

F2C ANNUAL REPORT 2012

CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

Welcome to the fifth Annual Report of Freedom To Choose.

The past twelve months has seen the Tobacco Control Industry remorselessly tightening its hold on society and spending even more public money on lobbying and campaigning.

Not content with banning smoking in all enclosed public spaces, they have moved to hide tobacco behind closed doors in supermarkets (and shortly in smaller shops), and are moving to ban smoking in private cars, in the open air of hospital grounds, and even in public parks. Social landlords are being encouraged to ban smoking in private homes. A farcical government 'open consultation' about plain packaging has just finished, with thousands of pounds of public money being spent on campaigning for plain packaging and commissioning a biased review, despite even the police saying it would encourage counterfeit cigarettes. Also, Australia's next step is the illegalisation of tobacco.

In a move of bizarre hypocrisy, the Tobacco Control Industry has accused and named Freedom To Choose as being a lobby group acting on behalf of the tobacco industry:
"Using Lobby Groups is one of the ways in which Tobacco Companies are Lobbying Decision Makers. Lobby Groups act on behalf of the tobacco industry, contacting regulators and policy makers with the aim to influence regulation and legislation." [Tobacco Tactics Website](#).

I will state it clearly again here: Freedom To Choose has never acted and will never act on behalf of the tobacco industry.

We are a membership organisation, funded only through membership fees and member donations. We act only on behalf of our members and in support of the rights of ordinary smokers.

Non-smokers and smokers continue to suffer the huge social and economic damage inflicted by the ban: as forecasted over 10,000 pubs have closed, as well as innumerable cafes, music venues and social clubs. Loneliness, especially amongst older people, has increased and community life has decreased.

The past year has seen a much greater media presence by Freedom To Choose, but we have a difficult task ahead: unlike the Tobacco Control Industry we don't receive hundreds of thousands of pounds in public money, and we don't employ thousands of paid staff. We are entirely dependent on voluntary income and on our volunteers.

I cannot praise our volunteers enough for their absolute commitment and their hard work. I would like to thank every single one of our members, and also thank my fellow committee members for their teamwork during the past year.

We have survived five years. We are still here. We will continue as long as is needed to fight these cruel and unfair smoking restrictions.

Dave Atherton
August 2012

STRUCTURE AND ADMINISTRATION

Freedom2Choose is an unincorporated membership association, formally constituted in October 2007.

Its objects are:

- to promote freedom of choice and to oppose any coercive restraints upon that freedom by any lawful means and with particular reference to the negative effects of smoking bans on individuals, groups, businesses and organisations and
- to advance public education in all such matters.

The Association is managed by an Executive Committee elected by the members at their annual general meeting.

Committee members serving during 2011 - 2012 were:

Andy Davis
Carol Cattell
Dave Atherton
David Bunn *(appointed 20 January 2012)*
Jenny Hunter *(resigned 29 May 2012)*
John Watson
Karen Bunn *(resigned 10 January 2012)*
Pete Jackson
Phil Johnson *(resigned 10 December 2011)*
Tony Ward

Officers were:

Chairman	Dave Atherton
Joint Chairman	Phil Johnson <i>(until 10 December 2011)</i>
Treasurer	Belinda Cunnison <i>(non-Exec)</i>
Membership	Pete Jackson
IT	Tony Ward
Committee Secretary	Carol Cattell

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

At the AGM in October 2011 members agreed seven areas were a priority for development and improvement. These had been identified from the members' survey. Here we report on progress on these areas in more detail.

1. Focus resources and build on strengths: F2C's uniqueness, independence, membership, good research, and good information base.

During the year it became essential to focus our resources, not least because of the loss of the volunteering services of a number of key previously active members through illness, work and family commitments or personal circumstances.

Ideas such as developing the online shop or organising a music festival became more of a distraction than a priority and were reluctantly but formally dropped for this year.

We have had to concentrate on consolidating our internal management, while increasing the promotion and perception of F2C's position as a member organisation with no links to tobacco funding, which is pro-choice and represents the rights of the smoker.

There have been over 30 radio interviews and 3 TV appearances during the past 8 months, and many more mentions of F2C in external articles and publications.

Excellent daily news and research updates continue to be provided on the Forum by active members.

2. Tackle and improve internal management and organisation, including holding regular Committee meetings.

Lines of accountability and decision-making and areas of responsibility were reviewed, and the safe future of F2C's online presences (Main Page, Forum, and now the new Blog) was secured.

The Committee has held full meetings every month on the last Wednesday of each month, receiving regular written reports including IT, planning, finance, and politics. These meetings have written agendas and are fully minuted.

It held a further three Special meetings to deal with urgent matters.

Sub-committees and working groups were formed to oversee IT developments, publications, constitutional review, policies review, and risk assessment.

3. Deal robustly with the image, ownership and quality of all F2C branded material and statements made on behalf of F2C.

Writing guidelines have been re-introduced and strongly enforced through editorial control.

The Webpage has been slowly cleaned up and key contents pages and links updated, and work is in progress to modernise the banner.

A new Blog, fully owned and controlled by F2C, was launched on July 1st.

The F2C Newsletter has continued to be published monthly and now has a circulation of around 300, with great potential to increase.

Cont ../...

