



Transition Town Kingston Annual General Meeting, 2015 - 16

Sat 18th June, 12.45pm*, Kingston Environment Centre

MINUTES

Present, 16 people: Nic Fearon-Low (chair), Hilary Gander (treasurer), Marilyn Mason (secretary), Des Kay (management team), Peter Mason (TTK Energy Group), Damon Hart-Davis (TTK Energy Group), Toni IZard (Abundance), Charlie Redman (KEC), John Legate (Kingston Beekeepers), Jon Fray (KCC), Sheila Hooper, Chris Beales, Anne Beales, Zoe Leeds, Dave Gander + Tariq Shabeer (KEC).

1. TTK chair Nic Fearon-Low welcomed those present, thanking them for all the hard work, time, energy and expertise they gave to help make this a great community to live in. KEC was thanked for hosting the AGM and in particular Tariq, who would be providing food and entertainment later; and Toni, Hilary and others in Abundance were thanked for the home-grown cider we were enjoying, a perfect example of what we did and how we worked, building trust and making the most of what we had, helping to create a sustainable, resilient community, together. NF-L highlighted the slightly different approach this year's AGM, with a greater focus on celebration – of a busy and interesting year with a lot of change. The AGM would provide the opportunity to hear about the year's activities as well as look to the future and some new challenges and exciting activities – and he took the opportunity to toast TTK with the fruits of our labour and wish it a happy 8th birthday.

NF-L also reminded everyone that contributions towards the BBQ, supplied by Tariq, would be very welcome.

2. Apologies for absence had been received from: John Fellowes (management team), Fiona Quinn (FGU), Sheila Gibbon and Jeannette James

3. Minutes of last year's AGM (at <http://ttingston.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/TTK-AGM-2014-15-minutes.pdf>) were approved and there were no **matters arising** not on the agenda

4. TTK Treasurer's report, 2015- 2016: HG reported that there had been no new grants this year because there had been no new projects, that TTK was as self-sufficient as it should be, begging and borrowing as it could, and that the books were balanced. The accounts had been overseen by an accountant and signed off by Martin Birley, founder member of TTK. In answer to a question about **membership**, it was reported that TTK had 3 paid-up Friends and hoped that more would sign up, a few regular donors, and 400+ subscribers to the newsletter and 400+ (possibly mostly the same people) in the Facebook group.

Detailed accounts: the TTK Balance Sheet 2015-16 is filed at <http://ttingston.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/TTK-Balance-Sheet-2015-16.pdf> and TTK Income and Expenditure at <http://ttingston.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/TTK-Income-Expenditure-2015-16.pdf>.

5. Reviews of the year's activities, April 2015 - end of May 2016: from TTK, TTK project groups, and TTK friends:

TTK events and projects:

- **Events:** NF-L reported that the management team had organised a number of events during the year:

The TTK vision event in October at KEC, when a group of us gathered together to think about how TTK might develop and evolve. We had lots of good ideas about what role TTK could take on, and some of these have been taken forward, e.g. the joint newsletter with KEC and assisting the plastic bag campaign, and others were in development, e.g. a mapping exercise.

In November at KQC “We need to talk about nuclear...” was a well attended event, with around 30 people debating the pros and cons of nuclear power. We were very lucky to have former Energy and Climate Change Secretary, Ed Davey, on the panel, who gave us the benefit of his extensive experience and explained how he had moved from being anti- to reluctantly pro- nuclear. We voted at the beginning and end of the event, to see what our community thought. There was little movement during the course of the event, with a majority reluctant to accept the need for nuclear power in our energy mix.

In March at KQC “Whose Food Is It Anyway?” was a very well attended event on agro-ecology, with nearly 50 of us gathered to consider how we have lost touch with our food production, what impact this was having on a local and global level, and how we could start to change this. Jointly organised with Richmond & Kingston Global Justice Now, we were lucky to have as speakers Aisha Dodd from GJN and Andy Goldring from the Permaculture Association.

- **Newsletter:** One positive outcome of the vision meeting in October with KEC was the decision to share our newsletters under the new title *Kingston Environment News*, which started in January. Because of data protection and Mailchimp rules it wasn't possible to amalgamate our subscribers' lists, but in theory at least everyone interested in environmental issues and activities in Kingston could now get comprehensive monthly updates on the many relevant events and projects going on locally, and opening the newsletter and click rates were good for the sector at around 25%.

- **Community gardens:** A new community garden was about to start up, with the support of the Canbury and Riverside Association and TTK, on the edge of Canbury Gardens in the former gardeners' yard. As with most other community gardens, there would be a lot of clearing of brambles and rubbish before the more creative and productive growing projects could start, but anyone living near the Gardens and interested in helping, was invited to talk to Marilyn.

[There were several other community gardens amongst our friends, though none currently under the TTK umbrella or providing reports for our AGM – there are regular updates from them in *Kingston Environment News* and on Facebook.]

DH-D wondered if there were other gardens or waste spaces needing volunteer gardeners, and how we could bring them together.

- **TTK's Green e-Directory** continued to tick over, with occasional updates and several 100s of visitors a month (though some of these may be bots?). One problem was that businesses and local organisations rarely notified us when they ceased operating, so members were requested to let us know about these as well as new entries to include.

- **TTK's Energy Group** ran a series of “Keeping cosy...” energy-saving workshops at KEC in February – and thought them enjoyable and well worth doing for those who attended; though numbers were not huge, they were probably as many as the group could usefully

give individual advice to, and they hoped to run something similar next winter. News on their community energy company is less positive – the government had in effect destroyed their business model which relied on the Feed-In Tariff, and schools had proved remarkably reluctant to engage on what seemed to the EG a win-win deal. So they were currently winding up Kingston Community Energy, as the admin costs in keeping it registered could no longer be justified.

