

**Maresfield Conservation Group**

**Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee 13<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

**Held at 7.30pm at Newham Cottage**

**Present**

Pat Palmer, Chairman [PP] John Smith, Treasurer [JS]

Stan Sadowski, Membership Secretary [SS] Alex Clarke, Member [AC]

Rob Penfold, Member [RP] Ian Shaw, Member [IS]

Dick Thompson, Member [DT] Peta Penfold, Minute Secretary

**1. Apologies**

There were no apologies.

**2. Declarations of Conflict of Interest**

There were no declarations of a conflict of interest.

**3. Approval of Minutes of 12<sup>th</sup> December 2018**

The Minutes were proposed by SS, seconded by JS and unanimously approved.

**4. Matters Arising**

- 4.1 **Recreation Ground Sign:** IS reported that he has been advised the Parish Council will pay for the replacement sign at the Recreation Ground. The supporting posts are rotten and will also need to be changed.

*AP1: RP to seek confirmation from Claire Goossens that the Parish Council are bearing the full cost of replacing the Recreation Ground Sign.*

- 4.2 **Finger Posts:** JS advised that in mid-January the Footpaths Group [FG] began the task of refurbishing the five 'finger post' signs within the Parish. They have been rubbed down and wire-brushed but they have not yet been painted due to the wet weather conditions. JS has written to the Parish Council to advise them accordingly.

- 4.3 **Updating of MCG Records:** SS has deleted Gemma Hallin's name from the Welcome Letter to new residents and instead added his own details as a contact point.
- 4.4 **MCG Website:** IS and RP have both explored the new MCG Website and noted the excellent improvements made. SS confirmed that it is not necessary to sign in to view the content, with the exception of the forum which does require users to log-in.
- 4.5 **Victorian Lamps:** IS has obtained an additional quote for the disconnection and reconnection of the electrics within the Victorian lamps. It has come in at £480 inclusive of VAT (copies passed around). The lamp at the entrance to The Rec is now properly illuminated, but there is still a problem with the diode on the Cemetery light – further examination will be necessary. The power for this light is drawn from the adjacent street light.

***AP2: JS to obtain another quotation for the electrical work on the Victorian lamps.***

- 4.6 **Cemetery Gate:** The refurbished gate has now been installed and looks much better. It may need levelling because the brick pillars supporting the gate have moved over the years and are not straight. However, this would be a lot of work for something that is not very noticeable, and it was agreed that no finer adjustments are necessary.
- 4.7 **Collectors:** RP reported that the discussions with the appropriate Collectors in respect of outstanding subscriptions is still a work in progress. It was agreed that this action point would be carried over to the next meeting.

***AP3: RP to speak to the appropriate Collectors about outstanding subscription payments.***

- 4.8 **Donations for Winter Supper Raffle:** After a brief discussion it was agreed that, rather than relying on donations, the prizes for the Winter Supper raffle will be purchased using MCG funds.
- 4.9 **MCG Newsletter:** The newsletter has now been printed and is ready for distribution to Members. Better quality paper has been used, and everyone present was very happy with the final product.
- 4.10 **MCG Logo Tabards:** JS showed a brochure from Chameleon Designs who will be able to print 'Maresfield Conservation Group' on the high-viz tabards at a cost of 50p per tabard. It was agreed that this is very reasonable. As a back-up, Chailey Heritage can also provide a similar service. Several members are storing tabards, some of which are now well used and slightly tatty and may need replacing. It was agreed that a stock of 15 high-viz jackets will be sufficient for use during MCG events. It is not necessary to buy T-shirts as well since the tabards serve the necessary purpose.

***AP4: JS to agree the required number of new high-viz tabards with RP and then arrange for 'Maresfield Conservation Group' to be printed on them.***

- 4.11 **Sponsored Christmas Tree Event:** PP advised that she is meeting Angie Whelton next week to discuss this idea.

***AP5: PP to discuss the proposals for a sponsored Christmas Tree Event in St Bartholomew's Church with Angie Whelton and report back.***

4.12 **Grass Cutting:** PP is still awaiting confirmation from the Parish Council that they will be paying for two additional grass cuts within Maresfield Village during 2019.

