

Minutes of the Cheney Friends Meeting

held on Tuesday 2nd April 2019 at 7.15pm

in the School Library

Present

Claire Stevenson (Secretary), Gill Wilkins (Treasurer), Louise Marsh (Senior Leadership Team), Olivia Goodrich, Tamasin Lilwall, Sue Harmer, Kirsten Burrell, Stephanie Jones, Uniz Manda-Liu, Hannah Rea, Louise Niland, Damian Niland, Richard Stamper, Pilar Visa, Alison Grunewald (parent working at Oxford Low Carbon Hub), Helen Wheeler (grandparent, presenting Ecobricks), Jen Henderson and Phoebe Mortimer (representing Cheney's Environmental Impact Team), Kim Polgreen (Centre for Alternative Technology, Wales, with links to the Environmental Change Institute), Ian Curtis (Environmental Change Institute).

Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Priscilla Goldby, Ben Pinches, Jane Tuck, Daniela Tramonti, Alison White and Marie-Alice Frappat.

Chair for the meeting

Thank you to Stephanie Jones for offering to chair the meeting, in the absence of a permanent Chair.

Matters arising from the meeting held on 28th January 2019

Cheney Falcon Kayaking Club: Claire S. had contacted Paula Duncan (parent and Chair of this club), Mrs Hart (Head of PE) and kayaking coaches at Falcon Rowing and Canoe Club, but there was still no news regarding if/when kayaking would start for the 2019 spring-summer season. **Action point** - Louise Marsh offered to speak with Mrs Hart about this.

Futsal: The Oxford Under 15s team, which includes several students from Cheney, has been doing very well in the league and in competitions. It is hoped that futsal can be introduced at the school – either as an after-school activity, or during PE lessons. **Action point** – Louise M. to put Tamasin in touch with Mrs Hart about this.

Fundraising: Sue Harmer is applying to the Thomas Dawson Fund for drumkits, recording microphones, a portable piano and computers for the Music Department, and is in touch with the Drama Department to see what needs for equipment/other items there may be. Sue is also waiting to hear from Ms Garden about the purchase of the woodturning lathe (funded through the Waitrose token scheme).

Three ideas to raise the profile of Cheney Friends: This point was carried over to the next meeting. However, it was felt that it was a good idea for CF meetings to have a theme to attract parents/carers (such as the current meeting on the Environment).

The **Constitution of Cheney Friends** has been amended, and will be uploaded to the CF section of the school's website.

A **“Question and Answer” Forum** will be held in the second or third week of the new term (starting after Easter). The precise date will be announced in the end of term newsletter.

Sixth Form Garden: This is a small area outside L1 which needs renovating. However, it is not clear what the plans for this are, or what may be needed in terms of materials. Tesco's “Bags of Help” charity campaign was mentioned as a possible source of funding for this garden. This scheme can apparently give out up to £4,000. **Action point** – Claire to liaise with Louise M. to see who from the Sixth Form could give us an update on the plans for this.

Possible Auction of Artwork: Uniz has contacted Ms Cox (Head of Art) about this, who felt that September or October would be a good time to hold this auction (rather than Christmas time, which is always too busy). The question of how to motivate students to contribute artwork was raised. Ideas included giving the students a percentage of any profit made, and suggesting that work from previous years could also be auctioned. Cheney Friends could buy frames for the pictures, and a spin-off idea was to produce greetings cards or postcards from the work submitted. **Action point** – Uniz to speak with Ms Cox again, to take these ideas forward.

Secondhand Uniform Sale: We are low on stock, so a Call for Donations will be put out ahead of the sale at the Year 10 Parents' Evening on 2nd May. **Action point** – Claire to circulate the call for uniform donations.

Help for Drama Show: Olivia had used the “Volunteer Sign-Up” online form to organise help for the drama show at the end of February, and found that this had worked well.

Kangaroo Maths Challenge: The information about this Maths competition had been passed on to the Maths Department.

Finance report

There is currently £1,500 in Cheney Friends' bank account.

Funds recently added to the account include:-

- £400 from secondhand uniform sales since the start of the 2018-19 year;
- Around £130 from the sale of refreshments at the Drama Show. It was suggested that this sum could be earmarked for the purchase of picture frames for the Artwork Auction, if needed;
- Around £30 left over from the Parent Talk course.

Cheney Friends is now registered to receive Gift Aid through Easyfundraising, which will boost the amount of money received. Easyfundraising is running a special offer until 14th April, whereby anyone making an online purchase at John Lewis through Easyfundraising will have an extra £5 sent to their chosen charity (Cheney Friends, in this case). **Action point** – Claire to send the details of this offer to Cheney Communications, to be circulated.

Request from the Environmental Impact Team and discussions around this

The Environmental Impact Team is comprised of a group of interested staff, who formed the team last year, and includes members of the Sixth Form's Environmental Team. The Sixth Form Team has been looking into issues including the use of corn starch cutlery and biodegradable trays in the canteen, and has had meetings with the Senior Leadership Team and Oxford's Low Carbon Hub. Cheney's Environmental Policy - which filled a gap in the school's overall policy - was ratified at the end of March 2019.

The Environmental Impact Team uses a spider diagram from One Planet, based on 10 different principles and looking at how the different parts of life intertwine. The E.I. Team aims to recruit teachers from all departments of the school, in order to have input from all areas. Currently, progress is being held back by various factors, including budget constraints, teachers' huge workloads and the amount of activities already taking place in school.

