

Abingdon Carbon Cutters AGM 2020

Weds 15th July 2019, 7.30pm on Zoom

- 1. Present:** Caroline Townsend (chair), Sally Reynolds (minutes), Sam Bradley (treasurer), Clive Elsmore, Dorothy Giacomini, Fiona Habermehl, John Killick, Cliff Marshall, Pauline Marshall, Richard Riggs, Lucille Savin, Anne Smart, Susan Tibbles, Robin Tucker.
- 2. Apologies:** Sharon Betts, Samantha Bowring, Linda Coker, Jill Gant, Sue Hammersley, Susie Howard, Pippa Hoy, Harriet Moggridge, Sarita Ormrod.
- 3. Minutes:** Minutes of the last AGM held on Weds 19th June 2019 were accepted.

4. Accounts for period 1st April 2019 – 31st March 2020

Copies of the accounts had been circulated and were shown on screen. Our balance at the end of the year was £3,772.61, an increase of £1,232.46 from last year's £2,540. £500 of this is being held as grants from the Town Council and Mid-counties Co-op for an interpretation sign at the Wildflower Maze. As before, our main source of income was hiring of the apple press, and donations at meetings, but a new income stream was Repair Cafes, where donations for repairs and for refreshments totalled £940.66. Christ Church have not charged us for use of the Hall for repair cafes, but we agreed to offer 50% of the normal rental: payment is still to be arranged.

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; Secretary: Sally Reynolds. These officers were returned unopposed.

Core Group members for 2019-20 had been Anne Smart, Caroline Townsend, Cliff Marshall, Clive Elsmore, Fiona Habermehl, John Killick, Linda Coker, Lucille Savin, Pippa Hoy, Richard Riggs, Sally Reynolds, Sam Bowring, Sam Bradley and Susie Howard. Clive Elsmore is now managing the website. Linda Coker is moving away and asked to be released from Core Group, we agree to send a card to thank her for her huge contribution as ACC's treasurer since we started. Sam Bowring and Pippa Hoy are unable to attend many Core Group sessions but would still like to be included in the group. Robin Tucker expressed an interest in attending Core Group and was warmly invited to attend, he can be co-opted onto the group at any point.

6. Annual Summary of Activity June 2019 - 2020

Caroline presented a written review of the year (attached below) accompanied by pictures of our activities.

7. Reports from co-ordinators of current subgroups .

Abingdon Cuts Plastic: Anne Smart reported the latest campaign to keep all plastic waste within the UK is supported by Layla Moran MP. Sophos are keen to support ACC and will fundraise for specific campaigns. ACP was having a great year until lockdown, which has sadly seen a return to single-use plastic. They had planned a stall at the Food & Drink Festival, and the Town Council had been about to introduce a policy for re-usable plastic beer mugs at Town events, but this has been delayed.

Bee Beds: Cliff reported that the group had had difficulty with access when the play area was locked due to Covid-19 restrictions, but acquired a key the day before the play area re-opened! Hundreds of bulbs were planted and made a great display.

Edible Abingdon: Sally reported some new helpers, most gardening is done on weekday afternoons but this can be flexible.

Wildflower Maze: Lucille showed the draft design for the interpretation board which was admired.

Cycling & walking: Robin gave an overview of this new initiative, soon to be renamed “Abingdon Liveable Streets”, a branch of Oxfordshire Liveable Streets or OLS <https://oxlivsts.org.uk/> ALS is a co-operation between members of ACC, AbiBike, Abingdon Freewheeling, Sustrans, Ramblers and Health Walks, aiming to make Abingdon more attractive for active travel – walking, cycling, wheelchairs and scooters etc. Robin has been co-ordinating a survey of existing cycle and walking paths within Abingdon, which will contribute to the Town Council’s Neighbourhood Plan and form the basis of an “LCWIP” (Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan) for OCC. One new initiative is “School Streets” where streets around schools are temporarily closed at both ends of the school day to encourage active travel to school. He is due to meet with OCC councillors and officers to help with a bid for Covid-19-related government funds for innovations in active travel.

