

Minutes of GREN Members' Meeting held on 1st March 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: Michele Atkins, Anne Booth, Chris Burden, Annalisa Cavallini, Steve Goodman, Ornella Trevisan.

Apologies: Jenny Hicks (via Facebook) (member).

2. Minutes of Last Meeting

Minutes of last member meeting http://www.gren.org.uk/resources/GRENminutes201013_final.doc held on 20th October 2013 were agreed with no comments, and no matters arising.

3. Updates from GREN Officers and Committee:

Chair – PC: no significant developments

Treasurer – AC: was re-arranging cheque signatories for new Committee; Loud'n'Clear invoice (for maintenance and hosting of website) awaited.

Secretary – JB:

Constitution: By decision at the AGM in November had modified quorum of AGM from 8 members to 6 members – revised document was now on website.

Reading Neighbourhood Network (RNN): By decision at the AGM in November GREN had applied to become an affiliate member of RNN – decision by RNN Trustees awaited. Had also applied for listing on RVA Directory.

Membership: Since end November 7 new individual members, 2 resigned (one moving away, one too busy), but in addition 5 with e-mails un-delivered (most known to have left the area) so will delete after further investigation, so total unchanged 164. Still 26 Groups registered.

Facebook: 110 Members of this group – seems to attract a fair few postings.

Discussed wording of description of Facebook page: 'it is not a place to post events'. Agreed to revise so as to not discourage posting of events, but to ask that events be posted on the website and on Twitter as well. **(Action - JB)**.

JB already had an action to ask Loud'n'Clear if website postings could be forwarded automatically to Facebook. It was agreed this should be investigated. JB was creating a list of questions to put to Loud'n'Clear in a batch. TM said she would ask a friend with relevant experience for his opinion on feasibility and options for propagating messages to various media. **(Action - TM)**.

4. Updates from GREN representatives on other bodies:

Reading Climate Change Partnership – JB:

GREN was an 'Other Delivery Partner' for five of the many Actions in the Action Plan of the Reading Climate Action Network. The draft Plan had been published in November 2013 and

Minutes of GREN Members' Meeting held on 1st March 2014

'Theme Leads' on the RCCP were in process of contacting 'Lead Delivery Partners' for each Action.

Progress with GREN's five actions was reviewed – positive progress was being made in all areas – summary should be posted on website. **(Action – JB)**

Progress on Repair Café was noted – launched by GREN and TTR, now run monthly by TTR and Hackspace. It was suggested that it should be easier for people to find out about local opportunities for repair and re-use – both commercial and voluntary – a Directory of Re-use on a website was suggested – linked from TTR, Repair Café, RBC, GREN etc. sites. **(Action – All)**.

It was noted that none of the 'Lead Partners' (RBC, RCCP and TTR) for the actions had yet formally contacted GREN. JB said the process was running slowly and because he was not 'Theme Lead' for any of TTR's proposed Themes he was not sure if TTR had yet agreed to be involved. Chris Burden said there was TTR Steering Group meeting on Monday 3rd March and JB agreed to provide him with more detail to take to this. **(Action – JB)**.

Cycling Forum – PC:

PC said Council did not seem to take much notice of discussions at these meetings, and they seemed to be much more interested in promoting bus use than cycling. They had been asked to provide examples of positive outcomes from member suggestions at the Cycling Forum and had only been able to cite addition of new cycling racks outside Cotswolds in Whitley.

Suggestions included boycotting the meetings (which would risk cycling campaigners being branded as uncooperative) and protest rides (which might annoy the car-driving public and could be presented as anti-social). Also writing formally to the RBC Lead Transport Officer, and if no response to the Lead Councillor. Should seek agreement on action with other members of the Forum. **(Action – PC)**.

It was commented that it really needed a long-term campaign to get Reading to change its transport strategy.

5. Meeting on Waste with RBC – proposal for GREN event.

There was already a series of three RE3 Stakeholder Meetings per year, which were poorly attended by community representatives, partly because meetings were usually held in working hours. (RE3 is the consortium which manages waste disposal for Reading and Wokingham and Bracknell – each Authority is independently responsible for waste collection). TM already attended. Should seek to get GREN on list of invitees. **(Action – JB & TM)**.

Waste and 'Circular Economy' had been included in the 'Purchasing, Supply and Consumption' chapter of the RCCP Climate Change Strategy.

It was agreed to continue the Action (C14.02) to seek a meeting on waste and recycling with RBC officers and Councillors ... if possible inviting people from other organisations such as Reading Neighbourhood Network. Suggested that RBC should host it, but at a time accessible to interested members of the public. **(Action – JB)**.

