

Abingdon Carbon Cutters AGM 2021

Weds 21st July 2021, 7.30pm in the garden of St Ethelwolds House, 30 East St Helen St.

- 1. Present:** Caroline Townsend (chair), Sally Reynolds (minutes), Tom Draper-Rodi (treasurer), Beth Adams, Victoria Adams, Georgia Barber, Caroline Bullock, Sam Bradley, Clive Elsmore, Fiona Habermehl, Susie Howard, John Killick, Pat Powell, Lucille Savin, Daniel Scharf, Anne Smart, James Wigmore.
- 2. Apologies:** Sharon Betts, Samantha Bowring, Jill Gant, Pippa Hoy, Cliff Marshall, Catherine McNeill, Richard Riggs, Robin Tucker.
- 3. Minutes:** Minutes of the last AGM held on Weds 15th July 2020 were accepted.

4. Accounts for period 1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021

Copies of the accounts had been prepared by Tom with Sam's assistance, and circulated to the Core Group. Our income was £1,267 and expenditure £1,909. Our balance at the end of the year was £3,330.84, £444 less than last year. We lost one of our main sources of income from donations at meetings, and Repair Cafes, due to restrictions in our activities due to Covid19, but had taken £790 for hire of the Apple Pressing kits despite Covid. £858 was taken at the produce table at St Eth's, of which £780 was donated to Abingdon Food bank and £78 to St Ethelwolds House.

5. Appointment of officers

The AGM appoints 3 officers, other roles are co-opted by the Core Group. The officers who served last year were: Chair: Caroline Townsend, Treasurer: Sam Bradley until December 2020 then Tom Draper-Rodi; Secretary: Sally Reynolds. Caroline, Tom and Sally are willing to continue and were returned unopposed. Clive Elsmore manages the website and is willing to continue in this role. Core Group members for 2020-21 had been Anne Smart, Caroline Townsend, Cliff Marshall, Clive Elsmore, Fiona Habermehl, John Killick, Lucille Savin, Pippa Hoy, Richard Riggs, Robin Tucker, Sally Reynolds, Sam Bowring, Sam Bradley and Susie Howard, and James Wigmore was co-opted onto the group in May 2021. All were willing to continue, except Cliff Marshall who has asked to be released from the Core Group but will continue to help with the Bee Beds. Grateful thanks were extended to him for all his work over the years, and also to Sam Bradley for her excellent work as treasurer .

6. Amendment to the Constitution to Allow Internet Banking.

Our new treasurer has explored internet banking which is now available for groups. In order to progress this we need to allow it in the constitution, and Tom has discussed this with the CAG officers who agree. A copy of the necessary amendment to the constitution was circulated to the entire email list in early July. There being no objections, the finance section is amended to read as follows:

Finance:

The Treasurer will keep the Group's financial accounts and records, prepare annual accounts, and control expenditure. The Treasurer will be responsible for setting up and managing the Group's bank accounts, and will approve signature of cheques (one signature for small amounts, two for larger amounts and three signatures for the largest amounts; the levels to be agreed at and recorded in the minutes of a regular meeting following the mandate agreement with the Group's bank, from among four specified members, who will normally include a chairperson, the secretary and the treasurer; signatories will not be related). Where a debit card/s is/are held, the card must be kept secure by the person named on the card and oversight of the use of this card will be the responsibility of the treasurer.

Online transactions will be made following written approval from the signatories for larger amounts (one signatory for small amounts, two for larger amounts and three signatories for

the largest amounts; the levels to be agreed at and recorded in the minutes of a regular meeting), normally via an e-mail with the invoice attached. The treasurer is also responsible for providing annual accounts to the Oxfordshire CAG Project.

We also agree to amend the aim of our constitution, substituting “climate breakdown” for climate change, to read “To work to reduce the carbon footprint of Abingdon-on-Thames in response to climate breakdown and to prepare for the challenge of ‘peak oil’.” A suggestion was made that “Climate chaos” would be more appropriate, and also that the quorum for an AGM should be increased from 3 members to at least 7: both these suggested amendments can be brought to next year’s AGM.

