

## Abingdon Carbon Cutters AGM 2018

Weds 18th July 2018, 7.30pm in the garden of St Ethelwold's House, 30 East St Helens St

**Present:** Richard Howard (chair), Linda Coker (treasurer), Sally Reynolds (minutes), Fiona Habermehl, Julien Willaime, Richard Riggs, Sam Bowring, Anne Smart, Caroline Townsend, Pat Powell, John Killick, Susie Howard.

**Apologies:** Cliff Marshall, Pauline Marshall, Petra Greenland, Sharon Betts. Anne Barnes, Kat Kelly, Sheila Bachman, Georgina Walker, Lucille Savin. The mayor, Margaret Crick, had been unable to attend and had hoped to be represented by the deputy mayor, David Pope, but he did not attend.

**Minutes:** Minutes of the last AGM on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2017 were agreed, with correction of dates.

### Accounts for period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018

The accounts were presented by Linda. These have been sent to Oxfordshire CAG office and Core Group had agreed not to have them checked by an independent verifier. Our income for the period was £2,800 and expenditure £2,700, so we have a healthy balance of payments. Most income was from apple juicing but we have also had a lot of expenditure on apple-juicing kit this year. Susie Howard's work in managing the apple pressing was acknowledged with thanks. CAG provide insurance for £50 for which they give us a grant. The accounts were accepted and thanks given to Linda for her work and for agreeing to continue as treasurer.

### Appointment of officers

The officers who had served last year were: Treasurer: Linda Coker; Secretary: Sally Reynolds, and both were willing to continue to serve. Caroline Townsend had accepted nomination for the post of chair and was appointed unanimously.

Core Group members for 2017-2018 were Samantha Bowring, Paul Buckingham, Linda Coker, Fiona Habermehl, Richard Howard, Susie Howard, Cliff Marshall, Sally Reynolds, Richard Riggs, Lucille Savin, Anne Smart and Caroline Townsend.

### Annual Summary of Activity July 2017 - June 2018

**Review of the year.** Caroline presented a written review of the year (attached below) and was thanked for her lively presentation. It was commented that although no formal work has been done to advance our Transition Town status, in fact all our work ticks these boxes. Additional information was offered about Georgina's study of the influence of ACC and another CAG, and about "The Pantry", an arrangement whereby surplus food from Oxford Food Bank is delivered to St Ethelwolds House for distribution to refugee families. This information will be added to the review.

Anne Smart reported on the Plastics Group which met prior to the AGM and is having a stall at the Local Excellence Summer Crafts market on July 28<sup>th</sup>.

Susie and Sally reported that watering is a problem for the Bee Beds and the Edible Abingdon beds due to the drought – the water-tank at Abbey Gardens has run dry, and water has to be drawn from the millstream for the Bee Beds and from the river for the kiosk beds. New volunteers are coming forward but more are needed. Sally agreed to contact Richard Ballard, Vale Parks Officer, to ask if his contractors could water these beds. If payment is a problem, could the Town Council offer assistance?

Sam Bowring reported that she has put a formal question to the Town Council re progress on reducing their carbon footprint, and has received the reply that the Roysse Room has been insulated. She encouraged more Carbon Cutters to stand for election to the Town Council.

### Suggestions for Activities for 2018-19

1. **Repair Café.** Successful ones have been held in Didcot and Wantage, using young technicians working at Harwell. No-one volunteered to organise this.
2. **Dietary Carbon Footprints.** A meeting presenting evidence for the carbon footprints of different diets was suggested, and Fiona Habermehl, Kat Kelly and Sheila Bachman are willing to contribute to this.

3. **Follow-up meeting with Layla Moran.** A summary of our meeting without her in April has been sent to her, and 2 dates in July have been suggested for a group to visit her at a surgery. Sally to arrange a date.
4. **Women's Institute Campaign Against Plastic Soup.** The WI are keen to spread the word about the effect of frequent washing of clothes made of artificial fibres on micro-fibre contamination of rivers. Anne Smart willing to invite them to a meeting.
5. **Car sharing.** Especially electric cars. No offers to take this forward.

**Date of Next Core Group Meeting:** Weds 1st Aug, 7.30pm at St Ethelwolds.

**Next ACC open meeting:** Weds 19<sup>th</sup> September, 7.30pm at St Ethelwolds.

**Next AGM - 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday in July i.e. Weds 17th July 2019**

Meeting closed at 8.30 pm and was followed by a walking tour of Edible Abingdon's Veg beds, the Pollinator-friendly Perennial beds, and the Wildflower Maze.