The Team is looking for:-

- Funding
- Expert help
- Gentle pressure on the school.

The school's Environmental Policy covers seven areas, as follows:-

1) Educational Aims – Enrichment events, talks from outside speakers on environmental issues, and similar activities.

2) Learning Environment – Improving biodiversity on the school site, e.g. by installing bird boxes, and not using herbicides or pesticides. Monitoring air pollution around the school. Oxford Brookes University runs an Environmental Assessment Module, and the Environmental Impact Team would like Cheney to tender for this, in order to have its site evaluated.

3) Resources – Looking at how the school's culture with regard to factors affecting the environment could be improved, e.g. by reducing printing and laminating. However, expert help is needed in order to determine the carbon footprint of certain products.

4) Energy – Cheney already has an energy consultant for gas and electricity consumption, but not for other things, such as double glazing. It was mentioned that Oxford's Low Carbon Hub now has a scheme which offers Salix funding for such improvements, if an Environmental Assessment has been carried out by Oxford Brookes.

5) Recycling – A food waste collection has been reintroduced in the school canteen, along with separate mixed recycling and general waste bins there. New signs will indicate which items go in which bins, and the recently installed outdoor bins will be decorated by the DT and Art Departments. Oxford City Council’s Blue Bin Recycling Team will run an Assembly for each year group next term. Many students are already interested in recycling, and want to know what to do, or how to help. However, more recycling points are still needed across the school site.

One suggestion is to ban all plastic bottles and other drinks in the canteen. The canteen currently sells cans of water, but this is not a long-term solution. However, if drinks are no longer available for students, many more water refill stations will be needed, and these cost nearly £1800 each! Two outdoor water refill stations have been ordered, and the school has agreed to fund half the cost, with the Environmental Impact Team covering the rest. Proceeds from the forthcoming non-uniform day will go towards the E.I. Team’s target for these, and it was suggested that profits from the secondhand uniform sales for this year go towards this as well. (It was noted that selling secondhand uniform was also in the spirit of recycling)!

Another idea was to seek outside sources of funding, from companies working in related fields, such as Thames Water and Biffa. **Action point** - Alison Grunewald offered to look into this.

The Environmental Impact Team is also looking at providing swan-neck taps for drinking water in the students’ toilets. Other suggestions for funding the various water points include an application to the Doris Field Fund (usually around June), which Sue Harmer could make, and possibly using some of the funds in Cheney Friends’ bank account. **Action point** – Sue Harmer to contact the Doris Field Fund about this.

6) Travel – Many improvements have been made in this area recently, with help from Cheney’s Human Resources Department. New initiatives have included the installation of bike racks and bicycle servicing, the use of car pools, and the new Year 7s being encouraged to walk to school with older students.

It was mentioned that the Broken Spoke Bike Co-op in Oxford city centre mends bikes and runs bike repairs courses. Perhaps a bike repair course could be organised at Cheney.

7) Food – The school’s Catering Manager is keen to make improvements where needed, but has no experience of the environmental factors concerning food. An assessment of the canteen is needed, to look into areas such as food miles, packaging, the use of palm oil, and so on.

Discussions around the above points

A parent asked if a link to the new Environmental Policy could be included in the school’s newsletter. Jen Henderson replied that this could be done, and that the policy would also be posted on the school’s website. It was suggested that Cheney’s Environmental Policy could be shared with other schools as a template.

Cheney doesn't want parents to drive their children to school, so as to reduce road safety issues and pollution. It was suggested that students could be encouraged to calculate their carbon footprint for walking to school versus taking a bus or being dropped off by car.

A parent asked how to take action against climate change without panicking their children. Kim Polgreen suggested that students should think about their future career choices and the environmental impact of these. Kim's workshops include positive, empowering stories about climate change, and suggest practical ways in which to do something at a local level.

Helen Wheeler presented Ecobricks, which are made by tightly filling a screw-top bottle (the "brick") with clean, dry, non-recyclable plastic. Each brick must reach a certain weight, around 333g, and there is a drop-off point for them in the New Forest. They can be used to make things, such as outdoor seating and planters. There is a Facebook group for people making these, with around 300 people in Oxfordshire signed up at the moment. More information can be found on the EcoBricks website: <https://www.ecobricks.org/>

Pilar Visa presented the Earthwatch charity, which is located in Oxford. This has free projects for schools, as well as "Citizen Science" projects for local residents, who can collect data from their area which is passed onto scientists. Young people need to feel a connection with nature, and Earthwatch has activities to get involved with, in the local area. Its website is: <https://earthwatch.org>

Ian Curtis encouraged everyone to contribute their different skills towards working against climate change, and to mobilise all possible resources. The Environmental Change Institute runs a summer school for 16-18 year olds, and Kim Polgreen can offer five free places on this to Cheney students.

Date of the next meeting

The middle of May was deemed to be a good time for the next meeting, and a Doodle poll will be circulated in due course.

Summary of Action Points

- Louise Marsh to speak with Mrs Hart about kayaking.
- Louise Marsh to put Tamasin in touch with Mrs Hart about futsal.
- Claire to liaise with Louise M. to have an update on the plans for the Sixth Form garden.
- Uniz to speak with Ms Cox again about the Artwork Auction.
- Claire to circulate the call for uniform donations.

- Claire to send the details of the Easyfundraising offer to Cheney Communications, for circulation.
- Alison Grunewald to contact Thames Water and Biffa, as possible sources of funding for water refill stations.
- Sue Harmer to contact the Doris Field Fund to apply for funding new water refill stations.