

Monmouthshire GreenWeb

Annual General Meeting, The Priory Centre, Abergavenny

10th October 2009

Present:

Dick Cole	Abergavenny Cycle Group
Jon Prince	Gwent Wildlife Trust
Glenda Genner	GAVO
Erica Davis	Transition Chepstow
Henrietta Lucas	Forgotten Landscapes Partnership
Danielle Fry	Monmouthshire County Council (Local Biodiversity Partnership)
Richard Lewis	Supporting Community Enterprise in Monmouthshire
Dick Finch	Wye Valley Communities for Safe Cycling
Sonia Beeston-Leaper	Chepstow Friends of the Earth
Bruce Davies	Chepstow Friends of the Earth
Sue Parkinson	GreenWeb Coordinator

Apologies:

Maggie Biss, Monmouthshire Meadows Group and Lower Wye Valley Soc; Katrina Gass Abergavenny Fairtrade; Tony Care Tools for Self Reliance Cymru; David Roman, Monmouthshire Community Recycling; Derek Jones, Monmouth Civic Society; Colette Mooney, Monmouthshire County Council; Ruth Prince, Fairtrade Usk; Barry Greenwood, Abergavenny & Crickhowell Friends of the Earth; Sorrel Jones, Gwent Wildlife Trust.

Agenda item 1 – Welcome and apologies

Dick Cole welcomed everyone to the meeting and accepted the apologies.

Agenda item 2 – Minutes of the AGM of 28th September 2008

These were accepted as accurate, proposed by Henrietta Lucas, seconded by Jon Prince.

Agenda item 3 – Matters Arising from previous AGM

- The Committee have not met frequently over the last year, but have met twice, the minimum required by our Constitution. There has not been a necessity to meet more frequently, with much of the work and discussion being undertaken by email.
- A link from GreenWeb to several of the daily environmental news bulletins has now been completed, and the links are included on the home page and the bulletin board.
- Accounts have been audited jointly by the Treasurer and Chairman.
- Subscriptions were invited this year in April, with a reminder sent in September to non-responding groups
- It was noted that subscription rates were discussed at last year's AGM, and although varying the subscription depending on size of group/organisation has not been discussed, it has not been lost sight of. ***Action Committee to consider after the web site changes.***
- Publicity about member groups' campaigns may be added to the bulletin board via the Chairman, who keeps this page up to date.

Agenda item 4 – Chairman’s Report

Dick Cole referred to the Annual Report for 2008-9 circulated prior to the meeting. Membership has reduced slightly by two groups on last year. We would like to hope that we can grow again in the next 12 months, with the introduction of our new web site. Visits to the site have remained steady over the last year, averaging between 4 and 5000 visits per month. Pages on Monmouthshire GreenWeb are the only presence that 13 local community groups have on the web, and membership offers particularly good value to these. Member groups were reminded that to get the most benefit from membership, it is important to refresh your page(s) from time to time. ***Action Coordinator to remind groups about this when contacting them about other matters.***

Members were informed that the GreenWeb site will be migrating to Monmouthshire County Council’s web services in the next few months. We will keep our own domain name and identity, and the move will offer benefits to the network, primarily by making the web site more secure, the underlying Content Management System will make it easier for everyone to create and edit their own page(s) without needing special software, as well as offering cost savings in the long term as hosting will be free. The new site will also enable the Green Directory and GreenWeb sites to be more closely integrated. It is hoped that a modest publicity campaign at the launch of the new site will provide an opportunity to remind local people of our existence.

Thanks were offered to the Environment Partnership Board for their coordination contract, our own Coordinator who services Monmouthshire GreenWeb, Lesley Strawson our volunteer who efficiently updates the diary every month, GAVO who provide our meeting facilities near Usk, and to the GreenWeb Committee for their input.

Other activities over the last 12 months included our support for Ashley Thomas the successful nominee for the Wye Valley Joint Advisory Committee, and support for Rural Community Action’s successful funding bid to become Supporting Community Enterprise in Monmouthshire. GreenWeb also sponsored the GAVO Environmental Volunteer Achievement Award in 2009, which was won by Leigh Danziger who had also volunteered for us, assisting with the Green Directory. The summer 2009 GreenWeb newsletter had a focus on volunteering.

Comments and questions were invited from the floor. Bruce Davies commented that as a young person he found meetings uninteresting, and would like more opportunities to get involved in practical environmental activities, and went on to list a number of local projects that he has been involved with. It was pointed out that GreenWeb is primarily a web site that exists to provide information about such projects and other opportunities to get involved. Glenda Genner will add Bruce to the GAVO volunteering database which can link volunteers with suitable projects.

Agenda item 5 – Treasurer’s Report

Jon Prince reported that, with careful management, a good response to subscriptions, and the coordinating contract with Monmouthshire Environment Partnership Board, GreenWeb ended the last financial year with a balance of £2049.10. It was noted that the balance includes funds from the EPB to cover unworked hours by the coordinator up to April 2008. It was noted that GAVO provide GreenWeb’s employee payment and administration service, which although a small fee is paid for this, actually provides an income through tax relief as the tax return is completed on-line by GAVO.

Glenda Genner asked if the contract between GreenWeb and the Environment Partnership Board is formalised through a Service Level Agreement, and pointed out that in future such arrangements are likely to be formalised. ***Action Committee to note.***

Glenda Genner proposed, and Erica Davis seconded that the accounts for 2008-9 be accepted.

Agenda item 6 – Election of Chair and Treasurer

As no other nominations had been received and present incumbents were agreeable, Richard Lewis proposed, seconded by Glenda Genner that the current postholders be re-elected. It was noted that the constitutional position of Vice Chair was unfilled.

Agenda Item 7 – Election of Executive Committee and Secretary

The current committee members are all agreeable to continuing on the Executive Committee. Sonia Beeston-Leaper proposed that they be re-elected en-bloc, seconded by Glenda Genner. Erica Davis (Transition Chepstow) also expressed an interest in joining the Executive Committee, and it was agreed that she would be a welcome addition to the Committee. ***Action Coordinator to add Erica to email list and to web site (Contact Us page)***

The Secretary to the Executive Committee has previously been appointed, being County Council officers or, since the last AGM, our Coordinator. Our constitution provides for an elected post and Glenda Genner offered to take this on. Richard Lewis proposed that she be elected, seconded by Henrietta Lucas, and this was agreed. ***Action Coordinator to make necessary changes to Contact Us page.***

Agenda Item 8 – Appointment of Auditor and Banker

It was agreed to reaffirm HSBC as bankers, proposed by Henrietta Lucas and seconded by Jon Prince. Glenda Genner strongly recommended that an independent auditor/assessor be appointed, especially as much of our income is public money from the Environment Partnership Board. ***Action Jon, Dick and Henrietta to discuss suitable person.***

Agenda Item 9 – Subscriptions

Annual subscriptions currently stand at £25.00, with the first year of membership free. It was agreed by all that in the current financial climate, it would be unwise to increase the charge before the next AGM in 2010.

Agenda item 10 – Discussion re future development of GreenWeb

- The Chairman suggested that the major development for the next 12 months will be the introduction of the new web site, which will be modestly re-designed. All groups will have an opportunity to see the new site before work progresses too far. The Treasurer confirmed that the cost will be £650 spread over 2 years, but there will be no annual hosting fee after this period so will save money in the longer term.
- The next AGM will be an opportunity to consider any changes that might be made to the new web site and any other activities that might be undertaken.