Attachments below:

1. Abingdon Carbon Cutters Annual Summary of Activity July 2017-June 2018
2. ACC accounts inc-exp 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018

#### **ACC Annual Summary of Activity June 2017 –June 2018**

Welcome to the AGM. We have had a very busy and exciting year at Carbon Cutters:

- Our initiatives on plastic have attracted a lot of attention from the media, the council and the general public.
- Edible Abingdon have been given more beds to expand their fabulous and important work promoting home-grown vegetables and pollinator-friendly flowers.
- Thermal imaging work was carried out and a documentary was made for Channel 4 on one of a member's research into energy efficiency of new homes.
- We continue to attract a good number of student internships.
- In addition, we have launched our own newsletter and hosted some excellent events.

#### **Edible Abingdon**

##### Flower/Veg Beds

A new bed by the railings beyond the kiosk was given to us, provided we took out the old shrubs ourselves. Lucille took out the shrubs and lots of volunteers spread manure. The extended beds were planted up in time for the grand opening of the open-air swimming pool and look great! The council repainted the kiosk wall and doors. Old Station House boxes were very productive and new ones drafted into use this year. Paving slabs have been laid in the Abbey Gardens beds by the Vale Offices to improve access for picking. The water butt developed a fault and was replaced free of charge.

##### Bee Beds

Shrubs at the end of the perennial bed were grubbed out. A work party dug it over in October, transplanted perennials and planted 1000 bulbs! Manure was added followed by a layer of woodchips. The spring tulips were spectacular and the perennial flowers are amazing! Jenny Hedges painted 2 lovely signs for the railings.

Friends of Abingdon invited us to lead a walk round our projects on Abbey Meadows on Monday May 28<sup>th</sup>, which Susie and Sally led. A dozen people came and were impressed.

#### **Apple Juicing**

A new Vigo electric apple mill was bought for £495 (our 3<sup>rd</sup> crusher) and a new pasteuriser for £195.

The Stonehill apple pressing went well with the help of many volunteers. 75 bottles were pasteurised and donated to Stonehill Garden for their funds. Apple pressing in the community shop raised an impressive £700.

This year members of the 'Food Group' were responsible for setting up the 'Community Pantry'. This is an 'Oxford Food Hub' once weekly drop off at St Ethelwold's House, for the 9 local Syrian refugee families to fetch. This has been a great success for the families but also for the Hub as they can sometimes have difficulties using up the fresh veg at the depot & this is the favourite provision for these families to take.

## **Financial Support**

In addition to profits from the apple pressing, the Vesper Rotary Club have gave us a cheque for £348 for the water butt.

## **Student Consultancy Teams**

We received a full report from the students, with 5 recommendations for the town council: improving cycling paths and bicycle facilities; increasing the connectivity of public transport in Abingdon, reviewing School Travel Plans and encouraging ride-sharing, Ensuring Safety, Implementing staggered school hours, and changing school systems.

Will Eaton, our Oxford University Internship Student, produced a report entitled "Analysis on Nitrogen Dioxide levels in Abingdon, Oxfordshire: 2013 – 2017". The report used data from an automated sampling tube, situated on Stert Street, which sampled the concentration of nitrogen oxide gases every 15 minutes. The report revealed how the concentration of gases increased with the amount of traffic. Rachel Roberts was pleased with the data, which shows a general trend of decreasing gas emissions, but she feels that the analysis underlines the need to encourage alternative transport instead of petrol/diesel engine power.

Students from the Oxford Student Consultancy met with the plastics group and carried out a survey of plastic reduction and recycling by local businesses including restaurants, take-aways, chemists and hairdressers.

## **School pupil transportation**

There was a meeting at the Vale Offices with interested parties such as Sustrans but no plan going forward. Our key contact at the council leading on cycle paths, Rachel Roberts, is on maternity leave.

## **ACC Events**

We had some great talks in the past year; Barbara Hammond of the Low Carbon Hub shared insights into the People's Power Station, Iain Tolhurst of Tolhurst Organic Produce gave a fascinating and well-attended talk on "Biodiversity and the Carbon Picture" and Miriam Kennet of the Green Economics Institute spoke about reducing our carbon tonnage. In addition, Ellie Bunn, from Oxfordshire District Council, gave a valuable talk on what happens to our household waste and Daniel Scharf gave everyone a lot to discuss with his "Custom Splitting" idea for solving the housing crisis.

## **Thermal Imaging.**

In January, Richard took thermal images of the Guildhall, which revealed that the lower floor is being heated, and of the Town Council offices which leak a lot of heat. Richard passed copies to Nigel, the Town Clerk.

Paul Buckingham was on Channel 5 programme "Nightmare Builders" where he shared insights into just how energy efficient new homes are.

## **Plastics Group**

Following Sally's e-mail to the council, Adrian Lear confirmed that drinking-water fountains are included in the plans for the new public toilets on Abbey Meadows.