4. Build bridges and make working alliances with other relevant pro-freedom groups and prominent individuals as appropriate.

Working links have been established in the UK with groups such as Nothing2Declare and with Bolton Smokers' Club. We supported the Hands Off Our Packs campaign. While not linking with FOREST - because we are committed to remaining (and being seen to remain) free of any tobacco funding - individual members have attended FOREST-organised events in the spirit of co-operation. We have continued to develop relationships with individual MPs and prominent pro-choice writers, and with similar groups internationally.

5. Consider encouraging local informal meetings to boost morale and support.

We have tried to do this, both through encouraging local action and through the efforts of one of our forum members to host a barbecue. Unfortunately there has been little response from members themselves.

6. Ensure that debate on the Forum and elsewhere does not cross the line between vigorous and abusive.

We have used more active Forum moderation, though rarely needed. Regaining editorial control and ownership of F2C written publications during the year has helped to reduce friction.

All members of the current Executive Committee work co-operatively as a team and have developed respect both for each other and for the paid membership. The rare occasions of abuse this year have come from registered forum members who are not paid F2C members: in each case we have tried to balance our values of allowing free speech against standing up for the good name of F2C.

7. Work co-operatively and openly with members, identifying and using skills and resources within F2C, and improve communication between members, and between members and their elected Executive committee.

This is the area in which the Executive Committee feels it has made least progress, and we apologise wholeheartedly to all members and thank them for having remained loyal to and active within F2C. It has been a year in which the incoming Committee has had to concentrate its efforts on some major campaigns such as plain packaging and the relentless attempts to ban smoking in the open air such as hospital grounds and parks.

It was also a year in which we needed to raise our profile in the media.

We were determined to take ownership and control of our publications, and to establish our own F2C Blog, which we have done successfully.

We also had to concentrate on getting internal matters in hand, many of which could not be shared publicly.

We faced many additional and unforeseen difficulties this year: the Forum going down a few days after our first committee meeting, the serious illness of one of our key researchers, the sudden resignation of our previous Chairman, accusations (false) in the national press that we had threatened Tobacco Control personnel with violence, our newsletter and front page editor stepping down, and the resignation of a further experienced Committee member because of family problems. It has all taken an enormous amount of time and human resources, and there was little time left to improve communications with members. We promise to do so during 2012-2013.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Accounts – Belinda Cunnison

**FREEDOM 2 CHOOSE
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE PERIOD 1 JULY 2011 TO 30 JUNE 2012**

	Ending	2011		Ending	2012
INCOME			INCOME		
Donations		£ 220.04	Donations	£	348.39
Standing orders		£ 1,027.21	Standing orders	£	980.00
Membership		£ 48.87	Membership	£	43.88
Renewal		£ 834.36	Renewal	£	526.02
Advertising		£ 120.33	Advertising	£	22.36
Shop sales		£ -	Shop sales	£	102.50
NET interest		£ 0.22	NET interest	£	0.24
Scotland income**		£ 147.30	Scotland income**	£	63.30
		£ 2,398.33			£ 2,086.69
EXPENDITURE			EXPENDITURE		
Marketing		£ 705.00	Marketing	£	183.00
Post & phone		£ 321.81	Post & phone	£	101.18
Travel & accommodation		£ 548.24	Travel & accommodation	£	221.91
Miscellaneous*		£ 53.49	Miscellaneous*	£	46.75
Corporation tax		£ 24.77	Corporation tax**		
Website fee		£ 59.99	Website fee	£	-
Paid to Scotland**		£ 147.30	Paid to Scotland**	£	63.30
		£ 1,860.60			£ 616.14
					£ 1,470.55
SURPLUS/DEFICIT OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE					£ 1,470.55

*Replacement printer £34.99 for secretary, £18.50 for drinks for function

**Income collected on behalf of and paid to Freedom to Choose (Scotland) (largely through Paypal).

*TICAP membership £8; floral tribute for Beryl Baker £38.75

**Freedom2Choose has been zero-rated for corporation tax as it has negligible trading income and bank interest. This situation will be reviewed in five years.

Cont./...

**FREEDOM 2 CHOOSE
BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 30 JUNE 2012**

Notes	30 June 2011	
	£	£
CURRENT ASSETS		
Bank Current Account	4,056	
Paypal Account	108	
Total	4,164	4,164
LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Taxation		0
Total		0
CURRENT ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		4,164
CAPITAL AND RESERVES		
Carried forward (bank/Paypal)		2,694
Corporation tax 10-11		0
Surplus of Income over Expenditure during the period		1,471
		4,164

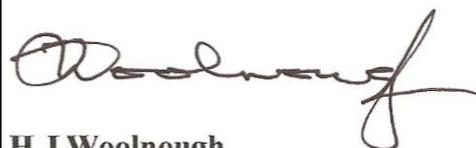
Account Notes:

I have presented two years' accounts together in order to show differences. Our surplus has risen, even though only two categories of income (donations and shop income) were higher than the previous year.

All income relating to members (new members, renewals and standing orders) have seen a drop.

Expenditure has also dropped significantly in all categories. This has contributed to a larger surplus. We have been zero-rated for corporation tax as our accounts do not show significant trading income.

I have reviewed the books and invoices of Freedom to Choose and find the attached Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet to be a true representation of the position at 30 June 2012.



H J Woolnough