

Maresfield Conservation Group
Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee 13th March 2019
Held at 7.30pm at Newnhams 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 13th February 2019

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

4. Matters Arising

4.1 **Recreation Ground Sign:** Claire Goossens has confirmed that the Parish Council will pay for the £954 plus VAT cost of the replacement sign at the Rec, although the funds will be deducted from their grant. The sign will be double sided and made of aluminium. It will bear the name 'Queen Elizabeth Field', will list the relevant clubs/groups, but will show the contact point for all as the Parish Council. The Parish Council will maintain an electronic list of the relevant representatives for each of the clubs/groups which will reflect any changes over time. The design of the sign is still to be finalised with the manufacturer. After some discussion it was agreed that, under those circumstances, MCG will not contribute to the cost of the sign but will instead seek to donate to another project at the Rec.

AP1: RP to advise Rob Taylor, Recreation Ground Committee, of this decision and invite further requests for funds in respect of future projects.

- 4.2 **Tabard Printing:** Some of the MCG tabards are now well used, quite tatty, and should be replaced. JS proposed purchasing tabards for the MCG Committee members in a different colour to the existing stock. The cost online is £5 per unit, which includes the MCG logo. They will need to be quite large to allow warm clothing to be worn underneath if necessary. At present the tabards are stored piecemeal making it difficult to keep track of them. It was agreed that, in future, a designated person will be responsible for handing out the tabards and collecting them in again after each event. Committee members will retain their own tabards.

AP2: JS to order 10 x green tabards bearing the MCG logo for issue to Committee Members.

- 4.3 **Outstanding Payment:** RP advised he had not completed this action point, but it is now obsolete (see 4.8 below).
- 4.4 **Electrical Quote for the Victorian Lamps:** JS and IS have tried to obtain a further quote but without success. The electrician approached indicated he would need to talk to the blacksmith before submitting a quote, but since then nothing further has been forthcoming despite being chased.

AP3 [carried forward]: IS to obtain a further quote for the electrical work on the Victorian lamps.

- 4.5 **Christmas Tree Event:** As per her email to the Committee members, PP had a meeting with Angie Whelton to discuss a sponsored Christmas tree event in St Bartholomew's Church in 2019. Evidently Reverend Nick had been reluctant to compete with Holy Cross Church, Uckfield who hold an annual 3-day event with 60-70 sponsored trees. However, the proposed Maresfield event would last until 12th Night and would comprise trees decorated by local village sponsors. Angie suggested locating the trees outside, but the ground is too uneven.

- 4.6 **Projector:** The new projector has arrived and was handed to SS for safe storage.

- 4.7 **Cemetery Gate:** IS and Angie Whelton met to talk about the MCG proposal to install dressed stone retainers beneath the refurbished cemetery gate. A Parish Council meeting is being held on 21st March to discuss this issue, along with the potential use of a solar power source to run the Victorian lamp at the Church. There may also be an option to draw power from the Church, although it is unlikely that any drilling through the Church wall will be sanctioned. RP spoke to Keystone Paving in East Grinstead, but the job is too small to be financially viable for them. Subject to Church agreement, JS, RP & IS are prepared to source reclaimed pavers in order to carry out the works themselves.

AP4: JS, RP & IS to measure the area beneath the cemetery gate in the event that Church approval is forthcoming for the installation of dressed stone retainers.

- 4.8 **Membership:** SS has contacted a number of the Collectors to introduce himself as the new Membership Secretary and is working his way down the list, concentrating on Collectors with outstanding subscription payments. Where possible SS has obtained email contact details. In a Parish Magazine article PP has highlighted SS' new role, issued a polite reminder that members need to pay their subscriptions, and apologised for any missing MCG newsletters.

- 4.9 **AGM Steering Group:** The AGM Steering Group, comprising PP, JS, SS, IS, AC and DT will hold a meeting on Tuesday 19th March to discuss the content and format of the AGM.

- 4.10 **Bonnars School Request for Funds:** PP gave an update on her visit to Toni Birkbeck, Secretary of Bonners School on 5th March for a fact-finding meeting in response to their request for MCG funding. In December 2014 MCG sourced three picnic tables and a storytelling chair from Ken Francis at a cost of £685 – these are all fine. However, six other picnic tables not originally supplied by MCG now need refurbishing - they are used extensively by the children at playtime and mealtimes during the summer. The request is for MCG to carry out the work or pay for an outside contractor to do it. The benches are currently standing on the grass and need to be placed onto paving slabs to give them a longer lifespan. The school would also like two planting tubs to be located just inside the school gates; and to have their netball posts set in concrete which would mean drilling into the playground surface. PP asked whether some of the work needed would be more appropriate to the school handyman or the PTA. She also said that it would be good if parents could be persuaded to join the MCG as very few of them are currently members. Toni agreed and promised to promote MCG via email and letters to parents enclosing a copy of the application form. After some discussion, it was decided that the request from Bonners should be put on hold in view of the proposed Cemetery improvements.

AP5: PP to advise Toni Birkbeck that MCG has deferred any decision to commit to a Bonners School project pending a decision from the Church about the work required at the Cemetery.

- 4.11 **Plot A Site Visit:** The site visit is still pending. DT pointed out that there is already some land at the Churchyard which could accommodate further graves and supplement capacity.
- 4.12 **Grass Cutting:** PP is still awaiting a response from Martin Craddock, Parish Council about the extra grass cutting.
- 4.13 **Historical Society:** RP would like MCG to forge closer links with the Historical Society. SS will speak to them about the website and explore options.
- 4.14 **PA System:** IS confirmed that he is in a position to store the PA System.

