

Maresfield Conservation Group
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
Held on 5th July 2016 at the Village Hall, Maresfield
The Meeting commenced at 7.30pm

Present

Mrs Sheila Cumming, Chairman [SC]	Mr Ken Ogden, Acting Secretary [KO]
Mr Rob Penfold, Minute Secretary [RP]	Mrs Pat Palmer [PP]
Mr Stan Sadowski, Member [SS]	Mr Dick Thompson, Member [DT]

28 Members and 6 Committee Members

The Chairman, Mrs Sheila Cumming [SC], welcomed everyone to the AGM, and outlined the changes that have occurred within the MCG Committee since last year, predominantly the resignation of Mr Michael Wheeler as Secretary. SC offered her deepest condolences to Mrs Carole Wheeler and her family following Michael's death. The order of business then commenced.

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence received from Mr Roger Wilmer, Treasurer, & Mrs Lesley Wilmer; Mr Michael Clifton, Committee Member, & Mrs Beryl Clifton; Mr Anthony Myers; Mr Clive Wilson & Mrs Linda Wilson; Mrs Fox; Mr Gordon Hodson & Mrs Anne Hodson; and the Reverend Nick Cornell & Mrs Gillian Cornell.

2. Minutes of the last AGM

The Minutes of the AGM of 7th July 2015 were proposed as accepted by Mr Ron Hayton, seconded by Mrs Jennifer Alt, and agreed unanimously.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 SC mentioned the resignation during the last year of Mrs Mary Wrake, who had served on the MCG Committee for many years but elected to stand down to enjoy her retirement. She also introduced Mr Robert Penfold [RP] who has joined the MCG Committee as Minute Secretary.

3.2 Major Alt raised the issue of the disabled parking sign in the Church car park, which he had highlighted as an issue last year and noted is now in place. He also asked about the status of the Traffic Plan, and it was confirmed that the latest improvements had been implemented in August 2015.

4. Questions to the Chairman on the published Chairman's Report

SC advised that the Chairman's Annual Report for 2016 had been circulated with the June newsletter, but provided a number of updates as follows:

4.1 Grass Cutting: SC explained that East Sussex County Council [ESCC] have changed contractor from Kier to Costain, and a new 7-year contract has been signed. Consequently, ESCC are reviewing funding to 3rd party groups who deal with local grass cutting contracts. SC has received email confirmation from ESCC that they will make a contribution to MCG towards grass cutting within the village. Previously a grant for £1,296 has been made, and this is currently being assessed for 2016. MCG have historically employed Barcombe Landscaping to facilitate the urban and rural cuts, but ESCC now require paperwork from Barcombe so that they can be officially authorised as the contractor before any money is provided.

4.2 Footpaths Group: SC reported that it had been thought that ESCC was not in a position to support the Footpaths Group. However, John Smith has now been told that ESCC will fund any work carried out on Rights of Way footpaths. Any work carried out within Maresfield Village must be funded by MCG.

4.3 Planters: SC highlighted the three planters that have been installed by the Footpaths Group at the three entrances to the village, and pointed to the photographs displayed on the art board. They have been placed on Batts Bridge Road, at Lampool Corner, and outside Mill House Farm on the approach from Budletts roundabout. The original plan had been to site a planter at the top end of Straight Half Mile, but the Highways Department at ESCC were concerned about its proximity to the road and consequently it was relocated to the verge near Lampool Corner. The ESCC Legal Department has issued the necessary permission documents for the planters, and the Parish Council has confirmed that it will cover the liability insurance. The planters were installed to brighten up the village for the benefit of all. They will contain bulbs in Spring and flowering displays during the summer, but assistance will be required to maintain them. The Footpaths Group have also addressed the Church car park, planting a summer flower bed and widening the pathway to the Village Hall.

4.4 Questions Arising: Mr Alan Sallows asked whether or not there is likely to be any resolution to the continuing problem with drainage outside the Village Hall, since excessive rain produces an enormous puddle. He appreciated that it is likely to be costly to repair. SC advised that Mrs Bowler, the Secretary of the Village Hall Committee, has recently written to ESCC Highways Department and is awaiting a response. SC is not aware of any impending work planned on the drainage outlets. Mrs Karen Tritton asked whether the fact that drains have been cleared elsewhere in the village may help with the issue, but KO stated that it is a problem with the underground drainage, which needs to be investigated.

5. Questions to the Secretary on the published Secretary's Report

Mr Ken Ogden [KO], Acting Secretary for MCG, said that it is difficult to follow in Mr Wheeler's shoes as he undertook so many tasks. However, the Committee has now been re-organised so that everyone has a specific role, which alleviates any previous issues that arose. KO highlighted the short Secretary's Report in the front of the June 2016 newsletter. There were no questions.

6. Questions to the Treasurer on the published Treasurer's Report

6.1 SC advised that Mr Roger Wilmer [RW], Treasurer, is on holiday and therefore not in attendance at the AGM, but the MCG Annual Accounts were distributed with the June 2016 newsletter. There were no questions. However, Mr Alan Sallows offered his congratulations for making a surplus during the last year. KO confirmed that Gift Aid is helping with the income situation, and SC added that, along with Member subscriptions, fundraising events have also contributed. She emphasised that donations had been made to numerous good causes, including the Village Hall and the Church Flower Festival. The aim is to try to provide the widest benefit to the Community.

