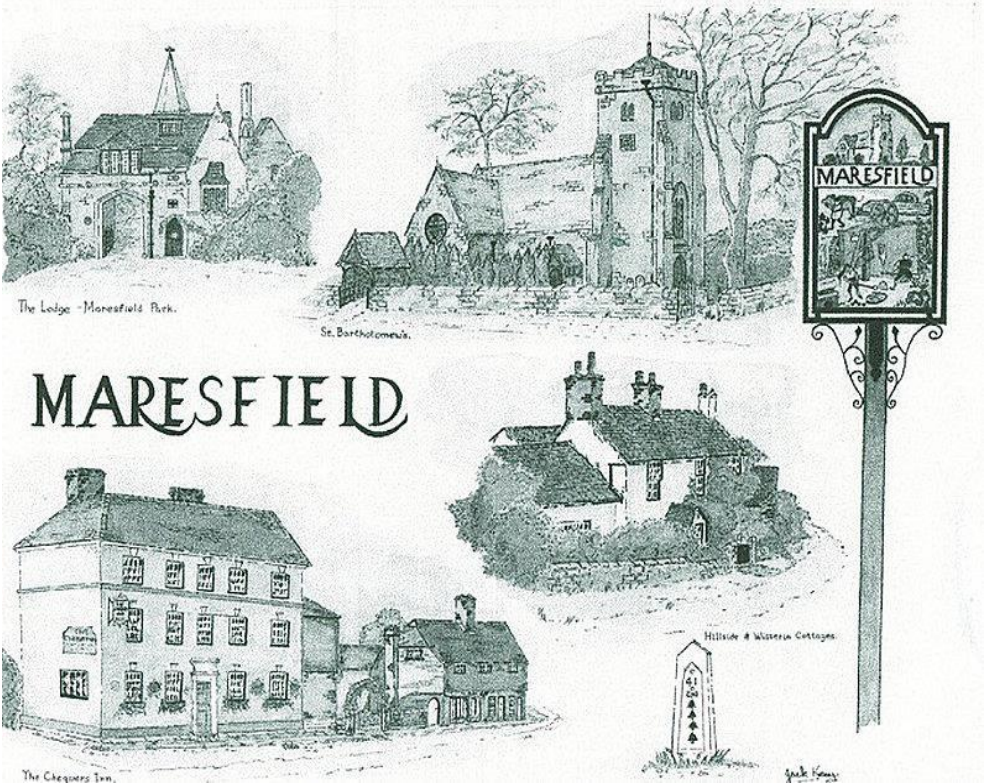




MARESFIELD CONSERVATION GROUP



NEWSLETTER

JULY 2021 AGM EDITION

AGM THURSDAY 29TH JULY 2021
MARESFIELD VILLAGE HALL 7.30PM FOR 8.00PM START

Dear Friends,

Would you believe it has been two years since our last AGM? This was of course due to Covid in 2020. Fortunately things have started to improve so we decided to be positive and set a firm date for this year. Onwards and upwards!

We would love to see as many of you as possible at our Annual General Meeting. Please feel free to invite anyone you think may be interested in finding out more about the Maresfield Conservation Group. All will be very welcome, subject to any Covid restrictions in force at the time.

Enclosed you will find a Nomination Form for new committee members. We are currently looking for a Treasurer and a Chairman. I will be resigning as Chairman and John Smith would like to hand over his position as Treasurer.

It is always good to have folk with new and fresh ideas to help pave the way into the future. Any MCG members, willing to join the executive committee, will be made very welcome.

After the meeting refreshments will be served. This will give us all a chance to mingle and have a good old chat.

Hoping we will see you there.

Pat Palmer
Chairman

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

This year we have decided to hand deliver your AGM Newsletter but will not be collecting subscriptions in person. Therefore, we have enclosed a stamp addressed envelope together with a MCG Subscription form for you to return your remittance by post.

Please Note: This does not apply to those of already paying by Standing Order, but everybody is requested to make a gift aid declaration and provide an email address if not already done so.

Your membership subscription will be due from 1st July 2021 for the year 2021/2022. If you wish to pay by cheque then please send your remittance to: Stan Sadowski, Farthings, The Drive, Maresfield, TN22 2HA.

To pay by Direct Bank Transfer: Sort Code 40-45-32 Account No 91457284
Please use ref: MCG Sub and your surname.

