

Minutes of SECA Steering Group
Tuesday 26th Nov, 7.15-9.15pm
Quaker Meeting House, Worthing Rd, Horsham, RH12 1SL

Present:

Jay Mercer, Carrie Cort, Nicola Peel, Catherine Edminson, Helen Whittington, Alison Marshall, Pat Smith, Geoff Barnard, Tony Whitbread, Viviane Doussy, Sally Barnard, Karen Park.

Apologies:

David Johnson, Jonathan Essex, Pauline Cory, Luke Berry

1. Election progress

Hustings: We know of 11 hustings that have been organised in the South East that are specifically focussed on climate/environment (Winchester, Sevenoaks, Steyning, Wealden, Portsmouth South, Horsham, Lewes, Petersfield, Eastbourne, Guildford and Isle of Wight.) This is a great reflection of how climate change has moved up the election priorities.

Pledge cards: Use of the SECA pledge cards for candidates has not really taken off the ground, though this could still be promoted, especially at hustings:

<https://seclimatealliance.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Pledge-card.pdf>.

Please post pledge photos on SECA facebook or email to SECA.

Posters: this has not taken off either, but people may not have spotted them

<https://seclimatealliance.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Vote-for-Climate-Action-poster-GE3.pdf>

Manifesto info: Geoff has collected all the climate election pledges from the 4 main parties on one document

We agreed to send out a brief election update to all SECA members with the poster and manifesto promises.

This can be circulated widely as possible

ACTION- GEOFF (done)

ACTION- ALL

2. Council working group

Survey of SECA member groups : Alison and Sally are in the process of carrying out a phone survey of member groups to ask whether they have had any engagement with their local councils on climate action. So far they have had an interchange with about 12. These are proving a valuable insight into the activity that is going on across the region. Most groups have had some contact with their council, and some are very actively engaged in advisory and/or lobbying roles. Some councils are embracing local community networks very positively eg Eastbourne, Worthing and Rother particularly stand out. Alison and Sally will carry on with the survey – their next challenge is to find a useful way of presenting the info and showcasing good practice. NB they have had a lot of positive feedback about SECA- especially that the newsletter is very helpful.

ACTION- SALLY/ALISON

Update on West Sussex CC: Geoff and Tony continue to attend the WSCC Advisory panel on climate change. There has been some detailed analysis of progress against the FoE 33 actions document. They are making some progress and the impression is that the council want to take serious action. However there are many issues that fall in 'grey areas' where national policy determines the situation and new guidance and legislation is vital for major progress to happen. Deborah Urquhart is now Deputy Leader as well as member for Environment, and there is a new Leader – Paul Marshall. Geoff said that through his research for WSCC meetings he has become familiar with various comparative data sets on carbon emissions, renewable deployment etc. This sounds useful.

ACTION- GEOFF to give a presentation on this for the next SG meeting (and to go in newsletter/website?)

3. **SECA monthly actions** - Nicola now has a separate SECA email account (seca.networking@gmail.com). She has been in contact with all the SECA member groups and has had a lot of suggestions for future monthly actions (for additional suggestions she has received, see the list at the end of these minutes). She will sort these all out and select some actions through to Geoff ready to post in the next few newsletters.

ACTION- NICOLA

- **NB Since there is urgency to respond to the crucial national consultation on building regulations 'Future Homes Standard', and the deadline is Jan 10th, the next monthly action should be on this.** <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-future-homes-standard-changes-to-part-l-and-part-f-of-the-building-regulations-for-new-dwellings>

ACTION- GEOFF will pull together suggestions/advice on responding for the newsletter

ALL to respond – individually and through groups

JAY to respond for SECA

- **There is also urgency to respond to the South East Transport Strategy , deadline Jan 10th . The relevant link on advice on how to respond is <https://transportactionnetwork.org.uk/take-action/>**

ACTION- GEOFF for newsletter

ALL individually and or through groups

JAY to respond for SECA

- **CAGNE is asking for responses in January on Gatwick expansion.**

ACTION- NICOLA to find out details

Then to GEOFF for newsletter and

JAY to respond for SECA

4. **Local Plans / Neighbourhood plans** – how should SECA respond to requests for support on responding to consultations?

Jay reminded us that there are 3 levels of planning :

- National planning guidance- sets the number of new houses to be built.
- District/Borough level – “District Housing Framework Plans” otherwise known as “Local Plans” . These decide how that level of new housing is to be distributed across the District or Borough.
- Neighbourhood Plans- parish plans that feed into and can become part of the Local Plans. Their principle function for a parish are in theory to help fend off developers who are putting forward plans that are outside the agreed policy. There are a lot of grey areas.

Responses to consultations could be at 3 levels- SECA, member groups and individual.

