

Gamlingay Environmental Action Group

Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting, 12 February 2011

Present: Brycchan Carey (Chair); Alison Blake; Sarah Saunders; John Mercer; Mike Brettle; Peter Condon; Nick Hardiman

Apologies:

1. Minutes approved: Actions all completed except Alice Hardiman to look into hosting a aswishing event April/May 2011.

2. Reports:

a) **Co-ordinator**

GEAG business: Membership has hit a plateau at just over 60 members, and the Executive Committee is currently understaffed at six instead of eight – in particular, the Carbon working group has no leadership as Chris Barker is unable to continue his role. The current ‘core’ of GEAG members is strong on enthusiasm but generally low on time, and there is a need acknowledged by the Committee for more members who are retired or otherwise have time to commit to GEAG’s activities. It was agreed that focus upon ‘action’-based activity over straightforward meetings would be a good way to consolidate the start made for GEAG so far (see 4c).

It was agreed that ‘working parties’ would be re-constituted formally as ‘posts’ as they are generally driven by single individuals, who can draw on help from other members of GEAG as required.

ACT: Brycchan to update constitution with regard to working parties.

Other issues: Planning talks have been held between RPS and Cambridgeshire Council over the Green End development, although these are at early stages. It is clear that RPS are keen to listen to GEAG’s views; they have read our consultation response and proactively called Brycchan to discuss, concurring with GEAG’s position that a rough 50:50 split between residential and non-residential development would be the most desirable option.

b) **Treasurer**

We are still solvent (c.£40). Gamlingay Parish Council require payment for use of the Old Methodist Hall.

ACT: Alison to make necessary payments

c) **Transport**

The Committee meeting took place directly after a successful 1 ½ hours of active promotion of the *GEAG Transport Survey* in the village (Co-op, the Post Office and Londis being the main sites). 26 surveys were completed, plus many more handed out, with promotional leaflets on GEAG also distributed widely. This will have raised the number of completed surveys from c.45 to c.75 in the space of one morning – so thank you to all who helped out, especially to John and Anna for hosting the morning’s

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It was agreed that the survey will continue until the end of March, with another survey morning agreed for **Saturday 26th March**. On **Friday 25th February** from 18:00 GEAG members will also meet in The Cock to hand out surveys, attempting to capture village commuters, and one afternoon survey session will also take place from c.15:30 (date tba).

ACT: Nick will ensure any more completed surveys are picked up from the Parish Council office in the coming weeks.

ACT: Nick/Brycchan to liaise to arrange an afternoon survey session in Feb/March. Brycchan to send out reminders for 25th Feb and 26th March.

ACT: Nick to continue to capture results in MS Excel and provide a 'write-up' of key issues arising from the survey in April.

Nick attended a Parish Council meeting on 8th February, having been invited to submit GEAG's views on the proposals by Cambridgeshire Council to withdraw the number 18/18a bus services between Gamlingay and Cambridge. Sebastian Kindersley felt that this was an inevitability, albeit the kind of leverage highlight by Bridget Smith (Gamlingay is classed as a 'remote' settlement and features on certain rural deprivation indices) should be used to extract from this process a more streamlined bus service tailored to village needs.

Nick informed the meeting about the status of the Transport Survey, which could inform further lobbying for public or private subsidy, and agreed to be part of the Parish Council's own transport working group to develop a coherent case. Bridget has since forwarded various documents to Nick.

d) **Carbon**

It was agreed that the Carbon working group needed to be more 'rounded' in its activities – extending to other practical options to reduce individuals' impact beyond the energy monitor scheme. These could include promoting measures in the home, sustainable consumer choice etc. However, this will require somebody with a working knowledge of the issues and a link with Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership.

It was agreed that GEAG would advertise for this role, which would have more defined objectives.

ACT: Brycchan to e-mail Committee with suggested role spec for comment.

e) **Eco-Hub**

This is in building phase. Five trustees are overseeing the process and associated promotion of the Eco-Hub. John has attended the one meeting of the trustees so far but expressed a concern that, four months ahead of opening, there are no clear ideas of how the key selling points of the Eco-Hub could be reflected in a professional 'brand' that would effectively target potential users. It will be important that the Eco-Hub avoids the 'old village hall' image and presents itself through clear, simple and eye-catching materials that tap into the desire by many organisations /companies to express their 'eco-credentials'.

It was agreed that John would continue to express these concerns at the trustee meetings, and suggest bringing in people with expertise in PR.

3. **Planning ahead**

a) **Turbine**

The Gamlingay Community Wind Turbine company are looking for people with planning

a) Turbine

The Gamlingay Community Wind Turbine company are looking for people with planning expertise to facilitate the process now that a planning application has been submitted. There is a trip to Swaffham turbine in Norfolk on **9th April** to demonstrate its benefits to the community there.

It was agreed that GEAG will continue to support the turbine in principle, subject to environmental impacts being mitigated or avoided. One or two representatives from GEAG could usefully join this trip as observers and to help ensure balanced and constructive discussion.

ACT: Brycchan will highlight the status of the turbine to GEAG members and encourage them to supply their e-mail addresses to the company as supporters of the project.

b) PR

The current PR of GEAG was acknowledged, such as the website, Gazette slot, regular e-mail to members and leaflets distributed during the morning.

It was agreed GEAG now needed to move forward, in particular with an eye-catching non-time-limited A5 leaflet on GEAG with clear messages on what we're about, highlighting the 'action' bit and that it's a way to have some fun and meet people.

ACT: Brycchan to draft leaflet and distribute to Committee for comment

There was consensus that the *Carbon Tsar* slot in the Gazette should now become branded as a GEAG slot, which Mike will continue to co-ordinate. The ideal format will be to mix 'for info' text with 'action/promotion' text each month – for example, next month could have a theme of 'environment in film', with a brief review of a particular film and "you might also enjoy..." followed by promotion of the GEAG showing of End of the Line.

ACT: John to draft material for next month's Gazette

ACT: All to liaise with Mike in advance if they wish to submit material to the Gazette, and send final submissions to Mike by the first Monday of the month.

c) Events and Meetings

It was agreed that more of GEAG's 'business' discussion should move to Committee meetings, which will occur more frequently, and 'public' meetings should focus on action, debate and information – through screenings, talks, activities etc – so that people can go home feeling they have either learned something or made a difference in some way. April and May meetings are organised (Optimum Population Trust speaker + debate and End of the Line screening respectively). It was suggested that June's meeting could involve a speaker from Friends of the Earth. March's meeting could involve a structured debate on a particular topic.

ACT: Brycchan to arrange speaker from FoE for June meeting

ACT: John to organise March meeting – with help from others as required!

ACT: All – get your thinking caps on for future events.

d) Socials

These are important to ensure people have fun at GEAG and can promote membership. Suggestions were:

- a bike ride, probably along the Greensand Ridge on the Sustrans route, involving rest opportunities at key heritage features (i.e. pubs)
- BBQ, which John and Anne kindly offered to host again on 2nd July.

ACT: Brycchan to e-mail GEAG membership with details of the BBQ

ACT: Sarah to organise bike ride

4) AOB & date of next meetings

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No AOB.

Next GEAG meeting **Wednesday 16th February.**

Next Committee meeting immediately after Transport Survey on **Saturday 26th March.**