

# MARESFIELD CONSERVATION GROUP

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee

Held at 7.00pm on Monday 19th February 2024 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 (CS), Stephanie Bassett (Minutes Secretary).

**APOLOGIES:** Stephany Reed-Perkins (SRP)

### 1) DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

None.

### 2) APPROVAL OF MINUTES DATED 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024 & MATTERS ARISING

Item 3 Treasurer's Report—Trust payment was amended to "The solicitors administering the estate of Joan Bailey have notified us of a legacy but no money has been received yet."

The Minutes of the previous meeting were then APPROVED.

#### Matters arising:

- **Pictorial Map and DT Memorial – RP**

BM and RP have surveyed the site by The Chequers and identified a schedule of works. There will be a certain amount of digging out. Six meters of sleepers will be needed plus mulch. They will be meeting again to design the area in more detail.

Map production continues and RP is due to accompany David Bailey when he visits the joinery firm to finalise the design of the noticeboard. It is hoped that it will be installed sometime during the Spring.

- **MCG Notice Board – BM**

No reply yet from the joiner. BM to chase.

**ACTION: BM**

- **Website – SS**

SS has yet to receive biographies and JPEG photos from our latest Committee members.

**ACTION: CS, RP and TM.  
c/f next meeting.**

- **Maresfield Historical Society – RP**

RP confirmed MCG covers the printing costs and any profits are sent to the MHS.

Our donation of £100 towards the storage of documents at the Village Hall (agreed at the September meeting) is outstanding. RP to ask MHS for an invoice.

**ACTION: RP**

All other Matters Arising were covered during this meeting.

3) **TREASURER'S REPORT – TB**

The January accounts were circulated by email earlier today.

**Accounts Update**

Current account balance: £7,117.84

Deposit account balance: £6,195.37

4) **UNDERHILL BRIDGE/STREAM/OART- TM/RP**

Work remains scheduled for late Spring.

RP has been in contact with OART, who have confirmed that the water quality has been declining over the years. TM said he would be happy to grant access to his land should a wider sampling area be necessary. RP is waiting to hear back from the CEO of OART to see how we can together take forward the protection of the stream.

5) **UPCOMING EVENTS:**

• **Classic Vehicle Show – JL on behalf of SRP**

The access to the site at New Place Farm, Blackboys is not suitable. IT WAS AGREED to revisit next year.

• **Photographic Competition – TM**

TM is waiting for a landscape photo from RP so that AC can produce the final design.

**ACTION:RP**

TM to produce an interim poster for display at the shop and the Post Office. **ACTION: TM**

RP confirmed he has let Uckfield Camera Club know. He will be advertising in the Parish Magazine.

• **Quiz – 24th February – IS/TM**

IS is waiting for a reply from the Village Hall for extra chairs.

9 tables have been booked so far. A last minute push to advertise is needed.

**ACTION: JL to post on Maresfield Matters**

**JL to ask Chequers if they wish to field a team**

**SS to email members**

**BM to advertise at the MHS meeting tomorrow evening.**

The Village Hall will be available at 2.30 for set up.

RP to set up the sound system

TM and SRP to attend a briefing at 6.15.

SS to set up AV

TM to produce 12 copies of the table quiz

Foodbank flyer, produced by AC, to be put on each table.

• **AGM – 14th May**

Village Hall booked.

TB to produce end of year accounts for emailing to members 3 weeks beforehand. **ACTION: TB**

SS to collate all reports. **ACTION: SS**

• **Cheese and Wine - 27th July**

**ACTION: c/f after Easter.**

6) **FOOTPATHS GROUP UPDATE - BM**

• **Schedule of activities**

BM has amended the schedule of activities circulated at the last meeting. SS to put on website and email to members. **ACTION: SS**

• **Millenium Walk**

BM has reviewed and updated the walk. BM to contact Parish Council (Nancy O'Hanlan) to request permission to reproduce their footpaths map on our website.

**ACTION: BM**

• **Flowerbeds Request**

BM has advised Sheila Cummings that MCG will be planting up the planters at the shop and the church car park.

- **Insurance**

IS has checked cover with our insurance company for the use of a chainsaw. Due to their regulations and the costs involved to comply IT WAS AGREED that MCG will no longer carry out chainsaw work and that the money would be better spent on engaging a professional chainsaw operator when necessary.

IS asked RP to send a costed list of all the equipment held by MCG ready for policy renewal next month.  
**ACTION: RP**

7) **PLANNING UPDATE – RP**

- **School Hill**

An application for 25 houses at the bottom of School Hill has been submitted. MCG to oppose.