Overall, this is not a simple challenge for SECA, or anyone. Lots of environmental organisations are responding to consultations. National government needs to change the laws to make carbon neutral house building mandatory etc. Should SECA try to come up with our own suggestions? What would be the value added from our perspective? Can we give a helpful vision on this? Our responses would probably be linked to our thoughts about item 5 – a SECA Vision

ACTION- JAY will try to bring something together for core use across all districts re Local Plans.

5. **A possible SECA Vision - The journey to 2030** Tony talked about his initial thoughts on this (see attached document). Eg the global climate footprint for Horsham district is 140 x bigger than its actual area. The numbers show what a steep hill there is to climb very quickly. There was discussion. If we produce a vision of the steps along the road to 2030 who will it be aimed at? Councils? As a response to consultations? Or is it aimed at ourselves , to give us a common view of where we are heading? Do we need to do it, or should we save our energy and use other visions (eg the film 2040 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p-rTQ443akE> that has just been released in the UK) . Agreed that a small group would meet in mid December to discuss this and flesh out the SECA vision if that is felt to be the way forward. This group to also consider how a SECA Vision might feed into Local and Neighbourhood Plans.

ACTION - TONY to convene meeting

6. **Dorking/Surrey feedback and plans:** Pat updated us on progress and ideas from Dorking. They held a Question Time event with local councillors which went well. There was pressure from the audience calling for action. They are holding a Family Week , they have produced a leaflet ‘ 6 Shocking Truths’ which we will send out in the newsletter for people to adapt if they wish . They are supporting a Trees for Life movement. Also Clear Skies,

handing out leaflets at Gatwick. On Feb 22nd they will be holding a Climate Fair. A Mole Valley Climate Forum is being set up .
Dorking is working on a 2020 campaign for Surrey councillors called “Surrey’s Green and Pleasant Land?” with a powerpoint presentation etc.

ACTION- PAT to send any info that could be of wider use to Sally for SECA newsletter

7. **Electricity switching** - should SECA get involved? We could encourage people to switch to renewable energy suppliers and incur small payments when anyone switches. However SECA is not at a point where we want or need to become an ‘entity’ with an official status/bank account etc. Carrie could hold a ringfenced pot for us through Sussex Green Living. Or we could give member groups the info and suggest they could make some funds themselves through this process. But how big a group would it need to be to make this viable?

ACTION- CARRIE to explore these options for the next SG meeting.

8. AOB:

- a) Carrie mentioned that she had spoken with Ollie Pendred of Community Energy South. UK Power Networks have a £4bn budget. They are working with 10 parish councils on action plans. They may be looking for community climate champions to fund in parishes. Could CES and SECA collaborate more as we have similar networks? **ACTION- CARRIE and JAY to talk to Ollie on 7th Dec at the Horsham Climate Café**
- b) Tony fed back from the South Downs National Park climate change group. SDNP is aiming to make their own operations carbon neutral (but should be aiming for carbon negative). They are going to measure the county councils actions relating to land management. They have an important role as a community leader.
- c) Pauline has requested help with facilitators for break out groups during Worthing’s innovative Climate Conference for council and community on March 4th. **ACTION- ALL- please let Pauline know if you can help.**
pauline.cory@yahoo.com
- d) Possible wider SECA gathering: is there time to fit this in before Nicola leaves for 3 months in January? Do we have the capacity/ time to organise it so quickly? What would be its aims? Could we use the offer of Giles Hutchings to facilitate?

ACTION- NICOLA to consider and circulate a suggested plan to the Steering Group if she thinks it is feasible . We would all then need to decide whether we can manage it.

DATE OF NEXT STEERING GROUP MEETING : early January.

See below for additional suggestions from member groups for monthly actions (the first batch were sent round on 26th Nov) :

Bus demos (Jill): Hi, should we not make and take our own bus stops and form queues to highlight

lack of public transport in these rural areas? On an appropriate day and at an appropriate time...not just ad hoc! All the vast new housing is accompanied by space for garages and parking.

Road traffic reduction (Chris Todd, Transport Action Network): One thing that research is showing is that transport is the sector that has totally gone rogue and that to stay within budget and get to net-zero carbon by 2050 or before, we are looking at a substantial need to reduce road traffic. So a willingness to promote and support road traffic reduction amongst SECA members would be welcome in helping raise this as a key issue. Friends of the Earth research suggests a minimum of 20% traffic reduction is needed, possibly up to 60%. The Tyndall Centre suggest 40 - 60%.

Juliet Merrifield (HKD Energy and HKD Transition) :

Can I add tree planting to the list? We really need to be planting many more trees. We're doing some work on this in Hassocks.

Marieke de Jonge (Tunbridge Wells FoE) :

Hi all, Like Juliet, we would like to see tree planting added to the campaigns. We want to start a campaign on this in the new year but not sure how / where to begin as none of us are experts here.

AND, the right kind of trees in the right place! Jill Sutcliffe