7. Annual Summary of Activity June 2020 - 2021

Caroline presented a written review of the year (attached below). This was warmly welcomed, with the addition of several names, and the alteration of Oxford Food Bank to its current name of “Oxford Food Hub” (it is not a Food Bank as such but supplies Food Banks).

8. Introduction of group co-ordinators for current subgroups.

Pat Powell represented Edible Abingdon in the absence of Sharon Betts who had written a very full report for the annual summary. Susie Howard talked about all the activities of the Food Group, who are willing to provide the café element of Repair Cafes when they restart. Anne Smart represented Abingdon Cuts Plastic, flagging up a Zero Waste coffee shop on 25th September under the arches of the Museum as part of the Great Big Green Week event. Anne is due to visit takeaway cafes in Abingdon with the mayor, Cheryl Briggs. There will be another River and River-bank clean-up in October, and the “Attitudes to Littering” survey is getting plenty of respondents. James Wigmore of Abingdon Liveable Streets mentioned the trial of a cycle lane over Abingdon Bridge which is due to start today. Caroline and Lucille represented the Trees Group which is still waiting to hear about the Vale Tree-planting policy.

9. Ideas for the “One Planet Abingdon” Climate Emergency Centre visioning meeting.

This is tomorrow night, 7.30pm at the statue of Queen Victoria in Abbey Gardens, and is to agree the basic aims of the CEC. The Mousehole Café has been officially offered to the CEC with immediate effect. John Killick, Clive Elsmore and Susie Howard plan to attend the meeting. ACC is a partner of the CEC and we discussed offering the following possible ways of using the space (Sally to email these ideas to Michel and Sue Davies and Michelle):

1. A weekly repair café presence with 1 or 2 repairers
2. A stand about Cosy Homes, possibly with a model of house showing possible retrofitting measures.
3. A Powerpoint on plastic pollution and what we can do to reduce it.
4. Apple pressing in October if there is a suitable space, access and flooring.
5. Bike mending under the arches
6. Homemade cakes for events or just for visitors
7. Sewing skills workshops/skillshare.
8. A display board or boards with pictures of ACC activities and info on why we do them.
9. Loan of our wooden A-frame and manufacture of more A-frames if needed.

Date of Next Core Group Meeting: Weds 1st September, 7.30pm either in St Ethelwolds garden or on Zoom.

Next ACC open meeting: Weds 15th September, Chris Church on COP26.

Next AGM - 3rd Wednesday in June or July 2022

Meeting closed at 9 pm SR 21.7.21

Attachments:

1. Annual Summary of Activity
2. Treasurer's summary & analysis

ACC Annual Summary of Activity June 2020 –June 2021

Welcome to the AGM. We had our activities curtailed by COVID to some extent from June to March 2021, but held our regular core and wonderful monthly talk meetings. In the spring we rose like a phoenix from the ashes to host a range of face-to-face activities:

- In May we had four events: plants and seedlings event with XR, River & river-bank clean-up, Repair café for bicycles and tools and a Zero-waste Refill event
- In June, we helped organise Climate Hustings and visited a Tiny Forest

Tom also sorted our Insurance for Repair Café with Mid-Cornwall – all covered by the CAG

Edible Abingdon (Petra, Pat, Sally, Linda, Julie, Janet, Sharon & occasionally Anne B & Sheila)

We have managed to keep the three Edible Abingdon sites going over the past year despite the various lockdowns and limits on the numbers of people who were able to meet. Being an outdoor activity certainly helped as we could garden at a safe distance whilst still being able to chat, usually about something plant related.

Kiosk Beds

The red currant bushes produced some fruit this year for the first time and hopefully the fig will also bear some fruit too. The fruit bushes seem to grow really well in these beds and we have talked about perhaps planting various other types of fruiting bushes or even small trees or even a mini-forest garden

However the strawberry plants and some herbs planted this spring were 'vandalized' we think by the ever increasing numbers of geese and their offspring. We've recently erected a low wire fence around each of the beds to see if this will prevent anymore losses. So far the beans, tomatoes, courgettes etc planted have survived and with all the rain we've had, they should be productive.

