



FARINGDON PEACE GROUP

NEWSLETTER 29

MAY-JUNE 2023

BOOK THE DATE

**SATURDAY 1st JULY
ANNUAL PEACE PARTY**

A BRING AND SHARE LUNCH
plus music and other delights.

From 12 midday in the garden of
19 Coxwell Road, Faringdon
and possibly extending into No.17

Slightly different this year, as we shall possibly
be joined by visitors from Königstein, our twin
town in Germany, and their hosts.

Come by bus or on foot if you can; bus stops
almost outside; disabled parking only at No.19;
otherwise there is drop-off only then parking
(probably) down the road at the United Church.

If you can help with putting up gazebos and
arranging tables and chairs, probably on the
evening before, please contact Sjoerd, 241707

When arrangements are finalised,
more details will follow.

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This Japanese prayer seems to be saying
just what we need to do to save our planet.

God our Father, creator of the world
please help us to love one another.

Make nations friendly with other nations;
make all of us love one another
like brothers and sisters.
Help us to do our part to bring
peace in the world
and happiness to all people.

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For further information about

FARINGDON PEACE GROUP

including Speaker info

please contact

Jennie 01367 710308

or Karen 01367 241707

or Dave 01367 240808

PEACE GROUP UKULELE GROUP

Is anyone interested?

I am holding a couple of Beginners Workshops
with possibly a third to follow, which is enough
to learn the basics. For these first few weeks
only, it will be combined with learners from
other groups, because having a few more
players in the group will make it more fun.

Wednesday mornings 17th & 24th May

10.30am at the Friends Meeting House.

There are a few Ukes to borrow.

Please let me know asap if you are interested.

jennyridd@yahoo.co.uk

Jenny

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All are welcome to our next Meeting
MONARCHY & MILITARISM

WHY WE SHOULD SPEAK OUT AGAINST THE CORONATION

Symon Hill Symon works for the Peace Pledge
Union and teaches history for the Workers'
Educational Association.

In September, Symon made the national news
after being arrested in Oxford for objecting
during the proclamation of a new king.

WEDNESDAY 3rd May at 7.30pm
FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE in Lechlade Rd.

Coffee 9pm. Wheelchair Access

For more info, please ring 241707 or 710308

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SUNDAY 13th MAY NAKBA 75.

'Free Palestine: End Apartheid: End Occupation'

LONDON DEMO

Supported by Stop the War, CND, Muslim
Assoc. of Britain and at least nine unions.

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ROOT AND BRANCH
PLANT FAYRE

SUNDAY 14th MAY 1-4pm
at Westmill Farm, Watchfield

TAKING BACK OUR RIVERS

Windrush Against Sewage Pollution

Ashley Smith, the founder of WASP – Windrush Against Sewage Pollution – spoke to Faringdon Peace Group about the fight to stop water companies using our rivers as toilets for profit. For too long this practice has gone unnoticed, but now it has been exposed this issue is, according to the Lib Dems, ‘bigger than potholes’!

WASP (<https://www.windrushwasp.org>) is a small campaigning group of volunteers and registered charity with the aim of ending sewage pollution and improving effluent standards to make rivers safe for all life, big and small. They collect and analyse information on water quality and sewage discharges, raise public awareness and engage with councils, water companies and government agencies to identify illegal dumping, bring the water companies to justice and try to bring in legislation to improve the dire state of our rivers. While they concentrate on sewage pollution from treatment works rather than pollution from farms, they have found local farmers very approachable and keen to do what they can to protect rivers.

The packed Meeting House was shocked to hear that only 14% of English rivers meet the standard of ‘good’ ecological status, based on fish populations, water chemistry and water plants. The once beautiful river Wye is virtually dead and our unique chalk streams are under threat.

The Faringdon Brook in Lechlade Road is over the limit for untreated sewage spills and the Ampney Brook near Fairford discharged raw sewage into the River Coln continuously for nearly a month in March. Such discharges are permitted only in emergencies, such as during storms when sewage plants cannot cope with the volume of water, but they have become everyday occurrences.

Ash’s photos of waterways contaminated with sewage, wet wipes, sanitary products etc. were truly disgusting, and very sad considering the beautiful wildlife havens and bathing spots they had once been.

There is no pressure on water companies to make the huge investments necessary to update and enlarge existing water treatment works despite their billions of pounds of profits. Re-nationalising water companies is not the answer according to Ash – we should mutualise them like the original Building Societies, where profits are shared by customers. At present 8% of Thames Water is owned by China, which probably doesn’t care much about the health of our rivers!