4.13 **EGM:** The EGM to discuss further development within Maresfield Village was held as planned. The draft Minutes were agreed. JS/RP confirmed that they had sent a note to Claire Goossens, Parish Council, requesting that MCG be advised of any future development proposals. There is still some capacity in the existing churchyard, where a further 12 graves could be accommodated. The Committee Members agreed to come up with a list of potential uses for Site A that are more attractive propositions than a graveyard. DT agreed to arrange a visit to Site A for AC and SS.

## 5. Treasurer's Report

5.1 **Income & Expenditure:** JS handed round copies of the Income & Expenditure Summary for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 to 12<sup>th</sup> February 2019. There are no outstanding issues other than a cheque for £27.58 which is yet to be banked. Subscriptions have risen slightly; the Village Maintenance Grant of £1,000 has been received; and there was income of £1,797.20 from the Winter Supper (offset by the expenses). Expenditure includes £328.34 spent by the Footpaths Group on necessary supplies; £151.20 spent on the projector donated to the Village Hall; and £737.21 spent on village maintenance (including the £300 cost of The Chequers sign and £200 for the fencing at Lampool Corner). The increase over last year is £2,053. Under the current Charities Commission rules, the overall annual income must remain below £10,000.

5.2 **Donations:** JS handed round a list of the donations made by MCG to other organisations during 2017-2018 which included £851.20 to the Village Hall in respect of the cooker, sign and projector screen; £350 to St Bartholomew's Church for the grass cutting in the churchyard; £250 to the Lunch Club; £294 to the Recreation Ground Committee for the oak trees and play area benches; and £300 to The Maresfield Historical Society. RP remarked that he would like to see closer ties between MCG and the Historical Society (who already piggy back onto the MCG website). IS proposed that, as MCG has just paid to refurbish the cemetery gates, there should be no donation in the current year to the cemetery grass cutting. This was agreed. It was further agreed that any contribution to the Village Hall would need to be for a specific project. The Lunch Club are not anticipating any expenditure this year so no donation from MCG is sought. Following a brief discussion, it was agreed that, in principle, MCG could make a substantial contribution of between £5,000 to £6,000 to the cost of a new village hall in the event that this proposal comes to fruition. There are difficulties as any site would need to accommodate both the hall and car parking facilities.

Commented [PP1]: ake

5.3 PP advised that, unfortunately, The Maresfield Village Meadows Trust [MVMT] will cease to exist at the end of March 2019 and they are looking for someone to take over Norman's Pond. The MVMT bingo nights were offered to the Village Hall Committee but declined. Michael Clifton has confirmed that the PA system jointly purchased by MCG/MVMT will now pass to MCG and IS agreed to store it.

## 6. School Hill

JS advised that he contacted The Highways Department at ESCC to enquire when the fence at School Hill would be repaired and was informed just after Christmas that the works would commence 'shortly'. There are no further details available.

## **7. Projector**

RP ordered the projector at a cost of £369, and it was due for delivery on 14<sup>th</sup> February. SS agreed to store the projector.

## **8. Website Update**

SS reported that between 7<sup>th</sup> December 2018 and 11 February 2019 the MCG website was visited 171 times (58 of them being new users). One new member has joined MCG solely as a result of accessing the website, which is a first. This has exceeded expectations and is encouraging. The steady growth in MCG membership has continued. In 2012 there were 388 members in 214 households (the number of households being a better measurement tool). Current paid up membership is at least 146 households, and work is continuing to identify the remaining non-paid up members to establish why there is a shortfall. PP noted that inserting MCG items into the Parish Magazine is helping to raise awareness and should continue. It will be useful to monitor how many previous members are rejoining MCG. PP also remarked that it is essential to encourage householders aged 40-50 years old to join as they represent the future and continuity of MCG.