“Superhomes” (see <http://www.superhomes.org.uk/>) was coming up again this year, showing off older homes that had made at least 60% energy-savings: DH-D’s home would be open on the afternoons of 9th and 11th September.

- **Abundance** reported a successful year, having saved over 600 kilos of apples (50:50 cookers:eatery), some of which had been given to the volunteers and the YMCA, 50% of which had been juiced and sold as juice, making £130, donated to the Museum of the Futures, and 25% of which went to make the cider we were enjoying. The pickers and press had been lent out to community groups, and HG and TI had recently spoken to 300 infants at Alexandra school. Next year they hoped to recruit more volunteers, find more trees, do more street-squeezing, and harvest a tonne of apples. TTK members could help by signing up and telling Abundance about trees with unharvested fruit.

- **From the Ground Up** reported that the past year had been a great adventure for FGU, with a new website, the introduction of delivery by bicycle, the launch of the Food School and attendance at local farmers markets. A particular success was the development of fruit boxes for offices which helped more people gain access to organic seasonal fruit every week, though, unfortunately, due to a lack of growth and change in terms from suppliers the decision had to be made to close FGU. However the community built up over the past 6 years remained and anyone interested in developing new food based enterprises was invited to contact Fiona who would be happy to provide 3 hours free coaching support to a new community based food venture

MM commented that even if expansion and turning FGU into a social enterprise had not worked out, it, or something similar, could perhaps work again if it went back to basics: scaled down, with less frequent collections, using only volunteers... DH-D commented that it was no bad thing to move on when something wasn’t working.

- **[Inner Transition:** there was no report from Inner Transition, though it continued to meet and its dates appear in *Kingston Environment News*]

Reports from friends and associates:

- **Ham Hydro** had had the go-ahead from its shareholders to start work, despite a final attempt from opponents to lodge an appeal against Richmond Council on grounds of procedure; this seemed unlikely to succeed and was probably just an attempt to delay work.

- **Kingston Beekeepers** continued to thrive and were doing a lot of education work to schools and the general public.

- **Kingston Cycling Campaign** thanked TTK for their newsletter and reported that the Council would shortly be consulting on the next 4 phases of the “mini-Holland” cycling infrastructure, including the reconfiguring of the Fountain Roundabout just by KEC.

- **Kingston Environment Forum:** TTK and many of our friends are members of Kingston Environment Forum, which meets quarterly to share information and to prepare for meetings with Kingston councillors, Kingston Strategic Partnership and relevant Council officers. KEF also responds to and passes on information about Council consultations. This year KEF has also circulated and published on its website useful and timely statements on sustainable development in Kingston and local flood risks. Currently a sub-group is working

on the very topical issue of air quality, one which overlaps with many of our other concerns such as sustainable transport, cycling, green spaces, public health...

- **TOPO**, the campaign to get community space in the Old Post Office, had recently wound up as a campaign as planning permission had been given to develop the site and the development would include community space upstairs in the old PO building. The bank account had been closed and the final small balance shared between TTK and KEC. Any news would be reported on the TOPO website and Facebook page, though the venue was unlikely to be ready in under 5 years or so. It was hoped that TTK and other community groups would find it a useful central Kingston venue.

- **Save the World Club** had moved on from mosaics and was focusing on redistributing food waste, reuse and upcycling – and was currently looking for a space for storage and workshops.

6. TTK's future plans and announcements:

The management team: NF-L reported that it had become clear that most TTK groups and projects were largely self-supporting and self-determining and did not need direct “management” or assistance or co-ordination from the management team. Given that the management team did not need to take such an active role, and that they were all heavily involved with a range of professional and voluntary activities, they had decided to step back a bit and meet less often next year. So, as we entered our 9th year, the team would evolve a new format with fewer meetings, quarterly rather than monthly, and with essential business and discussions continuing informally and/or virtually by email and at Green Drinks. The management team would remain a constant resource, available to advise and support the creation and running of Transition-related projects or events, and continuing to run the newsletter and website and to manage existing and new TTK funds.

Green Drinks: NF-L was liaising with Eliot of KEC and Kingston Biodiversity Network about reviving Green Drinks in Kingston, which would offer opportunities to meet each other and the management team. Though at an early stage of discussion, they were looking at a range of ideas including meeting every two months, having themed activities and possibly looking for different locations to meet, i.e., not always a pub. Anyone interested in setting up and participating in this was invited to speak to NF-L and/or Elliot

JL of Kingston Beekeepers suggested an occasional meeting at their base in Hampton. DH-D asked whether it was possible to share discussions more widely and was reminded that there was a TTK Facebook group for discussions and updates.

7. Management team 2015 - 2016 (NF-L, JF, MM, HG, DK + occasional co-optees) were willing to continue in their various roles (but see #6). There had been no new nominations for this meeting, though they were always welcome.

8. AOB

- **St John's church** thanked TTK for pointing them in the right direction to sort out their recycling problem.

- TTK had put **Park Road micro-brewery** in touch with Elm Road allotments which were benefitting from their spent hops

22/6/16, notes agreed by TTK management team present at the AGM, with no comments on accuracy or objections or to publication at the 2016 - 17 AGM on 13/4/17

*The afternoon began with a welcome toast to TTK (in Abundance cider) and the AGM was followed by a vegetarian BBQ, informal chat, and much enjoyed entertainment (Des Kay's performance poetry, as seen at Glastonbury, and Tariq and guitar with the world premiere of a new environmental song) till around 3.30pm. Kingston Beekeepers were giving away information and free bee-friendly seeds, Tariq updated us on KEC's activities, and Alison Fure arrived later to update us on biodiversity activities in Kingston.