

FARINGDON PEACE GROUP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, 5th October 2016

PRESENT

Jennie and Phil Chesterton, Sjoerd and Karen Vogt, Daphne and Pat Saunders, Janie and John Cottis, David Roberts, Ian and Josephine...., Gloria Zentler-Munroe, Charlie and Ellie Wickham, Linda Harrison, Helen Holly, Steve and Jenny Braithwaite plus Ugandan friend

1. APOLOGIES

Penny Wixey, Pat Williams, Hazel Townesend, Mairead Boyce, (Sand and Pete – belatedly!)

2. **MINUTES** - Minutes of 2015 AGM read and approved.

3. **MATTERS ARISING** – None

4. DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

5. REPORTS AND DISCUSSION

a) MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES – Jennie

Meetings

FPG held speaker meetings every month except for August and January, cover a wide variety of topics.

- **Historical:** World War 1 – Conscientious Objectors and women's support and the 1916 film 'Battle of the Somme'; the Spanish Civil War and a film of the history of Palestinian Christians 'The Stones Cry Out'.
- **Middle East:** British collusion in Saudi terrorism and the resulting chaos in the area.
- **Nuclear Weapons:** The case against Trident Replacement
- **Other:** Peacemaking in personal life, taxes for peace not war, the work of a military psychologist

Activities

- Members attended demos in London against Trident and the bombing of Syria, and a rally at USAF Croughton.
- We held a vigil on Armistice Day and laid a wreath of white and red poppies on Remembrance Sunday.
- In December we held a vigil to remember Bethlehem and the Palestinians
- Other meetings were attended: on Trident, including a lobby with our MP at Westminster; on Sylvia Pankhurst and film and discussion 'We are Many', about events leading up to the first Syria vote in the Commons.
- FPG 'sub-committee' meetings were held in the lead up to and following the fete, and to discuss the Peace Plaque project.
- The Peace Group Ramblers walked around Burford in preparation for the annual Levellers' Day parade and rally which 10 attended.
- The New Year's Social evening at the Vogts was well attended and enjoyed by all.

b) FARINGDON FOLLY/POSTERS – Karen

Thanks to others who have stepped in to take notes or do write-ups when I've been away.

Monthly meeting reports have all been published in the Folly, along with letter about white poppies, reports and photos of Grand Peace Fete, Trident Lobby with Ed Vaizey, and vigils.

Posters advertising meetings have been put round the town, on the website and sent round by email.

c) TREASURER – Steve

Steve presented the Income and Expenditure Account for year ending 31st August 2016, which showed a healthy surplus of £3457.84.

- Peace Fete expenses were up due to purchase of tables and gazebos.

- Premises costs were lower in 2016 as last year included the Corn Exchange for the Hustings.
- The Meeting House charges have barely changed in 36 years – maybe we should give more?
- ‘VWHDC app’ under ‘miscellaneous’ is for pre-application planning permission for the Peace Plaque.
- Some donations listed chosen by speakers

d) FETE – Sjoerd

Second best ever financially, feedback good, Bruce Kent good value, 5 different live music performances. Thanks to Jennie for getting volunteers together, all the volunteers, and Denny and residents at Clock House. They have been very much in our thoughts since the recent fire in the stable yard which destroyed Denny’s Indian clothes.

e) RESOURCES – Pete, Phil, Karen

All fine. Trident Ploughshares have a container of campaigning ‘stuff’ that they want to get rid of at Westmill. P and P to investigate.

f) ARTISTIC PROJECTS – Karen

Peace Plaque project drags on! VWHDC Conservation Officer has given approval for our suggested sites, and we successfully applied for pre-application planning permission. Now asking permission from each site in turn, starting with our preferred site on the right side of the door into the Old Town Hall. The Town Council manages the building for the War Memorial Trust, who are unfortunately not meeting again till February 2017 and may in the end be reluctant to allow it. 2nd choice is on Pump Rooms where the Information Centre is and 3rd is Corn Exchange. Listed Building Consent will also be needed for any of these sites.

g) MONTHLY MEETINGS - Jennie

Help is needed in different areas:

1. Suggesting speakers and taking responsibility for organising meeting
2. Transport for speakers, usually to and from Didcot. (Is Oxford Parkway also an option now?)
3. Hospitality for speakers eg. overnight stay or meal beforehand. (Penny, Jenny and Lauren and Peter offered last year)

h) PRESS REPORTS - Sand

Sand’s excellent piece about white poppies will go in November’s Folly. She also did reports on vigils and other activities during the year.

i) ANY OTHER REPORTS

SYRIA LINK

The Faringdon Syrian Refugee Group, which includes many FPG members, has had a busy year, with a well attended and positive ‘Refugees Welcome’ public meeting, research into facilities available for refugee families in Faringdon and in late August providing essential household items and toys for homes for 2 Syrian refugees families resettled in the west of the Vale under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. We have heard they are very pleased with their houses and are settling in well. Their resettlement is being managed by the British Red Cross. Anyone who would like to welcome the refugees in any way – language teaching is especially important – must be trained as a Red Cross volunteer. Contact Theresa Foster: tfoster@redcross.org.uk or tel. 01235 552 667.

6. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

All officers were willing to stand again and as there were no other volunteers, the committee remains the same.

- **Chairs:** Sjoerd, Phil, John, Dave H, Adam, plus Pete (new!), only needed once or twice a year.
- **Secretary for meetings and activities** – Jennie, but with help (see 5.g) above)
- **Secretary for minutes, Faringdon Folly Reports and posters** – Karen
- **Treasurer** – Steve
- **Artistic Co-ordinator** – Karen
- **Fete Organiser** – Sjoerd
- **Website/computer lists** – Sjoerd (active list) and Dave (very active list)
- **Resources** – Pete, Phil, Karen

- **Publicity, Fete and press releases** – Sand
- **Syria Link** – Sjoerd

7. POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES

i) Card to Jeremy Corbyn. Need to support people working for peace therefore will send card to Jeremy Corbyn to support his anti-nuclear stance.

ii) Remembrance Sunday. We have ordered a red poppy wreath through the Royal British Legion (£17) to which we will add white poppies and will join the official procession to lay it at the War Memorial. Although it means we're supporting RBL, there is less chance it will be taken away and it is a step forward in our relationship with them. An anti white poppy letter from one of their members will appear in November's Folly, but will be balanced by Sand's piece. The vast majority of RBL members are in favour of us joining in.

We will hold a vigil from 9.30-10.30 on Armistice Day, Friday 11th November, under or next to the Old Town Hall, retreating before the short service begins. Women standing silently in black, men supporting with leaflets and poppies. Jennie to check if we have enough white poppies and posters.

iii) Women in Black vigil for Bethlehem. Proposed for Tuesday 13th December.

8. DONATIONS AND GRANTS

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

Donations were agreed as follows:

- Local Refugee Support - £500 (Houses cost approx. £1000 to furnish with essential items, plus ongoing costs)
- Harbour Project - £50
- Sop the War - £50
- Movement for the Abolition of War - £50
- Nukewatch UK - £50
- Campaign Against Arms Trade - £100
- Medical Aid for Palestinians - £50
- Forces Watch - £50
- Virginia Moffatt, for her novel - £25

Other donations will be offered to speaker's chosen organisations throughout the year.

Faringdon Quaker Aid has run its course and will no longer be asking for money.

9. There being no other business, the meeting ended with refreshments and 36th Birthday Cake.