

Maresfield Conservation Group

Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee 3rd October 2018

Held at 7.30pm in The Chequers, Maresfield

Present

Pat Palmer, Chairman [PP]

John Smith, Treasurer [JS]

Rob Penfold, Membership Secretary [RP]

Alex Clarke, Member [AC]

Stan Sadowski, Member [SS]

Ian Shaw, Member [IS]

Dick Thompson, Member [DT]

Peta Penfold, Minute Secretary

1. Apologies

Apologies received from Gemma Hallin [GH], and Ken Ogden [KO]

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Approval of Minutes of 12th September 2018

It was noted that the entry for Rob Penfold [RP] should state Membership Secretary; the spelling of Graham Allt's name was corrected; and the entry at para 5.2 was amended to show that John Smith himself offered to cut the grass at the Parade, not the Footpaths Group. Subject to these amendments, the Minutes were proposed by SS, seconded by IS, and unanimously approved.

4. Matters Arising

4.1 **Victorian Lights:** IS advised that Sussex Lighting have now submitted a quote, and West Dean College have also been contacted as it appears that they may be willing to undertake the refurbishment of the Victorian Lights. Two other commercial companies were not interested in quoting for the work. IS hopes to have additional figures by the next meeting. AC offered to assist in sourcing the relevant tradesmen and will ask around.

4.2 **Recreation Ground Sign:** RP reported that efforts to organise the installation of a replacement sign are not going smoothly. The Rec is under the control of Fields in Trust, and further consultation is required. Rob Taylor, representing the Parish Council, has suggested using the Parish Council's email address as a central point of contact for all groups to be referenced on

the new sign, which will get around problems caused by changes in personnel and contact details. As a side issue, Rob Taylor has advised that in 2013 Asda provided funds for The Rec and a plaque commemorating this contribution was obtained but is still to be erected.

4.3 **Fingerpost at Chequers Roundabout:** The replacement lettering was purchased at a cost of £85 (less than the £150 estimate) and has now been installed.

4.4 **MCG Projector:** RP provided GH with the link to a website selling projectors. In her absence he explained that a suitable Epsom projector can be purchased for about £349. SS pointed out that the issue will be projector bulbs (which are expensive). Whilst they are not particularly fragile, lifespans vary, and this may impact on costs. MCG has already donated a new projector screen to The Village Hall for the use of all village organisations. It was therefore agreed that expenditure of up to £400 on a new projector will be a worthwhile investment, that figure to include the purchase of a spare bulb.

AP1: RP to research how long projector bulbs are expected to last, along with replacement costs.

4.5 **HSBC Requirements:** JS reported that on 26th September 2018 HSBC confirmed that they require the personal details of all Trustees of MCG, whether or not they are signatories to the account, for “safeguarding” purposes. RP said that the terminology used is incorrect and a question mark still remains over the necessity for HSBC to hold these details in light of the recent GDPR legislation. JS surmised that the request related to the fact that the MCG bank account is a business account rather than a personal or community account, probably due to the fact that it is a charity. After some discussion, it was agreed that the Trustee details *will* be provided to HSBC in preference to potentially losing the account.

AP2: JS to go into the branch to discuss HSBC’s requirement, before emailing the Trustees with a GDPR request for the necessary personal details.

5. Chairman’s Report [PP]

5.1 The Chairman’s Report is appended to the Minutes and was summarised by PP during the meeting. PP asked the Committee Members to email her the details of any MCG ‘helpers’ so that she can update the appropriate contact list.

5.2 RP gave a brief summary of the meeting held to discuss the proposal for permitted housing development within the Maresfield Parish ‘Core Area’. Essentially, it’s a 10-year plan which allows for development of suitable ‘windfall’ sites by individual applicants. Councillors have advised that construction of new houses within Nutley and Fairwarp will not be permitted due to their proximity to the Ashdown Forest, and therefore the 33 proposed dwellings will need to be built within Maresfield Village. KO also indicated to PP that the Parish may be asked to provide a new cemetery – his suggestion was Site A (the field behind Park Farm House). However, the Committee agreed that there is no reason why the new cemetery could not be located in Nutley or Fairwarp.

