

Feasta	Annual Planning Meeting
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Venue	ENFO, 17 ST. Andrew's St, D.2	Date	Jan 26 2008		
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Members Present:	Apologies:
Bruce Darrell (Chair)	David Healy
Morag Friel (Minutes)	John Jopling
Richard Douthwaite: RD	John Fitzgibbon
Emer O'Siochru: EOS	Graham Lightfoot
Gillian Fallon: GF	Imelda Kearney
David Korowicz: DK	Charles Henry
Morag Friel: MF	Nicola Creighton
Douglas Gordon: DG	David Healy
Mark Keenan: MK	Michael Walsh
Roy Johnson: RJ	John O'Donoghue
Thomas Goetzman TG	Tom Campbell
Michaela Goetzman MG	Lothar Luken
Eric Conroy: EC (morning only)	Duncan Martin
Marie McCrea: MMcC (morning only)	
Miren Maialen: MM (Afternoon only)	
Giles Fitzherbert: GFH (Afternoon only)	
Peadar Lynch: PL (Afternoon only)	

1. Review of 2007:

Background to this was given by BD; 2006 had been a difficult year, with no staff the organisation had been run totally on voluntary hours. However there were positive developments too e.g. website and Feasta started 07 w a sense of a new beginning.

Decisions had been made to work on the following:

C+S UK and Irl - this happened and is ongoing

Distributed Energy Generation Conference - this didn't happen

Discussions on website - has happened for Energy and Climate group but not for other groups

EU Conference on regional currencies to be held in Brussels - this didn't happen

"Threat to financial systems from Peak Oil" conference- this didn't happen

Food security in relation to other issues? - this didn't happen but we have been developing the possibility of biochar which could be the lynchpin

Reducing energy footprint of cities - this didn't happen

Food as fuel, the hunger threat - this didn't happen

Urban agriculture research - this didn't happen

Feasta review 3 - - this didn't happen

Energy Futures and Transport Reports for EPA - these were completed and we have been paid 90%, retainer to be paid once the EPA satisfied

Website developments - these continued.

Discussion arose from this:

The question of attendance at events vs the cost and energy of putting it on was raised. Also, at €15/€10 the costs to attend are seen by some members as high and may put people off. Balancing this is the view that Irish society is changing, waking up to the emerging crises, so we should see more attendance.

MMcC queried whether Feasta was actively engaging in educating young people? EO responded: There are other organisations working in that arena. Our resources, and the time we have to make the necessary changes, is so limited that we are focusing on getting the Feasta message out to decision-makers now - we don't have time to wait for children to grow up.....

2. Outstanding from 2007 AGM:

- i. Tagline change from 06 AGM: "Designing systems for a sustainable future" wasn't implemented.

Discussion on this:

Several suggestions were made re the exact phrase but there wasn't time to finalise it in this forum. As it is more of a slogan, and once we keep our official title as it is, it doesn't need to be changed at Co. Registration office.

Decision: It is to be finalised and implemented by the Executive

Introductions were held over to this point as several members arrived late.

ii. Finances

The draft Budget 08 as drawn up by Justin Phelan (Feasta's accountant) and Morag Friel was approved

The question was raised as to how long Feasta could last without any further funding at current expenditure: MF hazarded a guess of approximately 6 months as is (with heavy emphasis on the word 'guess').

MMcC feels that the auditor's fee is a bit high and that we should be able to bring it down. who to follow up? (Executive Committee should look at this later in the year)

MMcC questioned our public liability insurance; are we insured for events that we hold outside our premises? MF to check out.

iii Funding Strategy

TG: WE should pursue EU funding e.g. Life funding? EOS pointed out that this is where the big money is and it is earmarked for environmental NGOs like us. There was general agreement that we should go for this.

DK: It would be useful if members could come in and out and do paid work on projects depending on their availability. If we had more money that would help. Independence from the funding source will always a problem he would have no objections to approaching wealthy individuals for funding. MMcC offered to help with sectoral analysis necessary to come up with a funding strategy from various sources including corporate funding.

EOS: for funding strategy engaging with Feasta groups doing the projects is key.

RD: we have a list from James Bruges on Climate work funding possibilities - needs to be made available.

Decision : Set up funding sub committee but must interrelated, w members who have involvement / expertise and the Executive

There was a short networking break at this point

3. Premises search

Background by BD, giving a short term vs long-term view.

Regarding the idea of Feasta giving up a physical office and having a virtual office with meetings happening in EENGO or another venue, there wasn't a lot of support. There is a general feeling that it would be good to have a place for members to feel part of the Feasta community, to be able to drop by and/or work, for Feasta to host interns etc

This could be a separate issue from where the Member's Agent works: MF eventually hopes to work from the eco-village in Cloughjordan.

DG: What about DCC Property Dept? Clubbing together with other organisations could work especially if one would take ground floor shop-front type space, this could fund the offices. No decision taken on this.

Decision: DK to write a letter to directors of EENGO re the concept of an Environmental organisation hub hosted by them, they need to move premises next year too. He will have done by next Fri, Feb 2nd (and submit to Exec by email).

EOS: her old work office is coming available in the short term. We should make a proposal for it and we should be prepared go to €500 per month in rent.

Decision: EOS to write proposal by next Fri Feb 2nd, (and submit to Exec by email).

4. Membership development and participation

MMcC: Having a community of like minded people is important, how do we increase this?

MM: some groups haven't been very active e.g. food group since the 05 conference, how do you follow up on this work, and update it?

