

Minutes of GREN Committee meeting held on 16th January 2014

1. Welcome, introductions, and Apologies;

GREN Committee members: Peter Chan (PC) (Chair); John Booth (JB) (Secretary); Tony Cowling (AC) (Treasurer); Tricia Marcouse (TM); Tanja Rebel (TR).

GREN members: None.

Apologies: Steve Goodman (member).

Committee members briefly outlined their relevant voluntary and professional experience.

TM commented that Econet had been created to support practical wildlife conservation groups who needed insurance cover. JB commented that it was appropriate that Econet and GREN were separate organisations (with Econet a GREN member) because they had different remits – Econet was a specialist network while GREN aimed to support all sorts of environmental interests.

2. Induction of Committee Members

All committee members said they were aware of GREN's Constitution, JB outlined the functions of the Website and Facebook page, and all signed the standard agreement to support GREN and its values. JB said he would retain paper copies of these documents.

3. Minutes of Previous Meetings

Minutes of GREN Committee Meeting on 8th August 2013, Members' Meeting on 20th October 2013, and AGM on 28th November 2013 were taken as read with no comments or queries.

Matters Arising (not covered by Actions or Agenda Items for this meeting):

Minutes of the Members' Meeting on 20th October included an Appendix of comments received from visitors to the 'Repair Café'.

- Many of these comments related to management of domestic waste and recycling. It was agreed that JB and TM would review these and advise whether GREN should take action, such as posting information on the website. (JB & TM)
- There was a suggestion that GREN should set up an open meeting with RBC so that members and public could get answers to their questions. Agreed this was a good idea. (All)

4. Review of Actions Outstanding

Outstanding actions listed on 'GREN_Actions_Tracker' spreadsheet dated 14th January 2014, which had been circulated previously, were reviewed.

Actions from 2012: It was agreed that many actions dating from 2012 were either complete or out-dated, and should be deleted from the list. Actions from 2012 to continue (some modified or combined) were:

- Investigate introducing a 'Donate' button to the website (JB – with other website actions);
- Add information on Insurance for Groups to the website (JB);
- continue to press RBC for action on 20 mph zones at Cycling Liaison Group (PC);
- Check if Labour Party Green Policy Forum would still welcome input on Decentralised Energy from GREN (JB).

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Actions from 2013: Many actions continue (see table in Appendix below) or were Agenda Items for this meeting so could be closed – the following points were made:

- Treasurer role transferred to Tony Cowling – complete.
- Liaise with Katie Perrett (student researching GREN and Green Party) - action complete – new action to ask her for copy of her results (JB)
- Forwarding website postings to Facebook (RM) – close – new action to discuss with Rachel Miller who has left the Committee (JB). (Action to seek to automate this is a separate Action from 2013 AGM).
- Meet with RBC about JSNA – complete – record to be posted on website (AC).
- Rachel Miller to set PC as Facebook Administrator with JB – action transferred to PC (PC).
- Proposed Skill Share event – action taken on by PC (PC).
- Investigate running events on Palm Oil – noted its cultivation can create significant environmental damage – important to find alternatives to address need for nutrients - agreed to close action – not seen as appropriate for GREN at present but one or more GREN groups may wish to take it up.

5. Funding

AC said he was expecting invoices from RISC for the 2013 AGM, and from Loud'n'Clear for the website. He would investigate whether any income was due from the October Repair Café. (AC)

He had an outstanding action to ask Transition Town Reading for a donation, and on TM's suggestion would approach Econet to ask if they could provide any funding for the website. (AC)

Undertaking more GREN activities would help to raise GREN's profile and potentially attract funds.

While room-hire for events could often be funded by taking a collection at the event funds were needed both to pay for the website and to underwrite events.

It was suggested that more funding might be available from RBC, as GREN's activities often supported RBC's aims, and it was agreed to seek advice from other groups as to what options might be available and how to access them. (TM & TR)

The possibility of running stalls at events (e.g. Earley Green Fair, or Beanpole Day) to raise funds by selling food or other items to the public, as Econet did, was discussed. It was thought that this would compete with other groups and should not be necessary as GREN's funding requirement was not very large.

