

MINUTES OF THE UPPER THAMES PROTECTION SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD IN THE TOWN HALL ANNEXE ON 6TH NOVEMBER 2013

In attendance: Chris Graham (Chairman), Margaret Hunt (Secretary), Carol Rouse (Treasurer), Helen Goody (STRIPLING Editor).

Seymour Aitken and Richard Rumming (Committee Members), 7 UTPS members, 9 non-members, plus Petrina Brown (Cotswold Waterpark Trust Biodiversity Officer) and Jenny Phelps (Gloucestershire FWAG Senior Advisor).

Welcome: Chris Graham welcomed members and others to the AGM, adding a comment on the favourable 2013 weather as compared with the previous year.

There were no **Apologies for Absence**.

Minutes of the AGM of 28th November 2012: Proposed and seconded from the floor, these were signed by Chris Graham.

Matters Arising from the above Minutes:

Finance: In response to a 2012 AGM recommendation, the accounts now incorporate separate income and expenditure columns.

Chairman's Report:

Chris Graham concentrated on pressures upon the Upper Thames from (long-term) wet weather, adverse land use, built development and poor water quality. UTPS would feed its aspirations for change to the Environment Agency, and would also broadcast them to communities within the catchment.

Treasurer's Annual Report: (copy attached to signed minutes)

It was reported by Carol Rouse that the closing balance to 20th December 2013 stood at £2710.04, taking into consideration that the cost of producing and circulating STRIPLING for 2013 would be included in the 2014 accounts. Much of the production process had been carried out in-house, thus saving expense.

Membership Report:

Carol Rouse informed the meeting that membership now stood at 40 [plus a membership application at the end of the AGM]. Lapsed members had been contacted during the year.

Election of Auditor:

Phillip Pope had agreed to continue as UTPS auditor for the coming year. This was endorsed by the meeting.

Election of UTPS Committee Members:

In the absence of new nominations, the following members were re-elected *en bloc*: Seymour Aitken, Helen Goody, Chris Graham, Steve Greig, Margaret Hunt, Carol Rouse, Richard Rumming, Arthur Webb.

'Cricklade Neighbourhood Plan':

Margaret Hunt briefly described the steps that were leading to the eventual second consultation. From the floor, Mark Clarke, Cricklade Town Council chairman, indicated that this was likely to take place early in 2014, to which Chris Graham responded that UTPS would be commenting upon issues that fell within its sphere of interest.

'Have Your Say on Waterways' Consultation:

The topic was introduced by Chris Graham, detail being supplied by Jenny Phelps, who recommended the website for further information. A map showing areas that were in various ecological states from 'good' to 'bad' was on display.

Any Other Business:

'Upper Thames Steering Group':

All present were invited to attend a meeting to be held in the Down Ampney Village Hall on 25th November. Grants could be made available from 'Wiltshire Links to Nature', which covers Wiltshire and Swindon. Richard Ruming announced that he represented the NFU on the Steering Group.

STRIPLING:

Helen Goody was thanked from the chair for producing so excellent a 2013 edition.

There being no further business, the AGM closed at 8.05 pm.

Petrina Brown's Presentation 'Improving the Nature of Our Rivers':

Accompanying her talk with projected images, Petrina gave a comprehensive description of her work - that of assessing the environmental problems associated with the natural functioning of the rivers in the Upper Thames catchment, and of making suggestions as to how these might be resolved. There was much to do, she said, hampered by lack of adequate funding.

After lively discussion of the various issues, Chris Graham thanked Petrina for her thought-provoking talk. He looked forward to the eventual outcome of the project.

Service and coffee/tea and biscuits by Helen and Stefan Goody closed the proceedings.

Deposit Account	£2321.52
Current Account	298.00
Cash in hand	144.00

In a comment from the floor, the suggestion was made that, in future, income and outgoing columns should be separated. This would be reviewed with the Auditor and considered further by the Committee.

Election of Auditor: It was proposed and seconded from the floor that Phillip Pope, who had agreed to continue in the role, should be re-elected.

Election of Committee: The following members were re-elected *en bloc* on a seconded proposal from the floor: Seymour Aitken, Helen Goody, Chris Graham, Steve Greig, Margaret Hunt, Carol Rouse, and Arthur Webb. There were no other nominations. Committee officer posts would be ratified at the next UTPS meeting.

Membership: A review of the membership list had resulted in contact with those members who were in subscription arrears, and the names of those who had failed to respond had been deleted. STRIPLING was seen to have been instrumental in increasing membership.

Any Other Business:

Contact with the Cotswold Canals Trust: Lack of response from the Trust meant that the proposed meeting had not taken place.

Thames Path Margaret Hunt had recently been notified that the funding was available to the Trail organisation for the re-surfacing of the muddiest section of the Path through Cricklade. This was due to be carried out early in 2013. Two other problem surfaces would be further investigated.

Physical State of the River Thames: From the floor, Richard Rumming drew attention to the need for clearance of trees from the river. An Upper Thames Integrated Catchment Programme, linking with the Water Framework Directive, had recently been set up to tackle this and other issues. Grant aid to enhance the river's environment as well as to address water quality might be available.

The AGM closed at 7.50 pm.

Presentation by Charlotte Hitchmough:

Accompanying her talk with slides, Charlotte took her audience through the various problems and initiatives connected with the River Kennett. Abstraction threats had led to the formation of Action for the River Kennett (ARK) in 1990, which had also tackled pollution, dredging and crayfish infestation. Part-time project officers had been legacy

funded, and ARK had been promoted by lobbying the Westminster parliament and via TV publicity. Schools and a poetry group had been involved, and walks (with improved access for less mobile people) had been introduced. Relevant agencies, local councils and Wiltshire Council were very supportive. Fairly recently, the organisation had purchased grazing land at Stonebridge Lane that was being managed to improve biodiversity.

Questions and comments led to a lively debate, at the conclusion of which Chris Graham thanked Charlotte for a most interesting presentation. Attendees were invited to take copies of the informative and attractively-produced ARK 2012 Annual Report.

Refreshments: The meeting was rounded off by the service of tea/coffee and high quality biscuits by Stefan Goody.

