

FARINGDON PEACE GROUP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday 7th October 2020

Sjoerd welcomed everyone to the first zoomed AGM! Despite its limitations (no cake, for one!) it was lovely to be joined by Chris and Di from Cambridge who would not normally be able to come.

Sjoerd thanked Jenny B for keeping the group in touch during lockdown and since, through her monthly newsletters. Jenny will continue for as long as we would like, so please keep sending her interesting content.

PRESENT

Phil and Jennie Chesterton, Karen and Sjoerd Vogt (chair), Steve and Jenny Braithwaite, John and Janie Cottis, Chris Owen, Diane Green, Jill and Dave Headey, Penny Wixey, Pete Stone, Sand Cooper, Marge Crosby, Adam Twine, Gloria Zentler-Monroe, Helen Harris

1) AGENDA

Adopted

2) APOLOGIES

Hazel Townsend, Mary Love, Liz Rothschild

3) 2019 AGM MINUTES

Read and approved.

4) MATTERS ARISING

Jennie drew attention to Rosalind's continuing good work with Faringdon Community College.

5) DATES FOR DIARY

Online events of interest

- **Wed 14 Oct 14.00-15.30 BST 'Nuclear Weapons and Disarmament: What does the future hold?'** Organised by the Nuclear Information Service. Updates on the new nuclear weapons programmes with Jonathan Porritt, Jeremy Corbyn, Kate Hudson, Olamide Samuel, David Cullen, Henrietta Wilson. www.nuclearinfo.org
- **Tues 20 Oct 19.00 BST - Stop the War Coalition webinar 'U.S. Election: Prospects for War and Peace.'** With Tariq Ali, Medea Benjamin (CodePink) Lindsay German (Stop the War) www.stopwar.org.uk
- **Sat. 10th Oct. 11.00-1.00** - Keep Our NHS Public conference 'End the Social Care Crisis' with representatives from groups such as pensioners, disabled, women. Speakers include John McDonnell. Register here: <https://keepournhspublic.com/event/social-care-conference/>

FPG Meetings

- Weds 4 Nov, 7.30 - FPG Monthly Meeting. Nothing arranged as yet, any ideas to Jennie please.
- Weds. 2nd December, 7.30 - 'Carbon Footprint of the Military' Speaker – Gillian Smith from Scientists for Global Responsibility. Zoom link will be circulated.
- Tues 17 Nov, 7.30 - **Black Lives Matter** follow-up zoom session to be led by Liz, for those who signed up for the course.
- Every first Tuesday, 10.0-11.0am - **Black Lives Matter protest**, Old Town Hall, Faringdon Market Place. All welcome with placards, masks and social distancing.!

6) REPORTS AND DISCUSSION

a) FPG Meetings – Jennie

Jennie has had a well-deserved little rest from organising meetings this year, though monthly meetings carried on till lockdown in March and have now resumed via zoom:

Nov - Jennifer Gibson from **'Reprieve'** - a human rights group; Dec - Calvin Tucker **'Latin America: the Left fights back'**; Feb - Sjoerd Vogt **'False Flag Operations'**; Mar - Phil Chesterton **'Whatever Happened to the Chagos Islanders?'**

Thereafter we were overtaken by covid-19 and therefore have missed out on hearing about: **'Vision 2020- and the decision of the United States to dominate Space'** and **'First use' of Nuclear Weapons'** – a talk by a retired Polaris submarine Commander, which Jennie hopes to rearrange, possibly for November.

The talk on **'The Impact of the UK's Nuclear Test Programme on Fiji and the Christmas Islands'** with ex-Faringdon resident John Cooper will not take place as, due to Covid restrictions, John could not travel to Fiji as planned.

20 people enjoyed the New Year's social at Karen and Sjoerd's in January.

Other Activities and Events – Jennie Oxfordshire Peace Campaign (OPC)

We were represented at meetings by Jennie, Phil and Helen. Thanks are due, once again to Nigel Day and Chris Brennan for the spadework behind the meetings and organisation of the annual Rally at (USAF) Croughton. On 5th October 2019, the speakers were Paul Mobbs (our guru on all things Croughton), Dave Cullen from the Nuclear Information Service (we have had several talks from the NIS at the Peace Group) and Fabian Hamilton, a Labour MP who was Minister for Peace and Disarmament in Jeremy Corbyn's shadow cabinet. It was at this Rally that we first heard about the young Harry Dunn, killed 3 weeks previously in a road accident outside the base, by the wife of an intelligence officer. The court case regarding the extradition of Anne Sacoolas continues.

This year, 2020, CND organised a zoomed Rally on behalf of OPC and those who couldn't join will be able to watch it on the CND website shortly.

Shared Humanity

We were asked by Howard Grace (who had spoken at one of our monthly meetings) to host a meeting with Letlapa Mphahlele, which we were very pleased to do, as we had only previously seen Letlapa on film. From being a soldier fighting during the long struggle against apartheid in South Africa, he had changed to talking to groups, especially school students, about the power of forgiveness, and our 'shared humanity'.

Remembrance Day Sunday 10 November

The British Legion again allowed us to lay a wreath on the War Memorial in memory of ALL those who have died in wars. Thanks to Karen for performing this task.

Armistice Day Monday 11 November

In the Market Square, we held a Women in Black Silent Vigil for Peace and 5 women on the vigil were supported by 3 men giving out leaflets explaining why we were there.

Extinction Rebellion

Thanks to Karen and Helen who took part in various events, resulting in a court case for Helen, (which was eventually thrown out).

General Election Hustings 25 November

Following what has become customary for Faringdon Peace Group, we organised hustings in the Corn Exchange, for a gratifyingly large audience.