Food Group: Fiona reported that South Abingdon Children’s Centre is re-opening but that she doesn’t plan to offer cookery sessions until the risk from Covid-19 is much less. The edible hedge in Caldecott Meadow separating the “forest garden” area from the playing field was pruned professionally with 50% of the cost being paid by ACC. This will stimulate the hedge to thicken up and it can now be kept under control by volunteers. The produce table at St Eth’s is Food Group’s way of replacing the Friday morning market at St Nicolas Church which has stopped.

Repair Café: Richard reported that some other repair cafes are running “virtual repair cafes” with repairers offering suggestions and support for repairers via video link, but we have no plans to do that here.

Tree Planting: Sally and Lucille reported 2 potential sites for planting trees in Autumn: Catherine McNeill is investigating the possibility of applying for a grant for planting around the children’s playground on Caldecott Recreation Ground, owned by the Town Council, and Lucille has surveyed Rye Farm Meadow, owned by the Vale District Council, as a potential site for hundreds of trees from the Woodland Trust. Lockdown stalled progress on obtaining permission but the group plans to meet on Weds 22nd July by Zoom to progress the requests.

AbiMeds: Clive reported that this innovative scheme operated with help from many individual Carbon Cutters as well as Abingdon Freewheeling members, collecting and delivering 3019 prescriptions, 219 books and some wellbeing packets, protecting patients and staff from Covid-19 transmission and saving many miles of fossil-fuelled delivery vehicles. The service is beginning to taper off as lockdown eases.

8. Suggestions for New Activities for 2020-2021.

Cosy Homes Oxfordshire: Richard, Anne and Paul have been engaging with Cosy Homes Oxfordshire, a one-stop-shop home retrofit service, currently running as a pilot project resulting from a grant bid by three partners in Oxfordshire: Low Carbon Hub, National Energy Foundation, and Retrofit Works. They are looking for homeowners interested in using the retrofit service: Anne will send details to Core Group. Richard has invited a Cosy Homes staff member to give the talk at our September meeting, and we hope at that stage to have enough experience and knowledge to be able to ramp up our advertising of the project to our members.

Date of Next Core Group Meeting: Weds 2nd September, 7.30pm either in St Ethelwolds garden or on Zoom.

Next ACC open meeting: Weds 16th September, 7.30pm, talk by Cosy Homes, venue tba.

Next AGM - 3rd Wednesday in June or July 2020

Meeting closed at 8.40 pm

Attachments below:

1. Abingdon Carbon Cutters Annual Summary of Activity July 2019-June 2020
2. ACC accounts inc-exp 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020

ACC Annual Summary of Activity June 2019 –June 2020

Welcome to the AGM. A very different year at Carbon Cutters;

- We achieved SAS (Surfers Against Sewage) "Plastic-Free Community" status
- We have set up a walking and cycling group for Abingdon
- We have ramped up interest in our Trees group

Edible Abingdon

Flower/Veg Beds (Pat, Jenny, Sharon, Petra, Sally)

Edible Abingdon have managed to grow herbs, veggies and flowers on all three sites in spite of lockdown restrictions, and have recently erected 2 small raised beds by the kiosk beds from lined sleepers, Lucille provided soil and compost and Jason, a Vale contractor, also brought compost. This will allow access for wheelchair gardening.

The beds were planted up with veg grown by Sharon and flowers by Petra. The group are watering and maintaining all 3 sites.

Bee Beds (Cliff, Pauline, Susie, Lucille)

13 people turned up to help plant bulbs in the Spring and it was a lovely occasion. The perennials are now in full bloom and attracting lots of bees.

Wildflower Meadow (Lucille)

naturesigndesign.co.uk have been commissioned to make an A1-sized interpretation sign for the Wildflower Maze on Abbey Meadow. Posts will be set in concrete. The board is much needed to raise awareness of the Maze. ACC, the Town Council and the CAG have funded the sign.

Carbon Footprint calculator

4 schools agreed to use the WWF Carbon Footprint calculator as promoted by ACC.

Apple Juicing

We ran the apple press in the community FreeSpace in the precinct in the Autumn and hired out all three sets of apple-pressing kit to individuals and schools. Donations at the FreeSpace and hire of the apple presses raised £1251 less £25 donation to Abingdon Free Space.

A further £24.50 was made from the sale of apple juice at the St Eth's extravaganza.

