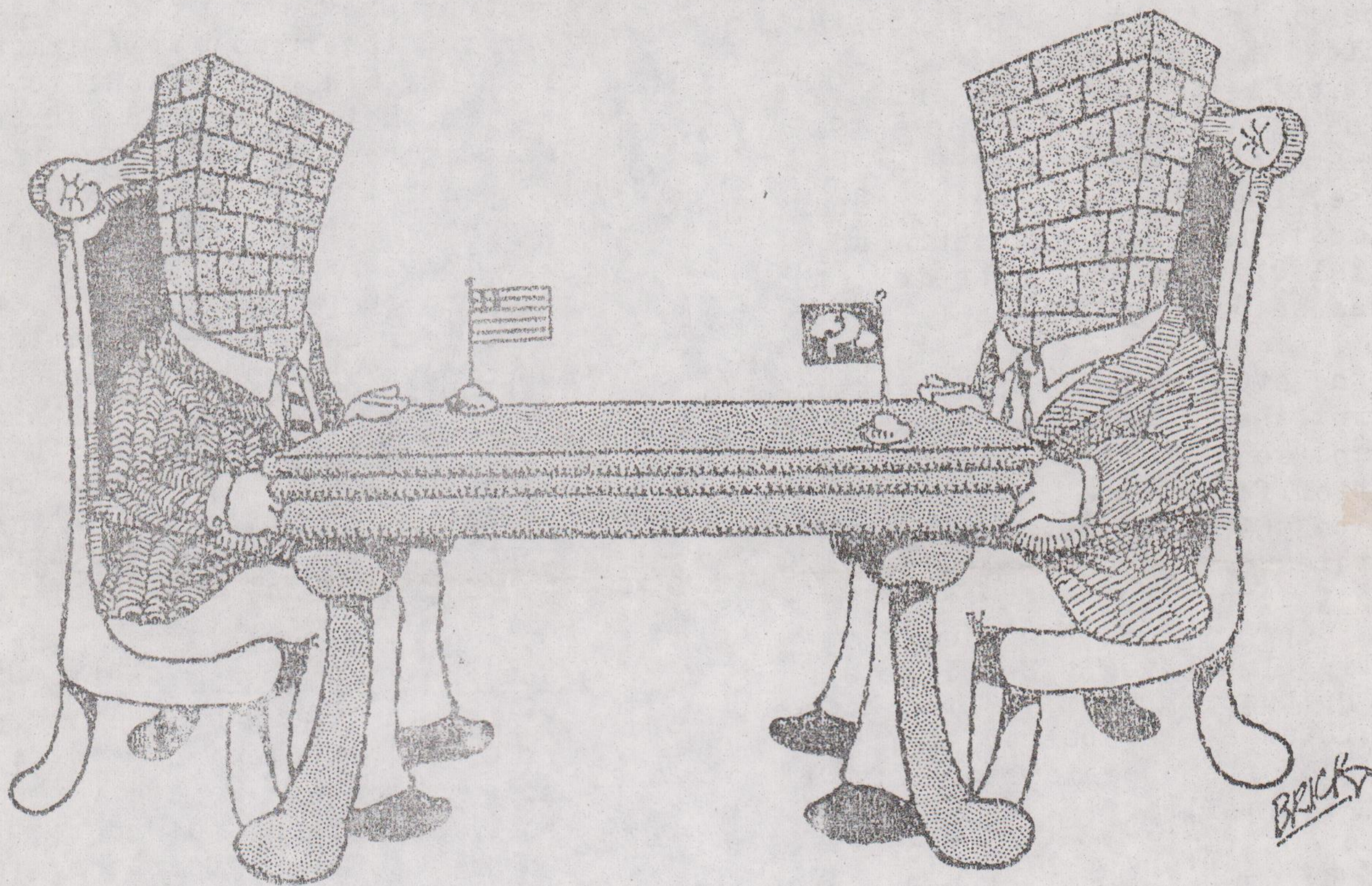


FOREST FIELDS PEACE GROUP

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 3 No. 3



ARMS TALKS

"We must do what we conceive to be the right thing and not bother our heads or burden our souls with whether we're going to be successful. Because if we don't do the right thing, we'll be doing the wrong thing, and we'll just be part of the disease and not part of the cure."

E.F. Schumacher

"COTTESMORE PROTEST"

Following the R.A.F. Cottesmore December carnival and blockade, several of the Forest Fields Peace Group and Leicester non-violent action group felt that Cottesmore should be further highlighted. This Liecestershire base is the tri-national training base for the Tornado, the multi-million pound first strike bomber. (see p4).