You may prefer to pay by Standing Order – forms are available on the website.

PROPOSED CHANGE TO OUR CONSTITUTION

Our current Constitution dates back to 2003 and a lot has changed in that time, so after a lot of discussion, a revised and updated version was drafted back in December 2019. The AGM will give you an opportunity to either agree or disagree with these changes. Please see enclosed flyer explaining this in more detail.

It is very important that you let us what you think so if you are unable to attend the AGM in person then please fill in our enclosed Proxy Voting Form and return to us in the stamped addressed envelope provided.

NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

If you would like to propose any member/s to sit on the Executive MCG Committee please fill in the enclosed Nomination Form and return in the enclosed stamped addressed envelope.

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Approval of Previous AGM Minutes
3. Matters Arising
4. Questions on Published Chairman's Report
5. Questions on Published Treasurers Report
6. Website & Membership – Stan Sadowski
7. Footpaths Group – John Smith
8. Future Projects & Plans – Pat Palmer
9. Election of Executive Committee
10. AOB (previously requested in writing)
11. Date of next AGM - TBA

DRAFT Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, 2 July 2019
Held at 7.30pm in Maresfield Village Hall

PP opened the meeting by paying tribute to Graham Altt and Ken Ogden, founder members of the Maresfield Conservation Group who will both be sadly missed. They remained great supporters of MCG and the Community and were always ready to address grass roots concerns. Condolences are sent to Jennifer, Betty and their families.

Present

The current Committee Members were introduced:

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]	

In attendance were:

Cathy Shaw, Jean Smith, Carole Wheeler, Adam Gibson-Brann, Jacqui Royal, Karen Tritton, Pat Bowler, Sheila Cumming, Bruce Milton, Jean Sallows, David Brown, Ann Thompson, Anthony Myers, Marion Myers, Dick Waterson, B Tarrant, Yvonne Minter, B Porter, W Porter, Ben Sear and Angie Welton.

PP welcomed those present. She advised that the objective was to make the meeting informative and enjoyable, and that, following the order of business, there would be several presentations. After the meeting Carole Wheeler will be serving teas, coffees and wine. PP reminded the group that only Members of the MCG can vote.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Nick & Sally Brown, Anne Seigne and Pat Langbridge.

2. Approval of the Previous AGM Minutes

The Minutes were proposed by Carole Wheeler, seconded by Cathy Shaw, and unanimously approved.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Questions on Published Chairman's Report

There were no questions.

Treasurer's Report [JS]

JS displayed the MCG Accounts for 2018-2019 which are also published in the AGM Newsletter in the format preferred by the Charities Commission. He advised that the accounts have been audited by an Independent Examiner. In summary, net receipts were £3,822.07 which included £2,193 from subscriptions, £374.19 from Gift Aid, a gift of £629.00 from Dick & Ann Thompson representing proceeds from the Plant Stall at the Maresfield Village Fete, and £337.37 raised by the MCG Quiz Night. Total expenditure was £2,784.72 giving a surplus of £1,037.35. Outgoing funds included £246.85 spent on administration (ink, paper, the AGM Report, and Village Hall/Pavilion hire), insurance costs of £407.06, and a £451.81 outlay on printing costs for the MCG Newsletters, and £124.21 spent on website hire. Village maintenance costs amounted to £1,487.21 which included restoration of the cemetery gate, replacement of the fence at Lampool Corner, and refurbishment of the signpost at The Chequers. However, these costs were offset by the £1,000 Parish Council Grant. A further £190.00 was spent on the Maresfield Christmas Tree, £369.00 on the projector, and £151.20 on the projector screen. In addition, the Footpaths Group spent £328.34 on petrol, equipment and refurbishment of the signs and stiles along the Millennium Walk. There were no questions.

Website & Membership [SS]

6.1. Website: SS introduced himself as the new Membership Secretary for 2019, and the current manager of the MCG website which has been in existence for circa 5 years. In 2018 the website was moved to a different platform and redesigned by Gemma Hallin to make it more user friendly. Encouragingly, between 30 November 2018 and 30 June 2019 the website was visited 625 times by 264 different users who looked at over 3,000 pages (an average of four pages per visit). This indicates that the MCG website is now reaching a wider audience. SS has further refined it since and gave a brief demonstration of the content of the website which now includes an 'About' page giving a history of

Maresfield (including links to the Maresfield Historical Society); an 'Our Activities' page outlining the work carried out by the MCG; an 'Events' page outlining forthcoming activities; 'Contact' and 'Membership' pages; and a 'Stay up-to-date' page which gives access to newsletters and committee meeting minutes. SS invited members to contact him with contributions, corrections, constructive criticism, complaints and compliments.

