

Minutes of GREN Members' Meeting held on 16th June 2014

1. Welcome, Introductions, and Apologies:

GREN Committee members: John Booth (JB) (Secretary); Tony Cowling (AC) (Treasurer); Tricia Marcouse (TM);

GREN members: Ricky Josey (Chair of ORCG); Janet Breeze; Will; Jasmine Lail; Rachel Miller (TTR).

Apologies: Tanja Rebel (GREN Committee member); Anne Booth (EEG); Paul Harper (member).

Ricky welcomed everyone to the Oxford Road Community Garden <http://www.orcg.org.uk/> and led a short tour. He explained that it had been created in 1988 as 'planning gain' from development, was Council-owned land, was run by volunteers, and was well-used by schools and individuals. In a densely populated area it provided space for wildlife, education, informal recreation, and fruit-and-vegetable-growing. Three primary schools use it as a 'green classroom'.

Members thanked Ricky and ORCG for hosting the meeting.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting and Actions:

Minutes of last member meeting on 1st March 2014

http://www.gren.org.uk/resources/140301_GREN_Members_Minutes.pdf were agreed with no comments, and no matters arising.

Actions: JB led a review of progress with selected Actions:

"C13.31 – Apply for Waitrose Community Matters funding after agreement on wording".

JB said that while cash collections at many meetings could cover their costs GREN needed income to support its website. In the Waitrose scheme each month every Waitrose branch donates £1,000 between 3 local good causes in a ratio determined by shoppers casting lots. JB said there had been no progress with the action but Rachel Miller said she had submitted a form to Caversham Waitrose in 2013 but had been given to understand that it could be many months before GREN's turn came. Action to continue to cover other Waitrose outlets.

It was suggested that ASDA, TESCO and the Co-op should be investigated for similar schemes. JB pointed out that previous Committees had looked at some of these and had found that (unlike Waitrose) while many would provide funds for special projects they did not give funds for general running costs. All opportunities should be sought. **(Action – JB, AC).**

"C14.02 – Consider open meeting with RBC – Waste and Recycling Q&A".

JB said he had made little progress with this but he had been advised that Oliver Burt would be the best Council officer to involve.

The re3 Stakeholder meeting on July 10th was not relevant to this action, although it will give information on current performance levels. re3 is the partnership between Reading, Wokingham and Bracknell covering waste management and disposal. While it would be informative only re3's performance against their existing 25-year contract would be on the agenda. It would be at least fifteen years before formal discussions on revision of their contract (unless they stop meeting targets prior to this), and hence the processes used to manage waste in the future, would start to be up for discussion with the Council after 5-10 years from now.

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GREN's proposed meeting with RBC would be to help people understand the issues and the options for improved performance within the limits of the existing re3 contract. Key issues would be minimisation of food waste and reducing contamination of separately-collected recyclables.

Ricky Josey said RBC was interested in improving waste management and recycling from flats and said that he could ask Reading Neighbourhood Network to host a meeting to be run by GREN for RNN members, GREN members, and RBC. This would give GREN members an opportunity to engage with officers and Cllrs. on waste and recycling issues.

TM said there was a useful re3 video of the Smallmead Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) which she could ask re3 to make available for a meeting. **(Action continues – JB, Ricky Josey).**

"C14.7 – Seek to run GREN stalls at Hackspace/Repair Café" –

Had not happened recently although leaflets had been made available. Rachel Miller said there was a lot of space in the new location at Jacksons Corner and GREN would always be welcome to have a presence at Repair Café events, but it could be hard to engage people with information stalls. Action continues.

"M14.04 – make it easier for people to find out about local opportunities for repair and re-use. Space on website?"

TM said GREN could collate and supply information. JB asked if TTR website could host this sort of information – Rachel Miller said she would ask TTR. **(Action – JB, TM, Rachel Miller).**

"M14.08 – Survey GREN groups on campaigning skill share needs and options for training"

Had not been started. Ricky Josey said RNN could help with training. Action to continue.

