

Chester World Development Forum

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 10 May 2022 7pm in the Unity Centre and via Zoom



1. **Welcome:** TG chaired the meeting

Present: Terry Green, John Tacon, Diane Williams, Katy and Brian Rowe, Vicki Jenner and Ann McCarthy, plus Bernard Payne and Gill Miller via Zoom

Apologies: Lindsay Cussons, Peter Spiers, Linda and Stewart Shuttleworth and Heather Swainston.

2. **Consideration of the Annual Report:**

TG commented on the great variety of issues and subjects covered over the past year with all our different speakers. We have focused again on the “Climate Crisis”, revisited tax evasion with a talk from Justin Thacker who worked for Christian Aid, and had a further update from Chris Matheson MP.

Over the year, we have enhanced our presence on social media through Georgina Wilson who has now sadly left the committee after taking a job on Ascension Island. BP commented on CWDF’s letter to the Government re the proposed increase in UK’s nuclear weapons to which we received no reply. It was suggested that we send the letter again; the committee will take discuss this at its next meeting

3. **Consideration of Financial Report:**

JT reported that there had been a large deficit in 2021 as a result of donations to DEC. Consequently, we have less money than usual but that our finances remain on a firm footing. The current balance is £399.46, but we owe £30 to the Unity Centre for the AGM room hire. The financial report was accepted by those present.

4. **Election of CWDF Chair and Committee members:**

The committee at present is: Terry Green, Gill Miller, John Tacon, Ann McCarthy, Lindsay Cussons and Vicki Jenner. TG expressed our thanks to Georgina Wilson for her input on the committee, and wished her well in her new job. Both TG and JT are willing to continue as officers, TG as Chair and JT as Treasurer. Other committee members agreed to continue, although VJ will be leaving the area some time after the summer. New committee members always welcome, and are indeed needed. We urgently need someone to take on updating/revamping the website and looking after our social media.

TG thanked BP for his input on the committee over many years. BP is now able to help with updating the website.

5. **Other Issues:**

➤ Investments in Fossil Fuels

At the last committee meeting, we discussed the issue of Barclays Bank’s continued investment in fossil fuels. Barclays Bank is ranked 7th and HSBC 13th in the world for the amount of money they have invested in fossil fuel projects. Should we take local action against these 2 banks?

We intend to raise our concerns by letter to the bank and this would be on behalf of all CWDF members. This will be followed up by certain members of the committee visiting the Chester branches.

Katy Rowe offered to look into Christian Aid's reviews on the matter. Seemingly, NatWest have reduced their investments but not enough.

BR commented that it is possibly not a good time because of the ban on Russian oil and the need to provide alternative sources of energy. On the other hand, BR thought that we should be consistent in our opposition to fossil fuels and that would be seen as a good thing.

➤ **Future of CWDF**

The committee wishes to highlight the need for more members, and more engagement from present members.

6. Forthcoming Forum Meetings:

Tuesday 19 July: Linda and Stewart Shuttleworth will report on their recent work in Uganda. NB Please note the change of date from the normal second Tuesday of the month.

Tuesday 13 September: Dr Mark Bendall, Senior Lecturer in the Department for Social and Political Science at the University of Chester will talk about "Challenges in global politics: mis-use and mis-governance"

7. AOB:

BR offered thanks to the committee for all their hard work.

Reflections on COP26 by the UK Envoy, Dr John Murton

Dr John Murton was the UK government's COP26 Envoy.

John was Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and non-resident Ambassador to the Republic of the Congo from 2017 to 2019. Before this, his role he was Deputy High Commissioner at the British High Commission in Nairobi and he also served as the UK's Permanent Representative to the UN in Kenya from April 2013 to August 2017.

We listened to his most interesting podcast on COP26, followed by a short discussion.

If any CWDF members would like to listen to this podcast, please email Gill Miller - g.miller@chester.ac.uk – to request the link.