It was agreed to continue the action to apply for 'Waitrose Community Matters' funding, which might raise a few £100, and wording for the application was brainstormed. (JB)

ASDA and possibly the Co-op were said to offer similar opportunities.

6. Website, Facebook and Twitter

Website/Membership:

Since end of November: 15 events and 2 news items posted; 4 members joined; 2 resigned (one leaving town, one too busy to read e-mails); and 5 had e-mail returned undeliverable (2 known to have left town). JB to 'phone 3 'undeliverables' to investigate status (JB).

One member had e-mailed to complain at recent high volume of e-mails and suggested would prefer a 'weekly digest' as opposed to an e-mail after every posting. Agreed to consider what

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alternative options of presentation of mail traffic (e.g. a weekly list) would be most useful to members, and to investigate what changes website provider can deliver, and at what cost. (All – JB to add to list of potential changes to website for discussion with Loud'n'Clear).

Facebook:

Since end of November: 6 new members; 10 new postings.

Twitter:

None of the Committee was familiar with ownership, management and status of GREN Twitter account. JB to discuss with Rachel Miller (JB).

7. Plan next Members' Meeting

It was agreed to work towards a meeting on a Saturday afternoon on 1st or 29th March. As well as general GREN business it was proposed to ask Michele Atkins to run a session on 'Love Food Hate Waste', and to have an update on the Sustainability Centre (see below), and to have a 'Waste Clinic' with TM (or Enrico Petrucco, subject to availability).

JB was asked to investigate options for venue including RISC and the Friends Meeting House. Access to a kitchen was an important factor. (JB)

Oxford Road Community Garden should be considered for an outdoor summer meeting.

8. GREN work with Reading Climate Change Partnership

JB apologised that he had not prepared to address this item. One action was covered by establishment of the Repair Café which seemed to be progressing well. He said he would e-mail the Committee with details of all the five Actions that GREN was to undertake as 'other delivery partner'. (JB)

9. Reading Sustainability Centre and Hydro proposal

AC said he had launched this initiative using the GREN website and contacts, but was intending to open an independent website soon.

There had been a well-attended meeting on this on January 10th 2014 and since then he and JB had discussed it with Ben Burfoot and Summreen Sheikh of RBC. Proposal was for a hydro-electric plant at Reading Weir, which should generate income, and a meeting/education centre close by which would be powered and funded by the Weir. More details had been posted on the GREN website.

It would be important to reach agreement to supply a significant local electricity load directly to get best value for the electricity generated, because 'export' rate to grid was well below market rate. As discussed at Reading Climate Change Partnership RBC were keen that the re-developers of King's Meadow Baths should be involved. TM commented that the Baths had been found to be contaminated with Barium so re-development may take longer or be more costly than expected.

It was agreed that GREN would continue to support AC exploring options for a Reading Sustainability Centre and the Hydro project, but that any proposal to commit to take on assets or liabilities would need to be put to the GREN membership and agreed by the Committee. Action on AC to progress these matters continues. (AC)

10. Environmental Hustings

It was agreed that it would be good to run a meeting to allow the public to question representatives of Political Parties on their environmental commitment before the May elections for MEPs and Reading Borough Council.

It was suggested that the UoR Vice-Chancellor should be approached to chair this.

JB agreed to work towards this but stressed that a lot of support from others would be needed to make it a success. (JB)

11. Repair Cafe

The first Repair Café had been launched on October 20th 2013 at a joint GREN and Transition Town Reading (TTR) event, but the second had been run by TTR and Hackspace.

Rachel Miller of TTR had discussed with JB and they concluded that, while GREN would be welcome to be involved in future Repair Café events, it would be best if 'ownership' and management of future Repair Cafés passed to TTR, who had suitable insurance cover, without further formal involvement of GREN for the time being. TTR could access GREN website and Facebook to publicise the events.

This was agreed, but it was noted that GREN should consider running information stalls at future Repair Cafés – a 'Doctor GREN' stall at the first event had enabled engagement with the public and GREN members. (All).