We spent £202.99 to Rupert at Tiddly Pommies for servicing of the apple pressing equipment.

Student Consultancy Teams

John Killick and Cliff Marshall supervised Oxford University students. Both reports have been received and circulated: one on the Carbon Footprint of Money, and one on Carbon Offsetting. The students would like to meet ACC at a future date to discuss the reports.

Food Group (Fiona, Anthea, Sally, Susie)

Cookery in Abingdon Carousel Family Centre

Fiona and Anthea ran the cooking class until lockdown. Due to high levels of food poverty in South Abingdon, Fiona had arranged for Oxford Food Bank to supply extra food so that members could take away food after Cooking Club.

The Food Group has set up a table inside the gate of St Eth's for donations of plants and produce, which has raised £390 for Abingdon Food Bank. Susie has been sending the money direct to the Food Bank

Abingdon Cuts Plastic (*Anne; Chair, Caroline, Marion*)

ACP had many events and actions this year:

In September: "A Plastic Ocean" was screened at the Friends Meeting Place and we had a mass unwrap at Tesco; 82 people took part, 3 trolleys full of plastic wrapping were collected.

In October, ACP were involved in organising the River & River Bank Bank clean up and in November The Mayor gave a reception to celebrate Abingdon achieving plastic free status. We now have 16 Plastic-Free Business Champions and over 24 Community Allies, including Miele, Sophos and Waitrose.

In February, Anne organised an interesting and informative visit the Biodigester near Wallingford. She has given talks on "plastic pollution and what we can do about it " at schools and Scout groups.

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*)

Cafes were successfully run on 7th Sept, 2nd November and 15th Feb 2020 at Christchurch Hall. The administration process has been streamlined to get visitors through more rapidly, we have had many skilled people volunteering their services and the café has provided a high standard of tea and cakes.

Two smaller repair cafes were also run at Oxford Wood Recycling

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

The Trees group took off this year – we had three meetings, the third of which had 14 attendees including the Mayor and 2 OCC councillors. We identified several sites in Abingdon which we considered suitable for tree-planting. The lockdown has hampered progress in obtaining permission to plant on these sites.

One particular site that we are interested in is Rye Farm Meadow. Lucille has surveyed Rye Farm Meadow where there are poplars planted last year by Rotary and she thinks there is room for 1000 trees which could be planted with inexpensive whips. The VWHDC has agreed a budget which puts funding towards a climate change lead and for community grants, but this is currently all on hold. However, the chair of the Vale Climate Advisory Committee has asked for us to send plans for planting trees on Rye Farm Meadow by 21st July, which Lucille and Sally are working on

We have attended some events:

In December, Tracy, Clive and Caroline attended a training session on tree planting and how to organise a tree-planting session. This year, Caroline and John attended the Tree planting in Drayton organised by Tracy Jesson; 70 trees were planted and Clive attended a Friends of the Earth training session.

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

We formed this group in response to the cleaner air and reduced traffic during lockdown to improve cycling and walking infrastructure in Abingdon. The first meeting was attended on Zoom by 12 people including Charlie Birks the mayor and people from Sustrans, Abibikes, Freewheelers and XR. **A further three meetings followed**

We designed a questionnaire for school students and their parents to give their views on the safety of the school run and to suggest possible improvements. After a pilot trial at Caldecott School, our cycling & walking questionnaire went out to all Abingdon schools and over 600 replies have been received to date.

The government have offered funding for innovative ideas regarding repurposing roadways for active travel. Oxfordshire County Council submitted a bid for the 1st phase of funding, but were only allotted half of the possible grant. Fortunately there will be a second tranche of funding available for quick innovations to improve cycling and walking routes and there are interested parties in Abingdon wishing to be involved in constructing the new bid.

Volunteers from Abingdon Carbon Cutters & Abibike have been recruited to survey all the main cycle routes in Abingdon, and Health Walks volunteers are surveying walking routes. Robin Tucker of Oxfordshire Cycling Network (OCN) is co-ordinating the results and will liaise with the District & County Councils in time for the 2nd tranche of money.

Once collated, ACC can lobby OCC for better routes and have them included in Abingdon's Neighbourhood Plan.

