

# *National RIGHT TO FUEL Campaign*

*Campaigning for a warm, dry, well-lit home for all*



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## **Annual General Meeting**

**Connect Offices**  
**Millbank Tower, Millbank**  
**London SW1**

**Tuesday 28 April 2006 – 1pm**

### **Present:**

Michael King		(Chair)
Dick Barry	Unison	(Vice-Chair)
Ron Campbell	NEA	(Secretary)
David Steckles	Warm up Wearside	(Treasurer)

William Baker	Centre for Sustainable Energy
John Crowe	
Lesley Davies	
Robert Jones	Chelmsford Environment Partnership
Dick Moore	

Caroline Heijne      NRFC Administrator

### **1 Chair's Welcome and Introduction**

Michael King welcomed everyone to the AGM and looked back over his 11 years as Chair of the Campaign. Times were difficult when he became Chair, the 1988 Social Security Act had taken away the "Hard to heat" allowance, the dealing with "E" factor and fuel supply competition not being allowed to cross subsidise social activities.

It was a tough climate in which to get the Campaign recognised but things have changed with high level meetings representing the Campaign. Recognition has come from John Chesshire for the research carried out by the Campaign and its partners in the effect of fuel policies on low income households, in particular looking at prepayment meters and monitoring the development of the competitive market.

The Utilities Act included the Social Action Plan.

1997 brought the Labour Government although fuel poverty was not in their policies. In 1998, Angela Eagle acknowledged the existence of fuel poverty and produced statistics for households in fuel poverty. There was a national debate on the balance of response and measures which developed into the Fuel Poverty Strategy, and the Fuel Poverty Action Plan. The Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act set targets for energy efficiency for 2010 and 2016, and included the devolved assemblies.

Funding through EEC and Warm Front now addresses fuel poverty and is well financed.

The Campaign celebrated its 25 year mark in 2000.

The publication of the "Underoccupation" research reported on the investigation of an area not covered elsewhere.

Recent shifts in the energy markets has seen prices rising and the numbers in fuel poverty going up again. Dick Moore's model will provide more detail and focuses debate on this problem. There is concern that, although energy efficiency is an answer, there will still be need for an income element in the short term.

Successful conferences have been forums for discussion, with Ministers regularly given speeches on current policy developments.

Michael said he had been proud to be Chair over the last few years and that the Campaign must be proud of its achievements, and thanked the Steering Group for its support.

## **2 Apologies**

Sarah Allen	Luton Borough Council
Richard Bates	energywatch
Hugh Bown	
Martin Chadwick	Beat the Cold
Elizabeth Gore	Energy Action Scotland
John Green	Oxford City Council
Chloe Hardy	National Housing Federation
Gretel Jones	Age Concern England
Norman Kerr	Energy Action Scotland
Jean Morrison	Scarf
Janet Rudge	LEARN, London Metropolitan University

## **3 Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 29 March 2005**

The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting. There were no matters arising.

## **4 Chair's Report**

The Annual Report (appended) was tabled. MK's introduction provided an overview.

## **5 Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer tabled a statement of accounts for the year September 1 2004 to 31 August 2005 (appended).

The accounts showed a balance as at 31 August 2005 of £11,214. However, there was an uncleared cheque for £7,226 (for research).

There was a loss of £3,432 over this financial year. However, additional income for the Fuel Prices research was received in the beginning of the next financial year.

Income showed an increase as a result of improved membership income and funding for the Fuel Prices paper.

Expenditure increased by higher Fuel News costs and the cost of the Fuel Prices research and work on the Fire Hazards paper.

CH reported on the financial progress for the conference, that there was £21k in sponsorship in place. EdF were also interested in sponsorship, possibly for other events for which ideas need to be developed.

There was also discussion about costing in NRFC element in research proposals to ensure income levels maintained.

