

MARESFIELD CONSERVATION GROUP

Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee

Held at 7.00pm on Monday 23rd October 2023 at The Chequers, Maresfield

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Jo Lawrance (JL)	Chair
Terence Brady (TB)	Treasurer
Stan Sadowski (SS)	Membership
Bruce Milton (BM))	
Ian Shaw (IS)	
Rob Penfold (RP)	
Stephany Reed-Perkins (SRP)	
Tom Merchant (TM)	
Caroline Shaw (CS)	

PRESENT: Jo Lawrance, Terence Brady, Stan Sadowski, Bruce Milton, Ian Shaw, Rob Penfold, Tom Merchant, Caro Shaw, Stephanie Bassett (Minutes Secretary).

APOLOGIES: Stephany Reed-Perkins (SRP).

1) DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

None.

2) APPROVAL OF MINUTES DATED 25th September 2023 & MATTERS ARISING

The Minutes were APPROVED.

Matters arising

Pictorial Map & DT memorial - RP

RP received a communication on 12th October from East Sussex Highways inexplicably closing our case. He will be contacting them to find out why.

ACTION: c/f November meeting

MCG Notice Board - BM

John Lazenby has agreed to carry out the work.

Minutes on the Website - SS

SS confirmed this has been done.

Grant to Maresfield Historical Society - RP

RP confirmed that the grant awarded last year was £100.

3) TREASURER'S REPORT – TB

Accounts Update

Current account balance: £6001.32

Deposit account balance: £7,083.58

A sum of £30 in interest was earned in September.

The bank withdrew our access to internet banking in September as it was discovered that the security device handed to TB by John Smith in April was a contravention of their terms of service.

The bank has twice refused to accept his completed change of primary user form: the first reason was due to completing the form as Treasurer when our mandate named him only as Committee member, the second was due to the bank not realising they already had the Minutes nominating him as signatory. TB continues to chase them to resolve the issue and suggested that once this has been done, we should consider changing bank. The lack of internet banking has become increasingly pressing as paper statements are no longer being produced.

ACTION: TB

SS confirmed that Gift Aid on the 2022/23 subscriptions has been paid.

Our bid to Maresfield Parish Council was submitted before the deadline of 29th September.

We continue to receive £10 - £14 per month from the sale of tickets for the Wealden Lottery.

TB explained that the date of our monthly statement falls midway between our meetings. IT WAS AGREED that TB will circulate a monthly account spreadsheet at the end of each month. Any queries can be raised at the next meeting, or earlier by email.

4) UNDERHILL BRIDGE & STREAM - TM

An update was circulated by email prior to the meeting.

There has been no reply from ESCC's contractor to our email on 5th September requesting details of the proposed new handrails.

As agreed at the last meeting, TM wrote a letter of thanks to ESCC for their co-operation re. repairing the railings and bridge to match the historic ones, and asked for the outcome of their consultation with the Environment Agency (EA). Their reply confirmed that the EA is satisfied with the overall scheme, subject to minor adjustments aimed mainly at protecting fish movement. They have also submitted a Flood Risk Activity permit application to them but at the time of writing (13th October) they had not received any further feedback.

TM has since heard from Roy Galley that work on repairing the bridge is on hold until January due to the EA not issuing the appropriate permits to ESCC.

TM was pleased to report that despite the recent heavy rainfall, the stream has not flooded.

ACTION: c/f November

5) UPCOMING EVENTS:

Classic Vehicle Show and BBQ – SRP

There has been no reply from the polo club.

ACTION: c/f November meeting

Litter Pick – October 28th – 10am to 2pm - JL

AC has produced a sign-up sheet. SS is to send a reminder email to the membership.

ACTION: SS

JL has been given permission to use the Church car park and will aim to park there at 7.30am before the football club arrives.

She highlighted areas which are of particular concern:

- Batts Bridge roundabout – JL highlighted the danger to litter pickers working in the area.
- Lamppool/Forest road layby: a bookcase and a large box have been dumped.

ACTION: BM/RP to investigate

- Batts Bridge footpath: a tyre has been dumped.

Xmas Tree Lighting – 2nd December – RP

RP met with Angie and Rummy on 19th October and another meeting is scheduled for 16th November. Most Church members are unable to help on the night but Richard Newman and Simon Young should be on hand.

Permission to close the road between 4.45 and 6pm has been granted.

RP continues to oversee the arrangements and is compiling a checklist. JL will ask SRP to act as co-ordinator on the night and TB AGREED to supervise the morning.

ACTION: JL

February Quiz – 24th February 2024 – IS/TM

IT WAS AGREED to again raise funds for Uckfield Foodbank. SB will advise the Project Manager, Lorraine Kirkwood.

ACTION: SB

AGM – 14th May 2024 (JL)

The date was AGREED and JL is to book the Village Hall.

ACTION: JLI

Summer Cheese & Wine Evening (JL)

IS is to ask Ann Thompson for the use of her garden on 6th July.

ACTION: IS

5) FOOTPATHS GROUP UPDATE - BM

The Footpaths Group will no longer be maintaining the footpath at the Recreation Group due to the amount of dog fouling.

