

Maresfield Conservation Group

DRAFT Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee 12th December 2018

Held at 7.30pm at Newham Cottage

Present

Pat Palmer, Chairman [PP]

John Smith, Treasurer [JS]

Rob Penfold, Membership Secretary [RP]

Alex Clarke, Member [AC]

Stan Sadowski, Member [SS]

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 7th November 2018

It was noted that paragraph 4.3 should say that milestone 39 is in Danehill not Newick, and the Parish has the longest succession of milestones in East Sussex (not in the country as previously stated). Further to the Minutes of 3rd October 2018, Ann Thompson and Alex Bury now maintain the planters at the Village Hall. Subject to these amendments, the Minutes were unanimously approved. To assist the Committee in future, it was agreed that AC will issue a list of the Action Points raised during the meetings in advance of receipt of the full draft Minutes.

4. Matters Arising

4.1 **MCG Website:** Further to the previous Minutes at paragraph 7.2, PP enquired as to whether Gemma Hallin's name has now been removed from the bottom of the welcome letter.

AP1: SS to ensure that Gemma Hallin's name is removed from the bottom of the MCG Welcome Letter

4.2 **Fencing:** Following a query from PP, JS was happy to report that the branches at Parklands had been chopped up and disposed of that morning. PP asked whether MCG should approach ESCC

with a view to tendering for the job of replacing the fencing along School Hill. JS proposed holding off due to the potential insurance implications, and the fact that ESCC may insist on using their own contractor at vast expense. The fencing may be improved once the new houses at Orchard Place have been completed.

- 4.3 **Christmas Tree Lighting:** IS advised he is currently in possession of the Advanced Road Closure Notices required for the Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony, and will retain them for use in 2019.

5. Chairman's Report [PP]

The Chairman's Report is appended to the Minutes. It was agreed that it is not necessary to separately list the Chairman's Report as the items are covered during the meeting and PP's Meeting Notes.

6. Treasurer's Report

- 6.1 **Income & Expenditure:** JS handed round copies of the Income & Expenditure Summary and asked Committee Members to bring the previous months summary to future meetings for comparative purposes. He advised that there is £190 to be added to the accounts consisting of £100 for the purchase of the Christmas Tree, £40 for the mince pies and the £50 donation to the Choir.
- 6.2 **Subscriptions:** Subscriptions have risen but JS is still awaiting the receipts from David Bailey. PP asked whose job it is to chase outstanding subscriptions, and was informed that Sheila Cumming previously dealt with it. RP noted that his Membership records don't tally with JS' summary – RP is only aware of payments totalling £1,191 whereas JS has recorded a total of £1,799.

AP2: JS and RP to meet to compare the membership payments against the membership list to ensure that the records are up-to-date.

7. Website Update

- 7.1 SS advised that the MCG Website improvements are now complete. The content has been rearranged and he is happy with the new format. Google Analytics is now working so SS will be able to monitor website usage. Between 8th November – 7th December there were 160 visits by 43 individual users, including one in Sweden and another in Florence, Italy. Between them, they clicked on 1,043 separate pages of the website. Whilst this is encouraging, there is still a need to further publicise the website. RP asked whether the website details could be added to the bottom of all hardcopy material sent out (e.g. the Winter Supper booking form). A query was also raised as to whether the website details should appear on the new Recreation Ground sign.

AP3: Committee Members to review the new and improved MCG website and pass any constructive comments to SS.

AP4: RP to ask Rob Taylor to ensure that the details of the MCG Website are added to the new Recreating Ground sign.

- 7.2 SS said that there is further scope for development in the History section, although he has already inserted the milestone article. SS will talk to Cerys Jenkins to see if the Historical Society,

who use the MCG Website, want to update their section. PP thanked SS for doing such a brilliant job of updating the website.

- 7.3 PP then pointed out that it is important for Maresfield residents to know the situation with the Footpaths Group [FG]. The FG receive an annual grant from the Parish Council to carry out work in the whole Parish, not just in Maresfield, and operate in Nutley and Fairwarp as well. PP was keen to raise this at the next AGM, but RP also suggested it will be useful to include it in the next MCG newsletter. JS also pointed out that any funding provided to the FG by MCG will only be used to carry out work within Maresfield – it is important to maintain a distinction between the Parish Council funding and the MCG funding. PP asked whether they should seek volunteers from Fairwarp and Nutley to assist the FG, but JS responded that the current 6 members work really well as a team and it will be difficult to manage any more people.

AP5: JS to write an article about the work of the FG for inclusion in the next MCG Newsletter and the February edition of the Parish Magazine.

- 7.4 JS then advised that MCG will not need to rust proof and paint the cast iron milestones because someone in Uckfield has a contract to carry out the works. That releases the FG to clean and paint the Parish fingerposts, including the one outside The Chequers. ESCC have advised that they won't replace them, but the Parish Council have agreed to fund the cost of any necessary refurbishment. The FG will start the work in mid-January. SS asked for photographs for inclusion on the website.

AP6: JS and the Footpaths Group to undertake refurbishment work on the fingerpost signs within the Parish, and to provide SS with before and after photographs.

8. Victorian Lamps

IS reported that there has been no progress as it has proved difficult getting craftspeople to provide quotes for the job. It is quite an involved process as the lamps will need to be disconnected from the electrical supply, sandblasted, repaired, repainted and then reinstalled. PP noted that the initial quote from the blacksmith DW Tester seemed quite reasonable, although obviously he will not deal with the electrical aspects. She proposed obtaining further quotes from electricians to deal with disconnection/connection. There is a group called Trust in Blue comprised of retired policemen who carry out electrical work – local people who do local jobs. JS added that Graham Altt has retrieved from KO the lights bought to illuminate the churchyard which he suggests selling to raise money to put towards the refurbishment of the Victorian Lights.

