

Maresfield Conservation Group
Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee 12th September 2018
Held at 7.30pm in The Chequers, Maresfield

Present

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| Pat Palmer, Chairman [PP] | John Smith, Treasurer [JS] |
| Gemma Hallin, Secretary [GH] | Ian Shaw, Member [IS] |
| Dick Thompson, Member [DT] | Stan Sadowski, Member [SS] |
| Ken Ogden, Member [KO] | Alex Clarke, Member [AC] |
| Peta Penfold, Minute Secretary | |

1. Apologies

Apologies received from Rob Penfold, Membership Secretary [RP].

2. Declarations of Interest

GH and KO both declared an interest as Members of the Maresfield Parish Council.

3. Approval of Previous Minutes

The Minutes were proposed by JS, seconded by SS, and unanimously approved.

4. Matters Arising

- 4.1 **Victorian Lights:** IS advised that the electrician has provided a quote of £120 to cover the work involved in taking down the Victorian Light at the entrance to The Rec, and re-installing it post restoration. The quote for stripping the light down and making good was £480, bringing the total refurbishment cost to £600. The existing wiring was inspected and deemed to be dangerous. KO said that the light is powered from The Pavilion by means of an armour-plated cable buried in the ground, with the running costs being incurred by the Recreation Ground Committee. There followed a discussion about whether it would be preferable to try to refurbish the existing light, or replace it with a new one. However, given that the light matches those at the Church and the Cemetery, the Committee were reticent about replacing it entirely due to its historical significance. It was agreed that two further quotes will be obtained for the refurbishment costs, and a decision will be made at the next Committee meeting. KO pointed

out that there is still an issue with the light at The Cemetery. The micro switch that controls the light is affected by car headlights at night which cause the light to turn off because the switch is fooled into thinking it is daylight. This problem can be rectified by the installation of a shield. JS agreed that, as MCG funds are available, it may be sensible to deal with both lights at the same time.

AP1: JS to obtain two more quotations for the electrical work and refurbishment of the Victorian Light at The Rec; and installation of a shield on the micro switch controlling the Victorian Light at The Cemetery.

- 4.2 **Recreation Ground Sign:** RP has removed the damaged sign and is liaising with Rob Taylor, representing the Recreation Ground Committee, with regard to the content and structure of a replacement sign. *In RP's absence this matter was held over until the next Committee meeting.*
- 4.3 **Grass Cutting:** PP advised that, despite the fact that Sheila Cumming emailed Roy Galley at East Sussex County Council [ESCC] to request removal of the grass cuttings left behind after the October cut, nothing was done about it. In the end, several of the Committee members and other volunteers spent a hard morning removing the grass cuttings themselves.
- 4.4 **Maresfield in 1840:** JS reported that sales of the booklet have gone well and a profit has been made. The Committee approved donating these proceeds to the Historical Society, but accepted advice from JS to wait until the end of the financial year.
- 4.5 **Footpath Fence at Lampool Corner:** JS advised that, whilst some new rails have been recycled from elsewhere, essentially the fence is on the verge of collapse and needs to be replaced. Two new posts and rails have already been purchased and installed at a cost of £47, but the remaining fence will be monitored and replacements posts/rails installed as and when necessary. Tannalised wood has a lifespan of 2-5 years, whereas split chestnut will last for up to 15 years. The intention is to eventually replace all of the wood with split chestnut.
- 4.6 **Fingerpost at The Chequers Roundabout:** JS said that the fingerposts have been damaged at some point and replaced with painted softwood. Three of them have rotted and need to be renewed. However, two joiners declined the business and the third would charge £200 labour to replace the fingerposts, which seems excessive. JS has taken the existing letters from the rotten fingerposts but they are degraded and covered in paint – replacement costs would be in the region of £150. KO suggested approaching Wealden District Council [WDC]. It was agreed that MCG would purchase new lettering if WDC declined to assist.

AP2: JS to contact the Sings Department at WDC with a view to WDC funding the purchase of the new lettering for the fingerpost.

- 4.7 **Royal Signals Centenary:** 2018 marks the Centenary of the formation of the Royal Signals Training School in Maresfield Park. GH advised that she has not yet spoken to the Regiment to discuss the proposed celebrations. However, it later became apparent that Graham Alt has already contacted them, and PP has asked him to keep MCG updated as to progress. It was therefore agreed that this matter should be left with Graham Alt.
- 4.8 **MCG Projector:** GH advised that she is still researching the cost of a projector and will give an update at the next meeting.