It was decided to have a direct action on the base with support actions in Nottingham and Leicester. We decided to occupy the two navigational-aid towers as this would be of a long duration, news-worthy and effective in disrupting the base. Despite reservations about the almost "military" flavour and potential elitism of the action, the date was set for Feb 2nd.

On the evening before the action we learnt that the police knew of our plans so we decided to bring the action forward 6 hours and left immediately for Cottesmore. By 1am four protestors had managed to climb the two towers and legal observers were in support. One hour later a patrolling landrover's headlights picked up peace graffiti which had been painted at the base of the tower. Soon the whole area was besieged with military personnel and everyone awaited the arrival of the police. By dawn the police had blocked off all access to the base and guarded the towers.



At 8am three of the legal observers were arrested; two of stealing their own car, the third for trying to find out why his two friends had been arrested. All three received rough treatment from the police and two had to see the police surgeon at Syston police station.

During the morning interviews were given to the press and media in Cottesmore village and at 12 o'clock the four protestors decided to come down the towers and were immediately arrested. Two of the four refused to give their names and addresses. A special court was set up in Oakham, two protestors being remanded in Leicester prison for refusing to give their names, the other two were released on bail. The court case was to be four days later. The three supporters who had been arrested were eventually released, two without being charged, the third bailed to appear at Oakham magistrates court on 27th February. All five were charged with breach of the peace and obstructing the police in the course of their duty.

February 6th, Oakham Court.

After a five hour hearing, in which we conducted our own defence, three protestors were given conditional discharges and ordered to pay £20 costs. The magistrates stated that the lenient sentences were due to the possible intimidation by the R.A.F. personnel. The fourth protestor's case was adjourned to Feb 13th, when she was given a conditional discharge and ordered to pay £40 costs.

Evaluation.

The base was effectively disrupted. Due to skillful press liason there was excellent media coverage - local and national T.V. and radio, four national papers and five international ones.

Strong links were established between Nottingham and Leicester peace groups.

The five hour trial revealed huge potential for court room tactics.

But most importantly, the action has inspired greater opposition to the horrendous dangers of the Tornado nuclear bomber.

Letter

Dear Friends,

After reading the article by "Dave", the peace activist who climbed up the navigation tower at Cottesmore last December, I feel prompted to make the following comment on the potential behaviour of this country's police and government.

Dave evidently believes that ultimately the police will behave in a civil and humane way towards peace protestors (as I feel they did for the most part at Cottesmore) i.e. refusing the order to use violence against us, merely "shrugging their shoulders" and letting us casually dismantle this country's "defence".

Much as I would like to believe in the eventual triumph of common sense and individual moral conscience in those governing us, I feel it is naive and over-optimistic to expect it. Not only will many people relish, and I do mean RELISH, the opportunity of "laying into" us when it comes to the final crunch, but they already have and still are committing the kind of violence that they can only get away with under the protection of a corrupt state.

CHILWELL PROTEST.

On Saturday 18th Feb. there was a demonstration against the proposed purchase of Chilwell Ordnance Depot by the U.S. AirForce. Leaf-letting, banners, placards and a chalk-in were held in the centres of Nottingham, Beeston, Stapleford, and Long Eaton. These demonstrations were linked together by a convoy of vehicles including a hearse and a mock Cruise missile.

The demonstrations showed there is increasing public opposition to the siting of American Cruise missiles in this country and to the American military presence in Britain.

The Forest Fields Peace Group Newsletter would welcome letters or articles concerned with the arms race or the peace movement. Please leave contributions at the Forest Fields Neighbourhood Centre.

The deadline for the next Newsletter is Friday 9th March.

To impose a totalitarian system is not as the article supposes, risking a governments downfall, but doing the reverse. This government, like, any other government, is at this very moment passing and preparing Bills that aim eventually to erode all our rights of protest - be it over trade union activities, the rights of minorities (for example, the Anti-Apartheid Movement is about to be made an illegal organisation), or the siting of nuclear weapons in this country.

This government sanctions police violence - I know personally of many vicious and unprovoked attacks by police on protestors - but we cannot do a thing about it, because those who make the rules can also bend them according to their will, keeping us forever under their thumb.

I am not sure exactly how to change the situation I have outlined, but I feel it is vital that we do not allow ourselves to believe in the myth of the "democratic right to protest" that governments of this country pacify us with. We are but a small threat to the enormous power that they hold, we are not the balance on the scales of justice. We are outweighed, and we need more than idealistic dreaming to change this.

