

Low Carbon Oxford North 2024 AGM - Minutes

24 September 2024

6.30pm to 8.30pm

North Oxford Association Annexe, Diamond Place, Oxford

1. Welcome and introductions, attendance and apologies

A total of 26 members were present in person, and six had sent apologies and appointed a proxy (total = 32 members). Two supporters attended, three prospective members and a representative of Bainton Bikes.

The LCON Chair Kim Polgreen introduced the following:

The LCON Board: Kim Polgreen (Chair), Brenda Boardman, Fiona Crosse, Alun Evans, Jane Grinsey, Guy Hargreaves, Carey Newson, Tim Weiss

Julia Patrick, LCON Coordinator

Margaret Simon, Secretary until December 2023

Rebecca Nestor, former Chair before, will present Trustee Report for 2023

Cllr Louise Upton

2. Minutes of the AGM held on 5 July 2023.

The draft minutes had been made available in advance. There were no corrections or omissions raised. *Members voted to approve the minutes.*

3. Trustees' report

Former LCON Chair Rebecca Nestor reported on LCON's work during 2023, the last financial year. The annual report had been made available in advance, and the first half of 2023 was also covered at LCON's last AGM. Rebecca highlighted the following key points from the second half of 2023:

Much of this period was about developing and implementing a number of LCON's existing projects, in particular LCON's Housewarming project, and Energy Saving Homes, run by Communities for Zero Carbon Oxford [see further below in presentations from trustees]. LCON continued to run Climate Cafes, led by Rebecca – these are simple hospitable spaces where people can discuss their responses to the climate crisis without pressure or judgement.

In addition there were two new projects:

- Safe School Streets, led by LCON's Coordinator Julia Patrick. This involved extensive research and engagement with a north Oxford Community Stakeholder Group, all of which bore fruit in a special edition newsletter on transport in February 2024.
- The Oxford Car Free Challenge project was developed, in partnership with national climate charity Possible and the Centre for Climate and Social Transformations (CAST), with the

aim of giving people a chance to try out going car free for three weeks and share their learning. Activities during this period included fundraising and putting arrangements for the project in place, including project officers. (Carey will say more below).

Rebecca reminded attendees that four trustees stood down in 2023, and she expressed thanks to all four of them:

- Robin Aitchison
- Sarah Edwards
- Tina Leonard
- Margaret Simon

Members voted to accept receipt of the report.

Chair Kim Polgreen recorded very sincere thanks to Rebecca on behalf of all trustees past and present and community members. She added that all trustees put in a huge amount of effort, and Rebecca Nestor in particular gave a huge amount of time, contributing to making Oxford a nicer place to live and saving our combined futures.

4. Finance report

The accounts for 2023 had been made available in advance.

Kim explained that LCON had been hugely fortunate to have Alun Evans join as Treasurer. Alun has also taken on the regulatory role, in the absence of a Secretary.

Alun expressed his gratitude to Roger Summers, who on a pro bono basis has undertaken the role of independent examiner of accounts.

Alun highlighted some key numbers from 2023:

Summary	2023	2022
Income	£36,643	£56,736
Expenditure	£22,925	£42,129
Net Surplus	£13,718	£14,607
Funds at end of year	£49,782	£36,064

In addition he reported the following:

LCON's core funding is mainly generated from its investment in renewable energy installations now managed by the Low Carbon Hub. This income covers the administration, governance, insurance and other expenses of LCON.

The resources to finance LCON's projects are provided by fund-raising. In 2022 and 2023 LCON raised funds for the Housewarming project and for Energy Saving Homes both of which were being carried out in 2023 and on into 2024.

In 2023 funds were raised for the Car Free Challenge which have been used to carry the project forward in 2024.

LCON has sufficient funds to meet its current commitments but it will need to raise new funds from grant givers and its supporters to undertake future projects.

Kim added that Rebecca had put a huge amount of work into fundraising.

Question:

Regarding the income from ONCORE: is LCON still receiving what it should be receiving and is that being tracked?

Alun replied that the answer was yes, this was being paid through the Low Carbon Hub which had taken over ONCORE's solar installations. LCON trustee Jane Grinsey added that LCON had spent some time checking payment arrangements with the Low Carbon Hub and that all was as should be, with income increasing yearly in line with the Feed In Tariff.

