

Minutes of GREN Members' Meeting held on 7th October 2015 at RISC

1. Welcome, introductions, and apologies:

Meeting was quorate with more than six members present.

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

GREN members: Will Alliston; Jackie Oversby; John Oversby; Carl Emerson-Dam; Peter Kirkham;

Apologies: Tricia Marcouse (Committee Member); Steve Goodman; Beth Scott; Chin Yee; Joanna Layne-Smith.

2. Minutes of last member meeting held on 23rd May 2015

<http://www.gren.org.uk/resources/150523GRENMembersMinutes.pdf>

- Agreed correct
- JB ran through actions and matters arising not covered elsewhere in agenda – website issues were still to be addressed by the Committee; only new action had been to arrange Members' Meeting; other actions outstanding included seeking funding; publishing information on Insurance for GREN groups; publicising repair and re-use opportunities; and contacting GREN groups to offer assistance.

3. Updates from GREN Officers and Committee:

- Chair – PC – no issues to report
- Treasurer – AC – account was in the black – invoice for domain name had been paid – GREN are grateful to Loud'n'Clear for not billing for website support.
- Secretary – JB

GREN Membership:

- Website – May was 188 – now 194 registered – perhaps a few lapsed?
- Website Groups – New – Reading Energy Pioneers – became Berkshire Energy Pioneers (which AC said was about to be incorporated in 'Campus Community Energy') – Total now 28
- Facebook – May was 193 – now 203

RNN meeting had led to contact with Caversham District Residents' Association – JB had advised on their Home Energy meeting scheduled for October 21st.

Stall at Town Meal on 3rd October was shared with TTR and RCCP – 8 new people signed up and have been e-mailed details of GREN

4. Updates from GREN representatives on other bodies:

- Cycling Forum – TR

TR was current representative and had just arrived from a Forum meeting – held at very short notice - only the second this year, even if you include a 'workshop' in January.

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RBC proposes a consultation on opening Broad Street to cyclists and on making changes along Oxford Road.

Attendees had proposed more crossings and counter-flow and had complained about dangerous cycle lanes and the Reading Bridge roundabout.

There were issues with the new shared bridge across the Thames – cyclists might fall down stairs – but it does seem popular.

Readibikes were to be extended to West Reading ... but the locks fastening them to the stands did not always work.

- Reading Climate Change Partnership – RCCP – JB

RCCP had held a good public meeting on Energy issues in June – plan a meeting on Urban Wildlife in November.

Reading Borough Council has released its Carbon Plan 2015-2020 – energy and water – “By 2020 we will have reduced our energy consumption and resulting carbon emissions by 50%, against a 2008/9 baseline” ... “generating at least 15% of total energy use off grid by 2020.” 2013/14 already 31% below baseline.

RCCP Board Meeting held in July – minutes awaited – next meeting October.

Sally Coble – EA – has resigned as chair – due to change in her role at EA.

RCCP has £50k to invest in PV before deadline – RBC staff have been working to do this – pre-registering – co-operating with BEP.

RCCP has thousands of pounds to give as grants from annual income of £25k.

RCCP Board have concerns at proposal to remove post of Sustainability Manager

Next Monitoring Report on progress with Strategy due November. Need four new Theme Leads to continue this – trying to recruit via RVA – should post on GREN:

- Natural Environment
- Water Supply and Flooding
- Education, Communication and Influencing Behaviour
- Community

TR asked if the RCCP could be re-aligned to focus on pollution in general because wider issues than climate were important. John Oversby commented that climate is a very long-term issue. JB replied that he did not think re-aligning the RCCP was possible, at least in the short term – Reading's Local Strategic Partnership had been persuaded that climate was an important long-term strategic issue impacting many Council strategies whereas pollution in general was a very diverse issue and was addressed by national and European legislation.

- Social Value in Public Commissioning Project – TM had provided the following:

The final open meeting, where hopefully there would be some sort of buy-in from Reading Council and Health Authority, was supposed to be on September 28th. The documents weren't finished in time, so this is still to come. When we have a DEFINITE time and

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agenda, it can go onto GREN site as it is an open meeting for all. It will contain a vision statement and an outline for activity.