3. Updates from GREN Officers and Committee:

Chair – PC:

- No comments had been received from Peter Chan

Treasurer – AC:

- After change in GREN Officers at the 2013 AGM new cheque signatories had been agreed with the bank. Change to communications address was in progress.
- A £1k grant from the Earley Charity had been received to support development of the Sustainability Centre website.
- No invoices had been received from Loud'n'Clear for website.

Secretary – JB:

Membership (status and changes since last meeting in March):

- Facebook – 24 new members, total 133, was 110 in March.
- Website/GREN Membership – 7 new members, 5 removed because of e-mail delivery failure (reported at last meeting), total nominally 170 but may include a few duplicates and people known to have left the area.
- Groups – 1 new group (Population Matters), total 27.

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GREN had joined Reading Neighbourhood Network (RNN) (<http://rgneighbours.net/>)

- can post meetings etc. on RNN website
- 50% discount on training costs provided by RNN
- RNN offers to pay first £75 of insurance costs for groups.

This should be publicised to GREN Members **(Action – JB)**

4. Updates from GREN representatives on other bodies:

Cycling Forum – PC: No comments had been received from Peter Chan

Reading Climate Change Partnership – JB:

RCCP Board had met in April, next due in July.

Reading Climate Action Network (RCAN) meeting on 'Circular Economy' held in May.

New RCCP scheme to grant-aid projects with up to £2k to investigate CC-related opportunities – funded from Feed-In Tariff.

<http://www.readingclimateaction.org.uk/resources/organisations/funding-loans/project-sipport-fund/>

This should be publicised to GREN Members **(Action – JB)**

WIP to review and report on first 6 months of Action Plans – period to end March 2014.

GREN is supposed to be involved in 5 Actions (listed in report to last meeting:

http://www.gren.org.uk/resources/140301_GREN_Actions_for_RCCP.pdf).

Suggestions had been received from RCCP Theme Lead for T8SP1.3 "Sustain and improve 'environmental' community organisations by improving links between groups contributing to tackling climate change" that GREN could:

- improve info. on GREN website about RCAN **(Action – JB)**; and
- engage more with its member groups about climate change ... which could run in parallel with other actions to engage with member groups e.g. on training. TM suggested that when contacting groups should not simply ask as an open-ended inquiry - but should present them with a list of options for activities that they could respond to. **(Action – JB, PC)**.

Ricky said he was on RNN's Climate Change group ... should seek collaboration. **(Action – JB)**.

5. Update on Sustainability Centre – AC

Open meeting at Lock on 4th June had been well-attended and successful with press coverage.

Website development was in progress. A keen volunteer was helping one day per week. Work in progress to confirm expected output of hydro turbines. Relationship with Environment Agency was progressing well.

6. Review of GREN Local Election Hustings (13th May 2014) - JB

Panel was councillors from 4 parties plus a UKIP candidate. Audience in Friends Meeting House was just over 30 people. Press Release had resulted in coverage after the event. Collection had more than covered room hire costs.

Taking questions from the audience on the night took least preparatory work but meant that politicians were not pressed on key issues relating to Reading. It was agreed that at any future events GREN should prepare leading questions to be put to panel, but it was also important to allow the audience a chance to put questions on the night. 'Question Time' format (as seen on TV) seems to allow audience involvement after a pre-selected topic had been put to the panel, but seems to result in relatively few topics being discussed.

2015 will have both parliamentary and local elections.

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

No specific suggestions were made.

8. GREN Website Functions – any requests or comments?

It was agreed to refer this back to the Committee for discussion – it was getting late and a little chilly.

9. Constitution Change

Clause 8.d of the GREN Constitution read: "No member of the Network will be paid for their activity supporting the Network or financially benefit from their involvement with the Network in any way. They may be reimbursed for all reasonable expenses."