Members voted to accept receipt of the accounts for 2023.

5. Election of trustees

Kim explained that there are two types of trustees, elected and appointment or co-opted. One third of the elected Trustees must retire at each AGM in rotation, with those longest in office retiring first. In addition, up to 3 trustees can be appointed by the elected trustees and trustees can also be co-opted until the following AGM, when they must stand for election.

This year it was the turn of Brenda Boardman to retire and stand for re-election. Kim reminded the AGM of Brenda's contribution:

Brenda has been the driving force behind LCON for many years, and has received significant awards for her work on fuel poverty, climate change and sustainability. We are all extremely fortunate to have Brenda on the LCON Board and hope that she will continue to work on Oxon for Buses and the other projects she champions.

Members agreed to elect Brenda Boardman as trustee.

In addition, Guy Hargreaves, Tim Weiss, Fiona Crosse and Kim Polgreen were all standing for election.

Guy Hargreaves

Coopted as trustee in July 2023. Guy introduced himself to the AGM:

I was co-opted as an LCON trustee in July 2023, and stand now for election as a trustee. My connection to LCON began three years ago when I met our former chair Rebecca and joined the LCON-supported Energy Saving Homes programme. I have opened our home on every opportunity, and this year ran the programme along with my colleague Fiona Crosse - which

saw 21 homes across Oxford during Open Doors weekend host nearly 300 visitors. In many ways opening our home these past few years has felt like leading by example, and I hope it has inspired others to get on the low carbon retrofit journey.

Members agreed to elect Guy Hargreaves as trustee.

Tim Weiss

Coopted as trustee since October 2023. Tim introduced himself to the AGM:

I am standing for election as a co-opted LCON trustee. I am a local resident living in Summertown, working between Oxford and London as a director at the national film & TV skills body ScreenSkills. My background is in education, qualifications and training, and in the past few years I have become increasingly involved and interested in courses in sustainability. I have been an LCON trustee since October 2023, since when I have focused on the development of the new Oxford Transport Options website supporting more sustainable travel options around Oxford and Oxfordshire. I aim to bring my skills and experience in strategy, training, digital and online development, and general management - and my dedication to activities to encourage and support people to reduce their and others' carbon emissions - to contribute to the further growth and impact of LCON.

Members agreed to elect Tim Weiss as trustee.

Fiona Crosse

Fiona introduced herself to the AGM: Fiona (known professionally as Dr Fiona Duxbury F.R.C.G.P.) joined LCON as a co-opted Trustee in November 2023 and is now standing for election. She is a retired GP Partner from The Leys Health Centre, Blackbird Leys, and a teacher of medical students and GPs. She has an MSc in Evidence-based Health Care, Oxon. 2002. Since re-retiring after the 2020 Pandemic, she is focused on working with LCON to help people take practical actions to reduce their Carbon Footprint, particularly that of their homes. She enjoys talking to people from all walks of life to help them do that.

Members agreed to elect Fiona Crosse as trustee.

Kim Polgreen

Kim introduced herself to the AGM:

I was co-opted onto the LCON Board in December 2023. I have a background in sustainability management in business, and in education. I currently do a range of freelance activities around sustainability and natural history education for teachers and secondary school students. My aim with LCON is to support the rest of the trustees, and specifically to see whether we can encourage more wildlife into our area. With the catastrophic loss of wildlife, particularly insects this year, partially as a result of climate change, we need to focus on this as a key issue to secure a safe future for ourself and our kids.

Members agreed to elect Kim Polgreen as trustee.

6. Any other business: there was none.

7. Close of formal business.

Oxford's future as a sustainable city

Following the close of formal business, there were presentations and discussion about Oxford's future as a sustainable city.

LCON trustees and former trustee Margaret Simon provided brief updates on a number of LCON projects; and Councillor Louise Louise Upton talked about her vision of Oxford's future:

Housewarming Project - Jane Grinsey

LCON trustee Jane Grinsey provided an overview of Housewarming activities and achievements, thanking everyone who had been involved:

- Since June 2022 73 people have attended our group sessions.
- 53 hard copy sets of the guides have been distributed to low carbon groups across Oxfordshire
- Oxfordshire County Council have distributed hard copy versions for each of the 44 libraries in Oxfordshire.
- Since our launch, the LCON Housewarming page has been visited 1902 times, the Guides have been downloaded 881 times.

