

17th SECA Meeting Notes 19th October 2021

Present

Tony Whitbread (Chair) Sussex Wildlife Trust and SECA Core Group
Viviane Doussy SECA Core Group and membership administrator
Sally Barnard SECA Core Group and SECA Councils Lead.
Geoff Barnard SECA Core Group and Greening Steyning
Alison Marshall SECA Core Group administrator
Liz Thorns Sussex Green Hub
Gonzalo Alvarez UNA Climate and Oceans
Karen Park Horsham Ecochurches
Tom Broughton EcoChi
Danny Lee PeCAN
Nicola Peel Eyes of Gaia
Emily Mott Weald Action Group
Phil Huggins Sussex Wildlife Trust, Storrington & Arun Valley
Sally Pavey CAGNE
Pat Smith XR Dorking

Apologies Philip Maber, Carrie Cort, Dinah Morgan, Brenda Pollack

1. Welcome and introductions – as above

2. The future of SECA.

Alison and Geoff explained the challenge facing SECA. To fulfil our aims, we need to be as big as possible, and present ourselves so. However, we have an informal structure and are entirely reliant on volunteers, who are also working hard in their local groups. This affects what we can do in response to requests from members and others – although we do try to respond in ways that we can. We are now asking SECA members to help us find people who could help with specific roles relating to the website, newsletter and facebook group.

Discussion comments

It's a key part of these roles for people to be aware of the work of other organisations eg the Centre for Sustainable Energy and ensure we focus on SECA's aims and contribution. There were also suggestions about how the new team might work and what they might do eg to increase interaction between members. The merits of involving students were discussed.

Action

Geoff has posted details of the roles on the website and there is a link in the recent newsletter - so members can publicise these roles to their groups.

3. Change of SECA logo (to include a green cross instead of a red cross) – this was confirmed

4. Follow up to SECA's evidence to the Environmental Audit Committee.

Tony congratulated Sally and Geoff on identifying and using this opportunity to make an impact and enhance SECA's future impact. Sally thanked Juliet Merrifield for alerting SECA. Sally had responded to the consultation, which led to the invitation, because SECA had the survey and could, through its members, gather evidence across the SE. Geoff highlighted the need to filter consultations so that you can "hit the spot" Link to recording –

we are at 3.55 <https://bit.ly/SECA-EAC> For written version - <https://seclimatealliance.uk/local-government-and-net-zero-evidence-from-seca/>

Although at the EAC meeting there seemed general agreement that government should enable local authorities to help reach net-zero, a later meeting showed the government's reluctance.

Sally suggests we have increased our "clout" and that we find more ways to lobby government and monitor local councils for relevant motions where we could also lobby.

Discussion comments

Concern was expressed at the centralisation of power and at councils limiting targets to their own emissions, with no statutory duty for an area wide target. Suggestions were made eg a petition to government and attending/speaking at Council meetings. Also involving parish councils.

Action

Councils group will focus on ways of maximising SECA's impact.

The meeting supported Sally sending a letter to all WSCC Councillors, asking them to strengthen this Friday's motion on Gatwick Airport expansion. Concerns were expressed about the expansion plans and suggestions made on wording of the letter.

5. Update – Climate Emergency UK's plans for their survey of councils.

CEUK and My Society are currently scoring climate action plans to produce a league table, which should be available early 2022. In some respects this builds on our survey work.

They plan then to progress to scoring actual action. This may mean we should refocus our efforts to avoid duplication.

Discussion comments

Concern was expressed over need for shared language, sources of data and difficulties in persuading Councils to replicate actions of other Councils.

Action

Sally and Councils group to review this development and adjust our focus if appropriate.

6. Review of first knowledge sharing session – Climate Hubs/Climate Emergency Centres. Are there other topics that could usefully be shared? If so, how should this be organised?

Feedback suggests that this session was well received. Thank you to Ben McCallan who did much of the organisation, with SECA supporting with booking and publicity. This is how such sessions could happen in future if someone has an idea and is willing to organise. Zoom allows us to include the whole area. However, SECA could also publicise knowledge sharing sessions run by member groups.

Discussion comments

Net zero was suggested as a topic for a regional zoom event. See, for example, <http://kevinanderson.info/blog/home-2/>

A possible example for local events was identified from a "Big Friday" event in Leatherhead – a written debate. Such events could change attitudes on the streets – particularly if they use positive language.

Action

Please let SECA know if you want hosting and publicity support to organise a regional zoom event or publicity for a local event.

