

Minutes of the  
FIRST GENERAL MEETING OF THE  
M A R E S F I E L D   C O N S E R V A T I O N   G R O U P

at the Village Hall, Maresfield, on Wednesday,  
July 10th, 1991, at 7.45 p.m.

1. OPENING REMARKS The Meeting was opened by Mr. Allt after those who had gathered (some 50-60 persons) had taken some refreshment. He pointed out that copies of the draft constitution were to be found distributed round the hall. This was to give everyone an opportunity to read the aims and see what the Group was about. He would shortly give a report on what the Steering Committee had been doing.

Mr. Allt said that this meeting resulted from the original public meeting of May 22nd this year, set up to take action on behalf of many in Maresfield who felt that their wishes were not being represented. The aim of this meeting is to report back to you on what we have done and what we intend to do in the future.

There are two questions Mr. Allt suggested we should ask ourselves:

- (a) Do I approve of what the Steering Committee has done? - and
- (b) If so, am I happy to give the Group my support?

He said that everyone would have an opportunity to speak later in the meeting, but this would be restricted to those who live in Maresfield. We are very happy to have visitors with us tonight, but on this occasion we would like to hear only from those resident in the village. Should you so wish, the file of correspondence on current issues, with chronological reference notes, is available for you to see.

2. REPORT BY ACTING CHAIRMAN Coming to the issues mentioned on the agenda,

(a) the Millpond Depot Waste Disposal site was the first item. The facts on this matter could be verified from the file. This project had been approved by E.S.C.C. against the advice of Maresfield Parish, Buxted Parish Council and Wealden District Council: against all this opposition, the E.S.C.C. has granted itself permission for the scheme to proceed. The creation of this waste disposal unit will be against the wishes of the Councils and contrary to the stated desire that there should be no development except in designated areas. This creates a precedent: soon we shall find developments appearing all along both sides of the Ringles Cross to Budletts road.

On the Millpond Depot site, portacabins have been erected: planning permission is required for this. The District Planning Office admits that there is no record of any planning permission having been requested. They have, therefore, been breaking the law.

Footpath 64 crosses the Depot site. The E.S.C.C. is making application for the permanent closure of this footpath in order to start the project.

Yesterday afternoon, Mr. Allt had a meeting with an officer from the East Sussex Traffic Department. He was given a map of the 9 accidents that had been recorded at the Budletts roundabout during the period June 1986 to July 1991. In discussion with this officer, Mr. Allt said that he presumed that the Department had been asked to present their considered views at the time on the Millpond project, but the answer was "no". "Are you sure?". "We are never consulted to provide such information". Mr. Allt said that, as a soldier, when he made a plan, all factors had to be taken into account; if not, the plan was useless. How can you make a decision regarding a development when not all the factors have been considered? It is apparent to a number of us that there has been a large degree of inefficiency and maladministration. We intend to submit this case to the Ombudsman.

(b) Motocross This last weekend was a particularly bad time for us all since there was a meeting on both Saturday and Sunday. It was difficult to believe that some official had given permission for this to take place. Many people complained to the police and others to the Emergency line of the Environmental Health Officer. If still more wished to complain, would they please write to:

Mr. R.W. Crouch,  
Senior District Environmental Health Officer  
W.D.C Offices, Vicarage Lane,  
Hailsham, BN27 2AX.

This may be the tip of the iceberg - the petrol station, then the Little Chef, etc. Maresfield will end up like Crawley.

(c) Speeding Through Village

At present the traffic lights for public work control the speed on the Batts Bridge Road. However, speeding past the school and recreation ground is increasing. Following a letter to Mr. Birch, the Chief Constable, the Police had reacted very quickly. The Police are to be congratulated on the speedy and helpful response they have given to our request.



There are two speed limits, 30 m.p.h. and 20 m.p.h. If you come down to these limits, you will find a great queue of cars behind you - people will soon get tired of these limits and avoid the village altogether. The answer is in your hands!

(d) Three years ago, a case was put up to E.S.C.C. regarding the track outside Flitterbanks Farm. The file is here and it is still current. This matter has for the last year been with the Department of the Environment for their consideration. On June 26th, 1991, a letter was received from the County Secretary's office. Mr. Allt received a list of all those present at the vote, but when requesting information on how they voted he was told that no record had been kept. What is the good of voting for Councillors if we are not able to find out how they vote. This is inefficiency in my book and I think that this may be another case where the Ombudsman should be consulted. Why are we not allowed to know how the County Councillors vote?

(e) Future Developments Having our ears to the ground should help us to prepare ourselves for early discussion. Another roundabout is to be built at the entrance to the Army Camp on the A.272. The Police were not consulted about this. Why, when the Maresfield By-Pass was planned did E.S.C.C. not use their sense and take into consideration the extra traffic that would be coming out of the Maresfield Camp area? Another entrance/exit is to be made to the gypsy encampment.