This letter is in no way intended personally, Dave's article merely prompted me to write on a subject which I have been giving much thought lately. I feel I should add my support and indeed admiration for Dave's inspiring action at Cottesmore. Best of luck to you all,

Peace and Freedom,

Claire (Hyson Green)

CRUISE DEMO.

Nottingham CND has announced that there will be an immediate demonstration in the Old Market Square at 5pm if it is announced that a Cruise launcher has left Greenham Common on a practise exercise.

People are asked to assemble in the Old Market Square at 5pm whatever time the announcement is made. You are most likely to hear the news if you are on the contact tree. (The media is sure to be told not to broadcast details). Please make sure you know who your contacts are and who will contact you. If you are not on the contact tree and would like to be, 'phone Paddy or Cathy on 788655

Sham negotiations between the superpowers

SIMULTANEOUSLY with their massive war preparations the superpowers are carrying on an elaborate series of negotiations on the question of arms control and disarmament. The impression is given that through these secret deals the world situation will be calmed, the number of nuclear weapons reduced and the peace and security of the people guaranteed. Nothing could be further from the truth.

For instance, if we examine the peace initiatives relating to the deployment of Cruise missiles for the four years up to October 1983, we find:

*Oct 6th 1979: Soviet President Brezhnev offers to negotiate about Soviet missiles if NATO does not deploy Cruise or Pershing 2;

*Dec 12 1979: NATO announces its "two track" policy of simultaneously preparing to deploy missiles while carrying on negotiations. The Soviets refuse to negotiate;

*Oct 1980: negotiations actually do begin in Geneva;

*Nov 1980: Reagan suspends talks;

Nov 30th 1980: talks are resumed. Reagan announces his "zero option";

*Dec 20th 1982: Soviet President Andropov offers to reduce the number of SS-20s if there is an agreement with NATO over medium-range bombers;

*Feb 14th 1983: NATO rejects Andropov's offer;

*Mar 30th 1983: Reagan announces his "build down" proposals;

*Apr 2nd 1983: Soviets reject U.S. offer;

*May 17th 1983: U.S. proposes a new version of "build-down";

*June 24th 1983: Soviets reject U.S. offer;

*July 1983: Soviets threaten to deploy more SS-20s and their own new Cruise missiles if NATO goes ahead with its deployment plans. NATO says it will not change its plans;

*Aug 26th 1983: Andropov offers to eliminate all SS-20s in Europe if NATO will abandon its plans;

*Sep 1983: Cruise missiles arrive in Britain. Soviets begin construction of new missile sites in Eastern Europe. Talks begin in Geneva again.

Thus it is absolutely clear that the whole "disarmament process" is actually an integral part of the arms race, that despite all the proposals and counter-proposals from the two superpowers the arms race continues, while, as can be seen by the three years of "negotiations" between the superpowers over Cruise-type missiles, the number of missiles deployed and the danger of world war actually is increased.

Nor is the situation that one side, for instance the Soviets, is more interested in peace or more serious in its negotiating than the other side is, as some people claim. The reality is that both "sides", both blocs, are war mongering and aggressive and only go through the motions of "negotiating". The path of peace does not run through their door.

To avert a new world war the people cannot rely on the superpowers and their negotiations. It is only the mass struggles of the people against the two superpowers and their allies that is the guarantee of peace. To achieve victory it is precisely this mass struggle - and only this mass struggle - that needs to be stepped up by the anti-war movement.

DISCUSSION GROUP

Wednesday 28th March at 8pm.

"What's wrong with the Freeze proposals?"

"What is the way forward for the anti-war movement?"

Venue - Neighbourhood Centre, 69 Wiverton Rd, Forest Fields.

Everyone Welcome.



Tornado - The new nuclear threat.

The controversy and publicity surrounding the arrival of American Cruise missiles in Britain has obscured a major and frightening development in Britain's independent nuclear capability - the Tornado bomber.

A complex aircraft with a variable geometry wing and advanced electronics which enable it among other things to follow the terrain automatically to its target in the worst weather, the Tornado has been ordered in two main versions by the R.A.F.: the GR1 strike version, of which 220 have been ordered and 100 are already in service, and 165 F2 interceptors which will begin to go to squadrons in 1985.

Tornado represents another massive escalation of the nuclear arms race. The 220 GR1 Tornado nuclear bombers officially "replace" 56 Vulcan and 36 Buccaneer bomber planes. At today's prices they are being introduced at a cost of £12,500 million. Each plane is a long-range, supersonic, accurate, low-flying, radar-evading, high payload nuclear bomber. It can be used as part of a first-strike. As The Times reported on 9th September 1983, "The Tornado, built jointly by the aerospace industries of Britain, West Germany, and Italy, has already taken over as Britain's main airborne nuclear deterrent."