6.2. Membership: There are now 175 households who are members of MCG (an increase on the previous total of 167 households). The increase is partially due to the introduction in September 2018 of Welcome Notes delivered to incoming residents. Of the 27 delivered, 6 have resulted in new memberships. SS advised that, although standing order is the most efficient way to pay subscriptions, 75% of households do *not* use this method. This means that MCG is heavily reliant on the Collectors to collect subscription payments and deliver the MCG Newsletters three times a year. New Collectors are always welcome and should contact SS if they are willing to fulfil this vital function. SS also pointed out that 56 households (representing 32% of membership) have not signed Gift Aid forms (although he recognises that Gift Aid is only applicable to UK tax payers).

Update on Projects [IS]

7.1. Victorian Lights: IS advised that a year ago the MCG Committee decided to invest in a number of village projects. It was recognised that the three Victorian Lights (adjacent to the churchyard, the cemetery gate and The Rec) were in a terrible state of repair and, if not given some attention, were likely to be lost. This was initially expected to be an easy project, but complete refurbishment quotes returned at £2,000 per lamp. This was deemed to be excessive and instead IS opted to break the task down. He sourced a blacksmith who quoted £600 per light but electrical quotes proved more difficult to secure. However, an electrician has now been engaged and work on the lamps is due to start in August. The Victorian lamp at the churchyard is not electrified and a feasibility study is being carried out (with support from The Church) into potentially installing a solar powered unit.

7.2. Cemetery Gate: This lovely old Victorian gate was also in a poor condition and hanging from only one hinge. The MCG, supported by The Church, paid £750 to a local blacksmith who has done an excellent job of stripping, repairing and repainting the gate. Once the refurbished gate had been reinstalled, JS noted how scruffy the cemetery entrance had become and recruited the

Footpaths Group to lay new flagstones and sleepers to smarten up the area. *JS invited MCG members to advise the Committee of any new ideas for projects within the village.*

Footpaths Group [JS]

8.1. **Activities:** JS advised that, as ever, the main activities of the Footpaths Group [FG] have been community work including clearing footpaths, cutting back brambles, removing fallen trees, repairing styles, replacing fingerposts, and putting in steps on sloped areas within the forest. When ESCC Highways declined to replace the fencing at Lampool Corner, MCG picked up the bill. About half of the 11 fence posts were dug out by the FG in preparation for replacement, whilst the remainder were removed by the trainee officers from the Royal Corps of Signals during the Remembrance Weekend. FG have also been involved in replacing the boards on two of the footbridges in the Parish (reporting to ESCC each time). The FG are no longer allowed to repair the bridges but instead notify ESCC of any problems – on the back of which ESCC have already repaired the bridge at Lampool Edge. JS also contacted ESCC Highways about the fence on School Hill which the FG were willing to replace with a post and rail fence – ESCC declined. However, at Christmas they had a change of heart and repaired a small portion of the fence. Following representation from a concerned resident, ESCC have now agreed funding to replace the rest of the fence on School Hill. The Parish Council advised that the £1,000 grant covered Fairwarp and Nutley as well as Maresfield. Consequently, when the barriers adjacent to Fairwarp Village Hall were damaged by cyclists/riders, the FG were asked to replace them. In the end new barriers were sourced for free.

8.2. **Artistry:** The FG have steadily been refurbishing the six fingerposts within the Parish which are not the responsibility of ESCC. They started with the sign at The Chequers which was damaged, rotted and corroded. The overall cost of refurbishment for this signpost alone was £378 which included installation of new arms at a cost of £92, £200 for the joiner and new lettering at a cost of £85. The Parish Council paid for refurbishment of the remaining five fingerposts which totalled less than £70. They were each cleaned, the lichen was removed, the old paint scraped off and any holes were repaired. Rather than replacing the arms, supporting rackets were installed and a compound was used to harden the wood before it was repainted. The Parish Council have been advised that they should last for, at least, another couple of years but will then need to

be fully refurbished. Finally, the iron Fairwarp Village sign has been cleaned and repainted and the lettering has been highlighted in gold.