### **Points from general discussion about research ideas**

DB - funding pots at Unison that the Campaign could continue to apply to for its work; develop a proposal related to fuel poverty and climate change, huge subject and unions interested, with the Stop Climate Chaos campaign.

LD - insurance costs affected by floods, etc and impact on low income households who could not cope.

MK - energy taxes and the impact on the fuel poor; also base load for electricity, but not heat, from nuclear sources, contributed nothing to reduction of fuel poverty, especially if consumers have to prop up the nuclear industry.

DM - academics did not like the government definition for excess winter deaths, eg, work by PSI on fuel poverty and climate change ignores summer deaths.

JC - impact of energy price rises on the RPI, does not reflect low income household expenditure, and affects benefit levels.

RJ - connection to climate change, with increase in summer deaths in France, mainly through dehydration in extreme heat; also increase in self disconnection as householders worried about the length of time it will be colder and ration energy use. May be worth talking with Age Concern and Help the Aged about the perceptions of older people.

CH - new Eaga PCT programme on multiple issues of fuel poverty; also has a meeting re update of Fuel Poverty Fact File.

DM - national picture of how cold homes really are, not done since 1997, from EHCS, but could be done as additional element.

MK - assumption in Energy Review that main issue gas, ignores heat so Renewable Heat Team talking with DTI/Energy Review Team; on household temperatures, Luton monitoring homes as part of refurbishment, had access to temperature monitors and Eaga PCT had agreed funding subject to formal research question.

DM - this needs to be "What temperatures are being achieved in English homes?", looking at all extremes, some temperatures were incredibly low in earlier data, direct measurements provide clear data.

There was some discussion about links, or not, with income, issue of quality/state of housing, very energy inefficient.

## **6 Steering Committee Elections**

CH reported that Chloe Hardy, NHF, had resigned from the Steering Committee as her position had changed. Her input had been appreciated and she was thanked for these. It was suggested that a letter be written to David Orr, CEO, about a possible replacement.

CH reported that Martin Chadwick, Beat the Cold, was happy to continue on the Steering Committee. This was welcomed.

The other members of the Steering Committee remained as before.

## **7 Election of Officers**

The Deputy Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer all agreed to stand for the coming year. The following were therefore duly re-elected:-

Dick Barry, Unison	Vice-Chair	(Proposed LD / Seconded DM)
Ron Campbell, NEA	Secretary	(Proposed DS / Seconded DB)
David Steckles, Warm up Wearside	Treasurer	(Proposed JC / Seconded DB)

Michael King resigned as Chair, but agree to continue, nominally, until the conference.

Lesley Davies was elected, unopposed, as the new Chair.  
(Proposed MK / Seconded JC)

Lesley spoke briefly about the challenge of following on from Michael and that she would be happy to achieve as much. Michael had done a fabulous job, and success was largely down to him, with his vast networks and input. She thanked him on behalf of the Campaign and as the incoming Chair for his massive contribution, for having put fuel poverty on the agenda which was significantly down to his unstinting efforts. She wanted his help in looking at her vision and the role of members over the next few months.

Dick Barry said that as Vice-Chair for the last few years he appreciated the magnificent leadership by Michael and his efforts to give the Campaign a high profile. Unison appreciated the work of the Campaign, which was thanks to Michael who had been a superb Chair.

JC added a one-line eulogy, that it was due to Michael that the Campaign was able to punch above its weight.

RJ suggested making Michael a life president but there was dissension to this, so further discussion needed, including any necessary changes to the Memorandum and Articles. This is to be included on the next meeting's agenda.

Michael thanked people for their appreciation and said that he would be staying involved.

## **8 AOB**

### **9 Date of next Steering Committee meeting**

Agreed – Tuesday June 20 2006, 1pm-4pm at the Unison offices, Mabledon Place, London WC1.

Again suggestion to set further meeting dates, especially one at the NEA conference in September.

RC will check dates and ask about 2 free places for Campaign members. LD would be available to speak or similar.