LCON is now planning the next series of events, and we are keen to keep learning as we go, so are trying some new things -

One of these is drop in exhibitions, one for heat pumps in November, and one for solar and batteries in March 2025. Each will have retrofit surgery with an expert; and we are also encouraging the Abingdon and Witney College to come along and school students who are interested in careers in the retrofit sector.

Keep an eye out and come and join us! [details here: <https://lcon.org.uk/energy/housewarming/>]

Energy Saving Homes Project (and the Oxford Open Doors) - Guy Hargreaves

LCON Trustee Guy Hargreaves provided a recap of Energy Saving Homes origins and activities: Energy Saving Homes is an initiative developed by Communities for Zero Carbon Oxford, formed during the pandemic, funded by the Low Carbon Hub.

Last year we had 20 open homes, attracting 191 visitors, with the Oxford Open Doors weekend attracting the majority, 177 visitors.

This year LCON have taken over the running and management of Energy Saving Homes, working with community groups across Oxford. We've concentrated mostly on working with Oxford Preservation Trust and Oxford Open Homes; we had almost twice as many visits as last year.

One of the great things about the project is that we're trying to build a community of people who want to transform the quality of their homes.

Oxon4Buses (All Aboard!) - Margaret Simon

Former LCON Trustee Margaret Simon provided a summary and update of Oxon4Buses: Oxon4Buses was set up through LCON by Margaret Simon and Brenda Boardman in late 2022. The aim is to increase bus travel in Oxfordshire to help reduce car journeys, by advocating for better bus services and representing the passenger viewpoint. This is done through the Enhanced Bus Partnership, which ensures that the county council and bus companies work together on service improvement. We are represented on two of their working groups, which gives users a direct voice and ensures we are listened to.

One working group is about developing projects that make buses more attractive. Examples are the development of mobility hubs; the recent launch of MyBus county wide ticket scheme, which enables you to take buses run by different companies; and a new set of bus route maps, which will be available online.

Oxon4Buses have also

- advocated for more real time bus information at more bus stops.
- Carried out a study of Gloucester Green Bus Station with recommendations for improvement by the city council.
- got involved in conversations about improving bus services to and between hospitals.

More recently we've got involved with project with MyVision charity about how you encourage people with visual impairments to use the bus.

We've also put together a manifesto of key aims and objectives.

In the medium term we're trying to plan a workshop on different models of bus service ownership and their suitability for Oxfordshire, which will aim to ask what would an ideal bus service in Oxfordshire look like, and what would be the best model of running buses to achieve that.

Thank you to LCON for its ongoing support.

Oxford Car Free Challenge (all is Possible) - Carey Newson

LCON Trustee Carey Newson reported on the Oxford Car Free Challenge project. This was quite a large project, run in partnership with national climate charity Possible and university partner CAST. Thank you to LCON members and other local residents, and to the City Council and Councillors, for funding the project.

Carey highlighted the following:

Premise behind the challenge:

- Transport makes up more than a quarter of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions, with cars the largest contributor – big reductions needed!
- The Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan aims to take one in four car trips off our roads by 2030.
- Many people in Oxford who would like to drive less but would value a bit of support to do so.
- The Car Free Challenge set out to understand barriers and benefits, and find out what kinds of support are helpful.
- Not suggesting all journeys should be car free!

We invited 12 Oxford residents who are regular drivers from across the city to go car free for three weeks in March. During that time we asked them to:

- Make decisions about how they travelled using a 'sustainable transport hierarchy'.
- Log their journeys.
- Share their experience.... in voice notes, photos and videos, and in-depth interviews both during and after the trial.

