

UPPER THAMES PROTECTION SOCIETY (UTPS)

Minutes of the Meeting Held at Brook House, Cricklade on 18th February 2016

Present:

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

Seymour Aitken
Richard Rumming
Arthur Webb

1. Apologies for Absence: Steve Greig, Gerry Tamplin and Steve Tabbitt (Thames Trail Officer).

2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the 2015 UTPS AGM: These were confirmed and signed by Chris Graham as a correct record.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE AGM MINUTES:

There were none.

4. Confirmation of the Minutes of the 8th September 2015 UTPS Meeting:

These were confirmed and signed by Chris Graham as a correct record.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE ABOVE MINUTES:

UTPS Committee Initiative Update Helen Goody and Carol Rouse had attended two events in Kempsford in September, at both of which UTPS promotional material had been displayed. The first of these was the monthly Coffee Morning, and the second a meeting to discuss enlargement of the Village Hall. A total of 13 new members had joined the Society. Petrina Brown had loaned a display board and copies of her River Churn Project 'before and after' photographs. Other suggested opportunities for UTPS to gain publicity were at the Cricklade Fritillaries Tearooms in April and at the Duck Race later in the year. Helen would investigate, and Richard Rouse would be asked if he would make a good-sized display board for permanent use. ACTION HG and CR

WILD Project / Upper Thames Steering Group (Monitoring Action) Update The recent meeting had been attended by Chris Graham, when the most important topic discussed was that of the latest planning application for gravel extraction in the Kempsford and Marston Meysey areas. Chris indicated that it would be necessary for contact to be made with the Minerals Departments of Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Swindon Councils with regard to the need to limit environmental damage during these long-term developments. Accordingly, UTPS would send a letter. It was noted that the various environmental bodies engaged in monitoring Thames Area activities were achieving valuable results. ACTION CG

Facilitation Fund Update The area in which farmers and landowners were engaging in good farming and environmental practices had extended well beyond the immediate river environs. Protection of curlew habitats would be expanded upon at the next UTPS meeting. Chris Graham would check whether UTPS is still listed as a facilitation Fund member. ACTION CG

River Churn Project Little progress could currently be made due to the lengthy flooding of the land covered by the project. Petrina Brown's advocacy of 'cattle-powered' drinking water pumps attracted the interest of UTPS Committee members.

Thames Path Update Steven Tabbitt had informed Margaret Hunt by e-mail that the North Wall to Richard Kidner's Field section of the Thames Path had now been surfaced. The Cricklade Town

Council chairman, Mark Clarke, had indicated that the Council had obtained a grant for this purpose from Wiltshire Council via the Countryside Access Forum. Financial assistance from the Thames Trail Office had also been provided. It is understood that, as a matter of policy, it is not possible for surfaced Thames Trail footpaths to be put in place across open meadow land.

Steven had also reiterated the need for volunteer River Wardens to regularly walk the Path and to report upon problems. Gerry Tamplin, who had earlier expressed interest in this, would be approached again. The item would be retained on the UTPS Meeting agenda.

UTPS Website In response to Steve Greig's request for website information, Helen Goody would send him copies of the 'before and after' pictures. She would let him have her amended version of STRIPLING for 2015, also an advertisement for River Wardens. Steve would be asked to regularly remove outdated material from the website. ACTION HG and SG

6. TREASURER'S REPORT / MEMBERSHIP / SUBSCRIPTIONS: (copy balance sheet attached to signed minutes)

Report Carol Rouse gave the balances at 18.2.16 as follows:

Deposit Account £2,363.82

Current Account £ 325.86

Cash in hand £ 171.31

Membership / Subscriptions It was reported that 24 members had lapsed since 2013/2014. Carol Rouse would contact these people, using a letter that Chris Graham would draft. 32 members had paid their 2016 subscriptions, 13 new members had joined at the Kempford events in September and 3 had been gained at the AGM. ACTION CG and CR

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Upper Thames CaBA Partnership Margaret Hunt would send copies of a letter dated 12.2.16 to Committee members with the meeting minutes. This, *inter alia*, gave information regarding the 'Environment Agency's Flood Risk Management Maintenance Strategy for West Thames Area, 2016-2017' (copies provided at the meeting). A CaBA public lecture was to take place in Gloucester on 25th February 2016. ACTION MH

UTPS Publicity It was agreed that a Cricklade Town Council grant should be sought for funding of a new advertising banner. Margaret Hunt would obtain an application form for passing onto Helen Goody. The latter was also asked to draw up a new logo for UTPS in coloured format.

ACTION MH and HG

Thames Access at Kempford Carol Rouse reported that at the two public meetings, village people had asked for access to the river to be provided on the side opposite to the Thames Path. As the farmland referred to was privately owned, it was recognised that it would not necessarily be possible for another path to be developed. The matter would be relayed to Steven Tabbitt.

ACTION MH

Canals Reinstatement The issue was raised by Richard Rumming, who wished to know whether UTPS would now support re-establishment of former canals. Seymour Aitken and Arthur Webb gave reminders of the reasons for the original objections – principally on the basis of major concerns associated with supplying water from the Thames to the canals. The further point was made that support would only be considered if the reinstatement of canals was on their original lines. The case would be considered on its merits at consultation time. Funding for such projects, however, was most unlikely to be available.

There being **NO FURTHER BUSINESS**, the meeting closed at 9.09 pm, Seymour Aitken having been thanked for his hospitality.

8. The NEXT MEETING, in late May or early June, would be notified in advance. ACTION MH

