

# **MARESFIELD CONSERVATION GROUP - DRAFT**

## **Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive Committee**

**Held at 7.00pm on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2025 at The Chequers, Maresfield**

### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

Jo Lawrance (JL)	Chair
Terence Brady (TB)	Treasurer
Richard Wane (RW)	Secretary
Bruce Milton (BM)	
Tom Merchant (TM)	
Caroline Shaw (CS)	
Tracie Coe (TC)	
Stephany Reed-Perkins (SRP)	

**PRESENT:** RW, BM, TC, TM, TB, CS (a quorum of at least 4 Trustees was achieved)

**APOLOGIES:** JL, SRP

**ALSO ATTENDING:** Izabela Kennedy (IK), Jeremy Hendy (JH), Jane Hendy, Graham Shaw (GS)

## **1. GUEST DISCUSSIONS**

### **Bio-Diversity Survey**

RW introduced professional ecologist IK and noted from earlier messages with the Committee that IK had been contacted with a view to possibly assisting MCG in undertaking a bio-diversity survey. IK has completed an initial walk around some of Maresfield with RW and GS, following public footpaths around some of the current Maresfield Conservation Area and beyond.

IK noted that from the initial walk she can see the area has some varied habitat, including evidence of a possible previous survey for dormice. She noted that any survey covering private land would need the permission of the landowner. Also that some of the land near the church has been designated a local wildlife site.

IK outlined that she could describe the chosen habitat, map it and conduct wildlife, bird and butterfly surveys – perhaps making use of the existing report data obtained.

The Committee noted that a survey could be of assistance as input for planning situations but also more broadly of interest to Maresfield residents and encourage further interest in the village area. This might perhaps include seeking to involve residents in a 'check your garden' exercise. IK noted that other records may also be available to add to the survey – like birdwatching records at the Sussex Ornithological Society for example.

The Committee discussed possible areas to consider and also timing. Typically habitat and breeding surveys would be best done in Spring into Summer.

It was agreed that:

- The initial survey area (phase 1) could cover the Recreation Ground and the public footpaths leading out of the Conservation Area and beyond, down to the A22 and across to Powder Mills (subject to the prior permission of the owner).
- Once we have a base document, a later survey might include (phase 2) a 'check your garden' exercise and other land areas of the wider Maresfield area.
- We will ask IK to provide us with an outline of the assessment she could undertake together (as specifically noted by TB) with an estimate of the cost and confirmation of her background.

**AP1: BM will ask permission of the Powder Mill landowners for access beyond the footpath**

**AP2: RW will further check the data received and follow up to see whether any further information can be provided (e.g. in relation to dormice)**

**AP3: RW will follow-up with IK to ask for a draft ecological assessment proposal, a statement of her experience and some estimated costs guidance.**

## **History Project**

JH updated the Committee on the back of his email of earlier in the day covering progress in setting up an MCG historical information site. BM had handed over a number of items donated to MCG by the Maresfield Historical Society (MHS) and MH is sorting through them. JH had also provided some wording to help us with a submitted Parish Council grant application for the project, which RW noted had been made.

JH further noted that the work may take a further 15-20 days in total and expected costs for IT support might be in the region of £200 for the first year and less thereafter but these are to be finally determined.

In discussion with TM it was agreed that the history information would be set up on a separate website. The domain is to be determined and JH will register that to MCG.

JH recommended that we take down the wording referencing MHS on the MCG website and perhaps had a look at the programmes of other neighbouring historical societies.

JH requested an electronic copy of the MCG logo.

The Committee thanked JH for his continuing work and continues to express support for the project.

**AP4: RW will keep in touch with JH and discuss when next is best for him to update the Committee.**

**AP5: TM to send JH an electronic copy of the MCG logo and review the wording of the website for MHS references.**

JH and Jane Hendy then left the meeting and the Committee discussed the possible future speaker schedule for both potential historical talks but also to look at areas such as conservation and ecology as possible topics – across spring, summer and autumn (three talks). RW noted that we might hold one such talk earlier in the day given the profile of attendees suggested many may be retired.

