

MARESFIELD CONSERVATION GROUP

Annual Report 2017

Throughout the year the Conservation Group has been active in maintaining the village to improve its appearance and amenity. There have been further changes to the Committee with John Smith joining as Treasurer on the resignation of Roger Wilmer and Gemma Hallin replacing Pat Palmer.

The Footpaths Group have continued to attend to the paths within the village and repair stiles and gates on the Rights of Way footpaths. Following the work on the verge near Lampool Corner it was seeded and in the autumn bulbs were planted. Recently there has been further planting and seeding for wild flowers to become established. Also in the autumn extensive work was carried out on the Rabbitty Lane footpath where muddy conditions at certain times made passing very difficult. When this was completed the footpath from the A22 end of Rabbitty Lane to the underpass was reinstated which now provides a circular route without having to cross the A22.

In June 2016 MCG purchased and erected three planters at the entrances to the village and these have been maintained by MCG members. Last summer they had annual flowers and then in the autumn bulbs and winter flowers were planted. A flower bed at the Church Car Park was also created to brighten up this area. These are all in addition to the wooden flower tubs on School Hill and Batts Bridge Road.

Last year a donation was made to Maresfield Village Hall to assist with the replacing of roof tiling on the old part of the hall. The lunch club received a donation towards replacing the fridge. There was also a donation to the Church to assist with the cost of grass cutting at the School Hill graveyard.

In October and March MCG organised Village Clean-up Days when vast quantities of litter was collected despite several members giving of their time to collect litter on an ongoing basis. This year the Group registered with the Great British Spring Clean which was a national initiative organised by Keep Britain Tidy.

For several years East Sussex County Council has made a contribution to MCG towards grass cutting in the village. In April 2016 there were changes to the

contract and from April 2017 there were numerous further changes to the terms and conditions. After much consideration the decision was taken to terminate MCG being responsible for grass cutting and pass it back to ESCC. The new contract increases the frequency of grass cutting which hopefully will be to the benefit of the village.

Fund raising events have been held during the year. Thanks go to Ann Thompson for a generous donation from her very successful plant stall at the Fete. In July the Summer Supper was held, then in January the Winter Supper, followed in March by a very well attended Quiz Night.

Early December saw the village Christmas Tree erected along with the Lighting of the Christmas Tree service. As in recent years this was followed by mince pies and mulled wine. To assist with safety at the event, the roads were again closed for its duration. The event including the tree and lights is mainly funded by MCG and this year included the cost of the purchase of road signs.

Since August 2015 MCG has been very concerned about the condition of the white rails on High Street, around the corner of the pavement adjacent to the church wall. There was no response from East Sussex Council until August 2016. After inspection and consultation with ESCC Highways it became apparent that removal or replacement was necessary. MCG wished to replace the posts and rails with wood again but this was rejected by ESCC. Following further consultation ESCC agreed to replace the existing posts and rails with white posts that conform to current safety requirements. Initially MCG were going to have to fund this project with some assistance from Maresfield Parish Council. However the new white posts will now be funded and maintained by ESCC. Although they will not look exactly the same there was no option but to accept this, as the alternative was for ESCC to remove the posts and rails completely without any replacement.

In the autumn, after the Play Area at the Recreation ground was completely refurbished, the MCG provided a picnic table within the Play Area. Sadly in April this was wrecked by vandals. A decision has not yet been made on a suitable replacement.

MCG received an approach in early April from Maresfield Village Meadows Trust to merge which is an item on the Agenda at the forthcoming AGM.

The MCG Trustees are very conscious of using funds that it has raised to benefit the quality of life of the community of Maresfield. Your continued support of the Group is greatly appreciated. The Committee would thank all of those in the village who have assisted both with the raising of funds and undertaking voluntary work with the various projects.

SHEILA CUMMING

Chairman, Maresfield Conservation Group

www.maresfieldconservationgroup.co.uk