JB explained that this would prevent any GREN members from doing any paid work for GREN, directly or indirectly, without resigning their membership, which could be inconvenient. He said the Committee is responsible for 'legal and financial' matters, so Clause 8.d should apply only to the Committee.

It was agreed to change 'member' to 'Committee Member' in Clause 8.d of the GREN Constitution. **(Action – JB).**

10. A.O.B.

Rachel Miller said a new initiative 'Speakers Corner' had been launched – proposed to run in Market Place monthly. She asked if GREN would co-ordinate speakers for this for one month – perhaps in August. <http://rvadirectory.org.uk/news/20140528/speakers-corner-reading-launch-reading-matters> Agreed to consider this - **(Action – GREN Committee).**

11. Date and location of next Members' Meeting

Proposal to hold at RISC on a September evening was discussed. It was suggested it could be combined with the proposed meeting on Waste, but this might not be compatible with holding an open meeting with RNN as previously discussed. No conclusion was reached. **(Action – GREN Committee).**

12. AGM

JB said Constitution required that this be by end November. It was suggested this could be combined with the third Members' Meeting and held in October/November. No conclusion was reached. **(Action – GREN Committee).**

Minutes by John Booth

Version: For website 01/07/2014

GREN Forum:

1. Reading West Station

Jasmine Lail explained that because of steps in the ramp from Oxford Road, and steps to the bridge over the rails between the platforms, access was difficult for push-chairs, wheelchairs and bicycles. The ramp down from Tilehurst Road was OK.

First Great Western had asked children at E P Collier School to draw pictures of a re-vamped station, so she believed some changes were to be made, but she had not yet managed to find out what was planned.

Environmental benefit of improvement would be easier, and therefore greater, use of rail as opposed to alternatives.

Points raised in discussion included:

- It could be that completely satisfactory plans were in development so priority should be to contact First Great Western to find out where they were on this.
- Theale station had recently been improved with lifts, but was seen as a key 'park and rail' site for Reading so may have had special funding.
- It was not clear if responsibility for significant changes was with Network Rail or First Great Western ... it was suggested that First Great Western might only be responsible for maintenance and significant changes would come from Network Rail.
- Booking Office in its present site prevented installation of a continuous ramp from Oxford Road.
- Maximum slope of ramps was thought to be 1:15, and there were requirements for flat sections on long ramps.
- One option would be to install a new bridge with lifts.
- Another option would be to install ramp access from Oxford Road to the eastern platform, and to replace the steps on the west side ramp with a ramp.
- Another option would be to install lifts directly from Oxford Road to platform level on both sides of the line.
- RVA had contacts with Disability Access groups.

Actions: Contact First Great Western and progress (**Action – JB & Jasmine Lail**)

2. Hodsoll Road Academy School

Jasmine Lail said a new Academy school was planned for Hodsoll Road off Great Knollys Street, and she was keen that it should be energy efficient and include renewable energy generation.

She had contacted Stephanie Clarke who was managing the project for RBC, who would pass the inquiry to the architect. Comment was that it was not too late but grant aid would be needed to fund any renewables.

Points raised in discussion included:

- Local Neighbourhood Watch oppose it because of implications for the adjacent green open space.
- RBC Sustainability team were to pass it to architects for comment. Had suggested RBC would probably not fund renewables because it was an Academy.
- JB said that as well as PV panels ground-source heat should be considered.

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- JB said that 'rent-a-roof' might be an option to get funding for PV – at least there would be some benefit for the school.
- 10:10 had a solar schools programme and should be contacted.
- Were there any proposals to redevelop adjacent areas that could have implications for solar output?

Actions: Contact 10:10 and progress **(Action – JB & Jasmine Lail)**

3. Air Quality in Reading:

Client Earth had taken the UK government to the Supreme Court.

<http://www.clientearth.org/201405282553/news/latest-news/use-the-law-beat-pollution-2553>

It was said that Reading don't pay the fines to the EU for non-compliance with the Air Quality Directive – fines were paid by UK government.