12. Any Other Business

None

Minutes by John Booth
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Appendix: Current and Outstanding Actions

Serial # Cyy.nn /M*/A*	Date opened yyyy-mm- dd	Meeting: Committee /Member/ AGM	Detail of Action	Who acts?	Reviews, Progress and Discussion	Date closed
C12.09	2012-07-25	Committee	Find out if Loud-n-Clear can add a 'donate' button to the website	JB	2012-01-16 - Continue, discuss with other website change ideas.	x
C12.20	2012-10-10	Committee	Raise lack of RBC commitment to 20 mph at cycle liaison group	PC	2014-01-16 - transfer to PC	x
C12.25	2012-10-10	Committee	Proposal on Decentralised Energy for Labour Party Policy Forum (with JB and AC)	JB	2014-01-16 - JB to check if still relevant	x
C13.28	2013-01-22	Committee	Find out progress of RCCP Community Solar project	JB	2014-01-16 - Continue	x
C13.30	2013-08-08	Committee	Ask TT for a donation	AC	2014-01-16 Continue	x
C13.31	2013-08-09	Committee	Apply for 'Waitrose Community Matters' funding after agreement on wording	JB	2014-01-16 - transfer to JB - OK & RM have left the Committee	x
A13.10	2013-11-28	AGM	Apply for Affiliate Membership of Reading Neighbourhood Network	Secretary	2014-01-16 - Continue	x
A13.03	2013-11-28	AGM	Include 'Love Food Hate Waste' in next Members Meeting	All	2014-01-16 Continues	x
A13.04	2013-11-28	AGM	Investigate with L'nC if website postings can be forwarded to Facebook automatically	All	2014-01-16 Continues	x
A13.05	2013-11-28	AGM	Set Peter Chan as a Facebook Admin.	PC	2014-01-16 Continue - PC to contact RM	x
A13.07	2013-11-28	AGM	Investigate 'Campaigning Skill Share' event - Press Releases, Street Stalls, Writing to MPs	PC	2014-01-16 Continue - PC to take on	x
A13.09	2013-11-28	AGM	Change AGM Quorum to 6 from 8	Secretary	2014-01-16 - Continue	x
C14.01	2014-01-16	Committee	Review Waste comments from 20/10/2013 and propose action	JB, TM	New	x
C14.02	2014-01-16	Committee	Consider Open Meeting with RBC - Waste & Recycling Q&A	All	New	x

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C14.03	2014-01-16	Committee	Collate info. on Insurance for groups and add to website	JB	2014-01-16 - new - replaces former C13 and A1	x
C14.04	2014-01-16	Committee	Ask Katie Perritt to report on her research into GREN & GP	JB	New	x
C14.05	2014-01-16	Committee	Discuss with RM how to post GREN events and News on Facebook	JB	New - replaces former Action C36	x
C14.06	2014-01-16	Committee	Post report of meeting with RBC about JSNA on website	AC	New - follows former Action C37 <i>(Completed by end January)</i>	x
C14.07	2014-01-16	Committee	Check expected invoices and income	AC	New	x
C14.08	2014-01-16	Committee	Ask Econet if they can donate to support website	AC	New	x
C14.09	2014-01-16	Committee	Seek advice on funding from RBC from other groups	TM, TR	New	x
C14.10	2014-01-16	Committee	Contact 3 members with 'undeliverable' e-mails	JB	New	x
C14.11	2014-01-16	Committee	Consider offering option to send weekly digest of GREN emails etc. (All) and establish cost of change (JB)	All, JB	New	x
C14.12	2014-01-16	Committee	Discuss GREN Twitter account with RM	JB	New	x
C14.13	2014-01-16	Committee	Investigate venues for Members Meeting	JB	New	x
C14.14	2014-01-16	Committee	Circulate details of Actions for RCCP to Committee	JB	New	x
C14.15	2014-01-16	Committee	Progress Reading Sustainability Centre (including Hydro)	AC	New	x
C14.16	2014-01-16	Committee	Develop proposal for 2014 Environmental Hustings	JB	New	x
C14.17	2014-01-16	Committee	Seek to run GREN stalls at Hackspace	All	New	x