

15<sup>th</sup> SECA Steering Group  
Zoom Meeting  
13<sup>th</sup> May 2021

**Present:**

Tony Whitbread (Chair)                      Sussex Wildlife Trust, Your Better Nature

Gonzalo Alvarez	UN Association, Climate and Oceans
Geoff Barnard	Greening Steyning, SECA newsletter/website
Sally Barnard	Greening Steyning, SECA coordinator (minutes)
Tom Broughton	Chichester XR, Eco Chi
Sherry Clark	Transition Hastings, Emerging Futures
Wilf Hardy	Blackwater Valley FoE, Yateley CAN
Julia Hilton	Energise South, newly elected ESCC/Hastings BC councillor
Danny Lee	Petersfield CAN (PeCAN), HCAN, WinACC
Alison Marshall	Transition Horsham
Jay Mercer	Kinder Living, newly elected WSCC councillor
Karen Park	Horsham Eco Churches, No Incinerator For Horsham
Brenda Pollack	Friends of the Earth, Campaigns officer for S.E.
Liz Thorns	Horsham Green Hub etc
Fran Witt	Divest East Sussex
Ben McAllan	ZeroCarbonGuildford

Apologies: Pauline Cory, Anne Davies, Carrie Cort, Nicola Peel, Pat Smith, Paul Street, Viviane Doussy, Gabriel Carlyle, David Johnson, Emma Cameron, Mark Francis, Eleanor Hill

1. **Welcome** and introductions as above.

2. **Local elections 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

ABCD PLEDGES: REVIEW AND FOLLOW UP

Full pledge results, including those candidates who were elected are all available on the register

<https://seclimatealliance.uk/64-seca-climate-pledge-candidates-elected/>.

**Sally** gave a run through of the results. *See the presentation attached for details.*

Overall very pleased and surprised by the number of pledges (330 in total, that's about 13% of candidates standing). Compared to the 43 pledges gathered in 2019 local elections it shows the increased reach of SECA and the rising importance of climate as an election issue.

A big thank you to all the groups who were involved. Congratulations to Jay Mercer, Julia Hilton, Sarah Sharp and Jonathan Essex, all are SECA members who were elected.

The value of the pledges has been in pushing the climate emergency and divestment as election issues and creating contacts with councillors to build on for the future. We are hearing a lot of stories that suggest they have stimulated debate within parties, especially over divestment. Also we are hearing of lots of groups planning to follow up and build on the contacts made with local councillors.

NB Jay (Horsham Lib Dems) said that it helped to hear about the ABCD pledge early in the campaign before other pledges started coming in. This gave them a chance to discuss and agree.

DISCUSSION ON PLEDGE FOLLOW UP:

**Brenda:** flagged up a FoE/ClimateEmergencyUK briefing for councillors on 17<sup>th</sup> June.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/how-can-local-councillors-help-to-meet-uk-climate-targets-registration-153620823017>

Also she suggested it could be helpful to arrange briefing events for councillors within their own parties. Conservatives in particular might feel 'safer' that way.

**ACTION:** ALL consider inviting newly elected councillors to the FoE briefing.

**Fran:** Divest East Sussex are running an 'Adopt a Councillor' campaign, matching councillors with local campaigners to build up personal relationships. Will focus on divestment, but also wider climate issues.

**ACTION:** East Sussex groups can contact Divest East Sussex if interested in "Adopt a Councillor"

[divesteastsussex@gmail.com](mailto:divesteastsussex@gmail.com) or go to <https://tinyurl.com/adoptyourcouncillor>

**Julia:** Julia will be encouraging ESx councillors to engage with Energise South and local community energy projects. The 3 LEP Energy Strategy recommends using pension funds for "positive investment" in local community energy projects. <https://www.southeastlep.com/energysouth2east/>.

**Wilf:** BVFoE are planning to also contact local candidates who were not elected as they are likely to be community minded people willing to get involved

**Note from Emma at Worthing CAN:** *they are going to ask each supportive councillor to try to persuade one other councillor on Worthing BC to support divestment and then put forward another motion calling on WSCC to divest.*

**Sally:** will send a letter from SECA to all pledge councillors to follow up and suggest they help to keep the SECA Council Survey updated for their council.

NB Sally flagged up that if she is going to go on coordinating SECA council related activity she will need to step down from her general SECA coordinator role (ie dealing with general emails and coordinating steering group meetings).

**ACTION:**

SALLY and ALISON will work on a SECA letter to all pledge councillors.

SALLY will feed back all the pledge follow up ideas via the SECA newsletter.

SALLY will add Succession Planning to the next SECA steering group agenda.