AP7: IS to approach electricians including Eagle Electrics to obtain quotations for the disconnection and reconnection of the Victorian Lamps.

9. Cemetery Gates

IS passed round copies of a report prepared by Rob Taylor on the condition of the cemetery gates. The repair will not be galvanised, but would be expected to last for at least 20 years. The current quotation is £600 - £650, but that is for a basic job and may be subject to change if more work becomes evident once the paint has been stripped off. JS thinks that will be the case as the vertical bars are very corroded.

AP8: IS to send Rob Taylor's report to Angie Whelton so that a decision can be made as to whether the Church will agree that MCG can carry out the necessary refurbishment of the cemetery gates.

10. Membership Update

10.1 RP reported that 175 households belong to MCG, and SS has been recruiting further members. RP just needs to know what subscriptions they have paid for his records. He is currently awaiting details from a number of Collectors, but may not be in possession of all the relevant information since JS seems to have more up-to-date details. RP noted that all Collectors have their own tried and tested method for dealing with their members and the collection of the annual subscriptions.

AP9: After meeting with JS to collate their figures, RP to contact the Collectors to discuss any outstanding payments.

10.2 There was then a discussion about whether email addresses are held for all MCG members – SS noted that members subscribing to Gift Aid will probably have provided those details. JS also said that it would help to reconcile the accounts if members paid by standing order. The newer members seem happy to do this, although he appreciated that not everyone likes that method.

10.3 SS has so far delivered 15 Welcome Letters which has generated 4 new members (a 27% success rate). It was therefore agreed that the Welcome Letter initiative should continue.

11. Winter Supper

PP said that 28 people have already booked and paid for Winter Supper tickets – Carole Wheeler is holding onto the cheques until after Christmas. More ticket sales are expected up to a maximum of 80. It is likely that tables of 8 or 10 will be set up containing a mix of people. Posters are up and the event has been advertised in the January Church Magazine. Lesley Wilmer will be doing the table centre pieces and has suggested a Winter Wonderland theme. She will supply the containers, will use branches from the Christmas Tree, and will therefore only charge for the flowers. The Committee expressed their appreciation. IS will organise the raffle, and it was agreed that, as well as donations, circa £50 expenditure on raffle prizes will be acceptable. SS will provide the computerised number selector. IS proposed putting a flyer advertising the MCG Quiz Night on each table, and this was supported.

12. Newsletter

PP is intending to start preparations for the newsletter over the Christmas period. There are 2 ½ pages to fill and she intends to include sections on the MCG website, membership, the Welcome Pack, the Footpaths Group, and Projects carried out to date. She invited written contributions which can be edited if necessary. AC offered to assist PP in preparing the newsletter. It needs to be completed by 11th January to allow for printing prior to distribution to the members in early February.

AP10: All written contributions to the MCG newsletter to be submitted to PP as soon as possible (before 4th January 2019).

13. Christmas Tree Review & Update

- 13.1 PP said that the Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony went very well, and the atmosphere in the Church afterwards was lovely. She congratulated RP on his organisation and co-ordination skills. DT also offered his thanks to all those involved in erecting the tree under atrocious weather conditions. Arrangements for 2019 will depend upon whether The Lodge is available as a site for the Christmas Tree. The date is likely to be 7th December.

AP11: JS to look into sourcing high-viz tabards/T-shirts with the MCG logo for use during MCG events.

- 13.2 PP said that the 30-strong choir were well received and have already said they will be happy to come next year. She may also ask the Heathfield Silver Band if they are available to play during the pre-ceremony period. RP said that there have been learning points regarding, for instance, the location of the PA system (which PP is looking into). It may be that mulled wine will need to be served in the Church and in a gazebo outside to reduce congestion. Jingle bells also needs to be sung to herald the arrival of Father Christmas. PP also suggested holding a Christmas Tree event similar to the one held at Holy Cross Church in Uckfield.

AP12: PP to discuss with Angie Whelton the feasibility of holding a 3-day Christmas Tree Festival in St Bartholomew's Church in the lead up to the Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony.

14. Any Other Business

- 14.1 DT raised the subject of the article in the Church Magazine which dealt with a proposal to use Site A (the land south of the Church) as a graveyard now that Rydon Homes are not proceeding with the Wellington Gate development. DT is not in favour – he believes that the land should be used as an extension to The Rec. It was agreed that MCG should not get involved in the discussion, but Committee members individually were free to express their views. There are three villages in the Parish that could potentially accommodate a new graveyard. It was agreed that a special meeting will be held in the New Year to discuss the proposal with a view to deciding whether it should be put to the membership at an EGM.

AP13: PP to convene a special meeting in the New Year to discuss the proposal to create a graveyard on Site A.

- 14.2 PP said that there is due to be a refurbishment of the Play Area in Parklands, but it has proved difficult to access any relevant material.

- 14.3 Martin Craddock, Chairman of the Parish Council, has put an article in the Parish Magazine about grass cutting, which PP read out. It was agreed that MCG need to establish whether the Parish Council are undertaking to pay for two additional cuts during 2019 because if only one is planned, MCG will undertake to fund the second additional cut.

- 14.4 ***AP14: PP to write to the Parish Council seeking an assurance that the Parish Council will fund two additional grass cuts to bring the annual total to 6.***

The meeting closed at 9.30pm. The date of the next meeting is to be advised.