In the raised beds some herbs have been planted along with trailing tomatoes and some salad leaves.

Several people living/visiting on boats who are moored at the Abbey Meadows have made positive comments about the beds and have made use of the herbs and other crops.

Abbey Gardens

Last autumn we built a 'Bug Hotel' out of some old pallets, bricks, broken pots, twigs, pine cones, in fact anything which might tempt some invertebrates or other creatures to make a home. This has become a popular feature especially with many children and a good way to talk to people about providing habitats in their gardens for wildlife.

This spring we built two archways out of hazel poles which we are growing various climbing beans & cucumber up. This meant there was extra space to grow other herbs, veg & flowers for pollinators. The bed is now full of lots of different crops, showing what a variety of things you can grow in even a small space.

When the volunteers are gardening we do get a lot of comments from people passing by and queries about how to grow things or how to use a specific herb. It can feel a bit like Gardeners Question Time but it is a good way to chat to people and let them know how easy it is to grow some of your own food. Overall the feedback is very positive

There has however been one major problem, the large water butt which was installed several years ago has been vandalized several times over the past year or so with the water being emptied and the taps destroyed. As we are dependent upon this as a water supply for the plants, it has been very frustrating. At present we have capped off the tap and are syphoning off water. (We would like to thank Clive Elsmore for the video he sent us showing how this can be done without having to suck on the hosepipe!)

Old Station House

In the spring we topped up the old recycling boxes with some peat free growing compost to regenerate the soil in them and have planted a mixture of veg, strawberries, herbs and flowers to grow this year.

When all the plants are growing well and cropping and the flowers in full bloom it is surprising what can be grown in small recycling boxes and what a splash of interest and colour they can give to an otherwise unused area of garden.

Wildflower Meadow (Lucille)

naturesigndesign.co.uk made an A1-sized interpretation sign for the Wildflower Maze on Abbey Meadow, funded by ACC, the Town Council and the CAG. Clive and Lucille installed it. The board has generated a lot of interest in the Maze.

Apple Juicing

We hired out the apple presses in November and made £619. We spent £64.30 on a pasteuriser

Student Consultancy Teams

Caroline and Anne hosted a micro-internship in December on how Abingdon residents travel to work. Anne and David are currently hosting a student looking at attitudes to littering.

Food Group (Fiona, Anthea, Sally, Susie, Marion and Susanne)

The Food Group has the table inside the gate of St Eth's for donations of plants and produce, which has raised £95 in June, 10% for St Eth's and 90% for the Food Bank. Susie has been sending the money direct to the Food Bank

Abingdon Cuts Plastic (Anne; Chair, Caroline, Marion, David, Jill, Sally Ainslie, Sally Mears, Bendicte.)

Our group's activities were curtailed because of Covid in the past year, but we still managed to do quite a lot of plastic-cutting We did enough for Surfers Against Sewage to renew Abingdon's status as a Plastic-Free Community for another year from June.

Pedal Power became a Plastic-free business Champion, and we have plans to recruit many more Champions and Allies We now have 16 Champions. And we have 25 Allies.

Last December we invited schools to enter a Plastic-Free Christmas decoration competition, with prizes presented by the Mayor Charlie Birks. 5 schools took part, with a total of 39 entries; the children made some lovely artistic decorations.

In January, Anne attended the SAS on-line conference, which had some interesting and inspiring speakers. The CEO of the Boston Tea Party coffee shops in the West Country talked about how his coffee shops avoid single-use plastic, eg by not offering a takeaway cup. Customers either bring their own cup, or buy a reusable one. Later in the year we invited our Plastic-Free Business Champions to a Zoom meeting to discuss the Boston Tea Party approach. Anne visited all local cafes and coffee shops, with Cllr Gabby Barody, Chair of the Green Advisory and Scrutiny Committee.

