

Minutes of the TGAA Committee meeting held at 11.00 am on Tuesday 15 January 2013 at 23 Chalfont Road, Oxford.

Present: Tony Hollander (chairman); Neil MacLennan (deputy chairman); Virginia Wallis (secretary); Bob Crabtree (treasurer); Carol Jarvis (lettings secretary); Pete Jarvis (pest control); Jonathan Clark (website and machinery); Ian Salisbury.

Apologies: Vibeke Mannion (shop).

Agenda

1 Proposed closure of the level crossing by Network Rail

The committee needs to submit its views on the proposed closure of the crossing to the Oxford City Council Executive Board before it next meets on 13 February 2013.

It was felt that the public meeting held on 9 January 2013 was largely a public relations' exercise for Network Rail (NR) but did little to clarify the proposed new lines as the explanations were badly presented by the NR spokesman.

After much discussion of the nature of the new lines and the changes to train speed limits, it was agreed that Tony would write to Councillor Bob Price (who is likely to support us) outlining our objection to the closure of the crossing and making the following points:

- that we do not object to the increase in the number of lines and rail traffic – just to the closure of the crossing;
- that we would like the council to go back to NR asking them to amend their proposal to keep the crossing open but with warning lights to improve safety;
- reiterating the view of the inspector at the Chiltern enquiry that closing the crossing would be harmful to allotment holders;
- that closure of the crossing should not even be considered before the new footbridge has been built;
- that installing warning lights would put a stop to trains having to hoot (which disturbs local residents) and also keep train speeds down, thus avoiding increased train noise and vibration (which could potentially disturb local residents)
- that the council has a duty to provide allotments and access to them – a duty which would be compromised by closure of the crossing
- that we would like to address the Executive Board in person to put across our objections.

Independently of the committee, Ian Salisbury will try to get the council to defer their decision on the NR proposals as he believes that NR does not have legislative consent to build the new track. If true, planning permission will be required so an enquiry will need to be held which effectively takes the decision out of the council's hands. Thanks to IS for all his hard work.

Action JC to draft letter to be sent to Bob Price and copied to other councillors. IS to obtain confirmation from the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) that NR has no legislative power to build the new track.

2 Stuart Skyte's resignation

TH accepted Stuart's resignation following his public support for closure of the crossing at the public meeting on 9 January 2013. However, it was felt that the committee should have been consulted before accepting as not all committee members thought that Stuart needed to resign as it is not necessary for all committee members to hold the same views. TGAA members will be invited to stand for committee membership at the Annual General Meeting on 12 March 2013. Stuart has very kindly agreed to continue his and Gillian's excellent organisation of the annual harvest supper.

3 TGAA finances

The Treasurer reported that the expected year-end bank account balance was a very healthy £8,400 so it was agreed that we would freeze plot and membership fees. It was also felt that we could usefully spend money on outside labour for maintenance of the allotment site.

The meeting ended at 12.45pm