Vigil for Peace in Bethlehem

We held our usual Women in Black vigil for Bethlehem in the Market Place in December.

b) Faringdon Folly and posters round town – Karen

Karen's monthly meeting reports were all published in the 'Folly' newspaper until it sadly closed along with the What's On – the diary of local events started by the Braithwaites. Lou is expanding the Faringdon Advertiser to take more reports and events etc. so we will take advantage of that now meetings (virtual) have resumed.

c) Treasurer – Steve

Steve presented the Income and Expenditure account for the year ending 31st August 2020, which obviously showed a significant drop with a balance of £2677 (2019 - £3859) due to zero income from the Grand Peace Fete, which took place online this year.

We have not had to pay rent or speakers' expenses since lockdown, but with £2000 ring-fenced for the Peace Plaque, potential XR expenses and 40th Anniversary celebrations, we are not in a position to donate to worthy causes.

Subscriptions to Network for Peace will continue for our monthly copies of Peace News, which Jennie has continued to distribute, and to CND, partly because FPG insurance is arranged through them.

Thanks to Steve for doing the finances and to John Cecil for auditing the accounts.

d) Grand Peace Fete – Sjoerd

Sjoerd thanked Zoe and Trev Williams for putting on such an imaginative, varied and interactive fete this year. They did a great job! There were Bruce Kent's inspiring words of wisdom, Lilly's circle dancing, Trev's music and juggling plus origami doves and face painting. All still available to watch here:

http://www.faringdonpeacegroup.org.uk/PEACE_FETE_2020/peace_fete_2020.html

e) Resources – Pete, Phil, Karen

Liz and Adam will be moving next March, so the store at Colleymore needs to be cleared. Adam hopes to provide space for it at Westmill. Many thanks to them for storing our fete equipment for so many years!

f) Artistic Projects – Karen

Peace Plaque

After another year of no progress, despite efforts from Jennie and Karen, it was decided to give Sue Drew an ultimatum. It must be made and installed this year for our 40th anniversary and if she cannot offer any dates to get it done, we will take it on ourselves. Karen, Janis and Marge were mentioned.

g) Monthly Meetings help

With meetings being zoomed for the foreseeable future, no speaker transport or hospitality is needed.

One advantage of Zoom is that we can draw on speakers from all over the world! Bernie Sanders? Palestinian?

Any ideas to Jennie please.

h) Press Reports – Sand

No activities = no press reports!

i) Any other reports

Black Lives Matter

Liz initiated a monthly BLM protest in the town centre – 10 – 11 first Tuesday of the month. She was on her own the first time, 3 the next, now numbers are regularly 12 – 15. Police are aware, so masks and distancing must be observed but, because it is a protest, it is exempt from the rule of 6. Informative leaflets given out, lots of positive responses along with the negative.

Liz also organised a series of 3 zoomed sessions '**Exploring the dynamics of difference: race, power and privilege in the UK**'. 15 of us attended the first thought-provoking session and look forward to the others.

7) ELECTION OF OFFICERS

All officers were willing to stand again but extra help was welcomed with different tasks.

All were thanked for their hard work during the past year.

Chairs: Sjoerd, Phil, Dave H, Adam, Pete, only needed once or twice a year

Secretary for meetings and activities – Jennie, but with help

Secretary for minutes, Reports and posters – Karen

Treasurer – Steve

Artistic Co-ordinator – Karen with help from Marge

Fete Organiser – Sjoerd (with Jennie and Marge and over 70 helpers!)

Website/computer lists – Sjoerd (active list) and Dave/Jennie (very active list)

Resources – Pete, Phil, Karen

Publicity, Fete and press releases – Sand

Syria Link – Sjoerd

8) FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Remembrance Day, 8th November

FPG is now definitely on the list of local organisations who lay a wreath at the War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday and Karen has already received this year's wreath (£17). Karen will add white poppies. The Town Council will have a small ceremony at the War Memorial, but no public wreath laying. Suggest we do ours on the afternoon of the 10th. Time TBC.

Women in Black Vigil for Bethlehem

December. Date/time TBC. Men welcome in support

40th Anniversary Celebrations

FPG has kept going continually since the first meeting on Oct 7th 1980, so this year is our 40th Anniversary!

Plans to celebrate are on hold, but the Peace Plaque will be installed this year come what may!

40th Anniversary booklet

Jennie and Phil suggested publishing a little booklet and asking all to contribute. 40 pages? Chris suggested asking all to contribute memories in various forms to create a miscellany rather than a year by year account.

Dave happy to put it together, Sand happy to co-ordinate content.

9) DONATIONS AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

We have ring-fenced £1000 for the Peace Plaque, £500 for potential XR expenses and £500 for 40th Anniversary celebrations. Hopefully we have budgeted for more than we need, but with £400 still to pay for the BLM sessions, finances will be very stretched, so no spare for donations.

Subscriptions will continue for Network for Peace, Peace News and CND.

Helen suggested circulating FPG bank account details, so that people can make a donation. (Details now on website)

Sjoerd to follow up with email.

10) ANY OTHER BUSINESS

FPG ukelele group

Jenny would like to start an FPG virtual ukulele group. She knows of 4 members who already play and would like to encourage others. Contact her if interested.

Gloria

Sadly Gloria will be moving away from Faingdon in the New Year to be closer to her children. Many thanks for all her support and contributions over the last few years to the Fete, vigils and meetings. We will miss her but wish her all the very best in her new home.

The meeting ended at 20.31, sadly without drinks or birthday cake!

Thanks to all who attended and to Sjoerd for facilitating.
