

Friends of the Earth (Birmingham) Ltd.

Board election 2022

Candidate Statements

NB. There are seven seats up for election this year:

- One for one year
- Two for two years
- Four for three years

Paul Hanna (Co-opted during 2022, standing for election)

I have been a non-executive director on the boards of many social enterprises and am currently the Chair of Gateway Family Services CIC. As a keen cyclist, I am fully behind the values and objectives of BFOE. The need for action on climate change at a local (and global) level is critical and we are at a key moment where we must influence it and ensure there is action. The key local players like the City Council and Combined Authority say the right things, but we need to support and encourage them as well as holding them to account. BFOE also needs to continue its own campaign of actions to promote sustainability and positive environmental care.

I can also bring skills and relevant experience to the BFOE Board from my working life. I have written bids for activities across a range of areas, including the voluntary sector, health, education, arts & heritage and community regeneration. I understand the pressures and challenges of running a café and conference centre, having set one up in a heritage building in Erdington. As a manager of services over many years, I have a wealth of experience of HR and project management.

Mel Lenehan (Co-opted during 2022, standing for election)

Mel is on leave for the AGM and has sent apologies. Karen has put together this summary on her behalf.

Mel Lenehan is the Principal and CEO of Fircroft College, an adult education residential college with a social justice mission in Selly Oak. She is also Co-Chair of the Women's Leadership Network. From those roles she has much experience of governance and boards. She is passionate about climate action, environmentalism and conservation, and has brought this to Fircroft. Fircroft was the first college in England to declare a climate and ecological emergency in 2020, and climate justice alongside social justice is a strategic priority for the college.

Mel sits on a variety of sector policy groups, including the FE and HE Climate Change Commission, speaking regularly at sector events and conferences. She engages with a number of climate activist education networks, including XR educators, and is studying for a doctorate in the area of adult educators and climate and environmental education.

She now wishes to apply her skills and passion to the valuable work of Birmingham Friends of the Earth.

Nick Whittingham (Retiring candidate, eligible for re-election)

I have been involved with the Warehouse on and off for over 30 years as well as involvement in the festivals over the last 15 years and the campaign group back in the late '90s/early 2000's. I currently live in Yorkshire where I am Chief Executive of Kirklees Citizens Advice & Law Centre, so a lot of my involvement in BfoE is remote running financial projections, though it's always good to come back and visit when I can.

Richard Bickle (Retiring candidate eligible for re-election)

I have been a member of BFoE since moving to Birmingham in 2005 and was first elected to the board in 2006. Prior to that I was involved in running The Greenhouse, a similar building in Norwich as, variously, a volunteer, paid staff member and trustee.

Currently serving as BFoE's Society Secretary, I also hold a similar position at the Co-operative Press and served for 8 years on the Board of Central England Co-operative, a large consumer co-operative society.

I am a lifelong environmentalist and believe that my skills and experience around governance in member-based organisations, the management of heritage buildings and financial and strategic planning would be of benefit to the BFoE board.

Bryan Nott (Co-opted during 2022, standing for election)

I am a long time campaigner on a wide range of issues including environmental and social justice. My current work involves me promoting the rights and the presence of communities in plans to address climate change in the city. This particularly focusses on marginalised communities and how a just and fair transition can be brought about with the support of all sections of society.

Previously I was a solicitor, representing individuals, campaign groups and trade unions rather than corporate interests. My work included public law, human rights, equalities, housing and special educational needs. I represented a number of campaign groups including environmental, squatting, hunt sabbing and similar

organisations. I headed a division of a national law firm that covered those practice areas.

I was a Labour Councillor in Birmingham between 1996 and 2004 and have lived in the city for over 25 years. I am a trustee of the Public Law Project, a national charity promoting access to justice and challenging state restriction of human rights. I am also a trustee of Stage2, an independent youth theatre group. As a board member I believe I can offer experience of working to support, oversee and constructively challenge organisations like BFoE.

Neal Fenwick (Co-opted during 2022, standing for election)

As an ex-engineer, I am keen on the efficient use of resources. During my working life, I tried to tread lightly for transport: commuting year round by cycle for over 30 years.

Recognising the waste of land/energy in meat production led to me becoming vegetarian in the mid-1980s.

I have over 15 years' experience leading technical projects/programmes for Rolls-Royce, including reporting financial performance to government assessors. Such work needed good communication skills at all levels. To deliver projects on time and within budget, I had to be highly organised, manage risks and develop/deliver to plans. I derived technology strategies and secured company/government funding.

I have managed and developed engineers, specialists and team leaders for over ten years; including recruiting and performance review of staff. In work, I needed to quickly pick up new rules and then visibly act on them.

With my background, I bring a fresh pair of eyes and perspective to the board; to ask the "why/why not" questions.

From early BFoE meetings, I can see benefit in more interaction/communication between the board and volunteers and I am keen to foster that. I have the environmental motivation and now the time to work hard for the board.