The Town Council supports our campaign, and now has a town Single-Use Plastics Policy on its website. In May we held a Zero-Waste coffee morning under the arches in the front of the museum; we displayed our new banner, "Reduce, Refill, Reuse". The event was attended by the new Mayor Cheryl Briggs, and Gabby Barody. We gave away 80 reusable cups, some from Oxfam, the Council, and some donated by Waitrose. About 150 people visited the stall, enjoying the cakes and coffee; we collected a total of £120 in donations.

We had a mini river and riverbank clean-up last October, and a bigger one in May, with a total of 47 volunteers, some on the river and some inland. We collected 14 large sacks of rubbish. We are always thinking of ways to encourage people to change their behaviour, and not drop rubbish in the first place. Caroline designed posters for display near bins in the Square and Abbey meadow, and Helen Flynn of Abibinit designed a poster for Facebook.

Recently we have had an Oxford Uni Micro-Internship devising a questionnaire about attitudes to plastic litter and pollution in Abingdon. Another Internship in September, will complete this survey by analysing the responses.

Currently, Andrew Covenay, Town councillor, is writing a plan for plastic-free Abingdon and is keen to work with Abingdon Cuts Plastic.

Repair Café (*Richard and Susie*)

In the winter, Richard had 12 repairers prepared to do home repairs. 15 repairs were entered into the spreadsheet online, and all 15 were successfully repaired
A bike and tools sharpening event was held in May. 8 bikes were fixed.

Trees Group (*Sally; Secretary, Caroline; Chair, Clive, John, Lucille, Catherine*)

VWHDC Land

Caroline, Lucille and Sally met with Andy Egan the new Climate Action Lead (Policy and Programmes) for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils. He will be writing the Vale tree policy and promised to make sure there is a clear line of command to give permission for planting

Rye Farm meadow: Lucille and John surveyed the land and Lucille made plans to plant 1000 trees in crescent shapes. We wrote and submitted a detailed proposal, safe plan of work and maintenance plan. We also applied for and obtained 420 whips for free from the Woodland Trust. The 420 whips for Rye Farm were planted at Peachcroft Farm by 6 Carbon Cutters on Saturday 7 November with kind permission of the farmer, Bill Homewood

Town Council Land

Boxhill Park:

20 fruit trees, were planted in November with about 15 people, (some Carbon Cutters and some Boxhill residents) assisting Tim Badcock. The trees were staked and protected. We raised £455 from local residents via a Just Giving page which funded 1,500 daffodil bulbs. We also had £135 to spend on wildflower seeds and Some snowdrops were sourced by Lucille. Catherine has created a JustGiving page to raise £1,250 for an interpretation board for the Community Orchard at Boxhill

Other Town Council land.

Lucille, John, Caroline and Sally met with Tim Badcock and Nigel Warner the Town Clerk to look at Town Council land. Lucille and John have done a survey of existing trees and plants and will do soil samples after the meadow has been cut in August.

Groups are exploring other areas:

VOW Leisure Centre,

Orpwood Way near the Ock (John & Lucille have done a site visit to suggest suitable species and Kim will drum up local helpers),

Wildflower verges owned by OCC and cut by VWHDC

We visited a tiny forest in Witney in June; 7 people joined Vicky Gwatkin, Witney Town Councillor and one of the organisers for a tour of this surprisingly impressive site.

Abingdon Liveable Streets *(Sally, Anne, Caroline, Robin, John, Richard, James)*

Our monthly meetings have continued on Zoom, with an average of 10 group members attending each time. The group comprises some Carbon Cutters, members of local cycling and walking groups, and some Town councillors.

Last summer, Robin compiled the Abingdon Cycling and Walking Plan from the routes which several of us had surveyed. This is a comprehensive and impressive document, which includes suggestions for small and large improvements. The Town Council support the Plan and it is included in the Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan was well received by OCC , who are using it as the basis for an LCWIP (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan) for Abingdon.

Last summer's survey into how pupils and students travel to school generated over 830 responses to the questionnaire devised by Caroline. Many young people and parents said they would walk or cycle if the paths were safer. Robin took into consideration the questionnaire results, when compiling his Plan.

