

Monmouthshire GreenWeb
Annual General Meeting at Coleg Gwent, Usk, 5 December 2004

Present

Dick Cole, Abergavenny Cycle Group
Tudor Morgan, Wentwood Timber Centre
Catherine Fookes, Wye Valley AONB
Sue Parkinson, GreenWeb Coordinator
Jon Prince, Gwent Wildlife Trust
Graham Harris, Usk Conservation & Environment Group
Martyn Evans, Usk Conservation & Environment Group
Ann Morse, Usk Civic Society
Rod Walters, Abergavenny & Crickhowel Friends of the Earth
John Kennet, Gwent Badger Group
Bill Howard, Monmouthshire Meadows
Catrin Williams, Monmouthshire CC, Sustainable Development
Simon James, GAVO

Apologies

Butterfly Conservation Wales	Monmouthshire Community Recycling
Chepstow & Area Friends of the Earth	Rural Community Action
Gwent beekeepers Society	South Powys LETS
Homemakers Furniture Recyclers	Tools for Self Reliance
Monmouth Fairtrade Forum	

Welcome and Apologies

Catrin welcomed the group and Dick Cole was nominated as chair for the duration of the meeting.

Agenda Item 2 – Chair's Report

Dick Cole gave an account of the activities and progress of GreenWeb since its inception, with particular emphasis on the work of the previous year. Copy of report attached.

Agenda Item 3 - Treasurers Report

Henrietta was unable to attend the meeting but had prepared a summary financial report that was distributed to the group and explained by Dick. The report was noted. There followed a short discussion on the budget available for this year (2004/05) and concern over potential under spend on the CEDS grant.

Agenda Item 4 - Election of Chair and Treasurer

Dick Cole was proposed to continue as Chair, this was approved by the group. Henrietta Bramley, the outgoing treasurer stood down prior to the meeting. Jon Prince offered his services. This was warmly welcomed, and approved by the membership. Simon James offered help from GAVO on support and advice for Treasurers. Thanks were extended to Henrietta in her absence for all her work in the Treasurer role since the group's inception.

Agenda Item 5 - Election of Executive Committee

In the absence of any written nominations, nominations were taken from those present. Nominations were:

- Henrietta Bramley
- Rod Walters

- Catherine Fookes
- Tudor Morgan
- Simon James
- Bill Howard

All nominations were approved by the membership. This new and extended committee will be more representative of the membership and will bring fresh ideas on developing GreenWeb.

Agenda Item 6 - Appointment of Secretary

Catrin Williams had been secretary for GreenWeb since the group's formation. Catrin could not be a trustee as works for the council which could cause a potential conflict. The members approved the continuation of Catrin as secretary.

Agenda Item 7 - Appointment of Auditor and Banker

HSBC are the current bankers of GreenWeb, there seemed no reason to change this. It was decided that the appointment of Auditors be made later in the year by the Executive Committee.

Date of the Next Meeting - The date of the next Executive Committee Meeting was set for Thursday 16th December 7:30, at the GAVO Offices in Usk.

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Discussion Group - Local Food, Catherine Fookes Wye Valley AONB

Catherine is the Development Office for the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Catherine works with a team of 4 others covering many aspects including publicity, policy and community. Andrew Nixon is the Community Links Officer and works within the Wye Valley on a number of projects such as dry stonewalling and administers the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) which has helped fund projects such as Monmouthshire Meadows.

65% of land in the Wye Valley AONB is intensively farmed, mostly in Herefordshire. AONB office helping to link farmers with local market for their products.

Working with 6 schools in Monmouthshire to encourage them to source local food and improve children's diet. This will be used as a pilot to measure the effect the scheme has on the local economy and children.

'Savour the Wye' conference being held on the 7th February for producers and tourist providers such as B&B's to show them how to source food locally. Idea to link local produce with local outlets. Are problems regarding continuity of supply etc and lots of barriers on both sides to overcome.

Working with Adventa, Steve Shearman (SE Wales Association of Farmers Markets) and others to promote farmers markets.

Useful contact for more information are: Sustain www.sustainweb.org
Soil Association www.soilassociation.org
Food links UK www.foodlinks-uk.org

Discussion

Hendre Food Co-op is a group of local people who have come together to source local fresh food at a good price. They have around 1-25 members, did this through really well attended public meeting and flyers through doors. Organic fruit and veg are delivered from Penpergwm weekly to a central point. Here it is divided into bags for each participating household, people collect from central point and place their order for the following week. Project has gone well, some volunteer fatigue, demand drops off during school holidays.

Maintaining **meadows** all about balance between grazing and late grass cutting. Monmouthshire Meadows doing a lot of work with members in the Wye Valley, trying to get more animals into the system - sharing flocks as often meadows too small to sustain animals. Gwent Wildlife Trust have employed farmer to manage 'flying flocks' system in Herefordshire. Difficulty people face is that introducing animals need good fencing which is expensive.

Polytunnels - good for local economy (which is important for the Wye Valley AONB) but not good for natural beauty of the area which is a priority.

Regulatory body for the Wye Valley is the **Local Authority** - don't have power to stop initiatives. National Parks have more resources, finances and power than AONB's. AONB can comment on planning etc but Local Authority do not have to act on their recommendations.

Wye valley AONB Management Plan available on their website, or by contacting Catherine.

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Discussion Group - What GreenWeb might do for your organisation - Sue Parkinson

Sue Parkinson was appointed in June through CEDS funding. There are now 31 members of GreenWeb, the website has improved, newsletter (1,500 distributed) gone down well and one group does it's own updating.

To become more sustainable members need to learn how to update their sites. Many groups are very good at sending information through to Sue. Links to other sites has worked well and brought in more visitors.

What is good about the service GW offers?

- Gives groups a presence on the web - GW need to provide effective interface.
- Increase awareness among public / member groups and their members
- Sharing information between groups

How could GreenWeb provide a better service to members?

- Look into making it easier to get straight to your page - have own address?
- Produce a Green Directory. This could bring in potential revenue from 'green' businesses. Would be useful resource. Could use some of CEDS grant?
- News Digest sent round monthly on interesting and relevant news with Monmouthshire angle - Barry Greenwood already doing this to some extent.
- Produce database of environmental groups for mailing etc.
- Organise some sort of conference / seminar for members and the public.
 - How to bring in enough people?
 - Would need to pick the right topic / have number of workshops on different topics?
 - GW should add on to other people's events to promote the site.
 - Use it to publicise activities of local groups
 - Topic of climate change - workshops on biodiversity, urban, food etc?
 - Topic of CAP - sustainable farming. maintaining rural way of life / policy = WV did something similar in Herefordshire last year. GWT doing talk soon with Colin Gardener on small holdings.
 - FoE and other organisation could bring in big speakers

Sue could bring ideas to Committee on directory and event

