

UPPER THAMES PROTECTION SOCIETY

Minutes of the Meeting Held at Brook House, Cricklade on 30th January 2014

Present:

Chris Graham (chairman)
Margaret Hunt (secretary)
Helen Goody (STRIPLING editor)

Seymour Aitken
Richard Rumming
Arthur Webb

An **Apology for Absence** was received from Carol Rouse (treasurer).

Confirmation of the Minutes of the Meeting of 9th July 2013 These were confirmed and signed as a correct record [Note: Steve Greig had subsequently advised that he had not offered to contact an AGM speaker].

Matters Arising:

AGM Feedback Margaret Hunt was concerned that the speaker's address had markedly overrun the agreed 40 minute slot. However, the talk and following discussion had been stimulating and there had been a welcome level of attendance. It was agreed that the same format should be adopted for the 2014 AGM, and that a speaker should be sought well in advance.

The **Cotswold Waterpark Trust Committee** had been overtaken by other organisations and enterprises.

UTPS Community Initiative (involving children in river projects) There was no action to report. Helen Goody, when comparing the UTPS situation with that of Action for the River Kennett, was not now very enthusiastic about the proposed Community Initiative; the latter organisation had funds, and did not rely solely upon volunteer activity. Arthur Web mentioned that Jenny Phelps (Gloucestershire FWAG) was adept at raising educational grants. She would be contacted a little later in the year. **Action HG**

WILD Project / Upper Thames Steering Group Helen Goody and Richard Rumming had attended the most recent meeting. Richard referred to the project's links with the Upper Thames Steering Group, upon which he sits as NFU representative. The group, funded by the Environment Agency, meets four times a year, the next meeting being in late February. It is governed by a ten-member board that appraises projects and reports to landowners. After the meeting had been reminded of the WILD Project's role and remit, an unfavourable comment was made upon the fact that it is perceived that the Environment Agency now concentrates upon environmental interests, rather than seeking to take action to minimise river flooding and to tackle the effects when it occurs. Chris Graham advocated a parish-based scheme that involved walkers in on-the-ground monitoring of the Thames and its environs. This might be advertised in parish newsletters, including RIPPLES. It had been successfully implemented at Siddington.

UTPS Remit Richard Rumming wondered whether the society was addressing Thames issues in a balanced fashion (was there too much emphasis upon opposing the canalisation that he now saw as being unlikely to materialise?). Helen Goody likewise considered that interests should be broadened.

Snakeshead Fritillaries Since the present severe flooding of North Meadow could prevent the satisfactory emergence of the fritillaries in Spring 2014, Richard Rumming advocated that more publicity should be given to the much smaller Wiltshire Wildlife Trust's reserve in the Waterhay area. Flood risk on that higher piece of land was negligible, and, in his view, the fritillaries produced were superior to those in found in North Meadow in recent years.

'Have Your Say on Waterways' Consultation While UTPS had not contributed, it would keep involved with a view to possibly providing an input into future consultations.

Finance:

Accounts Chris Graham pinpointed the salient entries from the balance sheets previously circulated by Carol Rouse.

Membership Report:

The committee endorsed Arthur Webb's earlier suggestion that the current £2.00 per annum membership subscription should not be increased at the present time. The matter should, however, be kept under review.

UTPS Website :

A progress report would be sought from Steve Greig.

Action MH

Any Other Business:

Potential New Committee Member Information was given that Gerry Tamplin, who had attended the AGM, had expressed an interest in joining the committee, first being invited to attend a meeting as an observer. It was agreed that this be actioned for the next meeting.

Liaison MH

Walking Waterways Arthur Webb returned to this subject from the point of view of parish promotion. The guidance of Cllr. Mark Clarke, UTPS Cricklade Town Council contact, would be sought.

Action MH

North Meadow At Richard Rumming's instigation, a watch would be kept upon Natural England's management of the nature reserve.

Action RR

New National Trails Website This was mentioned by Chris Graham, who considered that it should be publicised by UTPS.

Action: CG to contact SG

Thames Path Margaret Hunt would report upon latest proposed path improvements at the next meeting.

Meeting Speakers Having drawn attention to the River Thames Society's magazine, 'Thames Guardian', Helen Goody suggested inviting Colin Reynolds, a member of the charity's council and Upper Thames branch representative, to the May meeting. Agreed.

Action HG

The option of inviting a member of the Cotswold Canals Trust to address a meeting upon progress of Upper Thames infrastructure works would be discussed when UTPS next met.

Date of Next Meeting Toward the end of May, after 15th, was the period selected. Option dates would be circulated in the near future.

Action MH

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.20 pm. Seymour Aitken was thanked for his hospitality.