5. GREN response to Council budget proposals to abolish the post of Sustainability Manager and reduce support to partners.

It was agreed that GREN should comment on this and that draft comments previously circulated should be modified to include reference to Sustainability Manager's role in influencing planning strategies and decisions, and should be posted on the website to encourage further inputs from members, and be submitted before the consultation closing date of 16th October.

It was suggested that it would be helpful to lobby Councillors on this topic.

6. Reading People's March (RPM) – local response to Paris Conference of Parties (COP21) in December.

Carl Emerson-Dam said RPM was co-ordinating an ad-hoc working group to run a 'Reading People's March' on climate change on Saturday 28th November and to publicise the London march on Sunday 29th November. <http://readingpeoplesmarch.org>

The group would send a letter to GREN groups during week commencing 12th October seeking support and help.

Discussion followed:

- Media work and networking would be very important. Suggested: advertising at UoR; Walker Institute; contacting President of RUSU; Vice Chancellor David Bell who is President of the Association for Science Education; Muslim Council of Britain; Political Societies.
- Route of Reading People's March: starting at UoR might not be very popular – especially if early in the day. Others thought an event at UoR followed by march into town might work. Suggestion march in town centre to be seen – slow march - Broad Street-Friar Street route? Marches can either persuade or confront public – need to decide which is intended.
- Police permission would be required.
- Various marching bands were suggested.

Carl also asked for publicity and sharing for planned TimetoCycle 5-day ride to COP Paris 6th December - <http://www.timetocycle.org/>

London March 29th November <http://londonclimatemarch.org.uk/>. Carl has posters for this event. He advocates train travel on environmental grounds - train to London costs ~£22 but group tickets for 4 or more could be much less.

7. Members' Forum – Networking Opportunity

- PC talked about his recent visit to Centre for Alternative Technology in Wales <http://www.cat.org.uk/index.html> for their 'Small is Beautiful' festival which he had enjoyed. CAT is a pioneer of the 'One World' living concept and promoter of Zero Carbon Britain.
- JB talked about the Campaign against M4 widening <http://www.readingfoe.org.uk/m4/> that Reading FoE had initiated. The proposed 'Smart Motorway' involves both a 'Managed Motorway' with cameras and speed controls and 'all lane running' on the hard shoulder requiring replacement of 11

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bridges between J3 and J12. The campaign opposes loss of hard shoulder on safety and environmental grounds.

The formal examination was now in progress – it will largely be a written process but it is expected there will be some 'Open Floor Hearings' – GREN members will be informed of any local hearings. National FoE and Campaign for Better Transport staff are responding on air quality and climate change.

John Oversby commented that as chair of Mid Berks. Ramblers he had objected to the proposals.

- JB mentioned the RESCUE clean-up initiative <http://readingrescue.org.uk/> running from 8th to 10th October. It was not too late to sign up.
- Jackie Oversby said that she and other Global Justice Now members were going to talk with Rob Wilson MP about TTIP (under a 38 degrees initiative) on Friday 9th October, another group was scheduled to see John Redwood MP on 21st October. GJN had an upcoming public meeting on Trade Wars on 22nd October as part of the Reading International Festival (RIF) <http://www.risc.org.uk/images/image-slider-homepage/RIF-2015-web.pdf> .
- Peter Kirkham said that Greenpeace were running a World Quiz in Great Expectations on 21st October – also as part of the RIF programme. Greenpeace Polar Bear "Aurora" had won good publicity against Arctic oil extraction by demonstrating outside Shell's offices.

8. GREN's future activities

There were no suggestions for specific future activities.

9. AOB

There were no AOB items.

10. Date and location of next meeting - AGM.

Agreed to try to arrange for Room 3 at RISC or similar in November. AGM to be followed by a presentation on Eco-Philosophy by Tanja Rebel.

Version: Website 22nd October 2015.