

## Abingdon Carbon Cutters AGM 2013

Meeting Weds 3rd July 2013, 7.30pm at St Ethelwold's House, 30 East St Helens St

**Present:** Cliff Marshall (chair), Linda Coker (minutes), Peter Lefort (CAG), Fiona & Mike Habermehl, Sophie Christopher-Bowes, Richard Howard, Nicky Warden, Pauline Marshall, Lucille Savin, Zayn Meghji

**Apologies:** Paul Buckingham, Marion Owen Susie Howard, Sally Reynolds, Richard Riggs, Anthea Pearson, Christine Whild, John Marshall

**Minutes:** Minutes of the last AGM on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2012 were briefly reviewed & agreed.

### **Accounts:**

Ahead of reviewing the accounts the sources of income were briefly outlined for the benefit of new members/visitors. The accounts were received with thanks to Linda as treasurer & Frank for ratification. We need to confirm to the CAG network, before end of February 2014, whether the funds from CAG for the wind turbine have been used, will be used or should be returned.

### **Appointment of officers**

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

### **New Officers for 2013/2014**

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.

**Review of the Year ending 30<sup>th</sup> June 2013.** Cliff presented a document (attached to the minutes below as Abingdon Carbon Cutters Annual Summary of Activity July 2012-2013). Richard Riggs would like to encourage the comments of supportive comment on recent planning resubmission for Abingdon Hydro by 16<sup>th</sup> July 2013, a response to the application is expected in August.

### **Possible registration with HMRC for the purpose of benefitting from Gift Aided donations.**

This is possible for any group with formal membership which can demonstrate benefit to the community, even if not a charity. An HMRC form, when required, needs to be completed online, printed out & submitted as a hard copy. Cliff to forward a copy of the existing Constitution to the core group members to review ahead of a special meeting to discuss & adopt the proposed resolutions along with any other agreed amendments. The meeting resolved, unanimously, the following:

#### **Resolution 1:**

To establish the object of the organisation to be one whose purpose is wholly charitable and for the benefit of the public in the town and neighbouring villages of Abingdon on Thames.

#### **Resolution 2:**

To amend the membership definition in the present constitution to replace 'Resident' with 'Residents of Abingdon on Thames'.

#### **Resolution 3:**

To formally call a Special General Meeting (SGM) within the next six months to adopt the necessary changes to the constitution. This SGM is to be held prior to a normal open meeting, with due required notice given to members.

### **Transition initiative in Abingdon**

We will explore if any training funding is available for "Transition" training, specifically from the council. Also how to get other clubs, societies & organisations involved, once we have checked the town website for lists of local groups. Possible contacts include Abingdon Vesper Rotary Club. We will discuss further at the next meeting with the mayor. We need to prepare a display for the community shop including a simple explanation of "transition". We intend to invite the mayor & publicise in the local press.

## **Other priorities & Activities for 2013-14**

It was suggested we focus on topics most directly related to Transition such as reducing energy use (& thereby fuel bills), “fix-it”/ “up-cycling” workshops for cycles & other items, tool shares, car share/lift schemes and “get to know your neighbours/neighbourhood”. Any assistance required for specific events, feel free to contact Peter Lefort (CAG).

**Date of Next Core Group Meeting: 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday in August – TBC**

**Date of next open meeting: Merton College Gardens 17<sup>th</sup> July by arrangement as places are limited**

**Next AGM - 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday in July 2014.**

**Meeting closed at 9.45pm.**

### Abingdon Carbon Cutters Annual Summary of Activity July 2012-2013

Over the year ending 30<sup>th</sup> June 2013 ACC has been active in a number of spheres. Open Meetings have continued to be the central activity with topics, often with a ‘How to ...’ theme, ranging from bees and honey production issues through to green roofs. A very well attended meeting at Peachcroft Christian Centre (PCC) provided up to date information on the Abingdon Hydro project which through the year progressed to the stage of submitting a full planning application. Wildlife gardening was the theme of a well attended meeting in the Roysse Room. A number of the open meetings were concerned with the process of developing a Transition Town initiative for Abingdon and neighbouring communities: the film Economics of Happiness was shown and a meeting held to compare the experience gained in Henley on Thames with emerging ideas for developing a transition initiative in Abingdon. Both these meetings, also at PCC, were attended by 40+ members and encouraged the core management group to focus on the Transition Initiative for Abingdon through the rest of the year.

The enthusiasm for Transition was reinforced at a briefing meeting held in February with a group of local Town and District Councillors when support for the initiative was expressed informally by representatives across the local political spectrum. Members and councillors met again in May to share ‘Dreams for Abingdon 2030’ when a low carbon lifestyle will be essential if carbon reduction targets are to be met. The Transition Town initiative was given a further boost by its adoption, in May, by the incoming Mayor of Abingdon who nominated it as one of the themes for her term of office. Meetings are now underway with the Mayor to plan how the Initiative can be launched during the coming autumn with particular emphasis being given to the development of community wellbeing and energy descent action planning. Involvement of the widest possible range of community groups will be a priority.

ACC continued to attend the local Excellence Markets offering advice and information and providing space to promote Abingdon Hydro. Similarly a stall was provided at Fun in the Park. Regular Green Drinks events have continued throughout the year. The work of the Food Group in providing support and cookery tuition at the South Abingdon Children’s Centre was complemented by ACC helping to organise the second Apple Day at the Centre. This was linked to the development of the ‘Forest School Outdoor Learning’ site in the neighbouring school field. This development at SACC and Caldecott Primary School, very ably managed by an ACC member, Marion Owen, involved parents, governors and ACC members in much cultivating and planting effort, often in poor weather. It was great to see the project, complete with a smart shelter, formally opened as ‘Caldecott Meadow’ in May 2013. Grateful thanks were due to substantial financial support from the local Abingdon Vespers Rotary Club and Trust for Oxfordshire’s Environment.

Wildlife gardening and, in particular, pollinator-friendly planting, emerged as a key theme this year with a small group of members meeting with Town Councillors to promote pollinator-friendly planting of flower beds in public areas. Councillors were sympathetic as were White Horse Vale District officers who made two flower beds in the Abbey Meadows available to ACC for a trial pollinator-friendly planting. To date these beds have been successful and stimulated much interest.

In October the ACC website, [www.abingdoncarboncutters.org.uk](http://www.abingdoncarboncutters.org.uk), was launched and is proving valuable in providing information for the public and members alike. ACC were grateful for a generous donation to help fund the website. Work is currently in hand to enable ACC to be able to receive gift aid on such donations. Further funding grants were obtained, as indicated above, from Abingdon Vespers Rotary and TOE2 specifically for the Forest School Outdoor Learning project. Oxfordshire Community Action Groups Network provided funding for public liability insurance and a grant towards the cost of a wind turbine generation project currently being worked on with the Earth Trust at Little Wittenham. Current member contacts stand at just over 300.