A number of stiles need attention and the lime trees at the churchyard are to be tidied ready for Remembrance Sunday.

RP is to write an article in the Parish Magazine.

ACTION: RP

6) PLANNING UPDATE - RP

• Mission statement

The Planning Sub-Committee discussed their mission statement and reviewed the draft prepared by Clare Goodness. In addition to this document, they will also be drafting a terms of reference to ensure both accountability and transparency.

• Downland Farm Hearing - impact on the village and conservation area.

Following communication with Cllr Ian Tysh the issues to be raised at the forthcoming Planning Inspectors hearing on 24th October were discussed. (Subsequent to the meeting a letter was drafted and sent to Cllr. Tysh outlining the Planning Committee's concerns regarding increased traffic and pollution in the village should the appeal be upheld.)

• Revised plans for the development on Straight Half Mile.

The developer has reduced the number of houses proposed for the plot (25 down to 21). It appears a number of issues raised by a near neighbour have been taken into account and he has subsequently withdrawn his objections. It was noted that the original land owner had himself lodged an objection against the new proposals.

An issue of noise pollution from the heat exchangers envisaged for the properties has arisen.

The Archeological department at ESCC wish to make a survey of the plot as it was a significant site during WW1 and also has evidence of prehistoric dwellings.

• Plans to install gates on Park Farm Lane on the Recreation Ground

These were briefly discussed, but it was felt that until such time as the application is lodged with Wealden there was little to discuss. (The application was lodged on 29th September 2023 under ref WD/2023/2436/F but appears not to have been uploaded prior to the Planning sub-committee meeting). It is clear from the information received that the developer and or his agents have been in discussion with WDC and that recommendations have been made as a result of this meeting. The Planning Committee therefore intends to ask for full disclosure of what was discussed, if necessary under a FOI request. Any letters of objection must be received by 17th November.

• Underhill / Nursery Lane

Correspondence with Highways has been undertaken by Tom Merchant with a view to ensuring that the replacement rails are constructed in a sympathetic manner and that the ecosystem surrounding

Shortbridge Stream is protected. (Subsequent to the meeting Cllr Roy Galley has advised that repairs have been put back to January 2024)

- **Current situation regarding Mill House Farm**

It was unclear exactly which applications are still extant on this land. The Planning Committee has undertaken to establish the current situation by the next meeting.

- **Maresfield Neighbourhood Development Plan**

At a recent meeting hosted by Ian Tysh it became clear that lay members of the NDP sub-committee of the Parish Council had been in conversation with interested parties about the land adjoining the Recreation Ground. This proposed development is now widely known as the Master Plan. One of its members asked Cllr Tysh what his views were in relation to the proposal to build 250 houses on the land adjoining and directly behind the Recreation Ground. Cllr Tysh said he was unable to comment as this was the first time he had heard this. As a result of some heated exchanges at this meeting the 3 lay members have resigned. New members are being co-opted and the Planning Committee will engage with them to ensure full transparency in relation to any discussions they may be having with land owners and in particular relating to the land next to the Recreation Ground.

JL thanked RP for his hard work on behalf of the MCG.

TM enquired about the dilapidated state of the old barn on School Hill. BM said that this is a listed building and would raise the issue with English Heritage.

ACTION: BM

7). **ANY OTHER BUSINESS – JL**

Collectors – JL

More members are moving their subscriptions to standing order and IT WAS AGREED that in future no cash subscriptions will be accepted. JL asked RP to write a note for the January Parish Magazine.

ACTION: RP

Winter Newsletter – JL

All copy to be received by 31st October ready for distribution on 1st December. The newsletter will include 200 word articles on:

- ash die-back with a link to more information on our website. **ACTION: IS**
- Underhill Bridge **ACTION: TM**
- a request for a new Committee member **ACTION: JL**
- an advert for our tea towels **ACTION: JL**
- a planning update **ACTION: RP**
- a report from the Chair **ACTION: JL**
- photographic competition (see below) **ACTION: TM**

SS was asked to draw up a distribution list ready for SS and AC to sort the newsletter into piles.

ACTION: SS

IT WAS AGREED that information re. box blight be held over until the Summer newsletter.

Photographic Competition - TM

TM circulated a proposal for a photographic competition with the 13 winning entries used to produce a calendar for 2025 in aid of MCG funds and/or a nominated charity. The photos are to be taken within Maresfield parish to illustrate "Maresfield during the year" and entry to the competition would be free.

A judge will need to be appointed and the winning entries ready for printing by October 2024. The cost of production would be in the region of £4.00 per 100 A4 calendars. Larger print runs would cost less.

IT WAS AGREED that TM should write a launch piece for the Winter Newsletter with a link to our website for further details. RP is to advertise in the Parish Magazine.

ACTION: TM/RP
c/f November

Wellington Gate mailshot

RP asked SS for the result of the recent mailshot to 150 houses in Wellington Gate. To date there has been no interest.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING : Monday 20th November at 7pm in The Chequers.

Dates of Future Meetings: 18th December

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.