

Chair of the Board Information Pack

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Welcome from Matt Wright, Vice Chair, and Hugh Knowles and Miriam Turner, Co-Executive Directors

The coronavirus pandemic has devastated lives and, rather than transform it, has revealed society's weaknesses and strengths. When combined with growing protests against oppression of all forms, this has resulted in a deserved spotlight on injustice and inequality around the world. We know that without radical change this decade, injustice is only going to be exacerbated by the growing climate and ecological crisis. This means that, more than ever, social justice is going to be at the heart of our work as we help communities and nations shape how we recover and rebuild.

There is only one path ahead and that is a transformation of our society and regeneration of our natural environment. This must be done with those who are most at risk – either from current and future impacts or from not being able to participate in and benefit from the transformation – at the heart of what we do. If we design a transition for the mainstream, we will continue to leave many behind.

Friends of the Earth wants to amplify and widen the reach of our calls for transformation and engage multiple communities in our work. In doing so we have an enormous strength to draw on and build from.

What the pandemic has also shown us is the power communities have to come together, and that local people can be at the heart of change. As a grassroots movement in our 50th year, we know from experience this is how meaningful change happens.

In the last few years, we have seen a growing demand for action on the climate and ecological crisis and we now work in partnership with over 300 groups around England, Wales and Northern Ireland. As part of an international federation of grassroots environmental groups, we can join that global perspective with our expertise and experience nationally and regionally to leverage change from local to national to global. This background provides a rich and diverse mosaic of real-world experiences, upon which we build our policies and campaigns.

Over the last 50 years, Friends of the Earth has led many powerful and successful campaigns that have resulted in real change, from doorstep recycling in every town, to the phase out of leaded petrol, protection for our best wildlife sites, the world's first climate change act, the end of fracking, the prevention of coal mining and much more besides. We will continue to produce strong and innovative strategies based on a deep understanding of how to address the challenges faced by society.

In our next chapter we need to continue to build our power and put people at the heart of change. We are looking for someone committed and collaborative who can chair our Board of Non-Executive Directors, ensure effective governance of Friends of the Earth Limited in service of our mission and champion environmental justice at the most senior levels of the organisation.

If you believe you have the qualities and skills we need to be involved in writing the next chapter of the Friends of the Earth story, we would love to hear from you.

Matt Wright
Vice Chair
Friends of the Earth Limited

Hugh Knowles and Miriam Turner
Co-Executive Directors
Friends of the Earth

About Friends of the Earth

Our mission

For over 50 years, we've been dedicated to the protection of the natural world and the wellbeing of everyone in it.

Our international community brings together more than two million people in 73 countries, combining people power all over the world to make an even greater difference and transforming local actions into global impact. We lead campaigns, provide resources and information and promote alternative solutions to create a cleaner, healthier and fairer world for everyone, for today and for generations to come.

We stand with anyone who cares about the world we live in. Working together with local groups and communities, we push for change around the issues and causes that matter – protecting people's homes, neighbourhoods and local environment, promoting safe and healthy food and water, and supporting solutions that can deal with the climate crisis and change the world for the better for everyone. We're here every step of the way, supporting communities, defending human rights, protecting nature, moving mountains.

Combining the efforts of people all over the world enables us to make an even greater difference, meaning local initiatives are transformed into global impact. Together, our voice is louder, our actions more significant, our impact greater. Together, we are determined to change the world for good, creating a cleaner, healthier, fairer world for everyone.

Our communities

Friends of the Earth works with communities across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In recent years we have stood with people in Lancashire as they campaigned to stop fracking at Preston New Road, supported residents in South Wales opposing new opencast coal mines, and helped communities oppose gold mines in Northern Ireland.

At the heart of our work for decades has been our Local Groups network, made up of over 130 community groups working on Friends of the Earth's key campaigns as well as issues of local importance. In 2019 we scaled up our community work with the launch of Climate Action Groups, whose focus is on helping communities tackle the climate emergency. In less than three years, over 270 Climate Action Groups have been formed. Our communities are at the heart of everything we do, and together we are a powerful force for change.

Friends of the Earth EWNl also works particularly closely with colleagues in Friends of the Earth Scotland, Friends of the Earth Ireland and Friends of the Earth Europe on many key issues.

Our structure

Friends of the Earth comprises two separate legal entities operating under a regulated dual structure arrangement. Friends of the Earth Limited (FOEL), a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee, undertakes all campaigning and activism and is responsible for people, finance and operations. Friends of the Earth Charitable Trust (FOECT), a registered charity, raises charitable funds and provides grants to organisations for charitable activities that further its objectives, including Friends of the Earth Limited. FOEL is governed by a Board and FOECT is governed by independent Trustees with the CEO reporting to both.

Friends of the Earth EWNl employs around 170 staff together with invaluable support from our volunteers. Our largest office is at The Printworks in Stockwell, South London, and we have other offices in Belfast, Cardiff, Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester, Bristol and Brighton, reflecting the distributed nature of our network.