5.3 PP reminded the Committee Members that the Village Clean-up Day is due to be held on Saturday 6th October - Shelia Cumming is kindly organising it.

6. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report was summarised by JS, who advised that there is currently an excess of income over expenditure amounting to £2,369. Expenditure to date includes £308 spent on the new signs for the Millennium Walk; £151 spent on the projector screen donated to The Village Hall; and £455 spent on village maintenance including a new flower barrel and sign. The bank balance as at 3rd August 2018 was £10,329.

7. Website Update

A meeting was held between PP, SS and GH during which it was agreed that, as GH is now too busy to give her full attention to the MCG Website, SS will become the principal Web Master with GH assisting where possible. SS is awaiting the access codes from GH – these are required to allow 'publication' of changes that SS has recently made to the website. A discussion was held about the possibility of adding a facility to the website to calculate how many times it is accessed. AC asked why the Minutes of the monthly Committee Meetings are being added to the website – she has some reservations about this course of action. RP said it is intended to keep the MCG membership up-to-date with progress, and SS confirmed that it had been agreed at the AGM but had not yet been actioned.

8. Trustee Eligibility Declaration Forms

PP advised that these are required for all Committee Members as MCG Trustees. They are retained by The Chairman and produced to The Charities Commission on demand. The only outstanding declaration form relates to GH and KO, who were not present at the meeting.

9. List of Village Clubs & Village Hall Activities

PP is currently compiling an updated contact list for village clubs/societies/groups which she hopes to have completed by the end of next week. This is intended to be a living document that will change and evolve over time. RP said that he has been experiencing difficulties in contacting some of the relevant parties. PP will need to check the status of The Maresfield Residents' Group (previously led by Fred Taylor); and confirmed that The Millennium Players are now led by Dudley Dean. JS holds contact details for some of the other clubs/societies and will email them to PP. PP advised that the contact list will contain details of contact phone numbers and/or email addresses, but names will not be included.

10. Christmas Tree

10.1 RP has spoken to Angie Whelton representing St Bartholomew's Church [The Church] who said that they want to erect the Christmas Tree on 1st December. This generated a lengthy discussion on the basis that MCG Committee Members have been working towards 8th December for the Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony. PP reminded those present that the Christmas Tree has always been a gift from MCG to the whole village, but it was accepted that The Church should have some say in proceedings particularly since, in 2018, the tree will again stand in the churchyard (pending the sale of The Lodge). Reverend Nick failed to mention MCG during his speech in 2017 which caused concern and should be corrected this year.

10.2 PP advised that she is happy to source the Christmas Tree; the Road Closure Application is still outstanding; and The Village Hall needs to be booked for the agreed date. PP will ask her son-in-law Paul to be Santa again. The man who usually provides the PA system has retired, but PP has found a DJ called Rosie White who will look at the site and may be able to assist. RP said that the lights are PAT tested annually by Simon Ashdown, although it was noted that the Christmas Tree topper may need to be replaced.

11. Winter Supper

The Winter Supper will be held in The Village Hall on **12th January 2019**. Dick Waterson is moving and has been unable to arrange the event, but Carole Wheeler has stepped in and has already spoken to the caterer, Kelly Myland. Carole has also said that she will be happy to sell the tickets. There was a general discussion about costs and organisational preferences, and the Committee Members reviewed a summary prepared to illustrate anticipated income and expenditure. It was agreed that the ticket price for 2019 will remain at £26 based on guests bringing their own drinks (with the exception of a welcoming drink to be provided on arrival). Round tables seating 10 people each will be used in preference to long tables as they seem to accommodate a better layout. The raffle will be organised by the Penfold/Shaw households, with SS providing the electronic random number selector. As the Winter Supper is intended to be a social occasion rather than a fund-raising event, the estimated profit is about £122 which is largely based on the raffle proceeds.