4. Third Thames Bridge

JB said Reading FoE's Enrico Petrucco had been to discuss it with Rob Wilson MP, proposing road user charging.

5. TTR's proposed 'Local Economy Festival'

Rachel Miller said Transition Town Reading were working towards an event in March 2015 to promote the local economy. A major feature was expected to be a debate at the University.

6. Management of Thames river-bank east of Reading

Inquiry about management of land on south bank of Thames in Wokingham, between Kennetmouth and Dreadnought, had been received from GREN member Roger Williams. He is a Trustee of Reading Neighbourhood Network, and is associated with Kennet & Brunel Community Association.

He thinks that an approach needs to be made to Reading University College Estates Department (who appear to be responsible for the area) to improve litter clearance and brush clearing, and that the alternatives of close-mown grass and more wildlife-friendly management require discussion.

JB said he would ask Earley Environmental Group if they would like to be involved

Ricky Josey asked that the correspondence be forwarded to him and to Summreen Sheikh (RBC) because they are involved with Reading RESCUE. **(Action – JB)**

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Appendix: Action Tracker

New Actions - 16th June 2014:						
Serial # Cyy.nn /M*/A*	Date opened yyyy-mm- dd	Meeting: Committee /Member/ AGM	Detail of Action	Who to do?	Reviews, Progress and Discussion	Date closed
M14.12	2014-06-16	Members	Investigate funding opportunities from Tesco, ASDA and Co-op	JB, AC	New	x
M14.13	2014-06-16	Members	Publicise RNN membership and benefits to GREN members.	JB	New	x
M14.14	2014-06-16	Members	Publicise RCCP £2k grant scheme	JB	New	x
M14.15	2014-06-16	Members	Improve info. On website about RCAN	JB	New	x
M14.16	2014-06-16	Members	Contact groups about RCAN - with M14.08	JB & PC	New	x
M14.17	2014-06-16	Members	Discuss CC actions with Ricky Josey of RNN	JB	New	x
M14.18	2014-06-16	Members	Change clause 8.d of Constitution as minuted	JB	New	x
M14.19	2014-06-16	Members	Consider involvement with 'Speakers' Corner'	Committee	New	x
M14.20	2014-06-16	Members	Arrange Members' Meeting in Autumn	Committee	New	x
M14.21	2014-06-16	Members	Arrange AGM by end November.	Committee	New	x
M14.22	2014-06-16	Members	Progress Reading West Station access improvement opportunity	JB, Jasmine Lail	New	x
M14.23	2014-06-16	Members	Progress Hodsoll Road School renewable energy opportunity	JB, Jasmine Lail	New	x
M14.24	2014-06-16	Members	Seek to Involve EEG and RESCUE in management of Thames-side to east of Kennetmouth	JB	New	x

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Continuing Actions - 16th June 2014 (1):							
Serial # Cyy.nn /M*/A*	Date opened yyyy-mm- dd	Meeting: Committee /Member/ AGM	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	Committee	2012-01-16 - Continue, discuss with other website change ideas. 2014-05-29 e-mail from L'nC suggests better options - discuss, close? 2014-06-16 - Committee to consider	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	
C13.28	2013-01-22	Committee	Find out progress of RCCP Community Solar project	JB	2014-01-16 - Continue 2014-06-16 Asked for info - no details received, but info on readingclimateaction.org.uk suggests RBC has panels on 14 schools and 10:10 has panels on 3 more.	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 2014-06-16 RM has sent to Caversham Waitrose - action continues.	x	
A13.04	2013-11-28	AGM	Investigate with L'nC if website postings can be forwarded to Facebook automatically	Committee	2014-01-16 Continues 2014-05-29 L'nC said 'not simple' and suggested alternatives 2014-06-16 - Committee to consider	x	
A13.05	2013-11-28	AGM	Set Peter Chan as a Facebook Admin.	PC	2014-01-16 Continue - PC to contact RM	x	
C14.02	2014-01-16	Committee	Consider Open Meeting with RBC - Waste & Recycling Q&A	JB, Ricky Josey	2014-03-01 transfer to JB (from All) 2014-06-16 JB to progress with Ricky	x	