Our finances

The majority of our income comes in the form of an annual grant from Friends of the Earth Charitable Trust, which is based on a diverse portfolio of individual giving, People's Postcode Lottery grants, trusts and foundations, gifts from major donors, corporate partnerships and legacies. We also have our own income streams from sources such as individual giving and corporate partnerships. Total income for the most recent financial year was £14.5m, and the 2019/20 audited accounts for Friends of the Earth Limited can be found [here](#).

Our values, strategy and business plan

Our values

Integrity – We demonstrate integrity throughout everything we do, internally and externally.

Impact – We make the biggest impact we can through good analysis and judgement, insight, feedback and focus.

Leadership – We motivate others through our individual and collective actions, our compelling vision, and our clarity on what work needs to be done.

Focus on Friends – To build our influence we put new and existing ‘friends’ at the heart of our work.

Accountability – We hold ourselves and other to account for our work and how we work.

Learning and Enquiring Mindset – We learn continuously, challenging our own assumptions and habits while expanding our horizons to enable us to improve the impact of our work.

Our strategy

The past year has seen a strategic shift at Friends of the Earth, with our previous strategy coming to an end in 2020 and our refreshed strategy developed in the first half of 2021 following the appointment of our new Co-Executive Directors

By 2030, we need to see a transformation in human society. The speed and robustness of action over the next decade will determine whether we avoid the worst impacts of the climate and ecological crises or end up with a severely degraded natural world and diminished capacity to support humanity. In this context, what we exist to achieve hasn’t changed but how we achieve it must.

From 2021 onwards, at the heart of our work must be those suffering now due to climate and ecological breakdown, and those most at risk of not participating in, or benefiting from, the transition, both here and overseas.

We commit to developing broader and more diverse networks, partnerships and feedback loops that enable us to listen to these voices, use their insights, and help build their power. What we learn from our evolved network will inform the development of our campaigns, locally, nationally, and globally.

We commit to standing alongside those suffering today due to climate and ecological breakdown, those oppressed and those most at risk. In doing so, we will more clearly differentiate ourselves as an environmental justice organisation.

We want to build power, prevent a backlash and use our strengths to accelerate to the low-carbon, nature-positive transition that must take place. We want to ensure this transition works for everyone, and addresses and resolves inequalities and exclusion, even as it lays the path for a greener future.

This is an evolution of what we have always done, namely use our expertise and experience nationally and regionally to support the grassroots, and work together to campaign for change from local to national to global.

Our business plan

With an exciting and ambitious refreshed organisational strategy in place, our aim during this business year (July 2021 – June 2022) is to shift our direction to align with this new strategy. Central to this will be increasing our focus on listening to and learning from our network and those

communities most vulnerable to climate and ecological breakdown as well as being excluded from the transition to a greener and fairer world.

Over the course of the year, we aim to:

- Build even more community power to win existing campaigns and inform new ones.
- Win our campaign against UK government support for fossil fuels and develop a new justice-focused campaign package.
- Ensure that those worst affected by the climate and ecological crises, as well as those at risk of being excluded from the transition to a greener and fairer world, are able to inform our work.
- Defend communities' rights to protect their environment and challenge environmental injustices, particularly for the worst affected.
- Ensure a resilient and robust funding model.
- Continue developing our new CRM system.

We are also introducing a new KPI approach to monitoring foundational organisational health, including areas such as our supporter base, income and operations. By the end of the year, we aim to have also improved our ability to accurately assess our external impact using this approach.

Chair of the Board – Friends of the Earth Limited

Volunteer status: Annual stipend of £11,039 (plus any cost of living increases). Reasonable travel and other expenses covered.

Duration: Initially three years, with the option to extend for a second three-year term subject to Board approval.

Location: Flexible – usually three meetings are held in London and two outside London, with the option of joining remotely.

As we strive to tackle the climate and ecological crisis and ensure environmental justice at this critical time, we are seeking to appoint a new Chair to join the Friends of the Earth Board.

About the role

The Chair of Friends of the Earth Limited provides inclusive and positive leadership to the Board to ensure proper governance of Friends of the Earth Limited and holds the Co-Executive Directors to account for delivering our vision, mission and strategy and ensuring a culture of wellbeing, performance and accountability.

The Board meets on a quarterly basis and also has annual away days. Between meetings Board members may be required to serve on standing committees or ad hoc working groups, engage with external stakeholders, advise on urgent or ad hoc governance matters within the Board's remit, undertake learning and development and complete any necessary governance tasks.