ACC Events

We had a number of well-attended talks at the Guildhall including Phil Coker on "How Renewables are changing the energy system" and "Travel options for a low-carbon future" In November, Chris Church spoke about FoE's new report, "Fast Forward Oxfordshire". In February, a film by the Landworkers Alliance "In Our Hands – seeding change" followed by a speaker, Joanna from Stonehill Community gardens was well-received. Post-lockdown, we had three great Zoom talks: Sue Roberts- "What Price Local Democracy"?, Phil Coker: "What Future for Gas in a Low-Carbon world"?, and Daniel Scharf invited his family along to discuss "Family climate emergency declarations".

At our stall at Christmas Extravaganza. Caroline, Anne, Clive, Lucille and others made a very attractive display of plastic-free decorations and we won the prize for the most Christmassy stall! We gave out free hot mulled apple juice from juice pressed in the community shop. Layla Moran visited our stall.

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. A neighbourhood plan could protect a piece of land from development should it fulfil one of the following criteria: beauty, tranquillity, wildlife, recreation, history.

Green Scrutiny Committee

We liaise with Town Councillors, and until lockdown a number of us attended the monthly meetings of the Green Advisory and Scrutiny Committee.

Spring into Cosy Homes

Anne and Paul B were filmed discussing the Cosy Home initiative, which involves certification for retrofitting, the cost of a survey £175, a virtual one is £75.

Abimeds

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

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 **510** 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 2020

Officers for the year 2019-20:

Chair: Caroline Townsend

Secretary: Sally Reynolds

Treasurer: Sam Bradley

ACC income-expenditure accounts 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020

SUMMARY

	<u>y/e Mar 2020</u>		<u>y/e Mar 2019</u>
b/fwd	£ 2,540.15		£ 2,474.20
Income Received	£ 3,530.00		£ 2,088.85
Insurance Grants	£ -		£ 50.00
Total in	£ 6,070.15		£ 4,613.05
Expenditure Paid Out	£ 2,295.49		£ 2,022.89
Insurance deducted from grants	£ -		£ 50.00
Total out	£ 2,295.49		£ 2,072.89
Balance	£ 3,774.66		£ 2,540.16
Natwest account	£ 3,741.79		£ 2,448.91
Nationwide	£ -		£ -
Petty Cash	£ 32.87		£ 91.24
Cash Diff. written off/back	-£2.05		£ -
Balance carried forward	£ 3,772.61		£ 2,540.15
Difference 2019 to 2020 = £1,232.46			

ANALYSIS

	<u>Net</u> <u>Gain/Loss</u> <u>Cfwd</u>	<u>Income</u> <u>This Year</u>	<u>Expenses</u> <u>This Year</u>	<u>Net</u> <u>Gain/Loss</u> <u>Cfwd</u>
<u>Restricted</u>				
Abingdon Cuts Plastics	0.00			0.00
Abingdon On Thames Town Council Grant	250.00			250.00
CAG Grants_ Including Insurance	250.00			250.00
Midcounties Coop		250.00		250.00
Old Station House Edible Abingdon Donation	50.00			50.00
Website update		120.00		120.00
	<u>550.00</u>	<u>370.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>920.00</u>
<u>Unrestricted</u>				
Abingdon Cuts Plastics	-168.00		87.30	-255.30
Apple Press & Juicing	3,205.17	1,251.04	25.00	4,431.21
Environmental Development (Abbey Meadow & bee beds)	-677.49		139.20	-816.69
Environmental Development (Edible Abingdon)	-357.34		8.05	-365.39
Environmental Development (Misc - Forest Classroom etc.)	-147.42		390.00	-537.42
Misc/other donations	1,667.61	63.36	238.82	1,492.15
Repair Cafes	0.00	940.66		940.66
Room - Monthly Meetings (core & Events)	-728.15	904.94	786.72	-609.93
Storage Hire	-400.00		200.00	-600.00
Website	-404.23		420.40	-824.63
	<u>1,990.15</u>	<u>3,160.00</u>	<u>2,295.49</u>	<u>2,854.66</u>
	<u>£2,540.15</u>	<u>£3,530.00</u>	<u>£2,295.49</u>	<u>£3,774.66</u>
	<u>=====</u>			<u>=====</u>
per combined bank acs & cash	<u>£2,540.15</u>			<u>£3,774.66</u>