

Meeting of ECONET

3rd March 2008
Parks Department Offices, Prospect Park 7:30pm

Present:

Jenny Cottee
Judith Oliver
Tricia Marcouse
Dave Kenny
John Lerpiniere (Minutes)
Alan Stevens (Treasurer)
Paul Forrest-Jameson (BTCV)

Apologies: Dave Booth, Steve Ayers

Minutes of Last Meeting & Matters Arising

After their initial meeting, the newly formed Reading Environment Network decided to set up electronic communication in the form of a Yahoo group. Information has been circulated on meetings and issues including the Sustainability Consultation and the development of Kennet Meadows. Alan has contributed a short list of Econet practical activities and Earley Environmental Group has provided details of its meetings.

Alan will talk to Reading Voluntary Action about publicity and contacts.

Steve has obtained prices for an ECONET banner. Prices were not cheap and the sizes larger than required. Steve will be asked to continue enquiries.

The tools inventory update is with Alan awaiting completion.

News & Updates

Conserve Reading on Wednesdays (CROW) has had a solid programme of activity and been well supported. Special praise has been received from RBC for input at Caversham Court and Kings Meadow, and from Maiden Erlegh (Earley Town Council) for the hedgelaying at the lake which caught much attention.

There will be a Bluebell Walk at Blackhouse Wood on the 20th April organised on behalf of the **Friends of Clayfield Copse**. Tina Gower will lead.

BTCV appointed a new project officer, Una Keller, to start at the Bridge Street office on 25th March.

New training courses are available through BTCV, leaflets were distributed, together with a "Grow your own Group" course through RVA.

As a result of many enquiries from volunteers, BTCV summer weekday projects are planned for the three counties.

Reading Urban Wildlife Group (RUWG) had commented on Local Development Framework plans. Concerns raised in previous consultations appear to have been ignored, e.g. Wildlife Heritage Sites and wildlife corridors have again been included in the plans. In addition, previously participating groups have not been automatically contacted and plans are being back-dated without notification.

Concerns were expressed about the grubbing of hedgerows at sites including Chiltern allotments, Westfield Recreation Ground, Eldon Square and Palmer Park, and the recent felling of mature trees along the Thames Promenade. No biodiversity officer seemed to be responsible for assessing wildlife habitat against views and requirements. Tricia will take information from Dave to RUWG and perhaps send examples to Alan as publicity could be desirable.

Tricia is leading a walk at Lavells Lake in early May, Alan to be provided with details.

Tilehurst Globe are well organised for the annual RESCUE events on the weekend of 15th and 16th March at Blundells Copse and Mclroy Park. A tree planting event planned for Tilehurst Triangle has been postponed because of problems getting the agreement of the relevant council departments (Highways and Parks); Jenny expressed concerns about the lack of clarity regarding the process for seeking council approval.

Kennet Park

There has been much activity regarding the South East Development Plan, the aim being to have Kennet Meadows removed from the plan.

- Martin Salter held a publicity meeting.
- The local action group had disbanded but is to be reformed at a meeting at the Six Bells, Burghfield, on 9th March.
- A Yahoo group 'Kennet Meadows' has been set up.
- Letters outlining objections have been circulated via various groups.
- An online petition has been signed by over 80 people, to be added to the signatures collected by Martin Salter.

Tricia will find or put together a list of wider contacts for future use.

Accounts

It was estimated that at the end of March funds would stand at £2,850 approximately although this included awaited invoices.

RBC has notified agreement of £500 grant to Econet.

Income from CROW tasks is up with a number of schools making payments. There has also been a significant increase in the amount of interest received following the bank account change.

As petrol prices have increased significantly it was agreed to raise the transport allowance from £3, £4, £5 and £10 to £4, £5, £6 and £12 per journey (according to distance i.e. local, across Reading, into Berkshire, Newbury). Charges for CROW tasks would be increased from £35 to £40 (£25 to £30 for half a day).

Further tools have been purchased and the hard hats replaced, see Health & Safety.

Health & Safety

There were no issues.

The hard hats have been renewed, these should be replaced every few years. Regular CROW attendees have been given their own hats resulting in much more apparent use.

Date of Next Meeting

Monday 8th September, Parks Department Offices, Prospect Park at 7.30pm.

[Biodiversity Issues - RBC Response](#)