



Abingdon Carbon Cutters AGM, 7.30pm 16th July 2014

AGM 2014 Minutes

1 Present: Cliff Marshall (chair), Richard Howard, Susie Howard, Fiona Habermehl, Linda Coker, Daniel Scharf, Lucille Savin, Sally Reynolds

2.Prevented: Pauline Marshall, Richard Riggs

3 Minutes of AGM held on 3rd July 2013 and SGM held on 15th January 2014 were accepted.

4 Accounts.

Linda presented the Accounts for the period 1st April 2013 – 31st March 2014. These were independently examined by Frank Syrat FCA, who suggested some minor technical adjustments which will be incorporated into the final version. The accounts were accepted. It was noted that we had a healthy bank balance at year-end, and the suggestion was made that in future, room rent for core group meetings will be paid from our account. We thank Linda for all her hard work throughout the year, and Frank for giving his time and expertise.

5 Appointment of Officers for 2014/2015

With no resignations no proposals for alternative candidates for any of the roles, the officers were re-elected for the next year as follows:

Co-Chairs: Cliff Marshall & Richard Howard, Treasurer - Linda Coker, Deputy Treasurer - Susie Howard, Minutes Secretary - Sally Reynolds.

6 Review of the year ending 30th June 2014

Cliff presented a document, Abingdon Carbon Cutters Annual Summary of Activity July 2013-2014, which was accepted, with the addition of mention of the Community Shop and of Clubs & Societies day.

7 Priorities and activities for 2014-15

Transition. Bringing groups together across the town.

Keep trade local. The Federation of Small Businesses (fsb.org.uk/thamesvalley) are promoting a “Keep Trade Local” challenge between 4th – 11th August 2014.

Grow local : food and flowers. Witney has a town-centre veg bed. Could we find one and interest the allotment societies?

Links with schools

Permaculture/forest garden. Daniel has a friend in Garsington who has set up 2 Forest Gardens and would come & tell us how it could be done.

Hydro launch, probably Sept/October

Transport plan – current consultation in Oxfordshire. SH to circulate the 7 questions.

Solar Schools. St Nic’s are very interested, Sally Mears is the contact.

Date of next Meeting and AGM Weds 15th July 2015

Abingdon Carbon Cutters Annual Summary of Activity July 2013-2014

During the past year the activities of Abingdon Carbon Cutters have developed on a number of fronts. The establishment of Abingdon as a transition town initiative, announced by the Mayor at the Eco Fair held in the Guildhall on 26th October 2013, marked a key milestone for ACC; it has always been an aim of the group to help establish just such a transition town initiative. A significant aim now will be the nurturing of this initiative so that the whole community can understand and enjoy the benefits of living in a town in transition. To emphasise this new situation the constitution of the group was amended in January to include the objective *‘to promote a range of activities consistent with the status of Abingdon as a community in Transition’* Various activities have begun aimed at achieving this objective including holding a number of meetings to explore the possibilities for community-based actions. This will be a central concern for the group during the coming year and will involve establishing ways to enable community groups, councillors and other interested parties to work together to make the notion of transition real. A particular need will be the clear

communication about what being a community in transition means for the people of the town and surrounding area; significantly it will need to be the people themselves who determine this if the initiative is to be successful.

In addition to the work towards a successful transition initiative, ACC has continued to hold open meetings on the third Wednesday of the month which, as well as having transition as the focus, have involved such topics as: Air-source Heat Pumps for home heating, Getting the Best From Your Garden. A thought provoking meeting on Conflict and Climate Change was held jointly with Abingdon Peace Group. In a recent development a series of open Green Film Nights has begun with the first evening devoted to the showing of a stimulating speech on the moral imperative of Climate Change given in London recently by Costa Rican diplomat, Christiana Figueres, who is Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. These Film Nights are being held in the historic barn at Stonehill House, by the kind invitation of the owner. Green Drinks evenings have continued to be held on the second Wednesday of the month. The biennial Clubs and Societies Day gave ACC the opportunity to attract some new members.

The Food Group has continued with its successful work with the Mother and Toddler Group at South Abingdon Children's Centre encouraging the development of cooking skills to produce tasty meals from scratch using limited, 'left-over' ingredients. The Food section of the ACC website now also includes examples of recipes which make use of local ingredients and in particular vegetables. The Food group has continued to organise the ACC Stall at each Local Excellence Market and liaised with the work carried out to develop Forest School outdoor learning sites in South Abingdon Primary Schools. The outstanding apple crop of 2013 resulted in intensive use of the apple pressing equipment which enabled significant funds to be raised which will be used to replace equipment and extend the resources available to process future harvests. The Community Shop in the town centre, early in October, proved a very good venue for apple pressing by local people as well as a useful place to publicise the Eco Fair. Not least, people attending the Eco Fair valued the refreshments provided by the group.

The Abingdon Hydro Group has made great strides during the past year towards the installation of the hydroelectric scheme planned beside Abingdon Weir. The necessary permissions have been obtained and contractors are being sought. ACC will be helping to promote the sale of shares to raise the funding for installation which should now be possible in the coming year.

The initiative, taken last year, to develop pollinator-friendly planting of flower beds in the Abbey Meadows proved to be very successful. The beds thrived and attracted not only many bees and other pollinating insects but also much interest from the public. Notices were provided to explain what the beds were seeking to achieve and the three ACC members tending the beds were regularly asked about the planting. Plant names were provided on the ACC website. Encouraged by the success of these beds, using mainly annual flowering plants, the group have now negotiated the chance to plant a further two beds by the refreshment kiosk near the river. This time the planting is devoted to pollinator-friendly perennial plants. Negotiations are ongoing to enable the group to install proper support wires to enable climbers to be supported as part of the planting. Again there seems to be much interest from both the insects and members of the public. In another part of the Abbey Meadows, work is well under way to establish a Wildflower Maze with support from council staff and hard work by volunteers from ACC, Abingdon Naturalists, local Scout groups, all directed with expertise and enthusiasm by Lucille Savin.

Financial support has been received from the Oxon CAG Network with a grant towards the cost of environment development in the Abbey Meadows and we were able to use funds from the Trust for Oxfordshire Environment Development to part fund the Wildflower Meadow. The previously awarded grant from Oxon CAG Network for Wind Turbine Project has now been carried forward to help fund a workshop to build a 'demonstration' wind turbine generator for use at events to raise awareness. We were very grateful to the Mayor of Abingdon for 2013-2014, Cllr Samantha Bowring, for making the Guildhall available to ACC for the Eco Fair free of charge. This meant that we could use donations for programmes and refreshments, and contributions from exhibitors, to support our ongoing projects. As ever, we are grateful to the CAG Network for a grant towards and provision of public liability insurance.

The ACC website has continued to develop over the year as the activities of the group have extended. The website has now been live for 20 months and in this time has received almost 9000 visitors at a rate of about 150 per week. The number of people who have asked to be informed about ACC activities stands at 337. The officers are very grateful for the support and hard work of members of the core management group who meet on the first Wednesday of the month to organise activities and also those other members who help in activities such as the LE Markets, Fun in The Park, looking after the pollinator-friendly beds, etc.