

MARESFIELD CONSERVATION GROUP - DRAFT

Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive Committee

Held at 7.00pm on Monday 17th November 2025 at The Chequers, Maresfield

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Jo Lawrance (JL)	Chair
Terence Brady (TB)	Treasurer
Richard Wane (RW)	Secretary
Graham Shaw (GS)	
Bruce Milton (BM)	
Tom Merchant (TM)	
Caroline Shaw (CS)	
Tracie Coe (TC)	

PRESENT: JL, TB, RW, GS, BM, TM, TC, (a quorum of at least 4 Trustees was achieved)

APOLOGIES: CS

ALSO ATTENDING: Jane Hendy (JaH), Jeremy Hendy (JeH)

1. QUORUM, CONFLICTS AND MINUTES

- A quorum was declared and no further conflicts were disclosed.
- The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.
- In response to a question RW confirmed that the Constitution permits a maximum of 8 Committee Members plus the Chair, Treasurer and Secretary.
- Actions from the previous meeting would be addressed as the meeting proceeded with a number already having been closed.

2. GOVERNANCE - RW

- GS's appointment to the Committee and as a Trustee was notified to the Charity Commission effective 20th October 2025. GS will take over as Chair from 1 Jan 2026.

- JaH and JeH have expressed a willingness to join as Committee members and Trustees. All attendees were in favour of their appointment. RW will confirm details required for their registration with the Charity Commission, effective as of the date of this meeting, together with other details and information, including for the website.

- RW thanked those who provided input to the authorisation and access document which is now on the Committee sign-in section of the website, together with an MCG calendar.

- RW and TB noted that, as per the brief email from RW prior to the meeting, MCG must file an Annual Return with the Charity Commission (by 31 Jan 2026) covering the financial year to 31st March 2025. The Return is typically very light in terms of the information required. However, for the financial year just ended, an income threshold was crossed, due to the received legacy. This triggers a more detailed Return filing, requiring additional disclosures (for example, statements safeguarding and whether we have various policies). An Annual Report is also required, a draft of which RW circulated to the Committee and which includes signed accounts.

TB noted that JaH has been providing some support on our financials, including the need to make the Parish Council bench grant a restricted amount. A simple balance sheet is now being created to add to the existing income and expenditure statement. JaH mentioned that there is no requirement, given its current turnover, for MCG to have its accounts audited, which the Committee noted.

Further discussion ensued as to the process of completing the Return filing. RW noted that the Charity Commission site only permits two administrators (he and TM are the two authorised) and that it would be good to ensure Trustees can see the final filing before it is made.

AP1: RW to complete appointments of JaH and JeH as Trustees.

AP2: TB will consult with the MCG's independent accounting expert with a view to obtaining a sign off on the balance sheet in addition to the (already signed) completed income and expenditure statement.

AP3: RW will work through the rest of the Annual Return and look to bring the final filing to the attention of the Committee prior to filing.

3. MEMBERSHIP - TC

- TC continues to work through the transition of our membership records into Membermojo. Some members have been asked about renewal but they pay regularly (by standing order) and the system should now be set to issue a reminder to such members but ensure that their membership does not expire.

- TC noted that we have now set adult membership at £10pa and household at £15pa and that if someone pays, say, £50 the system will take the member contribution and then treat the additional amount as a donation. There are some anomalies where a member, say, pays £5. TC asked the Committee whether they wanted to consider a third level of membership. This was discussed but determined to be not something the Committee would support.
- TC circulated lists, reviewed during the meeting, of members the system has picked up as having an expired or archived membership. This was done to see whether any Committee members know the status of those on the lists (e.g. whether they have moved).
- A brief discussion ensued on the claiming of Gift Aid. TC noted that this remains as an action to progress. Also, the claim process for Gift Aid appears quite specific and will need to be followed carefully.

AP4: Gift Aid claim work to remain as an action for delivery. Re-visit in the New Year.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

- TB noted the conversation concerning the enhanced Annual Return and confirmed the current bank balances. There was a discussion around accounting for Stripe payments, where it is not always easy to see what item these are charged to and it was suggested this might require TB to have access to Membermojo as well as Stripe.
- It was noted that the now closed Maresfield Historical Society has gifted MCG £500.

5. FOOTPATHS

- BM reported that there has been a lot of leaf clearing activity. Consideration is being given to the purchase of a leaf gathering/clearing machine. BM will notify the Committee of any recommended purchase options.
- The Christmas tree has been paid for, with delivery due on Thursday 4th December, to put up on 5th December. BM will ask the owner of the lodge for the usual permission to use their front garden for the tree placement.