In December, an Oxford Uni Micro-Internship looked at how people travel to work in Abingdon. The students, Rachel and Ben wrote a useful report. Of the 214 responses to their questionnaire, 50% said they usually travel to work by car, 23% regularly cycle, and 21% walk. Most of those who responded are concerned about the environment, and more would cycle if routes were safer.

Sustrans organised a trial School Street at St Nicolas Primary School for 6 weeks from 7th June, with the aim of encouraging more children to walk or cycle to school, thereby improving both safety and air quality. Some Carbon Cutters were among the volunteers on the rota each day. We erected barriers to prevent all but essential car users from getting near the school for 45 minutes at the beginning and end of the school day. The trial has been successful, with many more positive than

negative comments. Hopefully the scheme will continue in September for 18 months, organised by the school itself.

ALS has asked the Council to consider a 20mph speed limit for traffic along Stert St, High St and Stratton Way: this is being considered by the Town's Traffic Advisory Cttee. There is also a Community Speed Watch on Ock St.

ACC Talks

About Greening Your Home: Geordie Stewart from Cosy Homes, "Solar Streets" with Andy Tunstall, Guy Matthews – Installing a heat pump, Tom Draper-Rodi "Bright Green Ideas Swap", James Wigmore and Susie Howard on composting and wormeries at St Eths

ACC Micro-internship students: Emily Passmore, "The Carbon Footprint of Money" and Luke Hatton, "How to Remedy our Travel Emissions".

Other topics: XR Abingdon: Michelle Charlesworth & Jenny Hirst and A Climate Emergency Centre for Abingdon? Speakers from Space Generators

The Town Council

The Neighbourhood Plan process

Members of ACC had a video conference with Richard Eastham, Abingdon Town Council's neighbourhood planning consultant on 18 May. Richard explained that the plan is useful for defining the use of land and buildings within the town area –features that would require planning permission to change their use. The Draft Plan has been published on the town website

Green Scrutiny Committee

We liaise with Town Councillors, and John, Richard and Anne attended the monthly meetings of the Green Advisory and Scrutiny Committee. On 13 July Michelle and Pippa presented about One Planet Abingdon.

Spring into Cosy Homes

Anne has had an assessment on her house - it is not cheap - all levels of the Whole House Plan would have cost over £60,000. Work has started including Cavity Wall insulation, Internal Wall insulation in other parts eg above bay windows, and also underfloor insulation where there are raised wooden floor boards. Anne and Richard are very pleased with the contractor's work and the oversight by Cosy Homes. The Green Homes grant was poorly administered and has now been cancelled altogether. However, for those interested in installing an Air Source Heat Pump, there is still a Renewable Heat Incentive Grant, available until March 2022. John has also had an assessment including thermal imaging has had a report and recommendations for actions e.g. new patio doors, Solar Panels, insulation, and is deciding which to go ahead with. John plans to pay for his own improvements without waiting for a grant.

Climate & Ecological Emergency Bill Alliance (CEE Bill).

We joined in the Autumn and Caroline, Anne, Lucille & Sally recorded a 3-minute video in support of an upcoming on-line meeting. Sally & Caroline attended the meeting on Zoom, which was attended by Layla Moran and Anneliese Dodds.

Abimeds

AbiMeds, the community medicine bicycle delivery scheme set up and coordinated by Clive Elsmore and Hester Hand, first tested its delivery service on the 8th of April. 50 volunteers including delivery cyclists, hub medicine organisers and phone responders ensured the delivery of medicines to vulnerable people shielding from Covid-19. Their efforts were greatly appreciated by the community, protected patients and pharmacists from Covid-19, and saved many miles of car journeys.

Climate Emergency Centre.

To be called "One Planet Abingdon" has a steering group of 14 representing ACC, XRA, Added Ingredients, Stonehill, Bioabundance and Oxford Wood Recycling.