## **9. Membership Update**

After a very smooth handover, SS has now taken over as Membership Secretary, but RP will still help out where necessary. SS and JS are working to correspond subscriptions/membership with the banking records – JS indicated that he will need addresses and postcodes of members by the end of March. SS would prefer to correspond with Collectors by email, but RP confirmed that not all of them have email addresses therefore SS will need to meet with them in person first.

*AP6: SS to provide membership details to JS on request.*

*AP7: SS to introduce himself to The Collectors in his new capacity as Membership Secretary.*

## **10. Victorian Lamps**

As indicated above, IS will seek another quote for the electrical work. It is apparent that refurbishing the three Victorian lamps is going to cost in excess of £2,000 which is double the initial estimate. The lamp at the Church is not connected to a power supply and it would not be possible to link it to the street lights because the base is too solid. IS has emailed Angie Whelton to enquire whether it would be possible to install a solar powered unit, which will also need consent from the residents of the adjacent cottages. Installing industrial sized batteries may also be a viable option. IS also proposed installing toughened glass for extra protection, which was supported.

## **11. Cemetery Gates**

The installation of the refurbished gate at the Cemetery highlighted the fact that the banking beneath the gate is eroding. IS suggested that MCG could look at installing between 6'-7' of York flagstones to counteract the problem, which would cost in the region of £500. This was agreed.

**AP8: RP to approach Keystone Paving to obtain a quote for the supply of the York flagstones with a view to inviting competitive tenders for the installation of same.**

**AP9: IS to speak to Angie Whelton to seek permission from The Church to install dressed stone retainers at the entrance to The Cemetery.**

## **12. Quiz Night**

IS and RP had a meeting last week to discuss preparations for the MCG Quiz Night. 35 tickets have been sold to date with a further 6 tickets required by DT. Committee Members were asked to confirm their table requirements.

## **13. AGM Planning**

It will be necessary to have available at the AGM a copy of the Minutes from the 2018 AGM, proposal forms for Committee Members, and the MCG accounts. By way of interest, PP also handed round copies of the Minutes of the inaugural meeting of the MCG held on 10<sup>th</sup> July 1991. The ensuing discussion concluded that supporting visual aids would be useful, and some thought should be given to a ‘speaker’ – possibly from The Historical Society. It was agreed that a working group comprising PP, SS, AC, IS, JS and DT will convene to discuss preparations for the AGM.

**AP10: PP to provide potential dates for the AGM Working Group to meet up (as soon as possible after 9<sup>th</sup> March).**

## **14. AOB**

14.1 Mr Patel has donated £100 to the MCG as a contribution towards the planting on The Parade outside the village shop, which was gratefully received.

14.2 Graham Alt had been involved with attempts to arrange an event to commemorate the Centenary of the Royal Corps of Signals in 2020 but is now unwell. It is unlikely that the main Centenary celebrations will be held in Maresfield because the event would be too big, but it may still be possible to hold a smaller event in the Village. PP is awaiting contact from Martin Craddock, Parish Council to discuss potential options.

14.3 Toni Birkbeck, who has now joined the Fete Committee, has asked PP to visit Bonners School to look at the picnic tables and benches donated by MCG a couple of years ago which now need some attention. JS advised that Gil Cummings has been regularly coating them with preservative, but as they have undoubtedly been well used, the proposed inspection can be undertaken on a ‘without prejudice’ basis.

**AP11: PP to hold a fact-finding meeting with Bonners School in response to their request for funds/a donation towards refurbishment of the picnic table and benches.**

14.4 In respect of the Summer Supper, PP asked whether it would be acceptable to hire 8 x round plastic tables at a cost of £56, and 8 x tablecloths at a cost of £60 bringing the total to £116. It was agreed that this would be worthwhile expenditure. The Fete bunting will be used to decorate the Village Hall on the day.

- 14.5 Clean-Up Day is scheduled for Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> March and Sheila Cumming is co=ordinating it. Sheila suggested obtaining names and addresses from volunteers for future reference, but it was agreed that this was unnecessary.
- 14.6 PP invited comment on Issue 62 of the Charities Commission News which she had earlier forwarded to Committee Members. No issues were raised.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm. The date of the next meeting is **Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2019** at Newnham Cottage.