AP6: IS/RP to collect the PA system from the Village Hall by the last Friday in the month (29th March).

- 4.15 **School Hill Fence:** JS has been assured by the Highways Department at ESCC that the fence will be dealt with soon. He has been given the name of the contractor and informed that the fence will be replaced like-for-like.
- 4.16 **MCG Quiz Night:** It was agreed that Quiz Night went very well and was an excellent evening. AC pointed out that the Nutley Quiz, which was very well attended, was on the same night. It might be helpful in future to avoid clashing with other events in order to maximise attendance. This is difficult to do as the Village Hall needs to be booked early to secure it, but efforts will be made to avoid duplicating events.
- 4.17 **Royal Corps of Signals Centenary:** PP is still awaiting a response from Martin Craddock, Parish Council about the proposed celebrations. Claire Goossens will remind him to speak to PP.

5. Treasurer's Report

JS handed out copies of the Income & Expenditure Summary 1st April 2018 – 13th March 2019. JS was handed the receipts relating to expenditure on the food and raffle prizes for Quiz Night which are to be added. There were no other issues of note and everyone confirmed that they are happy with the accounts.

6. Website Update

SS has been doing routine maintenance. He noted that between 11th February and 12th March 2019 the MCG website was visited 79 times (46 times by new users) and therefore website usage is not tailing off. Regarding the suggestion to monitor how many previous members re-joined MCG, SS advised that it might be possible to compare a snapshot of previous members against the current membership list, but this could take some time - it was agreed it is not important at this stage. There was nothing else of significance to report.

7. Membership Update

SS advised that some new members have joined, and he has identified two new addresses to deliver the MCG Welcome Pack to. It was agreed that it is appropriate to wait until Land Registry records have been updated before delivering Welcome Packs to allow the new home owners to settle in.

8. MCG Newsletter

There was a print run of 200 for the latest MCG newsletter and, whilst there are a few copies left, this is an appropriate number to produce. Copies will be added to MCG Welcome Packs. The next newsletter is due to be sent out the first week in June (well before the AGM on 2nd July). The AGM Steering Group will input to the next newsletter, but other contributions will also be welcome.

9. Recreation Ground Grass Cutting

JS reported that he received a note from Claire Goossens, Parish Council containing a request for the Footpaths Group [FG] to cut the grass on the perimeter of The Rec. However, having looked at the work, JS has established that it is too big a job for the FG as the members are only able to allocate three hours per week for their tasks. The perimeter grass would need cutting at least once a week and it is a surprisingly large area. He informed Claire accordingly and she accepted and understood the decision.

10. MCG Stall at the Village Fete

There was a discussion about whether MCG should have a presence at the Maresfield Village Fete in May 2019. The issue is staffing given the limited number of available volunteers, particularly since many MCG Committee members are already involved with various other aspects of the Fete. Having assessed several options, it was agreed that MCG will not take a table at the Fete.

11. AOB

- 11.1 SS asked whether it would be appropriate to add the Minutes of the Inaugural MCG Committee Meeting onto the MCG website. It was agreed that this would be appropriate.
- 11.2 **Village Hall Diary:** PP advised that the changes to the Village Hall diary were sent to SS and have been added to the MCG website.
- 11.3 **Collectors Evening:** This must be held in advance of the AGM so that The Collectors can be given their 'lists' of Members, and the newsletters to hand out. Notice of the AGM must be given three weeks in advance. Various ideas for the Collectors Evening were discussed (including a BBQ) but were dismissed as being too complicated. The event is simply an opportunity for the Collectors to speak to each other and the Committee Members in a pleasant social environment, and for MCG to thank them for their contribution. Collectors will, in future, be sent personal invitations from the Committee. It was suggested that the terms 'Collector' might be a bit outdated.

AP7: Committee Members to think of an alternative term for a 'Collector' and bring their ideas to the next meeting.

- 11.4 **Village Sign at The Parade:** KO has advised that this has been refurbished but is awaiting installation. The supporting posts are rotten and need to be replaced. JS undertook to look at them.

AP8: JS to examine the supporting posts for the Village Sign at The Parade and assess their condition.

- 11.5 **Parklands Grass Verge:** The area adjacent to Parklands is now flat following the departure of the contractors, but it is looking a little bare. It is unclear whether the contractors replanted the grass before they left or not. It is possibly something that the FG may be able to assist with, although numbers are dwindling due to members relocating - SS suggested advertising in the Parish Magazine for new volunteers to assist the FG. It was agreed that JS will look at the site to establish whether or not grass seed has been sown, but the matter should more properly be dealt with via the Parish Council.

AP9: JS to visit the area adjacent to Parklands to ascertain whether grass seed has been sown or is still required with a view to raising the issue with the Parish Council.

- 11.6 **Village Clean-up Day:** This is scheduled for Saturday 23rd March and is being organised by Sheila Cumming. Committee members were asked to make themselves available if possible, or otherwise let Sheila know and indicate whether they can assist on an alternative day instead.
- 11.7 **Minute Secretary:** Peta Penfold advised that, after fulfilling the role for circa four years, due to ongoing work commitments she is unable to continue as Minute Secretary for MCG.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm. The date of the next meeting is **Wednesday 10th April 2019** at Newnham Cottage.