### **3. SECA online event 'Step Change' , June 19<sup>th</sup>**

**Tony** reported on plans for this online event. It will be 10am to 1pm .

The focus will be on 'Step Change' ie how can we all in the South East help to achieve the huge level of change that is needed. This occasion aims to inspire big picture thinking and networking rather than detailed planning. All members of SECA groups and individual SECA followers are welcome. Several SECA steering group members are helping to facilitate the break out sessions. Being online will allow us to involve the whole SECA area, now that SECA membership has expanded so much. We will be using a Miro pinboard to capture thinking and information during the event, and also to create a virtual exhibition space for groups to show what they are up to.

19 are signed up so far.

Danny: we need to focus on good messaging to attract people to the event.

**ACTION: GEOFF:** will send further info out in the newsletter soon

**ALL:** Sign up to the event / encourage group members to attend – its for everyone. Sign up here:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSepmmnJmNivoVcndZRz-fpjp3Q6aRu2tH1G16DKnwwLG8SUVQ/viewform>

ALL: Please get the ball rolling by contributing info from your group to the virtual display- this will encourage others. Thanks !

#### 4. Heading for COP26

It hasn't proved workable to set up a systematic register of COP related events for SECA.

**ACTION:** GEOFF will let people know in the newsletter and we can direct groups toward national resources like Climate Coalition UK / Great Big Green Week 18-26<sup>th</sup> Sept.

#### 5. UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration.

**Gonzalo** flagged up that the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration is being launched in June 2021. <https://www.decadeonrestoration.org/>. The aim is to scale up the restoration of degraded land and marine ecosystems globally, help the climate crisis, and enhance food and water supply and biodiversity. Everyone is invited to join in #Generation Restoration from global to local level. There are lots of eye-catching posters and resources that can be adapted and made your own <https://www.decadeonrestoration.org/join-movement>. Eg "Lets Bring Back Forests" "Lets Restore Our Farmlands".

As part of this push, UNA Climate and Oceans is promoting a certificate scheme where individuals/groups/schools/councils etc can apply for certification as part of #Generation Restoration, and display the logos, use it to give a boost to funding applications etc. Groups can apply, but also individuals eg for an allotment. If there are educational as well as biodiversity and restoration elements to the project one can apply for a Gold level certificate.

There is a big launch event on 2<sup>nd</sup> June

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/biodiversity-and-climate-crisis-summit-on-the-road-to-cop26-tickets-142094168483>

Tony Whitbread will be speaking along with Prof Jacqueline McGlade (marine scientist) and there will be an international launch with teams in New York and Nigeria.

More details on the certificate will be announced then. Gonzalo is keen to encourage people to join especially schools and young people.

**ACTION:** GONZALO will keep us informed of the certificate scheme and #GenerationRestoration. The first step could be a blog for the SECA newsletter.

Sign up to the 2<sup>nd</sup> June event for more info

## 6. Climate Emergency Centres

Ben McAllan from ZeroCarbonGuildford

<https://www.zerocarbonguildford.org/>

gave us a quick summary about 'Climate Emergency Centres' or CECs. There is a network of CECs building up where alliances of local groups organise to take on an unused High Street property in their town and use it as a base for all sorts of climate emergency related activities.

CECs are in progress in Guildford, Farnham, Staines (Talking Tree), Godalming and Lewes (Lewes Climate Hub opens 22<sup>nd</sup> May). (? Dorking and Hastings too).

The alliances need to form a legal entity eg a CIC to take on a lease on a disused property and negotiate to get rate relief with the council .

There is a UK network of CECs and handbook available:

<https://climateemergencycentre.co.uk/handbook/>

Ben has offered to liaise with other colleagues in the CEC network and organise an information/discussion session for SECA member groups who might be interested. This would be a one off online session advertised through the newsletter.

Liz volunteered to be the SECA contact for this.

**ACTION:** BEN and LIZ to liaise to plan the SECA session (Sally will share emails)  
**NB Best to plan this for the autumn when the CECs involved have had longer to get up and running.**

## 7. AOB

1.CEE Bill : Liz would like to send round a letter that groups can adapt to send to their MP asking them to support this.

**ACTION:** LIZ to draft a generic letter to send around to SECA groups in the newsletter.

2. Tony reported that he and Geoff had been asked to join a Climate Board on Horsham DC

3. Danny reported that Hants CC may be promoted as a 'Shire of Excellence' in the lead up to COP26. This is based on their use of an assessment tool which Danny thinks is too one dimensional. He is concerned it may be a danger to promote this tool widely.

4. Karen will send information about an Environment Agency consultation on the Horsham and Ford incinerators so that SECA can contribute.

**ACTION:** KAREN to draft a response from SECA to the Environment Agency and send to SALLY and TONY to edit. SALLY to send it from SECA .

**8. Date of next meeting : Monday July 19<sup>th</sup> 7pm**