

Groups

Groups' round up

The **Brighton group** met with Green Party MP Caroline Lucas and she offered full support for our climate debt campaign. **South Lakeland WDM** managed to get Tim Farron MP to send a pound to Andrew Mitchell and he also took some extra pounds for his colleagues and former MPs Shirley Williams and Paddy Ashdown. Tim Farron is the chair of the LibDem's Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

Andrew Smith MP tabled a parliamentary question on what DfID are doing with everyone's donated pounds thanks to the efforts of the **Oxford group**. This was a very useful step for our campaign and key in building the pressure against DfID.

North Kent WDM had a productive session with their Conservative MP who by challenging aspects of our campaigns, has created a discussion between WDM and the Conservative party.

It's been great receiving everyone's feedback from their meetings with MPs and responses to letters they have written. We will be using the feedback to help plan the next stage of the campaign and to work out how best to target certain MPs.

And as Gerald Kaufman MP told the **Manchester group**: "it is essential that we make maximum effort on the different aspects of climate change because any success can have a repercussive effect on other issues. So please keep up the good work".

Most of the groups' World 'piggy' Bank piñatas have been smashed in successful stunts. **Brixham WDM** were very successful in getting press interest in their stunt that took place on 13 November. Students from **Richmond University** even made a short film about their stunt which will soon be available online.

The **Central Lancashire group** held a talk with Ashley Erdman from WDM on our food campaign and it was attended by members of the local Friends of the Earth group and the Fairtrade Foundation amongst others. **Watford WDM** are hosting a Fairtrade Quiz Night on 30 November.



Bexhill and Hastings WDM's human blackjack stunt

Bexhill and Hastings WDM held an eye-catching 'human blackjack stunt' on Saturday 20 November. Group members dressed as bankers played George Osborne at a game of blackjack with the stakes being sacks of food.

The **South West London group** held a stall at a local farmer's market in Oval.

Bristol WDM held a successful joint event with the university's Student Restaurant society. Over eighty students enjoyed a meal cooked from food that would have otherwise been wasted and most of them stayed for the WDM talk on our food campaign. The event showed how linking up with other groups such as student food societies can be a brilliant way of engaging diverse groups of people with our campaigns.

South Lakeland WDM have been busy, having organised a very successful meeting in Kendal with Polly Higgins, an environmental lawyer working for the UN, on 'Ecocide'. About 90 people attended including local councillors, environmental activists, council officers and planners.

The group also held their annual Youth Conference for local sixth form school students. Presentations included a talk on peak oil, reducing carbon in Cumbria and a mock trial on tarsands.

Jayati Ghosh's interview online

Whilst Jayati Ghosh was in London for our public meeting on food we took the opportunity to interview her on the global food crisis. In it Jayati explains the impact the food crisis in 2007-2008 had on India and what needs to be done to ensure it doesn't happen again.

A short video of this interview is available online on our Youtube channel at www.youtube.com/user/wdmuk.

Kenya talk

In August Caroline and James from WDM went to Kenya to research how drastic increases in the price of food have affected Kenya's poorest people.

They met people who have been directly impacted by the food crisis of 2008 and found out about communities that have won campaigns to ensure better food security for themselves and their families.

Caroline would like to share her experiences with you and is offering to give talks about the people she met and how they may inspire our food campaigning. She said:

In Kibera, I met a woman called Judith who said she was nursing her 3 month old child during this time. She told me she didn't eat for three days and consequently was unable to feed her baby. She had been ill and unable to work for sometime because of having tuberculosis, diagnosed during the food price hikes, which had worsened her condition.

Meeting Judith and other people in Kenya made me feel even more strongly about the huge importance of WDM's food campaign. The fear of another food crisis is very much on people's minds in Kenya and no doubt in other poor countries. People already struggle and not being able to afford food has all sorts of knock-on effects that take years to put right.

If you would like Caroline to give a talk to your group, contact Sarah on 020 7820 4900 or email sarah.reader@wdm.org.uk.

Annual survey

In the November issue of Think Global we sent out a copy of the annual survey and the groups agreement. If you haven't done so already it would be great if you could get these sent back to us before February 2011. Your feedback is very valuable in planning for the next year and knowing how best we can support you.

Groups subscriptions

All groups which do not pay their annual subs by direct debit will have received a renewal reminder. We do encourage all groups to set up a direct debit to pay subs if at all possible; it saves us money and should make life easier for you as well!

Top tips

Why not organise a Christmas social for your WDM group? Or welcome the New Year with an informal meeting? Having a social can be a great way of celebrating the successes from the past year, getting to know each other outside of meetings and energising the group. You might even come up with some exciting plans for next year!

Websites

The new websites are looking great and we've already had positive feedback from groups saying that having an updated website has helped attract new members. If you don't yet have a website then please contact Pontus for help (pontus.westerberg@wdm.org.uk).