8.3. Rewards: JS reported that photographs of the work carried out by the FG found their way to ESCC Highways who subsequently awarded the FG a £500 grant. JS has also been alerted to an initiative called Community Match wherein ESCC will award grants matching money put into a project by the Community.

8.4. Future Projects: Permission from The Church will be required but the FG would like to repaint the churchyard gate. The gate was donated by men from the Officer Training Unit in Maresfield and should therefore be preserved. In addition, the bowbell milestones within the Parish (which are of historical interest) need to be stripped and repainted – JS suggested that the Historical Society may be able to pursue this.

Future Projects & Expenditure [PP]

9.1 PP reminded those present how lucky we are to live in such a beautiful village which has a number of services such as the village shop, a pub, the post office, Bonners School and Stepping Stones Pre-School, the Recreation Ground and play area, and various clubs within walking distance. There are a wide variety of village organisations, including MCG, which rely on volunteers. On behalf of MCG, PP thanked those people who help out on Clean-Up Days, who maintain the village planters, and who routinely help out with MCG events such as Quiz Night, the Winter and Summer Suppers, and the Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony. However, she appealed for more help particularly with collecting subscriptions (given the high percentage of members who don't use standing orders). She asked for members to provide email addresses where possible so that they can be used for communication and to advertise forthcoming events. There is also a vacancy for a new Minute Secretary to take the minutes at MCG Committee Meetings following the withdrawal of the previous incumbent due to work commitments. PP asked for volunteers to join the Footpaths Group, particularly anyone with skills such as joinery, painting or bricklaying who will be able to help with projects such as the refurbishment of the picnic tables at Bonners School. She added that there is still a need to recruit new membership to MCG, particularly younger people in order to ensure continuity. There are many skills within the Community and a lot can be achieved by working together. New ideas for worthwhile projects are always welcome, and the

current Committee Members are happy to consider initiatives that may not be conservation in the purest sense but will contribute to maintaining and preserving village life.

9.2 Finally, PP advised those present that the Committee Members had provided the wine available after the AGM. She sought, and was granted, permission to use MCG funds to provide wine for subsequent AGMs.

Election of the Executive Committee

PP advised that she had received no nomination forms. However, the existing members of the MCG Executive Committee had indicated that they are all prepared to continue in their current roles. This was unanimously approved, and the Executive Committee was duly elected.

11. Any Other Business

11.1. Anthony Myers thanked the Executive Committee Members for their dedication and professionalism, expressing the sentiment “we are very lucky to have you”.

11.2. PP reminded those present that the Summer Supper will be held on Saturday 13th July 2019 and tickets are still available. There will be a welcome drink in Ann & Dick Thompson’s garden followed by supper in the Village Hall.

The AGM closed at 8.47pm. The next Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday 7th July 2020.

CHAIRMANS REPORT

Chairman's Report MCG Annual General Meeting

Thursday 29th July 2021

OVERVIEW

Our last AGM was held two years ago on 2nd July 2019 and from then to July 2021 we have only had eight months of activity due to the Covid 19 restrictions. During this period we have tried to keep you all updated through writing a column in the Parish News magazine each month.

EVENTS

SUMMER SUPPER - this took place on Saturday 13th July '19. This was very enjoyable evening and really well attended. Not sure if it's going to be possible to hold it this year and hopefully this is something that we can look forward to in 2022!

COLLECTORS EVENING - June '19 was the last we held. The committee were disappointed at not being to meet up with our collectors in 2020 as this gives us the ideal opportunity for us to thank them for their support throughout the year.

CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING – evening lighting ceremony held on 7th December '19 with carol service, Father Christmas and free mince pies and mulled wine. The following year, Dec '20, we, once again, supplied and decorated a Christmas Tree but no lighting ceremony was held.

WINTER SUPPER – last held on Saturday 11th January '20. Very well attended and enjoyed by all. Obviously we were unable to hold it this year and it will now be 2022 before this event can be arranged.

VILLAGE CLEAN UP DAYS – held as normal October '19. Then March '20, Oct '20 and March '21 while observing the Covid 19 restrictions. Our thanks go to Sheila Cummings who continues to organise this event.

MCG QUIZ NIGHTS – held Saturday 14th March '20. This was final event just prior to the lockdown.