Climate Hustings

Held on Zoom on 28th April, for the County Council Elections. The Hustings were organised collaboratively by Carbon Cutters, XR Abingdon, and 3 members of Youth Strike. A representative from each of the 4 main political parties took part, answering the Climate Emergency - related questions which had been prepared in advance. 55 people took part in the Zoom audience; it was interesting to hear the Candidates' proposals for actions on environmental issues

Collaborations/ Links

CAG (Lucille is our representative), Oxford University, Abingdon Green Party, Friends of the Earth, Stonehill Community Garden, Oxford Food Bank, VWHDC, Friends of Abingdon, Abingdon Chamber of Commerce, Low Carbon Hub (Richard is our representative).

Contact list membership figures – currently 613 on our email list.

Social Media

The newsletter is issued in January, April, July and October.

The ACC Facebook group is seeing many posts and views.

The website is managed by Clive

ACC officers are very grateful for the hard work and support of the members of the core group who meet on the first Wednesday of each month to plan activities and the wider group of other members who are involved in looking after the bee beds, the Wild Flower maze, Edible Abingdon beds, Caldecott Meadow, juicing apples, Plastics etc.

Caroline Townsend July 2021

Officers for the year 2020-21:

Chair: Caroline Townsend

Secretary: Sally Reynolds

Treasurer: Sam Bradley for 2020, then Tom Draper-Rodi from 2021

Treasurer's Summary Year Ending 2020-21

	y/e 2021	y/e 2020
brt/fwd	£ 3,772.61	£ 2,540.15
Income Received	£ 1,267.33	£ 3,530.00
Insurance Grants	£ 200.00	£ -
Total in	£ 5,239.94	£ 6,070.15
Expenditure Paid Out	£ 1,909.10	£ 2,295.49
Insurance deducted from grants	£ -	£ -
Total out	£ 1,909.10	£ 2,295.49
Balance	£ 3,330.84	£ 3,774.66
NatWest account	£ 3,300.02	£ 3,741.79
Nationwide	£ -	£ -
Petty Cash	£ 30.82	£ 32.87
Cash Diff. written off/back		-£2.05
Balance carried forward	£ 3,330.84	£ 3,772.61

PTO for Analysis

	Net Gain/Loss Cfwd	Income This Year	Expenses This Year	Net Gain/Loss Cfwd	Notes
Restricted					
Abingdon Cuts Plastics					
Abingdon On Thames Town Council Grant	£ 250.00		£ 250.00		<i>contributed to cost of wildflower maze</i>
CAG Grants_ Including Insurance	£ 250.00	£ 200.00	£ 250.00	£ 200.00	
Midcounties Coop	£ 250.00		£ 250.00		
Old Station House Edible Abingdon Donation	£ 50.00			£ 50.00	
Website update					
Fitzharrys/Boxhill planting project Donations		£ 477.33	£ 306.00	£ 171.33	
Total restricted	£ 800.00	£ 677.33	£ 1,056.00	£ 421.33	
Unrestricted					
Abingdon Cuts Plastics	-£ 255.30			-£ 255.30	
Apple Press & Juicing	£ 4,431.21	£ 790.00	£ 302.33	£ 4,918.88	
Environmental Development (Abbey Meadow & bee beds)	-£ 816.69		£ 428.52	-£ 1,245.21	
Environmental Development (Edible Abingdon)	-£ 365.39		£ 21.85	-£ 387.24	
Environmental Development (Misc - Forest Classroom etc.)	-£ 537.42			-£ 537.42	
Misc/other donations	£ 1,492.15			£ 1,492.15	
Repair Cafes	£ 940.66		£ 70.00	£ 870.66	
Room - Monthly Meetings (core & Events)	-£ 609.93	£ 65.00		-£ 544.93	
Storage Hire	-£ 600.00			-£ 600.00	
Website	-£ 704.63		£ 95.40	-£ 800.03	
Total unrestricted	£ 2,974.66	£ 855.00	£ 918.10	£ 2,911.56	
Restricted plus Unrestricted	£ 3,774.66			£ 3,332.89	
per combined bank acs & cash	£ 3,774.66			£ 3,330.84	
cash written off	-£ 2.05			£ -	
bal carried forward	£ 3,772.61			£ 3,330.84	