

OF THE UPPER THAMES PROTECTION SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT THE CRICKLADE JENNER HALL ON 24th October 2018

Liquid Highway: Before the meeting began, attendees were invited to partake of an alcoholic beverage by this name, newly brewed (and provided by) the Red Lion Inn. It was the Official Beer of the Thames Path National Trail, and had been advertised in the 2018 edition of the UPTS STRIPLING Newsletter. Favourable comments upon it were made.

Attendance: Chris Graham (Chairman), Margaret Hunt (Secretary), Carol Rouse (Treasurer), Helen Goody (STRIPLING Editor), Richard Rumming, Gerry Tamplin, Arthur Webb (Committee Members).

9 UTPS members, 21 non-members and 7 Committee members, giving a total of 37 attendees.

Welcome: Chris Graham welcomed those present to the AGM. He then made reference to the death of Louise Aitken, a valued member who had in the past provided much support to UTPS, including holding meetings in her house when Seymour was UTPS Chairman.

Apologies for Absence were received from Ben West (Committee member), Hugh Slater (member) and Mr. and Mrs. R. Sweet (members).

Confirmation of the Minutes of the 2017 AGM: These had been signed as a correct record at the 31.1.2018 Committee Meeting. Agreement was confirmed.

Matters Arising from the above Minutes: There were none.

Chairman's Annual Report:

Chris Graham began by singling out two UTPS Committee Members for special praise for their supportive action – Richard Rumming for his membership of various associated bodies and his environmentally-friendly farming practices, and Helen Goody for her expert publication of the annual STRIPLING Newsletter. He went on to say that matters discussed at the quarterly Committee Meetings had included the potential designation of the Cotswold Lakes area as an SSSI, the fact that Thames Path National Trail had now been completed between Castle Eaton and Lechlade, and the involvement of UTPS with the Catchment Management Partnership and the Farmer Guardians of the Upper Thames.

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

The **Accounts** as at 31st August 2018 were presented by Carol Rouse, who reported that income had amounted to £168.24, made up of subscriptions, donations and a grant. Expenditure had been £405.70. The Balance Sheet showed at figure of £3,089.00, £41.00 higher than at the end of the 2017 accounting period.

UTPS Membership stood at 62 active individuals.

Election of Auditor:

Philip Pope was re-appointed as Auditor, confirmed and seconded from the floor.

Election of UTPS Committee Members:

It was proposed and seconded from the floor that the following Committee Members be re-elected *en bloc*: Helen Goody, Chris Graham, Margaret Hunt, Carol Rouse, Richard Rumming, Gerry Tamplin, Arthur Webb and Ben West.

Any Other Business:

Cricklade Town Council Remedial Work on Fairview Fields River Bank

This work had now been completed. Town Councillor Russell Osman thanked the UTPS for its financial contribution. In answer to a question about dog access to the river where the stabilisation had taken place, Mark Clarke, Cricklade Town Council Chairman, stated that there was no statutory means of preventing dogs from entering the water.

The possible future re-opening of the Thames and Severn Canal alongside Dance Common and along to the entrance to Cricklade was raised to. Although the original plans were designed as part of an application for Lottery funding, as far as is known, there is no live scheme at present.

Steven Tabbitt, Thames Trail Officer, expressed his gratitude to Wiltshire Council for undertaking the recent Path surface improvements in the Cricklade area.

There being no further business, the AGM closed at 7.50 pm.

Presentation by Jim Seymour, Environment Agency Fisheries Field Team, entitled 'Upper Thames Fish Populations'

Jim Seymour gave his address, accompanied by colour slides manipulated by Stefan Goody, to a deeply interested audience, some of whom had come to the meeting as a result of the advertisement in STRIPLING. Jim started by giving a detailed list of the varieties of fish to be found in the river and its tributaries, following this with information about fish surveys, in particular an electronic form of detection that had a non-damaging impact upon the fish inspected. Various factors associated with loss of fish populations were then dealt with, such as dirty water, phosphate contamination, low or high water levels, unsuitable water flow, fish predators. In connection with the last of these, the ongoing difficulties of removing signal crayfish was enlarged upon. Fish passes, which were very expensive to construct, gave a means of stabilising fish populations, as did the provision of cattle-drinkers (to stop cows and horses from entering the river), fencing and depositing of gravel. The cooperation of riverside farmers was beneficial. As a last resort to prevent depopulation, fish could be artificially reintroduced. Throughout Jim's talk, many questions and comments from the audience received responses.

The post-AGM Talk brought the meeting to a close at 9.20 pm, after which coffee/tea and biscuits were served by Helen Goody, giving attendees had the opportunity to interact.