PROJECTS

CEMETERY ENTRANCE – By July '19 work to restrain the soil on either side of the newly paved area and to create a step leading up onto the grassed area had been completed, thanks to the members of our footpaths group.

BONNERS SCHOOL BENCHES – By July '19 work had begun on the children's wooden picnic benches which had been in need of restoration and repair.

By Sept `19 four had been completed and returned to the school. Also three new brightly multi coloured plastic benches had been donated. These will not require any maintenance other than wiping down occasionally and the children can enjoy these for many years to come.

VICTORIAN LAMPS- In August `19 we were expecting the work to begin on the restoration of the three Victorian lamps but were still waiting for a start date. Work eventually started late October. The restoration work was finally completed in January 2020 with the exception of the one in the church yard which still needed an electricity supply. This lamp was finally connected in August `20.

CHURCH NOTICE BOARD AND LYCHGATE – By Oct `19 we had cleared the notice board of Ivy and replaced the centre piece with marine ply, treated with wood preserver. The Lychgate was also cleared of Ivy and treated with a wood preserver.

WROUGHT IRON GATE – By Oct`19 we had received a quote for the restoration and repair. This gate is of historical interest being linked to the military presence in Maresfield Park during both World Wars and worthy of conservation for future generations.

NEW PLANTER – MCG supplied and positioned a new planter at the entrance to the Recreation Ground. We also supplied Sheila Cummings (Recreation Ground Committee Member) with spring flowering bulbs.

MCG NOTICE BOARD & SLEEPERS – in March `20 the MCG notice board outside the shop was refurbished and the crumbling, rotten sleepers retaining the garden area outside the shop were replaced with Oak hardwood sleepers.

MARESFIELD VILLAGE FETE – in March `20 funds held by the Fete Treasurer were transferred to the MCG account. These monies will be available to any new group/co-ordinator taking on the task of organising the village Fete.

These funds will be held for a three year period and, if no new group is formed then the fund will, on 1st Mach 2023, be distributed equally among MCG, Maresfield Village Hall, the Church and the Recreation Ground.

The shed, housing the Fete equipment, was inspected in early March `20 and found to be rat infested. Following the lockdown, other than putting poison down, work had to be suspended until later in the year. Eventually, the shed was cleared out and a new four inch (rat proof!) concrete floor was laid onto a waterproof membrane which should mean that the Fete equipment will be safe and sound for the next couple of years.

ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH PROJECT (Toilet, Kitchen and Meeting Room)

In May 2021 the committee agreed to make a financial contribution to the church refurbishment. A sum of £500 will be donated for use in the construction of the new facilities.

SPRING BULB PLANTING – November `19 MCG, with help from the Royal Signals, planted numerous daffodil bulbs at the entrance to the Recreation Ground, entrance to Forest Park and on Batts Bridge Road at the entrance to Wealden Bowls Club.

MISCELLANEOUS

School Hill Fencing- Aug `19. Upon being alerted to the deterioration of the fencing on this pathway and the subsequent risk to school children we contacted the highways department and by Sept`19 they had started the repairs required and was finally completed by end Oct/ Nov `19

Traffic Calming, School Hill – In Sept `19 the `pinch point` at the bottom of School Hill was considered by many to be a serious traffic hazard. MCG sent a letter to the Highway Department pointing out these concerns.

Cemetery Wall, School Hill – In Feb `21 MCG sent an email to Maresfield Parish Council, with a copy to Angie Welton, Church Administrator, voicing our concerns that this wall looked to be showing signs of deterioration and was in need of attention. The church has since arranged to have the wall looked at by a specialist builder and following this will take any appropriate action necessary.

FOOTPATHS GROUP

The Footpaths Group carry out extremely worthwhile work on the footpaths, stiles and bridges not only in Maresfield but also around the Parish and parts of Ashdown Forest. They have been unable to carry out this work since the lockdown started in March `20 through to April `21. I know just how frustrating this has been for all of them as they watched and waited for the restrictions to be lifted.

FUTURE PROJECTS/PLANS

Facilitating a Good Neighbour Scheme, proposed display board of historical sites around Maresfield, Bee Project to run in conjunction with Bonners School, Fish and Chip night and Race night.