Thames Water sponsored the Re-fill project which enabled Carbon Cutters' Kat Kelly and Liz Fraser to use the brand name, app and stickers for free when signing up local cafes to the campaign.

The mayor attended the launch of "Abingdon Cuts Plastic" in the Community FreeSpace and gave out the certificates for the winning Barns and Mousehole Cafés. A talk was arranged every day, including one from Waitrose. The event was a success generating a lot of visitors and interest in plastics reduction.

Jill Carver of Added Ingredients was so impressed with the SESI dispensers in our shop that she arranged to have three for her own shop.

In April, Anne addressed a full council meeting about ACC, housing and Abingdon Cuts Plastic. She was awarded the Mayor's Award for her work on plastics.

Georgina Walker, a Brookes student and member of Ab Cuts Plastic, is doing a dissertation on the relationship and effective links between community groups like ACC, and the local Council.

The next big challenge is plastic free schools, especially secondary schools. We hope to engage eco students to survey plastic use and propose actions. We aim to publicise their efforts through the local press and the Council.

The Mayor, Margaret Crick, told an ACC meeting that the town council had pledged to support all initiatives on plastic reduction. We asked if the Council can use their authority to encourage or require the reduction of single-use plastic by

the Monday market and the autumn Fair in Abingdon; the Town Council has responsibility for issuing licences for markets and the Fair.

### Town Council Community-led Plan

The consultation on the Local Plan is now closed. The government has now revised down the numbers of houses needed. Report awaited.

### Transition Initiative

We continue to work towards becoming a stronger Transition Town with all our activities, building resilience through relocalising & away from heavily globalised systems for food, agriculture, energy, transportation, health & housing. Peak Oil & climate change are having effects (not least this very hot summer!) & we want to help the local community mitigate the worst of them. We have considered forming an energy descent plan for the Town in the past but this is not something we are currently working on.

### Collaborations/ Links

CAG, Oxford University, Abingdon Green Party, Friends of the Earth, Stonehill Community Garden, Oxford Food Bank, VWHDC, Friends of Abingdon, Abingdon Chamber of Commerce, St. Nicholas Local Church Friday Morning Market. Contact list membership figures – currently 460 on our email list

### Newsletter

Launched in February, “Eco-Action News” was distributed to schools in Abingdon, requesting that they send it by email to parents. The first addition had a children’s competition for which we received over one hundred entries. Since then two more issues have been distributed.

## ACC accounts inc-exp 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018

	<u>y/e March 2018</u>	<u>y/e March 2017</u>
b/fwd	£ 2,323.99	£ 2,258.97
Income Received	£ 2,895.52	£ 1,979.49
Insurance Grants	<u>£ 50.00</u>	<u>£ 50.00</u>
	£ 2,945.52	£ 2,029.49
Expenditure Paid Out	£ 2,745.31	£ 1,914.47
Insurance deducted from grants	<u>£ 50.00</u>	<u>£ 50.00</u>
	£ 2,795.31	£ 1,964.47
c/fwd	<u>£ 2,474.20</u>	<u>£ 2,323.99</u>
Natwest	£ 2,327.09	£ 2,153.38
Nationwide	£ -	£ -
Petty Cash	<u>£ 147.10</u>	<u>£ 170.60</u>
	<u>£ 2,474.19</u>	<u>£ 2,323.98</u>

	Net		Net	
	Gain/Loss	Income	Expenses	Gain/Loss
	Bfwd	This Year	This Year	Cfwd
<u>Restricted</u>				
Abingdon On Thames Town Council Grant	250.00	0.00	0.00	250.00
CAG Grants_ Including Insurance	0.00	250.00	0.00	250.00
Old Station House Edible Abingdon Donation	26.56	50.00	0.00	76.56
Rotary Club Edible Abingdon Donation - Rainwater Tank	0.00	348.00	398.40	-50.40
Stonehill Community Garden Courses	0.00	240.00	300.00	-60.00
	<u>276.56</u>	<u>888.00</u>	<u>698.40</u>	<u>466.16</u>
<u>Unrestricted</u>				
Apple Press & Juicing	1,780.35	1,410.00	715.84	2,474.51
Environmental Development (Abbey Meadow & Edible Abingdon)	-648.27	0.00	313.60	-961.87
Room - Monthly Meetings/Events	-617.29	574.52	676.62	-719.39
Storage Hire		0.00	200.00	-200.00
Website	-216.43	0.00	116.40	-332.83
Misc	1,749.06	23.00	24.45	1,747.61
	<u>2,047.42</u>	<u>2,007.52</u>	<u>2,046.91</u>	<u>2,008.03</u>
	<u>2,323.98</u>	<u>2,895.52</u>	<u>2,745.31</u>	<u>2,474.19</u>
per combined bank acs & cash	<u>£ 2,323.98</u>			<u>£ 2,474.19</u>

available surplus