthusiasts, and reporting in to the Steering Group, which would play a coordinating and decision making role.</p> <p>A key point, however, is about not spreading ourselves too thin. Sally &amp; Geoff in their current coordination role are already heavily committed, so don’t have spare capacity to take on more coordination work. If we are to expand our remit, we don’t want to risk diluting our effectiveness or confuse our reputation.</p> <p>We agreed we should not jump to conclusions on this, but give some time to exploring potential new roles over the next couple of months.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Carrie &amp; Nicola</b> will put some thought into how an education &amp; awareness raising role might evolve, focusing especially on how SECA could add value rather than just recreating what is done well elsewhere.</li> <li>• <b>Clive</b> will look into options &amp; tools for sharing events and/or hosting discussions. On the event sharing these range from using the newsletter (needs editor), relying on the Facebook Group (possible but Group not very active yet), adding a event calendar module on the website that members could enter events into (there are various Wordpress plug-ins for this)</li> <li>• <b>On activism</b>, our initial feeling was that SECA’s role for now should be as information sharer and connector, rather than taking on new campaigns itself (i.e. stick with CE as our main focus)</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Plans for future events</b></p>	<p>SECA has been invited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blue Idol Sustainability Day, 8<sup>th</sup> June- <b>Helen and Carrie organising SECA input</b></li> <li>• Billingshurst Carnival 30<sup>th</sup> June- <b>Carrie organising</b></li> <li>• Unitarian Church Horsham, Open Day 21<sup>st</sup> Sept with Climate Emergency theme- <b>Carrie, Nicola and Helen organising SECA input</b></li> <li>• World Environment Day 5<sup>th</sup> June- <b>Nicola will share ideas</b> on what groups could do</li> <li>• Time is Now mass lobby of Parliament – 1pm Weds 26 June – <b>Sally to share info in newsletter</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Membership list and mailing list</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update on new member groups: <i>Latest additions: Cuckmere Community Solar, Divest East Sussex, Thanet in Transition, Eco Cops (Canterbury), Eyes of Gaia, Community Energy South</i></li> <li>• NB List of member groups is on google drive and website</li> <li>• Now have just over 250 on mailing list. <i>(Viv Doussy now managing on Mailchimp)</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>7. Date of next meeting</b></p>	<p>4<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> of July</p> <p><b>Sally will do a doodle poll and ask for venues</b>- the Horsham Quaker Meeting house is not available on those days.</p>

