

Minutes of the 3rd Annual General Meeting and Conference
OF THE Ecology Party held on the 26th and 27th September 1976
at Sorby Hall, Sheffield.

Note: This is a formal record of decisions taken, for circulation to those who attended, booked, or sent express apologies for absence. A more descriptive report of the proceedings will be included in the newsletter.

26 members attended, and 10 apologies for unavoidable absence were received. Tony Whitvaker took the Chair.

Annual General Meeting

1. Election of the National Executive Committee.

After discussion as to the appropriate size of the NEC, the following resolution was proposed by C.R. Lord and seconded by J. Tyley, and passed nem. con. "The NEC membership shall be increased to 9. It shall not be increased beyond 9 prior to the next AGM, but if the elected membership is less than 9 at any time, the NEC shall have power to co-opt voting members as they think fit."

From 12 nominations, the following were elected: Clive Lord, Colin Fry, Jonathan Tyler, John Davenport, Edward Goldsmith, Cllr. John Luck, Elizabeth Davenport, Keith Rushworth and Eric Jones.

2. Financial Statement.

In the absence of Peter Murray, who had attended but had been unable to stay, there were a number of queries which could not be answered fully, in particular the items relating to newsletter publication, and local election expenses.

A proposal by Peter Sizer to pass the accounts was amended by John Luck (seconded by Mike Benfield) that they should be referred back for clarification and audit. The amendment was carried nem. con.

3. Hon. Auditor.

Peter Sizer was appointed, having been proposed by Mike Benfield and seconded by Colin Fry. It was agreed that the party's accounts should in future be audited annually.

Conference

1. Amendments to 1975 Manifesto.

68 amendments were considered, and the Manifesto as amended was proposed by Mike Benfield and seconded by Dennis Nightingale-Smith. It was passed with one against and 2 abstentions.

2. Defence.

In view of the division of opinion on this area, the Chairman informally suggested that the NEC be asked to formulate a policy document for discussion by the party. This was generally agreed, but with 2 against.

3. Popular Manifesto.

Conference considered various suggestions for the publication of a manifesto which would be more appropriate for the public and the media. Peter Sizer proposed and Colin Fry seconded that the preparation of a campaign document be referred to the NEC. This was carried nem. con.

It was suggested however that some guidance should be given as to what form it should take, and a majority (14-2) were in favour of a document short enough to be distributed free, the other suggestion having been a publication similar to "Beyond Tomorrow", which the New Zealand Values party had retailed through booksellers.

4. Resolutions.

Conference overwhelmingly passed the following:

- i. The Ecology Party supports John Tyme in his courageous campaign to bring wider issues into the debate on road expansion schemes. The Ecology Party challenges both the assumption and the encouragement of traffic increase, and hopes that in opposing economic growth it will not in future be necessary to resort to unreasonable methods to obtain a hearing for a reasonable case.
- ii. The EP urges the immediate abolition of VAT on all repair work, and suggests that whatever revenue is lost should be made good by an increase in the VAT rates on newly-manufactured goods.
- iii. The EP deplors the support for fast breeder nuclear reactors given by the TUC at its 1976 conference, and hopes that the labour movement will recognize the folly of trying to protect employment or living standards by such dangerous methods.
- iv. The EP endorses the campaign by Half-Life to invoke the mechanism of a Planning Enquiry Commission in the case of the proposed extension to the nuclear waste processing plant at Windscale.

Clive Lord was instructed to inform the local authority of this last resolution before a public meeting to be held at Whitehaven on 29.9.76, copies to the DoE and the media.

5. Mr. S. S. Eustace (London).

Mike Benfield outlined a letter he had received in which Mr. Eustace offered to stand as a candidate. He would state the intention to accept the whip of the party normally elected in that constituency, except where their policy conflicted with our population policy. Mike was instructed to reply expressing sympathy with Mr. Eustace's suggestion, but stating that Conference does not view favourably the idea of a single issue campaign. Mr. Eustace should be encouraged to stand on the EP Manifesto.

6. Strategy.

There was a general discussion in which Keith Rushworth advocated a change of emphasis from national to local. Tony Whittaker pointed out that this had always been the aim, and outlined previous efforts.

It was agreed that each NEC member should be given responsibility for an area. Mike Benfield proposed that Conference directs the NEC to stress that the major emphasis of their task was to develop regional structures with the object of replacing themselves with a national assembly of delegates within two years. Colin Fry seconded this, but with the omission of the time scale. Dennis Nightingale-Smith seconded the original, but Colin Fry's amendment was seconded and carried.

7. Party Name.

The idea of again changing the party name - to Values - as per a suggestion received from Australia was briefly discussed, but received no support.

8. Dennis Nightingale-Smith expressed thanks on behalf of Conference to Tony Whittaker for his chairmanship.