7. What's on? COP26 and other events – an opportunity to share what your group is doing and appreciate the range of initiatives across the area.

Friday October 22nd Divest West Sussex and anti-Gatwick extension demo. County Hall Chichester 9.45am-2.30pm. Meet at The Cross at 9.45am

Saturday November 6th Chichester Eco Festival
<https://www.transitionchichester.org/eco-festival/>

Login online Saturday 6th November at 10.55 for a vote on – Do you support Gatwick Airport expansion plans?

You will be asked this question at 11am, please have a sign made ready to hold up and say NO.

We will then post this along with groups throughout the UK as our protest
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88587398575?pwd=a2JmSE45cEtxWDdzaERkTnR6M1p6Zz09>

Saturday November 6th 2pm <https://greeningsteyning.org/dayofaction/>

There will also be an opportunity to join with other local environmental and social justice groups for the COP26 Coalition Climate March at Horse Hill (12.30-3pm) as part of the global day of action on Saturday, 6th November. <https://m-partners.facebook.com>

Thursdays October 28th, November 4th and 11th - UNA Climate & Oceans :
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/un-cop26-expectations-challenges-goals-and-actions-tickets-186873883817?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>

Our Isles and Oceans offshore sailing project <https://www.una-climateandoceans.org/>

Thursday 11th November at 7pm – The Concerns of Future Generations
– Book Talk 4 Chaired by West Sussex Youth Cabinet – a gathering of young minds:

The science tells us so clearly that if we keep expanding airports, the future for our children is just unspeakably grim.

Caroline Lucas, Member of Parliament, Green Party

Friends of the Earth speaker Laura McFarlane-Shopes
<https://actionnetwork.org/events/talk-four-the-concerns-of-future-generations>

Craig Bennett CEO of The Wildlife Trusts will be offering a daily feedback from COP26.

Catherine Sleeman hoped to join us at the meeting but technical issues prevented this. So she sent this written request to the meeting.

A bit about me: my name is Catherine Sleeman and I am a young environmentalist and dancer based in West Sussex. I started volunteering with SGL in 2019 and last year ran the Youth Eco Forum while training for my contemporary dance diploma. I have also trained in ballet (RAD grades 1 to Advanced 1). Having graduated with a distinction from Trinity Laban conservatoire this summer, I have been living in rural France working on a dance project with a Swiss choreographer interested in creating work connected to and in response to the natural world and the climate crisis that threatens it.

The project: One of the results of this time in France is AVIS, a 20 minute dance solo made for me by this choreographer to a piece of music by a Swiss composer. It uses the story of a mythical bird trapped in a net of cobwebs to express the panic and turmoil of the times we are living in and to question our role and response to the climate crisis. I will be performing this in Switzerland in December but the choreographer and I are both keen to find opportunities to perform it in the UK next year. It stands alone as a piece (potentially followed by a discussion of its themes and ideas) but could also be performed as part of a longer mixed programme/event as will be the case when I perform it in Switzerland. Although the story and movement could be appreciated on some level by anyone of any age, I think the depth of the piece is better suited to adults and young people than primary age children.

Other offers: I also have a longer-term personal choreography and performance project that I am developing based on Robert McFarlane's Lost Words poems (enjoyable, I hope, for everyone from very young children to grandparents) and this could potentially go alongside AVIS or with children's creative movement workshops led by me.

Practical considerations: this is a professional project/work and therefore, while I am happy to do some things for free, I am seeking opportunities where there could be income from ticket sales or other funding to make it viable for me to perform. The virtuosity of AVIS means that I would ideally like to find performance spaces that are 8m by 8m and have a flat, level surface. However, I like a challenge, and so, if you know of any other spaces that do not quite fit these ideals, I would be happy to try working around that providing I had a chance to visit and rehearse in the space before performing there. The Lost Words project is more adaptable to different sizes/surfaces/outdoor events. The performance spaces would also need to have a sound system and somewhere for me to get changed. I do not drive so would be reliant on public transport or car shares to reach any destination.

At this stage, I would just be pleased to hear if there is any interest or ideas from anyone in SECA for this project. If there are any definite offers of events or spaces/locations then they might help secure funding from my end which would potentially enable me to offer performances for free and give me more capacity to cover the costs of travelling around and further afield.

Please contact me on merecat364@gmail.com with any questions or suggestions. Many thanks, and apologies not to be able to make it in person.