MG: there should be a monthly meeting, say to discuss a good book

BD: Started a discussion group in 06 but it ended up with him being the only person from the Executive there and he felt like a teacher instead of a peer. He admits that we are poor at educating our members, need self education from the ground up.

RJ: We need a mentor system for new members.

EC: Balance between expert views and new people being intimidated

MG: Do we want a broad membership or to be fewer and more 'academic'?

DK: Feasta works to come up with new ideas, we are a think tank and don't have resources to be a more general organisations involved in broader public education. This would take away from our 'thinking role' and there are many other organisations doing that.

RD: DK has identified our role, but we do need to bring new people up to speed:

MM: What are the benefits of membership, BD responded: to use Feasta to help to run one's own project for support and administrative function etc

RJ: Could use contacts from food conference to move food things on

EOS: we are a 'blue sky' organisation, with no institutional barrier to anyone coming in - though admittedly there can be a language barrier to understanding Feasta's thinking. Meeting face to face is important.

Decision: we need an introductory process to our ideas, suggested options included:

- an interactive seminar: one day long, on a particular topic, for max 12 people, perhaps 4 times a year.
- a regular series of informal presentations on key topics (Cap and Share, Biochar, etc.), perhaps organised by members.

Decision: We will host a Feasta Book Club, this will get people to educate themselves and provide face to face opportunities to further our thinking. who will be Project Co-ordinator and when will it start?

5. Feasta Project updates

5a. Climate and Energy Group work on Cap and Share ("C+S")

RD: Climate and Energy meeting in Schumacher College last week. A small group has been developing ideas and thinking, this weekend was to meet face to face, to present these ideas to the wider group and validate them. Two main outcomes:

i. People like simplicity of the idea. Ramifications of the various aspects of C+S were discussed but these were not seen as pivotal. The range of options can be presented, there is no need to be dogmatic.

ii. JJ's idea: we should set up a climate trust - a "government in exile", and recruit an international 'great and good' to give their support. Then we can recruit governments into it and then have it inserted into the UNFCCC.

Regarding funding and set up: "Earth Charter", an international organisation that could be promoter for this approach is interested. RD to meet them in UK. Karen Blinks (new director of Schumacher) thinks that they could fund the promoting of setting the Trust up.

John Jopling is going to do up the Trust Deed.

iii. "AEA Environment", Harwell: RD met and had a Q+A session with four members of the research team doing the C+S research on behalf of Comhar.

Policy analysis to be ready mid Feb. If favourable then Comhar will commission Cambridge Econometrics to do the modelling on it. Report by mid July, so can make it to December budget.

Decision: we need someone to oversee them. Who?

iv. C+S (Ireland) received a donation at Schumacher which is their first funding.

v. There was a favourable mention of C+S by Oisín Coughlan (FOE) in the Irish Times this week.

vi Initially C+S will be applied to Road Transport emissions only.

5b. Other Climate and Energy projects:

i Distributed Energy Conference:

System in flux. Community, local energy supply companies. DG: spoke of need for integrated renewable energy with community as stakeholders: this all could be part of broader themed conference. RD and EOS

RJ Energy Institute should to be involved, they have a new director: John Power

Decision: Feasta to hold conference: working title: "the New Emergency". It needs Project Coordinator to identify speakers etc. Who?

Decision: Start discussion on discussion boards for this purpose. Who?

ii. Biochar:

EOS: Seems to connect things in interesting ways, i.e. carbon emissions reductions and sequestration; agriculture; food and energy security and production systems etc.

Where does Feasta go with this - a position paper? We need to get it all down in writing.

EOS has become EPRIDA Ireland and investing in prototype plant that is also mini-lab, delivering 10kWh energy. She has been in touch with Michael Hayes from Limerick, on advisory board for new conference on biochar in Newcastle. Michael put in proposal to EPA for research on biochar for carbon seq. through Bord na Mona and Teagasc. Gov to give 4,500 for each KW generated. Looking at returns on system. Looking at making those units available to people, through pension funds. EOS to go to EPA conference, with poster illustrating possibilities of system. EPRIDA has many potential profit centres, i.e. fertiliser, energy, carbon seq.

EPRIDA model can spread fast at small scale, preventing takeover by big companies wanting to appropriate the technology

Conclusion: (EOS) We need a position paper. Potential link with conference on local energy etc. System still high-risk. Feasta to provide a platform for discussion of benefits of system.

(RJ) We need to identify the most appropriate scale of system.

EOS: Feasta is potentially an expert on the social/economic effects of biochar. Bearing in mind need to prove viability of system. Costs will fall, but there is a need to look at overall effects on rural life, energy generation etc.

Perhaps an article on it? EOS + BD

6. Discussion followed on other possible Feasta projects (Note: finalised / agreed listed on separate doc for easier future reference.)

AOB

7. Member Alan Cunningham suggestion of developing the topic of Public Health and sustainability - This would be part of the proposed conference: "the New Emergency" (working title)

GFH: This year's Irish Green Gathering will take place this Aug 8th-10th. He would like Feasta to be involved again. Will liaise with MF.

RL: He is working on a paper on energy efficiency and retrofitting housing stock, training builders as he feels there is ignorance 'on the ground'.

DG: shouldn't water be a Feasta topic? He will liaise with Feasta on this.

EOS: Things have changed, we have access, to govt but we are missing out on opportunities to transmit our ideas. We need formal letter to EENGO demanding to be informed about meetings / workshops w DEHLG and other depts. Who to do this? (EOS to lead)

Meeting closed at 4.45pm