

MARESFIELD CONSERVATION GROUP

Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee

Held at 7.00m on Wednesday 22nd September 2021 at The Chequers, Maresfield

Present:

Jo Lawrence (JL)
John Smith (JS)
Alex Clarke (AC)
Dick Thompson (DT)
Jacqui Royal (JR)

Stephanie Bassett - Minutes Secretary

Guest: Tom Mearchant

APOLOGIES: Stan Sadowski, Rob Penfold and Ian Shaw.

1. UNDERHILL PARAPET – SS

Tom Mearchant was present for this part of the meeting and he summarised the email sent by SS to all Committee members before the meeting.

JR has spoken to an Underhill resident who knows Cllr Galley and who said they did not believe there to be any mileage in pursuing the matter with him.

IT WAS AGREED we need to emphasise safety aspect of new parapet. Young children could fall through the gap. AS said new parapet is a standard design found elsewhere in country, and the aesthetics card has already been played with ESCC. DT suggested there should be a curb on upstream side.

The following steps were AGREED:

Step one

Contact Clare Goossens (Parish Clerk) and Martin Craddock (Planning) for contact at ESCC and ask if they have taken any action in the matter, with a view to joint collaboration. Letter to include issues raised and photos.

ACTION: SS

Step two

Following replies in response to step 1, advise MCG members in a mailshot and on our website that we're proposing to approach ESCC on grounds of the safety aspect.

An item in the Parish magazine is not necessary

Step three

A carefully worded letter with photos along the lines set out in the email report by SS is to be drafted to ESCC for scrutiny by Committee, with copy to MP. Again, the safety aspect of fast flowing, deep water is to be emphasised.

Contacting the local media or escalation to the Government and Social Care Ombudsman was not considered to be a positive final step

JL thanked Tom for his input and he left the meeting.

2. DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES DATED 18th AUGUST 2021 & MATTERS ARISING

It was agreed that the Minutes be adopted. All matters arising were covered under this Agenda.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT - JS

There has been little movement on the accounts. Total income is £3,067 (£2,567 from membership subscriptions plus £500 from Gift Aid). The only expenditure was for printing.

Excess income over expenditure is £2,100 resulting in a bank balance of £11,068.

We are holding £1,900 on behalf of Maresfield fete until 1st March 2023. The sum will be divided among interested organisations if the fete doesn't go ahead.

Grant applications for 2022/23 have been made.

5. MEMBERSHIP and WEBSITE – SS

An update from SS was emailed during the meeting but was not discussed. JS said that the membership stands at 140. More members are needed. c/f next meeting.

ACTION: JL c/f next meeting.

6. FOOTPATHS GROUP - JS

JS approached by a local resident incensed at the proposed level of development and its effects on local wildlife (nightingales, nightjar etc). It appears developers are actively looking for land and Maresfield is in the firing line given Nutley and Fairwarp fall within Ashdown Forest.

IT WAS AGREED MCG should be involved in some way and individual Committee members were asked to reflect on their position regarding large scale development.

ACTION: JL c/f next meeting.

IT WAS AGREED that Parish Council and Wealden Council be approached to update the Committee at the November meeting.

ACTION: RP & IS

JS said that the progress of footpath maintenance is slow as he no longer has his core group of dependable, experienced workers.

Work on Uckfield no. 1 footpath has been carried out and the stile repaired. The bridge needs footboards.

JS reminded the Committee that he would be standing down completely from the MCG and will no longer be leader of the footpaths group. JL expressed her thanks to JS for his many years of work for the MCG.

IT WAS AGREED that the next newsletter should contain a request for volunteers for footpath maintenance and for a new Treasurer.

ACTION: JSS??

7. FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Village Clean Up – 16/17 October 10am – 4pm

AS passed round posters. She will take to the village shop, Post Office and Chequers.

JL has the bags and equipment from Wealden.

Volunteers are needed at the car park for administration of returned equipment etc.

The area of the A22 between Batts Bridge and Lampool Corner needs clearing but is not included in the clean up as it is considered to be too dangerous.

SS is to advertise the event on the website.

ACTION: SS

JS asked for the next newsletter to contain a request for surplus perennials to plant along Straight Half Mile by the bus stop.

ACTION: SS??

JR asked if something could be done about the amount of litter left on the Recreation Ground following use by sports teams. It was decided to approach the Recreation Ground Committee after the village clean up.

Xmas Tree –

RP and IS have this in hand.

Quiz March 2022 –

Pat Palmer has agreed to be chair. A new question setter is needed. Questions are to be given to Pat two weeks before the event. IT WAS AGREED to approach the Chequers if they know of a question setter.

ACTION: JL

8. CHURCH CAR PARK

The Village Hall Committee is offering funds. A meeting between all parties was suggested to agree what needs to be done plus costing (i.e. suggest resurfacing in lighter colour gravel/stone, disguising electricity station with trellis and flowers, painting). JS advised that no grants will be available as it is church land.

ACTION: JL to contact Angie Welton at Church
SS to approach Thorne's to quote for resurfacing
AS to approach Gary Adlam for advice on resurfacing contractors

9. HISTORY BOARD FOR MHS

RP has potted history plus a design from Quarry Printing.

The Maresfield in 1840 booklet has been reprinted using the printers' version.

ACTION: AS to liaise with RP to discuss final cost (production cost £2.00). A price of £4.00 was suggested.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

• Wealden Open Space Consultation – JR

Consultation closing September 28th. All Committee members were asked to complete.

ACTION: ALL

• Village Fete – JR

JR spoke to Melanie Gurney, the person suggested by Pat Palmer, and she has agreed to take on the organisation of the fete provided she has a team.

Various members of the MCG have in the past been helpers but it was not considered an MCG responsibility. The fete should have its own committee but MCG might help to get the event off the ground.

ACTION: JL to speak to Pat Palmer to ask for her advice, and ask if she wished to be involved.

• One Way System - DT

DT referred to the Parish magazine article. This issue has been raised before and proved contentious with the surrounding villages. The Committee discussed the increasing number of access points on School Hill, the affect on passing trade, the disruption caused to bus routes, inconvenience to villagers and increase of traffic elsewhere. JL read out a letter from Bruce Milton.

JR observed that a per capita rather than a group response carried more weight with the local authorities.

Further discussion to be carried forward to the next meeting.

ACTION: JL

• Ugandan Refugee Exhibition – JL

JL has received a letter from a woman who was based in Maresfield as a refugee from Uganda and who wishes to mount an exhibition in 2022 to mark the 50 year anniversary. JL has already spoken to Angie Welton and the Historical Society and asked MCG committee for support. JL is to contact school.

ACTION: JL

DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS : 20th October, 17th November and 15th December.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.