**AP6: BM will consider a speaker programme for 2026 (three talks) and review with the Committee.**

**2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST** – No additional conflicts noted.

The minutes of the previous Committee meeting were APPROVED

### **3. FURTHER MATTERS ARISING - RW**

Committee membership.

RW noted that GS was attending this evening. As messaged to the Committee this was because GS has expressed an interest in joining the Committee and becoming Chair when JL retires from the latter role at the end of the year.

GS outlined his engagement in a number of community projects and organisations over the years and noted that he is a Green Party councillor for Buxted. RW asked whether he felt this might be a conflict and GS noted that he was not covering Maresfield. He noted he would declare any relevant interests as and when he joins. TB asked what GS's vision is for MCG. GS said that he believes MCG could attract a wider range of interested parties and boost our local engagement with Maresfield residents.

The Committee also noted, with sadness, that SRP has stepped down, with immediate effect due to pressures of time and work. The Committee thanked SRP for her contribution to MCG over the past four years..

RW also noted that JL has agreed to remain on the Committee after she steps down as chairman and undertake a role whereby she will document the various activities/events the MCG holds and sponsors so that these will be easier for all to follow

After further discussion, the appointment of GS to the Committee and as successor to JL as Chair was unanimously APPROVED.

**AP7: RW will follow-up with GS to add him as a Trustee etc.**

Other **Matters Arising actions** from the September meeting were reviewed and updated (as attached to these minutes).

**AP8: RW to update the Parish Magazine content schedule to reflect Committee changes. This will be posted on the Committee only section of the website.**

#### **4. MEMBERSHIP & MERCHANDISING - TC**

Membership – TC will intends to circulate a list of any members whose membership has expired at the end of each month, as we look to continue to keep the membership list current.

Merchandising – TM noted that the MCG website shop page now links to the Membermojo Store and our MCG stock items are on sale. A meeting has also been held with The Chequers manager who will look to sell our items (tea towels and calendars). Purchases can be made using a bank transfer or Stripe – although the former is rather cumbersome, whereas with the latter payment is ‘straight through’, albeit with a small fee deduction.

CS and TM noted that the 2026 calendar is now ready and printed (60 copies). As messaged to the Committee a launch event for the calendar has been arranged at The Chequers for invited monthly photo winners ‘plus1’ and the Committee. RW asked TM if MCG were paying for the event and TM confirmed it was as agreed with JL – and we had a discount on the room hire. Some wine, soft drinks and nibbles will be provided.

**AP9: CS will look to get some improved photos of stock items added to the website.**

**AP10: RW will look to get TB added to Stripe as an Administrator.**

#### **5. TREASURER’S REPORT – TB**

TB reported on the account balances. We had received and responded to some suggestions from our external accounts expert.

TB proposed to add RW as a third signatory to The Charity Bank application, to ensure we should have any two from three available to provide any instructions. This was unanimously APPROVED.

The Accounts and Authorisation document amended to show RW as a third signatory was further discussed and unanimously APPROVED.

Potential gift aid on the legacy money had been investigated but was not possible as claimable payments were required to come from income.

TB had earlier noted that MHS has yet to transfer the monies we understood were being offered by way of a gift from their final balance.

TC has continued to follow up on Gift Aid and obtained some information for the last time we made a claim.

**AP11: TC will continue to look at the Gift Aid position.**

## **6. FOOTPATHS GROUP UPDATE - BM**

The programme of work has continued. BM has been in correspondence with the Council about the booking system which is soon to come in for Maresfield tip. We have just been told we will need to book in advance.

BM continues to be in touch with our contractor and the Parish Council concerning the replacement and repair of Fingerposts.