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Continuing Actions - 16th June 2014 (2):							
Serial # Cyy.nn /M*/A*	Date opened yyyy-mm- dd	Meeting: Committee /Member/ AGM	Detail of Action	Who to do?	Reviews, Progress and Discussion	Date closed	
C14.03	2014-01-16	Committee	Collate info. on Insurance for groups and add to website	JB	Continue 2014-06-16 Advice on RNN offering received from Ricky Josey, not yet published on website.	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	
C14.11	2014-01-16	Committee	Consider offering option to send weekly digest of GREN emails etc. (All) and establish cost of change (JB)	All, JB	2014-03-01 - discussed - continues 2014-05-29 L'n'C say not easy 2014-06-16 - Committee to consider	x	
C14.12	2014-01-16	Committee	Discuss GREN Twitter account with RM	JB	New Continues - need training	x	
C14.15	2014-01-16	Committee	Progress Reading Sustainability Centre (including Hydro)	AC	2014-06-16 - progress reported to members meeting, action continues.	x	
C14.17	2014-01-16	Committee	Seek to run GREN stalls at Hackspace	All	New	x	
M14.02	2014-03-01	Members	Seek opinion on automatically propagating messages between website, Facebook and Twitter	TM	New 2014-06-16 - Committee to consider	x	
M14.03	2014-03-01	Members	Post summary of progress with RCCP Actions on website	JB	2014-06-16 Done, but can't get link to work automatically	x	
M14.04	2014-03-01	Members	Make it easier for people to find out about local opportunities for repair and re-use. Website?	JB, TM, Rachel Miller.	2014-06-16 Discussed - transfer to JB, TM and Rachel Miller. Rachel to see if TTR website can be used.	x	
M14.06	2014-03-01	Members	Agree action on cycling with other members of	PC	New	x	
M14.08	2014-03-01	Members	Survey GREN Groups on campaigning skill share needs and options for training	PC & JB	2014-06-16 Continues - with M14.16	x	

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Completed Actions - 16th June 2014:							
Serial # Cyy.nn /M*/A*	Date opened yyyy-mm- dd	Meeting: Committee /Member/ AGM	Detail of Action	Who to do?	Reviews, Progress and Discussion	Date closed	
M14.05	2014-03-01	Members	Send Chris Burdon details of RCCP Actions for 3rd March TTR meeting	JB	Complete	2014-03-02	
M14.01	2014-03-01	Members	Revise description on Facebook page to welcome posting of events	JB	2014-03-16 - Complete	2014-03-16	
M14.09	2014-03-01	Members	Encourage members to attend European Movement meeting on 14th March	JB	Complete	2014-03-16	
M14.10	2014-03-01	Members	Investigate website options	Annalisa Cava	Asked contacts - no good suggestions	2014-03-23	
A13.10	2013-11-28	AGM	Apply for Affiliate Membership of Reading Neighbourhood Network	Secretary	2014-03-01 - Applied - decision awaited 2014-04-23 - Approved	2014-04-23	
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 2014-05-14 Hustings held and press	2014-05-14	
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. Reminded but still not received - Close.	2014-06-16	
C14.05	2014-01-16	Committee	Discuss with RM how to post GREN events and News on Facebook	JB	New - replaces former Action C36 Seems to be working but more training	2014-06-16	
M14.07	2014-03-01	Members	Get GREN invited to RE3 Stakeholder meetings	JB & TM	2014-06-02 - info received and posted as GREN event. Complete.	2014-06-16	
M14.11	2014-03-01	Members	Arrange Summer meeting in Oxford Road Community Garden	JB	2014-03-12 - booked 16th June 2014-06-16 Complete	2014-06-16	