We gave our participants lots of support:

- Help in planning their travel from our project officers – 1to1 consultation and WhatsApp support.
- Project briefing pack with a menu of Oxford travel options with links and advice.
- Offers of cycle repair, adult cycle training, cycle buddyng, cycle hire including hiring an electric bike or a cargo bike.
- Reimbursed for their sustainable travel expenses

Carey showed a film which summarises the experience of participants. This is available here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3jDIZWM7X_8

Project results

Between them our participants used walking, cycling, scooters, buses, trains, car clubs, taxis and home deliveries...

- 7 mainly cycling, including 2 who tried out cargo bikes
- 4 mainly walking with some bus use
- 1 mainly bus

At the end of the trial:

- Participants cut their emissions by 53% on average.
- 10 out of 12 participants planned to continue driving less in future

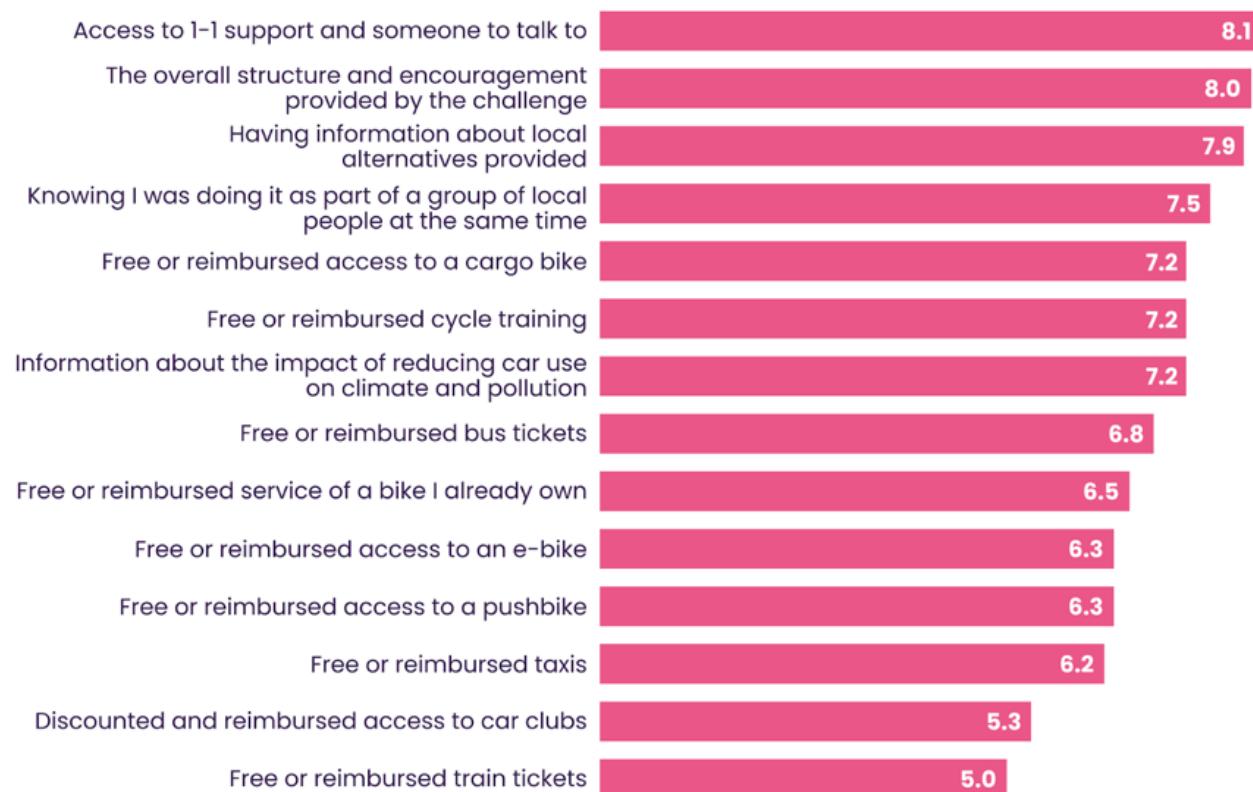
- 3 participants were planning a significant lifestyle shift, including one who gave up their car and another who intended to.

People talked particularly about feeling connected to their local environment and appreciating Oxford as a beautiful city.