The printer has now provided some indicative pricing (around £200) for the revised and wire-bound Millenium Walk booklet. We are also looking to have the walks available for use via the website for printing off individually.

In discussion we agreed we should review the re-issued the booklet with the Parish Council – in terms of discussing whether they will either allow us to pay the cost of revision but take the revenue from any sales (which will go to the MCG) or would wish to go 50/50 on costs and revenue. We prefer the former (simpler). It was noted that the booklet is copyrighted to the Parish Council, BM has done the work revising it but that there are not many changes.

**AP12: BM to keep the Committee updated on discussion with the Parish Council and look to see if we can add the MCG logo to the revised booklet.**

## **7. EVENTS PLANNING UPDATE – All**

In addition to the calendar progress and event (see above), there was a further litter picking event on 25<sup>th</sup> October (10-1pm).

For the Christmas tree, we will purchase the tree (Stavertons) and put it up with lights ready for the Church service.

**AP13: BM to arrange purchase and delivery of the tree / TM to note on our website that we would be putting the tree up.**

## **8. PLANNING – ALL**

No comments noted.

## 9. GOVERNANCE - RW

RW noted that the MCG now has a number of platforms and systems that it uses. Access rights to these should be better documented.

**AP14: RW will circulate an access and authorisations document to confirm which platforms MCG uses and who has primary and any secondary access and authority to them.**

## 10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

RW is seeking clarification from the Parish Council about the siting of the bench for which MCG received a Parish grant but which could not proceed due to the need for clarity over the ownership of the land on which it is to be sited.

CS noted that given the turnover of residents in the village we might look at more proactive promotion of the MCG, although noting that we do now have a FB page. We might look at the cost of a maildrop or adding a QR code to our noticeboard.

BM noted that Ian Shaw has provided us with an old planter which he has varnished up and is seeking the assistance of the Footpaths group to re-site.

**AP15: RW will continue to follow-up with the Parish Council and also contact Ian Shaw in case he can recall where the bench was to be sited.**

There was no further business and the **meeting closed** at 9.05pm.

Note: Remaining dates for 2025 Committee Meetings (so far) – all at The Chequers at 7.00pm:

- 17 Nov
- 15 Dec (P.S. Jo cannot make this date which was originally going to be her farewell 'do'. As we now have a date for the latter event we will keep the Committee meeting on 15<sup>th</sup>)

### **Action Points from the September Committee Meeting – Updates (in italics)**

#### **- Matters Arising**

**a. Maresfield History website/web pages**

**AP1: RW undertook to confirm our support in principle to Jeremy (done). BM to follow-up with Jeremy (done). Closed.**

**- Notes from the Chair**

**AP2: RW will circulate a schedule of content rotation, deadline and requirements for our monthly Parish Magazine slot.**

*This is now done and was sent to all with the Sept minutes. It is also now posted in the Committee only access section on our website. Closed.*

**- MEMBERSHIP & MERCHANDISING**

**AP3: TM will look with CS into printing and pricing point of the 2026 calendar with a view to printing 100 copies and will monitor photo competition result.**

*60 copies printed. Closed.*

**AP4: TM and TC to work on adding the payment link to our MCG shop for our items.**

*Link now set up. Closed.*

**- TREASURER'S REPORT**

**AP5: TB to keep us updated on accounts and authorization (we were considering the proposed payment authorization policy)**

*Policy discussed in October meeting and approved (as attached). Closed.*

**AP6: TC to follow-up to investigate how we can make Gift Aid filing.**

*On-going.*

**- PLANNING UPDATE**

**AP7: RW to follow-up with Cllr Tysh on the Conservation document and further on the bio-diversity survey.**

*Maresfield Conservation Area document. RW has followed up with Ian Tysh and he in turn has asked the officer in charge. RW will keep this under review.*

*Bio-diversity Survey. Having worked through a Sussex Wildlife Trust document and traced a professional ecologist an initial response from one was sent to the Committee and input received. This will be reported on at Committee.*