- The Millenium walk booklet is nearing readiness for production, subject to final checks, with estimated costs for production of just under £400 for 100 copies. We reviewed the correspondence with the Parish Council and agreed to their offer to pay half of the production costs. We will look to have a hard-copy wire-bound version available for purchase (£5 is suggested) and look to sell it on the website and through The Chequers. The plan remains to make individual walks available on the website. We may also add a QR code to the MCG noticeboard and/or a note about its availability in The Chequers.

- BM continues to monitor progress with the Fingerposts with our contractor and is hopeful of work starting soon. JL noted this would be good to mention in the Parish Magazine. JeH noted that there are several signs that get obscured or become dirty but it was noted that these are the purview of the Highways Department.

AP5: JeH will proof-read the walks booklet.

AP6: RW will add JaH and JeH to the Parish Magazine Rotation.

6. EVENTS and ACTIVITIES

- The list of 2026 events put together by JL was circulated prior to the meeting to which RW added agreed dates or those which match the ones on which similar events were held in 2025. A discussion ensued concerning the need for improved co-ordination of the communication events via the website, the FB page and with member mailings.

- BM has done some research on various speakers and topics which he passed around (closing the action from the previous meeting). In response to a question, JeH noted that there is not enough by way of hard copy material to present as exhibits but we discussed the possibility of the new website being 'launched', perhaps at the AGM, with a slide presentation.

As to specific events:

- We agreed to continue with the Cheese & Wine.

- For the Quiz, TM will ask the questions. JL noted that Stephany Reed-Perkins is happy to help and JaH is happy to act as scorer. We agreed on a format of tables of 8 with tickets to be sold via the website 'per table'. At a

price of £8 per ticket a table will therefore cost £64. JL noted that raffle prizes need to be requested from M&S, Home Bargains, The Chequers and Committee Members. Our chosen charity will be Uckfield Foodbank. RW confirmed that the Village Hall is booked for the date of Saturday 7th March.

AP7: GS will review the speaker information BM has kindly researched with a view to creating an overview and schedule of possible talks.

AP8: RW will refresh with proposed dates the events list provided by JL, taking account of potential clashes with sporting events (e.g. Wimbledon, World Cup) so as to confirm the dates at the next meeting.

AP9: GS will follow-up with possible donors of gifts for the Quiz raffle.

7. PLANNING

- TC noted that a member has expressed concern about the proposed development at Limestone Way which we might keep under watch.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- TC is unavailable to go to the next meeting of the Maresfield Recreation Ground Committee which has been postponed to 2nd December.

AP10: RW to attend the next meeting of MRGC and report back on any matters of relevance.

- RW further noted that the Parish Council has now given the go ahead for the bench on the ground with walking paths to the side of Park Farm Lane, details of which were emailed to the Committee. Authority was given to RW to confirm back to the Council that the Council adopt the bench, which the Council informally indicated it will do. We reviewed where the bench is to be sited and noted the contractor details used by the Council (Garden Force).

AP11: RW to confirm to the Council that the MCG would like the Council to adopt the bench.

AP12: BM will investigate engaging Garden Force for the task for installation of a hardwood bench.

- JeH continues to work on the history site, scanning in documents and may be able to send the Committee some further information by the end of the calendar year. JH noted that we could obtain the domain 'maresfield.org' and he would suggest we do so for 10 years, likely at a cost of around £160 – which met with general approval to proceed. (Postscript: JeH confirmed he has received the MCG logo from TM so this action point is now closed).
- For governance purposes, JeH noted that MCG might be able to make use of some free software potentially available for not-for-profit organisations such as MCG. Additionally, JeH will circulate some notes and documents concerning cybersecurity for the attention of the Committee. RW suggested we might store these in the Committee section of the website.

AP12: JeH to circulate any software and cybersecurity information as he thinks appropriate and is authorized to proceed with the purchase of the maresfield.org domain.

- GS noted that we might wish to discuss what could be done with the land on which the bench will be sited.

AP13: RW to note discussion on the land by the side of Park Farm Lane as an item for the December agenda.

AP14: JL will add JaH and JeH to the MCG WhatsApp group.

The meeting closed at 8.37pm.

**Rolling Action Points outstanding from Previous Committee Meetings –
Updates (in italics)**

October AP3: RW will follow-up with IK to ask for a draft ecological assessment proposal, a statement of her experience and some estimated costs guidance.

RW has followed up on the bio-diversity survey discussion with IK following the October meeting, conveying the Committee's requests. These have been acknowledged. We await a proposal from IK. Keep under review.

September AP7: RW to follow-up with Cllr Tysh on the Conservation document and further on the bio-diversity survey.

RW has followed up with Ian Tysh. Keep under review.