The project also highlighted barriers:

- The Challenge was much more difficult for a participant with restricted mobility.
- While some participants were very positive about cycling there were common concerns about safety.
- Participants' experience of public transport was mixed in terms of reliability, accessibility and the convenience of routes.

And the project highlighted which forms of support are helpful:



Read the full report here:

<https://www.wearepossible.org/our-reports/oxford-car-free-challenge>

Find our case studies here:

<https://www.wearepossible.org/latest-news/oxford-case-studies>

Low Carbon Oxford North is now working with partners to develop a sustainable travel website to bring together car free options in one place.

The Oxford Car Free Challenge is funded by the Foundation for Integrated Transport, Oxfordshire County Council's councilor priority fund and contributions from many Oxford residents.

We're grateful to all the businesses that have supported the project: Avanti Cycling, Bainton Bikes, Co Wheels, Laka Cycle Insurance, Pedal & Post, Voi and Oxford County Council Road Safety Team.

The new Oxford Travel Options website - Tim Weiss

This project has come out of the Oxford Car Free Challenge project, drawing on its findings and insights.

The idea is a website that is designed to help all people who live and work in Oxford to travel well, and for all organisations and companies with operations in Oxford to support their employees to make more sustainable travel changes.

It is created by Low Carbon Oxford North and the Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership (ZCOP), and is funded by ZCOP and the Low Carbon Hub.

The website has different sections, including a section with travel information to help with journey planning; and a section called 'Better Journeys' with case studies and information from different travel perspectives eg commuting and school travel, designed to inspire change. The third main section is for Employers, providing information for employers how they can work with employees to give support and guidance on alternative forms of transport.

Over time we hope to use the website to build a community. We hope to use it as a basis to raise additional funding over time to maintain and develop it.

Louise Upton: Reasons to be cheerful!

Councillor Louise Upton gave an overview of initiatives across Oxford designed to help people switch to sustainable and active travel.

The drivers behind these initiatives are:

- Poor air quality contributing to 1 in 18 deaths.
- Levels of physical activity so low that life expectancy is dropping.
- Congestion are making bus routes unviable.
- Need to reduce fossil fuel use from car journeys.

How do we encourage people to cycle?

- Employers fund 'bike doctor' sessions
- Joyriders – buddy up and find low traffic routes
- 'school streets' initiatives
- Bike hire and loan schemes
- Park and ride-a-bike
- Women's Tour of Britain

Problems and solutions:

- Finding space for secure parking eg Westgate secure parking.
- City Council is still trying to find more space to put cycle parking in city centre and gradually more are going in eg Ship Street, South Parade.

Make public transport better:

For a lot of people the solution will have to be getting on a bus.

The point of traffic filters is to get our buses working and buses moving, so that bus services can run properly.

The bus companies only agreed to put in resources if traffic filters were going to be coming in to reduce journey times.

- Traffic filters will unlock new bus routes, and more reliable services
- Bus operators will invest in 159 new electric buses.
- Journeys for those who need to drive will be quicker.
- Cycling and walking will be safer and more pleasant.
- It will help us be a net zero city by 2040.
- Long life expectancy as air quality gets better.

New bus routes:

- Eastern Arc.
- Wolvercote to Botley and Cumnor.

More reasons to be cheerful:

- ZCOP, convened by city council, brings together hospital trusts, universities, Lucy Properties, BMW, the big employers, looking at different solutions together eg district heat network
- Greenways bike routes into Oxford – map out ways to bring people in from 5 to 10 miles outside Oxford
- Europe's largest battery and EV charging point at Redbridge
- District heat network – coming to Oxford
- Local plan policies

Local Plan 2040

- Our lever to build the city how we want it to be
- Includes policy to require all new buildings to be net zero in operation.
- Promote liveable neighbourhoods
- Urban greening factor and Biodiversity net gain – encouraging more planting of plants/ shrubs
- New developments have to be 'car-free' if within 400 minutes of shop and bus-stop

Vision of what Oxford could and should be:

A low carbon, low traffic, healthy, happy connected Oxford...**If Amsterdam can do it, so can we!**

DRAFT

The evening concluded with an opportunity to chat to speakers and each other.

Thank you to everyone who attended, and thank you to Bainton Bikes who attended with a Gazelle Electric Bike!