Ash explained that every 100 new houses produce 30 tons of sewage a year. WASP is pushing the government to adopt ‘Grampian conditions’ whereby the water companies must sort out wastewater treatment before new homes are inhabited.

Although Thames Water produce their own live maps of spillages (See Thames Water EDM) – often clear evidence of law breaking – on the rare occasions when they are prosecuted, the fines are meaningless compared to the massive profits they make through that law breaking, and yet no-one has gone to prison. Ash claims that the regulator and the government are working more in the water companies’ interests than those of the general public. However, public awareness and outrage is growing, thanks to groups like WASP and programmes such as Paul Whitehouse’s excellent ‘Our Troubled Rivers’ (Available on I-Player) and once the government see it as an election issue – and it’s up to us to make it so – it will need to radically change its water policies.

Karen Vogt

FARINGDON BIG GREEN DAY

In the Corn Exchange
SATURDAY 17th JUNE

SAVE THE DATE??

Fairford Air Tattoo
Friday 14th - Sunday 16th July 2023

“THE BIG ONE” EXTINCTION REBELLION OUTSIDE PARLIAMENT 21-23 APRIL

Emma Markham, one of our Quaker Friends attended the Extinction Rebellion protest "The Big One" outside of Parliament in London, which formally received support from over 200 organisations, including CAFOD, Tearfund, NHS workers, the PCS union, Greenpeace, and Quakers, and was attended by over 60,000 people.

Emma writes: "On Friday Quakers gathered at 4pm to march from St James park to Parliament Square and then held a meeting for worship on the lawn for 30 minutes. There was something special about having a meeting for worship outside in the sunshine, a peace descended on the whole area



despite being in central London surrounded by thousands of people, and all that could be heard was a bell ringing and some distant traffic. So many people from different walks of life joined us, and the local meeting house in Westminster opened its doors to us. It was so moving to see Quakers gathering from all over the UK to unite in peacefully calling for justice and action on climate change, which will impact the lives of those least responsible or able to take action and future generations. Our meeting felt like a symbol of hope, to unite and stand in solidarity with so many other people, putting faith into action.



PENNY WIXEY



As mentioned in the March-April Newsletter, our good friend Penny Wixey died suddenly on 30th January 2023. An enthusiastic supporter of Faringdon Peace Group, Penny was specially interested in the Palestinians and their struggle against the apartheid Israeli regime occupying their land. She was part of the small group of FPGers who visited the West Bank in 2009 to help with the olive harvest, and to try to better understand the conditions under which the Palestinians are forced to live.

It was agreed that at the April meeting we should hold a collection for Medical Aid to Palestinians. We are very pleased to be able to tell you that £105.95 has been sent to MAP as a result.

Thank you to everyone who supported this very worthwhile charity.
Jennie Chesterton.

**WE'RE WORKING FOR A JUST WORLD WHERE
CONFLICT IS RESOLVED WITHOUT THE USE OF FORCE**

LEVELLERS DAY

SATURDAY 20th MAY at BURFORD

10.30am with Jeremy Corbyn
and 1.30pm with Symon Hill

‘Republicanism and Democracy Now.’

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THURSDAY 4th MAY LOCAL ELECTIONS

Make your vote count!

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FPG MONTHLY MEETING IN JUNE

WEDNESDAY 7th JUNE at 7.30pm

Speaker: Kate Hudson, Gen Sec. of CND
in person at the **Friends Meeting House**

Topic TBC

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WORLD DEFENCE BUDGETS REACH ALL-TIME HIGH

Stockholm International Peace Institute’ annual
report finds UK was region’s biggest spender in
2022 at \$68.5bn.

Defence spending in western and central
Europe are reported to have hit an all-time high
of \$2.24tn last year.

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The Pentagon leaks have unveiled the staggering scale and range of British and US involvement in the Ukraine war and the lies that have been told to the public.

Unsurprisingly, our politicians and the media are trying to downplay the alarming revelations. We must do all we can to use this opportunity to make the case for peace and push for negotiations instead of escalation.

The leaks also reveal that British Special Forces along with many more Western military personnel are in Ukraine, indicating direct NATO involvement in the war.

The only realistic way to end this war is a ceasefire and peace negotiations which Stop the War has been campaigning for since the war began. We were right about Afghanistan and Iraq, and our arguments about the Ukraine war are also proving to be correct despite the pro war propaganda.

To counter the never-ending pro-war propaganda, we must continue to make our voices heard in every corner of the country. And to do this we need your help. Take a look at the Stop The War website.

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**Please submit newsletter items via email to
Jenny on jennyridd@yahoo.co.uk
by 24th June at the latest**