



Oxford Ecology
Movement

September 26th '79

Dear O.E.M. Members,

The summer holiday period is drawing to a close, and we need to decide what are priorities between elections, and organise whatever action seems appropriate.

Part of the silence over the summer has been due to a long drawn-out attempt to come to a satisfactory arrangement with the local Ecology Party branch before planning future strategy in detail.

A date for a meeting with the Ecology Party has now been fixed for Tuesday October 2nd. The idea is to have 3-4 people from each group and to try to establish mutual trust and plan co-operation. If anyone would like to come to the meeting to represent O.E.M. could they contact me or Sue Taylor. The meeting is at Nick Hawkins' house, 93, Campbell Road, Cowley (7.30 pm).

The following Monday (Oct. 8th) we are holding an O.E.M strategy meeting at 35 Wellington Street. There are some important inquiries (eg. superstores locally and heavy lorries nationally) which the O.E.M. should perhaps be involved in. However, to do these things, we need people!

My impression at present is that most of the people who have been active in the establishment and campaigning of the O.E.M. are very busy pursuing ecological activities in other, more direct ways. For instance, the West Oxford Ecology Group has been set up by a core of members in Osney, and another group is giving a series of evening classes on 'Practical Ecology' for the North Oxford Association (Adult Education Committee). It is in one respect a strength that the O.E.M.'s membership is strongly rooted in practical action, but in another sense it is a weakness, as such members do not see political action as their primary task. My feeling is that it is too dangerous to leave politics to the politicians, and that we must accept the limitations imposed by the diverse activities of our membership, and devote ourselves purely to politics only when this is essential - i.e. at election time.

In the meantime, when most people are doing other things, we must continue in some sense to exist so that, if appropriate, action can take place as O.E.M. rather than, say FOE or ConSoc or a residents' association.

As a basis for discussion on October 8th I suggest the following structure for O.E.M. over the next year:

- 1) An annual subscription of £2 to cover incidental expenses. This to be payable as of October 1st (some members will of course have had 15 months on their last sub., others less than a year).
- 2) A steering committee meeting once a month, made up ideally of a chairperson, secretary, treasurer, a representative of each ward of the city with more than 5 members and 2 or 3 more people if felt desirable. Particular matters to consider might be next year's local elections, council policy, letter writing to newspapers, etc.
- 3) An A.G.M., held in early November to elect the above committee, or those members not selected by ward membership - the A.G.M would of course have to approve any such plan first anyway. Only paid-up members to vote!
- 4) If the committee feels action needs taking, it should recruit suitable people (who need not themselves be members) to do it or to advise. For example, if political action on bicycle tracks seems necessary, advice and information (both facts and most useful tactics) would be sought from the FOE bikes group (non-members).
- 5) At election times, ad hoc committee(s) to be formed to run campaigns, etc.

I had never intended to be 'organiser' of the O.E.M., this role falling on Steve Larkin and myself when Gordon Thompson went to America early in the year. I'm hoping he will be able again to assume this position when he returns, but in the meantime I need time for other important matters and do not want to carry on being de facto chairperson. Steve Larkin has moved to Bedford to

work at Cranfield College on agricultural wastes.

I hope as many of you as possible will come to the meeting on October 8th.

Yours sincerely,

Contact addresses:

Anthony Cheke	139 Hurst Street	Tel. 48344 (evenings 881297)
Sue Taylor	35 Wellington Street	Tel. 58513 ^{at present}

P.S.

The course in 'Practical Ecology' may interest some members. It consists of 10 2-hour sessions starting Thursday 27th September at 29 Observatory Street, and is geared to ways of putting conservationist and ecological principles into practice in our daily lives. Contact Anthony for more details or North Oxford Association, Ferry Centre, phone 52295. (don't worry if you've missed the first one)

In addition, it would be most helpful if people could answer the following few questions on their interests and expertise. This will help the committee when they need to call on extra assistance.

Is your main ecological interest in: party politics , pressure group action , practical activities (recycling, gardening, nature conservation, teaching, other (which?) , personal lifestyle (cycling, nutrition, gardening (again), yoga (etc.) more clothing/less fires, human relationships, physical exercise, spiritual exercise)

Would you be prepared to: write letters to local newspapers on eco topics , write letters to local authorities , write letters to MPs , help prepare a case for a local public inquiry , help present a case at a local public inquiry , monitor council planning decisions (this could be done in liaison with other organisations who already do this), send 15% of your electricity bill (the nuclear proportion) to the minister of energy and ask him to spend it on alternative energy sources , stand for election to city council , or county council , help type OEM material , help distribute to (a) OEM members (b) the public (door to door deliveries) , (c) the public (handing out leaflets in the street)

Have you any professional or practical knowledge of:

Law Local Government Engineering Planning Agriculture
Biology Nutrition Architecture Transport Journalism
Broadcasting other: specify:

NAME

(please return to Sue Taylor, 35 Wellington St., Oxford)