12. Planters & Garden at Village Hall & Parade

PP summarised the plans in place for the upkeep of the planters located around the village. IS and Cathy Shaw maintain the planter located at the bottom of School Hill; JS deals with the one at Lampool Corner; Marion Myers looks after the planter on Batts Bridge Road; Ann Thompson and Ann Seigne are responsible for those at The Village Hall, the bus stop and the cemetery; and Sheila Cumming takes care of the Church car parking area. A query was raised about the flower bed at The Parade adjacent to the Village Shop, which was planted by IS and Cathy Shaw. IS said that it needs only occasional weeding and pruning, which he is happy to do.

13. Future Expenditure/Funding

13.1 PP summarised the outcome of a sub-committee which met to discuss options for future expenditure within the Village (special projects over and above normal annual outlay). Proposed works and estimated costs include:

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| • Replacement Recreation Ground Sign | £250 |
| • Refurbishment of 3 x Victorian Lights | £1,000 |
| • Refurbishment of Cemetery gate | £650 |
| • Repair of the fence alongside School Cottages | £2,000 |
| • Refurbishment of milestones at Chequers/Lampool/Forge Lane | £30 |
| • Projector | £400-£500 |
| • New planter at bus stop | £40 |

13.2 It was agreed that, pending the approval of The Church, the refurbishment of the Cemetery gates is a priority as they are in a poor state of repair. PP said that The Church may not be able

to contribute financially due to the fact that the organ is failing and will cost around £2,000 to repair. JS responded to the effect that, if MCG funds the repairs to the Cemetery gate, the option exists to withdraw the annual contribution made towards Cemetery grass cutting in lieu. There was a brief discussion about whether MCG should offer to help finance the organ repair, but it was agreed that this is a Church matter not pertinent at this stage to MCG.

AP3: RP to speak to Angie Whelton to seek permission from The Church to refurbish the Cemetery gate.

- 13.3 JS proposed that MCG expenditure should remain within the annual budget, equating to a current surplus of £2,369. He pointed out that the £10,000 bank balance had been accrued over many years. PP advised that several members have already said that there is too much money in the MCG bank account and some of it should be spent. AC and RP agreed, with RP responding that the proposed projects represent a good cross-section of the membership. JS was assured that, whilst it is not the intention of the Trustees to actively seek to use the entire cash in bank figure, as MCG is a charity there is a responsibility to spend money raised on worthwhile projects within the Village. It was widely accepted that if cash reserves ever fall below an agreed figure of, say £3,000, expenditure will stop until more money had been raised.
- 13.4 IS asked whether it is necessary to set an upper financial limit per project, beyond which the Trustees would need to refer to the Membership, either at the AGM, or by means of an Extraordinary General Meeting. AC said that an EGM must be requested by a minimum of 20 members, in writing. PP proposed making the expenditure identified by the sub-Committee (amounting to around £4,500), and then taking the matter of any further expenditure to the AGM. The MCG Constitution may need to be amended accordingly.

AP4: SS to make a start on reviewing the MCG Constitution to identify any necessary changes to the original, now quite historic, document.

14. Any Other Business

- 14.1 PP advised that Clive Wilson (a former MCG Chairman), has asked her to raise the fact that he fell and cracked his ribs on Batts Bridge Road by Robian Close due to the lack of street lighting. It was agreed that this is a matter pertinent to The Highways Department at ESCC.
- 14.2 PP reminded the Committee Members that, as agreed last month, an MCG newsletter will be required in February/June/October 2019. The October 2018 newsletter is not yet in hand. AC offered to assist PP to prepare the newsletter.
- 14.3 PP said that a date needs to be confirmed for the annual Quiz Night, which is usually held in March. This is so that a booking can be made at The Village Hall.
- 14.4 PP requested that, when anyone is dividing plants, any residue is passed to Ann Thompson so that she can make use of them when preparing for the Plant Stall at the Village Fete.
- 14.5 Finally, PP read out an email received by Sheila Cumming from Liam Riley at ESCC regarding the grass cut due on 28th September which was not done. A further 'Urban' cut is due in October.

The meeting closed at 9.37pm. The next meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday 7th November 2018.**