Best wishes,
Pat Palmer,
Chairman

Maresfield Conservation Group (MCG)
Income and Expenditure account for the
Year to 31st March 2021

Bank Balances:	2020/21	2019/20
Start of year	£8,323.54	£8,997.92
End of year	£8,965.95	£8,323.54
Surplus/ Deficit	£ 642.41	£ 674.38

Income

Bank account interest	3.49	9.32
1840 books	0.00	20.00
Merchandise	56.50	21.00
Plant stall	178.0	634.00
Quiz Night	0.00	616.00
Summer Supper	0.00	850.00
Winter Supper	0.00	1,532.33
Subscriptions	2380.00	2,594.50
HMRC Charities (Gift Aid)	599.32	403.55
Village Maintenance grant	1,000.00	1,069.06
Donation		500.00

Total Income	4,217.31	8,249.76
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Expenditure

Admin	194.04	878.46
Christmas tree lighting	8.05	265.62
Donations	0.00	1,040.00
Footpaths Group	93.12	301.94
Insurance	407.36	407.33
Asset Purchase		93.54
Printing	100.77	470.00
Quiz night	0.00	267.14
Summer Supper	0.00	327.63
Winter Supper	0.00	1,543.31
Village planters	0.00	34.99
Village maintenance	2,609.56	3,169.97
Website costs	156.61	124.21
MVF Hut	5.39	
Total Expenditure	3574.90	8,924.14
Surplus/Deficit	642.41	674.38

**The Accounts have been signed off by our Independent Examiner
Gregor J. Smith B. A. M.Sc., FCCA
Signed copies can be examined at the AGM or on our Website.**

Notes:

1 Village Maintenance - £459.56 Churchyard light. £2150.00 Churchyard gate.

2 Footpaths – £23.44 Petrol and oil £26.12 Strimmer line. £43.56 Hedge-cutter repairs.

3 Village Fete Hut – £5.39 Mouse and Rat poison.

4 Contribution not recorded in the Financial Accounts – Valued at £1064 including VAT for the installation on 7/10/20 by East Sussex Highways (as part of their Social Value Provision) of a damp proofed concrete base to the MCG hut used to store the Village Fete equipment.

Maresfield Conservation Group

Treasurer's Report for year 1st April 2020 - 31st March 2021

This forms part of the Income and Expenditure Account for the year 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021 which is attached.

The year ended with a surplus of Income over Expenditure of £642.21 compared with the deficit of £674.38 in the previous year.

The balance of the accounts attributable to the Group is £8965.95 with a further £1925.09 held by the Group for Maresfield Village Fete Committee until a new Fete Committee is formed or, until 1st March 2023, when these funds will be shared with village organisations as previously agreed.

Income was almost halved at £4217.31 when compared with last year at £8249.76. This was due, unsurprisingly, to the effects of lockdown. No Winter Supper, no Summer Supper, no Quiz Night, no Village fete and therefore no income from the Plant Stall and a small reduction in subscriptions. Even without the Plant Stall Ann Thompson managed to sell some plants and, very generously, made a contribution of £178.

Expenditure - This area probably shows the greatest effect of the various lockdowns with expenditure of £3574.90. Less than half of the previous year £8924.14. Again the lack of social gathering plays a large part as there were no expenses for Winter Supper, Summer Supper or Quiz Night. The Committee thanks Mr and Mrs Cox for the very generous donation of the village Christmas Tree.

The notes to the accounts provide details of the larger, and unusual, items of expenditure.

The Committee again thanks Mr Gregor Smith for his detailed examination of the accounts and for signing them off ready for submission to the Members and to the Charity Commissioners.

John M. Smith Treasurer

MARESFIELD CONSERVATION GROUP

Executive Committee

Dick Thompson President Tel: 763179

Pat Palmer Chairman
Tel: 764804 Email: tricia.wild@googlemail.com

John Smith Treasurer
Tel: 714683 Email: john_mcg_smith@hotmail.com

Stan Sadowski Membership Secretary/ Website Master
Tel: 762933 Email: stansadowski4@gmail.com

Alexis Clarke Committee member (acting Minute Secretary)
Tel: 762545

Jacqui Royal Committee member

Rob Penfold Committee member Tel: 01825 508533

Ian Shaw Committee member Tel: 765985

The Committee usually holds meetings on the first or second Wednesday of each month.

To contact please either email or telephone any of the above.

For further details please see our website

maresfieldconservationgroup.org