

MINUTES OF THE UTPS AGM HELD VIRTUALLY ON 10TH NOVEMBER 2021, STARTING AT 7.00 PM

Attendance

Richard Ruming (Acting Chairman)
Helen Goody (Editor, The Stripling)
Carol Rouse (Treasurer)
Ben West (Committee Member)
Stefan Goody (Member)
Mark Clarke (Non-Member)

Apologies for Absence received from:

Elizabeth Nesar
Richard & Marilyn Sweet
Steve Tabbitt
LTCdr AGS & Mrs Janet Williams

Remembering Chris Graham

The meeting began with a minute's silence in memory of Chris Graham, UTPS Chairman, who died on 11 October 2021. Chris joined UTPS in 2010 and became Chairman in 2014. Chris was a well-respected and much-liked Chairman, and the Society benefitted enormously from Chris' professional land management expertise. On 4 November 2021, UTPS Committee members Richard Ruming and Ben West attended the Service of Thanksgiving for the life of Chris Graham.

Carol Rouse agreed to kindly organize a card to be sent from UTPS Committee expressing our condolences to Chris's wife Sue and to the family.

Matters Arising

- a) Richard Ruming thanked Helen Goody for pulling together articles for The Stripling, October 2021.
- b) Ben West was commended on his article on sewage discharges into local rivers, a highly relevant and important topic for UTPS. Ben noted that the Government's Environment Bill does not contain any legal powers to stop water companies discharging sewage into rivers during storm surges; water companies should do their best endeavours to avoid such sewage discharges.
- c) Mark Clarke, Chairman Cricklade Town Council said he had noted the River Trust statistics quoted in The Stripling.
- d) On occasions, River Key (tributary of River Thames) at Dance Common, Cricklade can look brown. River Key lies downstream from Purton Sewage Works.

Treasurer's Annual Report on Accounts year ending 31 August 2021: (report copied for file)

- Income: £81.00 from membership renewals, plus a generous £86 donations and 0.37p interest, gives total income for the year of £167.37.
- Total expenditure for the year amounted to £102.96, including £90.97 for the production of The Stripling
- Net annual income over expenditure was £64.34, with total funds standing at £2,895.43.

Election of Auditor

Philip Pope was re-elected to this role.

Election of Committee Members

Those present agreed to continue membership of the Committee. In addition, Margaret Hunt had communicated to Helen Goody she would be willing to remain a UTPS Committee member, but would like to step down from her role as UTPS Secretary. Steven Tabbitt informed Helen Goody that he has left his job as Thames Path National Trail Manager and a replacement is being recruited. His new role is Principle Officer for Countryside Access for Oxfordshire, including the West Oxfordshire border with the Upper Thames. Steve confirmed he is willing to continue to be a UTPS Committee member.

UTPS Committee comprises:

Richard Rumming – Acting Chairman
Carol Rouse - Treasurer
Helen Goody, Editor The Stripling
Ben West
Steven Tabbitt

A new Chairman and Hon Secretary will need to be found.

Membership Annual Report

UTPS Treasurer reported membership currently stands at 35 active members and 5 Committee members. It was noted there has been no contact from potential new members through the UTPS website.

The Future of the Society

UTPS membership has been in steady decline over the last few years and the Committee itself has also lost several members. 2020/21 has been difficult for the Committee, especially since losing the Chairman.

A discussion took place on the future of the Society, with the key points being:

- Due to the fact the current membership has been in decline, and it has been very difficult to attract any new members, the majority of the Committee expressed the opinion that the Society should be wound up.
- Mark Clarke said he would be saddened to see UTPS no longer in existence and encouraged the Committee to embark on a recruitment drive, utilizing social media, and local advertising as much as possible.
- Contact could be made with relevant Parish Councils to promote UTPS and to find out who in the parishes may have an interest in joining UTPS.
- The Committee agreed to review the situation again in 6 months' time

AOB

- a) Mark Clarke stated that the willow tree pollarding by Cricklade Town Council and supported by FWAG came about partly as a direct result of Jo Leigh from FWAG giving a presentation at UTPS AGM in November 2019. Being able to meet Jo that evening prompted CTC to explore matched funding options with FWAG, which resulted in the successful completion of the work in 2021.
- b) It was noted that the field adjacent to North Meadow has also undergone willow pollarding.
- c) Richard Rumming noted the Thames Path near Waterhay car park has been improved with the support of the owner of 4Lakes.
- d) Newland Homes plan to build 140 houses adjacent to Reeds. A previous planning application was turned down as a result of objections from Natural England.
- e) Mark Clarke thanked Ben West for notifying CTC about the Thames Valley Flood Scheme.

THERE BEING NO AGM PRESENTATION ON THIS OCCASION. THE MEETING CLOSED AT 20:17.

Date of next UTPS Committee Meeting **5 January 2022** at 7.30pm to be held via Zoom.