Key responsibilities

- To provide non-executive leadership to the organisation and to ensure that Board members fulfil their duties and responsibilities for the proper governance of the organisation.
- To line manage, support and, where appropriate, to constructively challenge the Co-Executive Directors and conduct their annual appraisal.
- Through the Co-Executive Directors, to work closely with the Senior Leadership Team and other staff in a strategic and supportive way.
- To secure the long-term future of the organisation by ensuring that:
 - the Board sets the mission, vision, strategy and high-level policies for the organisation, including risk appetite.
 - the Board takes effective steps to monitor the performance of the organisation, including delivery of strategic objectives.
 - adequate systems are in place to assess, review and mitigate risks.
 - internal controls and systems (both financial and non-financial) are audited and reviewed regularly, and the organisation satisfies all regulatory and legal compliance requirements.
 - the Board protects and enhances the reputation and positive culture of the organisation and ensures the wellbeing and productive performance of all staff and volunteers.
 - the Board works collaboratively with executive staff and functions as a unit.
- To ensure a strong, collaborative relationship with Friends of the Earth Charitable Trust, including taking part in the Trust in an ex officio capacity.

Wider responsibilities

The Chair's wider responsibilities include:

- Effectively and inclusively chairing Board meetings and working with the Co-Executive Directors and Board members, managing Board effectiveness and ensuring wise decision making.
- Attending and participating in Board committees and other gatherings as required and ensuring the other Board officer roles are filled.
- Supporting and constructively challenging Board members in carrying out their duties and being responsive to their concerns.
- Being the main communications channel between the organisation (staff, volunteers, activists and supporters) and the Board.
- Engaging with staff, volunteers, local groups and international partners across the Friends of the Earth family and supporting fundraising efforts and events.
- Representing the organisation on matters requiring non-executive leadership and acting as an ambassador of Friends of the Earth.
- Leading on procedures for Board appointments, inductions, development, training, appraisals and governance reviews to ensure the Board includes the required skills to be effective and accountable.
- In collaboration with the Co-Executive Directors and the Governance Manager, managing the Board agenda, Board cycles and away days.
- Acting as a Trustee of Friends of the Earth Charitable Trust in an ex officio capacity.
- In collaboration with colleagues, working to ensure that the dual corporate structure works in the best interests of the organisation as a whole.
- Membership of the Association of Chairs.

Person specification

The successful candidate should have the following attributes:

Commitment

- Passion for and commitment to the organisation's values, strategic objectives and cause.
- Passion for and commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Ability to commit time to conduct the role well, including travel and the occasional event or Board away day out of office hours.

Leadership

- The personal gravitas and diplomacy to chair a significant, national environmental justice organisation.
- Strong, inclusive and positive leadership skills, with the ability to inspire and bring people together.
- Ability to constructively challenge other Board members and staff.
- Confident and effective at creating consensus around decisions.
- An intuitive and supportive line manager.
- Good listening, communication and interpersonal skills.

Collaborative working

- Ability to work closely with the Co-Executive Directors, Senior Leadership Team, Chair and Trustees of Friends of the Earth Charitable Trust, staff and members of Friends of the Earth local groups in a strategic, collaborative and supportive way.
- Ability to engage effectively with a range of external stakeholders.
- Ability to work with others to achieve shared goals.

Judgement

- Ability to make sound judgements, appraise performance and manage risk.
- Impartiality, fairness and the ability to respect confidences.
- Tact and diplomacy.

- Understands and values the importance of a positive organisational culture.

Knowledge, skills and experience

- Senior experience of working in the not-for-profit/charity or related sector, in organisations with substantial budgets operating in complex and changing environments.
- Successful track record of Board membership, ideally with experience of Chair or Vice Chair responsibility, in the not-for-profit/charity sector.
- Significant experience of chairing meetings and events.
- Significant interest in and knowledge of the issues of environmental justice.
- A broad understanding of not-for-profit/charity finance issues, ideally with some financial management experience.
- Strong understanding and experience of not-for-profit/charity governance issues.
- Good understanding of the issues affecting civil society generally and a keen appreciation of the UK political climate.
- Strong networking experience and skills.
- Prior experience at leadership level running an organisation of a similar or larger size.

Being a member of the Friends of the Earth Board is a highly rewarding experience and you'll play a vitally important role.

Friends of the Earth is committed to equal opportunities and to continuously learning how to increase the diversity of our people. We welcome applications from all suitably qualified persons and encourage applications from people currently underrepresented in the environment movement and on our Board, including women in senior leadership positions, people of colour, disabled people and LGBTQI+ people.

How to apply and key dates

If you feel you have the skills required to add value to the Board and to help Friends of the Earth achieve its objectives, then we invite you to send your CV, along with a supporting statement, to laura.carter@foe.co.uk. Your supporting statement should be no more than two A4 pages in length, address the key requirements of the person specification with relevant examples of your experience and outline why you are interested in the role.

If appointed, we will request two references relevant to this role. References will only be taken once your express permission has been granted.

Key dates

Application deadline: Monday 10 January 2022

First-round interviews: W/c 31 January 2022 (online)

Second-round interviews: W/c 7 February 2022 (in person)

Please make us aware of any dates you won't be available.

If you have any queries about the application process, please contact laura.carter@foe.co.uk.

