

MARESFIELD CONSERVATION GROUP

Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee

Held at 7.00pm on Wednesday 14th April 2021 at Alpines, High Street, Maresfield.

Present:

Pat Palmer (PP)

Rob Penfold (RP)

Alex Clarke (AC)

John Smith (JS)

Ian Shaw (IS)

Jacqui Royal (JR)

1. APOLOGIES

There were apologies from Dick Thompson and Stan Sadowski.

Stephanie Bassett – Minute Secretary

2. DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES DATED 5th October 2020

It was agreed that the Minutes be adopted.

4. MATTERS ARISING

- Proposed display board of historical sites around Maresfield. This will be a long-term project and discussion followed on the eventual location of the map (i.e. Church or Rec. Ground car parks, Chequers). **RP to investigate finding an artist and costs etc.**
- Proposed railings at Recreation Ground **PP to c/f to next meeting**

5. TREASURER'S REPORT-JS

The Accounts for the year to 31st March 2021 have been audited and approved and are now published on the Group website.

The Annual Report will be provided to the Charity Commissioners and the Gift Aid Claim in respect of members' subscriptions submitted to HMRC.

During May we will again receive a generous grant from Maresfield Parish Council that will assist us with the various projects to be undertaken during the next year.

6. MEMBERSHIP and WEBSITE - SS

Membership

By 31 March, we had 140 paid up member households as compared with 184 members same time as last year. I assume that there are a variety of explanations for the 44 "missing" members such as died or moved, but I expect that most of them just did not get round to doing the necessary to pay their subs. I expect/hope that many of them will pay up this year if a collector calls in person.

I suggest that we should plan on asking collectors to do their rounds as usual later this year, providing that they only go collecting if they have had both vaccinations and at least 21 days since the 2nd and that they wear masks and observe social distancing.

Since 1 April we already have at least 2 paid up members for the current year. You've got to start somewhere.

Website

Odd bits of routine maintenance and updating have been carried out, but nothing dramatic. In the year 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020 the website was visited 895 times by 470 different users. From 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021 the site was visited 819 times by 589 different users. We have had at least 2 new members who have joined by using forms downloaded from the site.

Email

We now have 87 members email addresses and GDPR sanction from those members. These addresses have been used quite frequently for distributing Coronavirus information from various authorities and now and again for other purposes.

7. CHAIRS FOR PAVILION REFURBISHMENT

PP reported that on speaking with Laura Stevens, Parish Councillor, they are looking at comfortable, sturdy, washable chairs suitable for outside and indoor. We will wait to hear back from the Recreation Ground Committee/The Parish Council before a final decision is made as to the amount MCG will donate towards the costs.

AP1 - PP to keep committee updated and c/f to next meeting

8. MARESFIELD IN BLOOM

During March PP and AC walked around the village in order to identify areas that could be used by MCG to contribute to the Maresfield in Bloom day being organised by the church.

Several possible areas were discussed and three sites were agreed:

- By the shop where the Maresfield sign stands, it looks as if we could hang two baskets from the lower ironwork of the sign.
- The two fences by the Chequers at the top of the slope to Underhill could have standing planters or planters hung from the fence.
- A planter at the bus shelter at Lampool corner

AP2 PP to request donations of planters and baskets in the May issue of the Parish Ne

9. AGM

It is not possible to arrange anything at this time. **AP3 – PP c/f to next meeting.**

10. FUTURE PLANS

The proposed Maresfield Good Neighbour Scheme is to be held in abeyance until later this year.

11. FOOTPATHS GROUP

Following the graduated relaxation of national lockdown restrictions similar relaxation has been applied to the earlier blanket ban on any voluntary footpaths work. From late March we have been permitted to carry out clearance work but no construction / repairs are allowed.

Our first outing was 5th April when six fallen trees were cleared on five footpaths

On 7th April activities were restricted to Maresfield Village with the village 'gates' and traffic signs being given a much-needed wash down and inspection for future repairs and painting.

14th April these activities were extended to the wider Parish area and required repairs and painting work has been listed.

21st April we will be back on forest footpaths clearing growth and fallen trees.

12. AOB

- Park Farm Gate – following the purchase and fencing around land on footpath by Wellington Gate and the loss of the original gate. Several residents have had concerns regarding the future use of the roadway leading from the entrance to the recreation ground down towards the bridge under the A22. PP received a message from Laura Stevens (local parish councillor) confirming that Sigma, the building developers, will not be using the Park Farm lane access for any works traffic.
- Fete Shed – Only a small amount of Stoolball equipment remains in the shed. Alternative storage is being sought by the Stoolball club.
- Venue for MCG Executive meetings – It was agreed that some members of the committee would share hosting meetings in the foreseeable future.
- Cemetery Wall – church have advised they are seeking advice from a professional structural engineer regarding any work, if any, needed to maintain the wall in good repair.
- ‘Pop In’ – It was suggested that the Pavilion could be used for a weekly ‘Pop In’ morning. MCG have approached the Parish Council and they will discuss this idea at their next meeting and get back to us.
- Litter on Recreation Ground – This has been a real problem of late with bins being upended by, we assume, foxes. Dog walkers have reported regularly seeing lots of fast food and packaging strewn around the park.

We feel that the bins on the rec are not fit for purpose. They are too small and are subject to attack from vermin, foxes and seagulls.

We are given to understand that there are fox proof bins in existence and that Bifa, who currently hold the contract, will be able to supply these if the appropriate request is made.

Apparently the current proposal to stake the bin adjacent to the road will not rectify the problem as the vermin can still get in and spread the contents all over the rec.

MCG will be emailing Maresfield Parish Council regarding this particular problem as the current situation poses a health risk to humans and their pets and needs to be rectified as soon as possible. **AP4 – PP to email MPC**

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – TBA

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.