- **Downlands Farm**

Appeal rejected but surveyors have already been spotted on the land.

- **Mock Beggars (land behind Leslie’s Garage, London Road)**

An appeal against refusal was heard last week.

- **Local Transport Plan for 2025-2050**

Consultation period ends 25<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

The following road improvement schemes are proposed for our area:

Carriageway dueling of Copwood to Black Down roundabouts

Carriageway dueling of Black Down to Batts Bridge roundabouts

IT WAS AGREED that SS email links of the proposal to our membership and that TM drafts a letter for approval on behalf of MCG to Claire Dowling, Lead member for Transport and Environment at ESCC, suggesting that the bypass could be reconfigured to 3 lanes (similar to A26 section at Eridge).  
**ACTION: SS/TM**

- **Wealden Draft Local Plan 2024**

The map of Maresfield shows areas of land offered by landowners under the SHELAA (Strategic Housing and Land Economic Availability Assessment) scheme which will provide an additional 370 homes. RP advised that consultation meetings will take place in a number of villages (including Maresfield) and that he will inform TM and SS when the dates are published so that members can be notified.  
**ACTION: RP**

- **Maresfield Ward Community Forum update**

RP reported on the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> January in Fairwarp Village Hall.

There is a target of 1500 homes for Wealden, half of which have already been allocated. This equates to 463 new homes per year. The Plan expects additional windfall land to become available which would provide a further 2000 homes.

A public consultation meeting will be held in March/April.

**ACTION:**

**RP to send links to SS for inclusion on website and in email to membership.**

**RP to progress OART water survey**

**RP to expand DIY “how to object” page on our website.**

IT WAS AGREED that MCG should investigate the possibility of engaging a professional environmentalist/town planner

7). **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- **Committee Matters**

SS has produced a Resolution for presentation at the AGM to increase the number of committee members from 7 to 8. As the Committee will be experiencing ongoing changes in membership we need to ensure the following roles are covered:

Chair – by 2025 she will have been in post for 3 years.

Website – TM has taken over from SS

Membership database manager – SS offered to continue until post has been filled.

Planning and Development – a vacancy will arise in the not too distant future.

Secretary – JL in discussions with SB

JL reminded the Committee that the Constitution allows for the possibility of co-opting new members to help fulfill these roles. SS to email members with news of the above changes.

**ACTION: SS**

- **Membership year**

SS circulated a proposal in advance of the meeting to change the membership year and IT WAS AGREED to accept Option 2- "From now on, subscriptions paid in any given year should be for membership for that calendar year."

He advised that the number of people now paying by Standing Order has increased from 70% last year to 80+% this year

IT WAS AGREED that, going forward, all correspondence with members will be by email. SS to provide names of members who have not provided email addresses. **ACTION: SS**  
**(ADDENDUM: SS later confirmed 63% of members have provided their email addresses)**

- **Website**

TM is in the process of designing a new website and requested maps of the Conservation Area, footpaths etc. He hopes to launch it at the AGM in May.

- **Land behind Recreation Ground**

MCG has received emails and seen several posts on the Maresfield Matters Facebook page by residents upset at the sudden change of access to the land behind the Recreation Ground and the appearance of No Trespassing signs. CS reported that there have been 40-50 new requests to join Maresfield Matters, probably as a result of this matter. The suggestion on Maresfield Matters of applying for a Statutory Declaration if a footpath has been used uninterrupted for 20 years was mentioned in passing.

IT WAS AGREED that SS should reply to the emails stating that the landowner was within his rights to restrict access to his land other than by the official footpaths, adding that MCG will be monitoring the situation.

**ACTION: SS**

RP has contacted the Parish Council to request 2 more dog waste bins but they are costly to install and maintain. He was advised that his request will be discussed at the Environmental Committee on 11<sup>th</sup> June. IT WAS AGREED that RP should write to the Parish Council offering to sponsor one of the bins.

**ACTION: RP**

The remaining footpaths are degrading due to the wet weather and IT WAS AGREED that we should stabilize the path from the churchyard to the gravel paths with substrate. BM to estimate the amount needed and advise the Parish Council.

**ACTION: BM**

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING : Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 7pm in The Chequers.**

Future meetings will be:

15<sup>th</sup> April, 20<sup>th</sup> May, 17<sup>th</sup> June, 15<sup>th</sup> July, (no meeting in August), 16<sup>th</sup> September, 21<sup>st</sup> October, 18<sup>th</sup> November, 16<sup>th</sup> December

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 8.50pm