6. Campaigning Skill Share – proposal for GREN event

TCV ran training in some fairly specialist areas, and RVA a wider range of training.

Minutes of GREN Members' Meeting held on 1st March 2014

There was some discussion about what skills would be useful to groups, and which groups had skills they could usefully share. It was agreed to survey GREN Groups about their needs and capabilities. **(Action PC and JB).**

7. Environmental Hustings 2014 – proposal for GREN event

Other groups had already scheduled at least two meetings specifically related to European Elections, and it was felt that it would be difficult to run a successful meeting specifically on EU Environmental policies, so it was agreed to have a main focus on the local elections, which would not preclude candidates referring to the EU.

GREN should encourage members to attend the 'European Movement' meeting on 14th March (already listed as a GREN 'Event') and ask questions on environmental topics. Chris Burden said he was willing to go to this but would welcome ideas for questions, and perhaps questions could be submitted beforehand. **(Action – JB).**

Meeting rooms at the University were said to be very costly, but it was suggested the Council might be willing to facilitate such a meeting in the interests of the democratic process.

It was agreed to set up a working group of TC, TM, JB and Chris Burden to work towards an environmental hustings before the elections on May 22nd. (Continue existing Action C14.16)

8. GREN's future activities – what else should we be doing?

There were no suggestions or comments.

9. GREN Website Functions – any requests for changes or comments?

At present members can choose either not to receive 'Events' and 'News' by e-mail at all, or to be sent them immediately postings are made. It had been suggested by a member that an option of a weekly digest of e-mails should be offered, to reduce the mail traffic to in-boxes.

Opinions on this were divided. Some thought it would be good to offer the option, others thought that 'weekly digests' would not be read, so 'immediate' mailing should continue. There was no consensus. JB already had an action from the Committee to ask Loud'n'Clear if this could be done. It was agreed this should continue.

It was agreed to investigate if there were lower-cost options for a website than continuing with Loud'n'Clear – it was pointed out that while some 'free websites' were available maintenance and management would fall on GREN members. **(Action – Annalisa Cavallini).**

10. A.O.B.

AC asked the meeting to confirm that the GREN bank account could be used to receive and disburse funds in connection with the development of the proposed Reading Sustainability Centre and Hydro Scheme.

GREN Committee Meeting on 16th January 2014 had 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. It was noted that cheques on the GREN account require signature of two GREN officers (Chair, Secretary, Treasurer).

Minutes of GREN Members' Meeting held on 1st March 2014

The meeting agreed to the use of the bank account subject to the understanding that: GREN shall not take on any liabilities or borrowing; there shall not be any overspending; records shall be kept; and the Committee shall be informed of all transactions.

11. Date and location of next meeting

Ricky Josey had suggested the Oxford Road Community Garden for a summer meeting. This was agreed, and it was suggested it should be on a weekday evening in early June. 5th was Environment Day, 6th was Greenpeace, 7th was Urban Wildlife Group, 11th was FoE, 13th was the day before the Waterfest ... Recycle Week starts on 16th June ... it was agreed to try to arrange for Monday 16th June. **(Action - JB).**

Minutes by John Booth
Version: 16/03/2014

GREN Forum:

Reading Sustainability Centre and Hydro Scheme:

Tony Cowling summarised progress with this proposal.

A preliminary feasibility study of the Hydro scheme had been completed and posted on the GREN website. Revenue from sales might be as high as £80k p.a.

A meeting was to be held with the Oxford Low Carbon Hub.

Tony had responded to the current Local Plan sites consultation suggesting the area near the weir and View Island be identified as sites for a hydro scheme, and somewhere nearby for a Sustainability Centre.

Ideas for Sustainability Centre were not as advanced, but some useful supporters had come on board.

Another meeting of supporters was scheduled for 28th March.

Waste Clinic:

Tricia Marcouse said that overall waste quantities were falling – 2015 targets had been hit by the end of 2013 and prospects were good for meeting the 2020 targets.

However there was a problem with contamination of recycled material with 'contrary materials' which added to costs and reduced throughput at the MRF (Materials Recovery Facility), and meant that otherwise recyclable material went to incineration. Collection crews were expected to tighten up on this over the next year.

There was in general no market for mixed plastics – much was shipped to a holding centre in the Midlands – better to leave it in 'residual' waste, almost all of which now went to the Colnbrook incinerator.