3. ACCEPTANCE OF DRAFT CONSTITUTION We have had to start somewhere. Mr. Allt hoped that most people had already had a chance to look at the draft. There may be some flaws and we have taken outside advice, but it is not written in stone and can be amended in the future. The main aim was to keep it simple and clear-cut: this, I think, we have achieved. Mr. Allt asked for a proposer and seconder. Mr. Harry Bruford proposed that the Constitution should be adopted, and this was duly carried by a unanimous show of hands.

4. ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS All the Steering Group have been working away for your benefit. We have a constitution; now we need a Committee.

We will start with nominations for Chairman. Mr. Ogden nominated Mr. Allt, this was seconded by Mr. Bruford. There was a unanimous vote in favour of Mr. Allt acting as Chairman of the Group.

Peter Selby nominated Mrs. Shipsey as Secretary, and this was seconded by Mr. Thorogood. Mrs. Ransom (nominated

by Liz Cordray and seconded by Sally Bennett) and Mr. Sallows (nominated by Judy Shipsey and seconded by Mr. Allt) were nominated for the post of Treasurer. A vote was taken and Mrs. Ransom won by 31-16.

Mr. P. Selby wondered whether a single nomination for the existing committee members would save time. After discussion, this was passed unanimously. The new members are as follows:

Mr. M. Batchelor	Mrs. M. Maynard
Mr. H. Bruford	Mr. A. Sallows
Mr. G. Harriss	Mr. P. Selby
Mr. K. Ogden	Mr. A. Schmid
	Mr. D. Thompson.

It was asked whether there were any further nominations from the floor. No other nominations were received from those present.

5. MATTERS PARISH RESIDENTS MAY WISH TO RAISE

Mr. Vernon Joyner of Tanyard Farm, Underhill, asked whether it was a fact that nothing could happen on the waste disposal site until the public footpath had been stopped up. Mr. Allt said that this was so, and that whether we wanted the development or not, the method by which planning permission had been granted to the E.S.C.C. by themselves was not acceptable. This is why we intend to go to the Ombudsman (whom we are able to approach as an individual organisation): the County Council were acting against the wishes of the people. The main point is that the footpath is there and we all have the right to use it: no-one has the right to take it away from us - it is on the definitive map. If we go to the Ombudsman, we make a case for mal-administration - it is understood that the Parish Council is unable to act for us. If there are any other ideas on this matter we should like to hear them.

A copy of a letter from the Chief Executive of the E.S.C.C. to Sir G. Johnson Smith admitted obstruction to Footpath 64 and admits infringement. Basically, again, this is maladministration. The Highway Authority have a duty to keep these routes open throughout the County.

Mrs. Maynard intervened to stress that it is not just the question of calling a halt to the blocking of the footpath; it is vital that our objections to the closure of this footpath are made known so that the County Council cannot go ahead with the waste disposal scheme. We still have a chance for objections to be heard against the closure; it is a question of principle.



Mr. Batchelor wished to clarify a point. Plans are under foot for the E.S. Highways and Traffic Department to build a steel barn to cover the rock salt, for which they will grant themselves planning permission (similar barns can be seen at Ringmer). These are large constructions, high enough to take the tipper lorries.

Mr. Relevitch, The Paddock, asked whether the new roundabout would be a mini-roundabout? Mr. Allt said that we would try to find out more about it.

Mrs. Powell, Queen's Drive, said that the roundabout was already marked out. This was known about before the By-Pass was built. It also appeared as planning permission three weeks ago in the papers. Road safety is one of the factors to be considered and close liaison with the police is required.

Mr. Henning, The Paddock, spoke of a development near the Wealden Sports Centre. Apparently the plan has twice as many houses as The Paddock. This will have an adverse effect on conservation in this area. It will increase the number of cars - there will not be space for garages, etc. This type of development is an attempt to use the minimum amount of land to create the largest financial benefit in an area of 2 1/2 acres.

Mr. Ken Hall, Westworth House, Queen's Drive, wanted to hear the views of the Committee on the state of the water in Normans Pond. The gist of his complaint was that the water feed from one field to another was causing great problems and that everyone wished the pond (used by anglers) to be returned to its state prior to the building of the by-pass. A question of putting a Conservation Order on some oak trees that were at risk in remedying this scheme was mentioned.

Mr. McCord, Maresfield Park, said that, if advised, the Conservation Officer of E.S.C.C. could make a call to the site.

Mr. Inman told the meeting that it was not possible to get water from Mr. Grover's Pond. When the fish were removed for the building of the by-pass, the pond was supposed to be returned to its former state so that fishing could take place again. When they dug the by-pass the top soil was removed. Now all the area is covered in sandstone, which of course allows the water to filter away in a few days. The Angling Club has spent over £1800 "messaging about" between Councils and is still not getting anywhere.

6. CONCLUSION Mr. Allt asked whether those present approved of what is being done and what has been done, and whether they approved of the Maresfield Conservation Group being set up. If it is to be successful, it must have support and impetus. We cannot, however, do it all by ourselves: we need membership and subscription. If you know of others who were unable to attend, could you please take forms to give to them if you think they would be interested. We hope that the Group will become part of village life. If it is unsuccessful, it is because we do not care sufficiently about our own environment.

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