6.2 **Church Railings:** SC said that MCG are now seeking to refurbish the white railings adjacent to the Church in the centre of the village, and have been in touch with ESCC to confirm they should be retained in their current style, and to seek funding for the works. KO advised that a contractor has been found, but permission and insurance from ESCC is required before any works can be undertaken. From a health and safety perspective, it is likely that the Highways Department will insist on traffic management during the refurbishment period, possibly in the form a single file traffic and lights. However, some initial remedial work can be done. Mr Alan Sallows asked whether ESCC Highways have to attend within a certain timeframe if a complaint is made. However, KO advised that 51 different groups of Parish and Town Councils deal with their own grass arrangements within Wealden DC, and the change of contractor to Costain means there has been a redistribution of budgets.

6.3 **Signs:** Mr Graham Alt noted that the signs within the village are very green and have not been cleaned for three years. He enquired whether this was being addressed. KO reported that the Parish Council agreed last month that they will pay £2,000 to have the signs cleaned this year, including those within the village and on the main roads. Mr Brian Porter then asked whether MCG had been consulted about the new, rather ugly red sign that has been erected in the centre of the village to advise of the new speed limits. As it is out of character in a conservation area, and seems to be at odds with Central Government's policy of reducing the number of road signs, he asked whether there is any scope to press for a time limit on its lifespan. KO said that there has already been another complaint from an adjacent resident about the sign. SC advised ESCC Highways decide where to locate the signs, and noted that there is another, almost invisible, sign hidden in the trees at the Budletts roundabout. There was general agreement that the roundels on the roads are much more effective. SC confirmed that the issue will be discussed at the next MCG Committee Meeting.

6.4 **Traffic Plan:** Mr Graham Alt raised concerns about the apparent lack of co-ordination in ESCC in relation to the improvements on School Hill. The speed bumps don't conform to the existing white lines prohibiting overtaking outside the school, which in any event can no longer be seen. He raised a concern that if an accident occurs, there could be a court action against ESCC. KO responded that, when the scheme was first introduced, School Hill was the main A22. It is now a 'C' road used by 3,250 cars per day rather than 12,000. As it is a 20mph zone, there is no longer

a need for white lines which, according to Kal Pegler at ESCC, were never intended to be repainted. In answer to a further question about proposed rights of access to the John Lewis Retail Centre, KO replied that he had no knowledge.

6.5 Subscriptions: RP thanked those Members who are now paying their annual subscriptions by standing order. He added that the Collection Period is now upon us and once RW has returned from his holiday, they will look at the Membership List and the Collectors will come round to collect outstanding subscriptions.

Mr Alan Sallows proposed that the MCG Annual Accounts for 2015/2016 should be adopted. This was seconded by Mr Rob Penfold, and approved unanimously.

7. Election of Executive Officers

Mrs Sheila Cumming (Chairman) advised that she, Mr Roger Wilmer (Treasurer) and Mr Ken Ogden (Acting Secretary), have all stated that they are willing to continue in office. They were proposed by Mrs Carole Wheeler, seconded by Mrs Cathy Shaw and, there being no other nominations, are duly re-elected. In a show of hands, those Members present indicated their unanimous approval.

8. Election of Executive Committee (up to 8 Members)

SC said that Mrs Pat Palmer, Mr Dick Thompson, Mr Michael Clifton, Mr Rob Penfold, Mr Ian Shaw and Mr Stan Sadowski, are also willing to continue in office and are therefore re-elected. This was again carried unanimously.

9. Any Other Business (previously notified in writing)

9.1 Appreciation Offered to the Footpaths Group: SC advised that she had not been notified of any other business. However, Mrs Karen Tritton said that, whilst not previously raised, she wanted to offer her thanks to John Smith and his team for clearing the footpaths, especially those on School Hill. She added that it means a lot to people with mobility issues, and she is very impressed with a job well done. SC said that additional assistance is always welcome from anyone who would like to join the group or help out with anything specific.

9.2 Summer Supper: SC reminded those present that the Summer Supper is being held this Saturday. Guests are invited to meet in DT's garden at 7pm, with the meal commencing in the Village Hall at 7.30pm.

The AGM closed at 8.10pm and the Committee Members took office.

The date of the next Annual General Meeting will be 4th July 2017 in the Maresfield Village Hall.

The meeting was followed by a very informative and entertaining presentation by John Smith about the work of the Footpaths Group, who carry out an annual programme of clearance and repairs or

replacement of styles, bridges etc. in order to maintain the Rights of Way around Maresfield and its environs. He outlined the teams' achievements to date, and highlighted their aims and aspirations for the future. Chief amongst these was the continuing desire to produce work of a high enough standard to merit attaching a 'Sheila' (also known as an MCG marker).

Afterwards, those Members present were invited to partake of cheese and wine.