To reduce excess and un-recyclable packaging pressure needs to be put on Trading Standards to apply the existing laws.

Minutes of GREN Members' Meeting held on 1st March 2014

Love Food Hate Waste:

Michele Atkins said there were 4.2 million tonnes of avoidable food waste from homes every year, equivalent to 17 million tonnes of CO2 in total, and valued at £470 per household.

There was a great deal of useful information – including recipes - on the WRAP website <http://england.lovefoodhatewaste.com/> and

There was a five-point plan for success:

1. It Pays to Plan
2. Know Your Dates (storage, best before etc.)
3. Savvy Storage
4. Perfect Portions
5. Lovely Leftovers and forgotten foods.

Michele intended to run stalls at future Repair Cafes to get the message out, and local WRAP campaigner Emma Barnett had run meetings for local organisations, and would be doing so in the future, including one for Earley Environmental Group in April.

Minutes of GREN Members' Meeting held on 1st March 2014

Appendix: Current and Outstanding Actions

Serial #	Date opened	Meeting:	Detail of Action	Who to do?	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 2014-03-01 - close action	2014-03-01
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	2014-03-01 - Applied - decision awaited	x
A13.03	2013-11-28	AGM	Include 'Love Food Hate Waste' in next Members Meeting	All	2014-03-01 Complete	2014-03-01
A13.04	2013-11-28	AGM	Investigate with L'n'C 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	2014-03-01 Close - new action M14.8	2014-03-01
A13.09	2013-11-28	AGM	Change AGM Quorum to 6 from 8	Secretary	2014-03-01 - Complete	2014-03-01

Minutes of GREN Members' Meeting held on 1st March 2014

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C14.01	2014-01-16	Committee	Review Waste comments from 20/10/2013 and propose action	JB, TM	2014-03-01 - reviewed at Members meeting - C14.02 continues	2014-03-01
C14.02	2014-01-16	Committee	Consider Open Meeting with RBC - Waste & Recycling Q&A	JB	2014-03-01 transfer to JB (from All)	x
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	2014-03-01 - contact made - awaiting report.	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	Follows former Action C37 2014-01-17 Complete	2014-01-17
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	2014-03-01 - tried and no response - will delete end March	2014-02-24
C14.11	2014-01-16	Committee	Consider offering option to send weekly digest of GREN emails etc. (All) and establish cost of	All, JB	2014-03-01 - discussed - continues	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	2014-03-01 agreed summer meeting	2014-03-01
C14.14	2014-01-16	Committee	Circulate details of Actions for RCCP to Committee	JB	2014-02-28 - Complete - also presented at members meeting	2014-02-28

Minutes of GREN Members' Meeting held on 1st March 2014

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C14.15	2014-01-16	Committee	Progress Reading Sustainability Centre (including Hydro)	AC	2014-03-01 - progress reported to members meeting, action continues.	x
C14.16	2014-01-16	Committee	Develop proposal for 2014 Environmental Hustings	JB, TC, TM, Chris Burden.	2014-03-01 agreed to set up working group	x
C14.17	2014-01-16	Committee	Seek to run GREN stalls at Hackspace	All	New	x
M14.01	2014-03-01	Members	Revise description on Facebook page to welcome posting of events	JB	New 2014-03-16 - Complete	2014-03-16
M14.02	2014-03-01	Members	Seek opinion on automatically propagating messages between website, Facebook and	TM	New	x
M14.03	2014-03-01	Members	Post summary of progress with RCCP Actions on website	JB	New	x
M14.04	2014-03-01	Members	Make it easier for people to find out about local opportunities for repair and re-use. Website?	All	New	x
M14.05	2014-03-01	Members	Send Chris Burdon details of RCCP Actions for 3rd March TTR meeting	JB	Complete	2014-03-02
M14.06	2014-03-01	Members	Agree action on cycling with other members of the Forum	PC	New	x
M14.07	2014-03-01	Members	Get GREN invited to RE3 Stakeholder meetings	JB & TM	New	x
M14.08	2014-03-01	Members	Survey GREN Groups on campaigning skill share needs and options for training	PC & JB	New	x
M14.09	2014-03-01	Members	Encourage members to attend European Movement meeting on 14th March	JB	2014-03-16 - meeting was on GREN Facebook. CB & JB attended and asked questions.	2014-03-16
M14.10	2014-03-01	Members	Investigate website options	Annalisa Cava	New	x
M14.11	2014-03-01	Members	Arrange Summer meeting in Oxford Road Community Garden	JB	New 2014-03-12 - booked 16th June	x