With slight and inexpensive modification: the Tornado can be equipped to fire the new Sea Eagle missile, a British equivalent of Cruise. It has the adaptability to perform the function of Polaris, Trident, or Cruise.

Moreover, its versatility means it cannot be included in any of the existing categories named in arms reduction talks and it therefore ruins any prospect of a negotiated peace between East and West. Equally, the British Government would doubtless argue that Tornado should not be included in any nuclear arms reduction talks since as well as being part of this country's nuclear arsenal it is an intrinsic part of Britain's conventional air defence. Tornado, therefore, guarantees no progress on any peace initiative.

The purchase of Tornado is further evidence of the British Government's preparation and readiness to fight a nuclear war. It is hoped that the recent actions at R.A.F. Cottesmore, the training base for Tornado pilots, has helped to fuel public awareness and opposition to this suicidal development of Britain's nuclear defence policy. But opposition to the Tornado must become stronger and let us not concentrate so hard on getting rid of American Cruise missiles from our shores that we forget the menace already instigated from within these shores.

MOBILE AFFINITY GROUP

A meeting has been arranged for all those interested in forming a mobile affinity group to support the Greenham Common peace actions should the Cruise launchers attempt to leave the base. The meeting is on Sun 26th Feb. Ring Paddy 788655 for details.

If you would like to subscribe to the monthly Forest Fields Peace Group Newsletter, then please contact us at the Forest Fields Neighbourhood Centre, 69, Wiverton Road, Forest Fields or ring Paddy on 788655. Cost is only £1.00. If you would simply like to make a donation to the Peace Group then please contact us at the same address.



The Forest Fields Peace Group

Wants Your Support.

In recent months the F.F.P.G. has expanded greatly and attracted the involvement and support of many new members. At the same time a fresh enthusiasm for the many aspects of campaigning as part of the peace movement has arrived and different people are involved in a varied range of activities.

The Non-violent Direct Action Group's hugely successful work has inspired city-wide support for direct action from other peace groups and the group itself has grown in number. It is also integral in the planning of a mass action at Chilwell Ordnance Depot which will take place later in the summer and details of which will in a future edition of the Newsletter.

The Newsletter is edited and designed by a small group of peace activists and currently has a monthly circulation of 750 copies. The group is still looking to improve the quality and lay-out of its content but feedback indicates the new style presentation is popular and effective.

Some members of the F.F.P.G. are undertaking to organise fund-raising events and activities and already scheduled are a disco and sponsored walks etc. One member of the Action Group will be undertaking a sponsored jail sentence after he has appeared before the Magistrates Court for non-payment of a fine.

In addition some members are concentrating on organising public events such as meetings and information stalls etc. In line with this a Peace Discussion Group has been formed which will meet on the fourth Wednesday of each month to discuss lots of issues related to the peace movement and the arms race. This will hopefully fill a gap for many people in the peace movement whose time seems to be devoted to organising and campaigning.

All these groups need and welcome any additional support to their numbers. The peace movement is growing, but to keep growing it needs the active participation of more people. Enthusiasm for peace and opposition to the horrendous arms race are all that are needed (although special skills will be greatly appreciated). Perhaps you can lend a hand to one (or more) of our groups. To help you work it out, here's a list of our current activities:

1. Non-violent Direct Action Group - next meeting 04.03.84, 7.30pm at 69, Wiverton Road to discuss and plan a mass action at Chilwell.
2. Newsletter - a) editorial group to design, draft and edit newsletter. Next meeting 11th March (tel 788655 for details).
b) distribution - to circulate to members of F.F.P.G. and distribute every Saturday morning in Hyson Green outside Scoop Shop.
3. Publicity - to organise public meetings, information stalls etc.
4. Discussion Group - next meeting Wed 28th March, 7.30pm.
Topics - "What's wrong with the Freeze proposals?"
"What is the way forward for the anti-war movement?"
Venue - Neighbourhood Centre, 69, Wiverton Road, Forest Fields.
5. Fundraising - if you'd like to get involved then please get in touch with Julian or Barbara, c/o Neighbourhood Centre, 69, Wiverton Road, Forest Fields.

NEXT MEETINGS OF THE FOREST FIELDS PEACE GROUP:

Wednesday 14th March 8pm }
Wednesday 11th April 8pm } at Neighbourhood Centre, 69 Wiverton
Road, Forest Fields.