5. Chairman's Report [PP]

- 5.1 The Chairman's Report is appended to the Minutes and was summarised by PP during the meeting. She has prepared 'Contacts' sheets, including one for 'helpers', and has also drafted the proposed entry for the Parish Magazine. AC suggested adding emails addresses where held, and this was agreed.
- 5.2 PP advised that Mr Patel personally paid £50 to have the grass at The Parade cut – the other residents declined to assist. JS said that the Footpaths Group will be happy to cut the grass so that Mr Patel is not forced to carry the costs, although it may be that he would like to make a small monetary contribution in lieu of paying the full price to contractors.
- 5.3 Graham Alt has again raised the subject of additional the floodlights at St Bartholomew's Church to supplement the existing light at the lynch gate. KO reminded the Committee that the overall costs of installing two more floodlights is likely to be in the region of £4,000 (to include the £2,000 inspection costs for the Church architect). JS advised that Tony Cottingham no longer wants to be involved in the project, and he understands that the Church are not keen on having the floodlights. However, when the inside of the Church is illuminated the stained-glass window looks beautiful. It was agreed that MCG will park the issue of floodlights at St Bartholomew's Church and instead explore options for lighting the stained-glass window.
- 5.4 PP proposed that MCG back the proposal for the building of a new Village Hall as part of a new 10-year Plan for Maresfield, and SS agreed in principal that it is sensible to plan ahead.

6. Secretary's Report [GH]

GH advised that one new member has joined MCG this month. The Website still needs to be addressed but is in hand.

7. Treasurer's Report

- 7.1 JS said that subscriptions have risen to £1,649, whilst the Gift Aid total is £374, bringing the total income thus far to in excess of £2,000. Expenditure included £308 for the Millennium Walk signs – those that need replacing have been installed and there are also some spares. Costs for the MCG website included a one-off payment of £12.46 for the domain name, and £111.78 for the annual web hosting costs. JS proposed the MCG expenditure of £292.33 for the replacement fingerposts, which was seconded by SS and carried.
- 7.2 JS then advised that, following receipt of a letter from HSBC, he phoned them to discuss the MCG account. The bank representative examined the account status and transactions with a fine toothcomb, and then indicated that the bank require full details of all Committee members, including full name, date of birth, address, time at that address, nationality, and role in the MCG. Whilst this is clearly designed to address customer due diligence issues, it was proposed that, in light of the General Data Protection Regulations 2018; the fact that due diligence would usually only apply to account signatories; and existing oversight from the Charities Commission; the bank should be asked to explain why they feel it is necessary to obtain personal details relating to Committee members who are not signatories.

AP3: RP/PP to provide JS with some salient points to enable him to raise the query with HSBC.

- 7.4 JS then reminded the Committee that the Parish Grant Application is pending, and his intention is to use invoices coming into MCG as a basis for calculating and supporting the total requested. He proposed that MCG fund two additional grass cuts per annum to supplement the reduced ESCC programme of works – this was agreed.

8. Charity Commission

PP is in possession of the Trustee Eligibility Declaration Form which applies to all MCG Committee Members as trustees of the Charity. Once completed, it must be retained within the records. PP read out the list of disqualifying factors and ascertained that none are applicable to current trustees. The form was handed round and completed by those present.

9. Written Communication / Advertising

- 9.1 **Welcome Pack:** PP advised that the Welcome Note and Welcome Letter have now been agreed. However, she suggested inserting a list of all the groups and activities operating within the village to provide additional information designed to help new residents settle into the village. This was unanimously agreed.
- 9.2 **MCG Newsletter:** PP proposed that the newsletter should be produced quarterly, but SS, whilst concurring that it is important to keep Members up-to-date, suggested that a half-yearly newsletter might be a better option so that the content remains interesting and relevant. After some discussion, it was agreed that, in light of the fact that the MCG Website is up and running; that each newsletter costs £200 to print; and to avoid adding unnecessarily to the workload of the Collectors; the newsletter will be produced three times a year on a trial basis. The first issue will be sent out in November to highlight the Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony. The option to advertise forthcoming events in the Parish Magazine remains.
- 9.3 **MCG Tabards:** IS raised the possibility of obtaining polo shirts for MCG Committee Members/helpers bearing the MCG logo, to be used when performing services within the village such as the recent removal of the grass cuttings. JS pointed out that MCG is already in possession of high-viz tabards, although more are needed. Additional tabards can be purchased and sent away for the MCG logo to be added - JS has the previous invoice for this service which identifies the company involved.

10. Update on Maresfield Core Area

DT has spoken to Fred Taylor, a Member of the Local Plan Working Group on the Parish Council, who confirmed that planning consent already exists for 49 new houses planned/under construction in Maresfield, including 9 on School Hill and 25 on Site B (adjacent to Wellington Gate). When consent was given to Rydon Homes to develop Site B, it was on the understanding that Site A (the field to the south-west of the Church) would be gifted to the village. It is currently unclear as to whether Rydon Homes will pursue the building works. DT reported that there is now a new 10-Year Plan which would support construction of 33 additional houses on 'windfall' sites within the 'Core Area' (a diagram was used for illustrative purposes). It should be noted that the 'Core Area' does not appear to include Site A. The proposal is for unplanned construction of new houses on infill sites in central Maresfield. A

meeting to discuss the 10-Year Plan will take place in the Village Hall on 13th September - Committee Members were encouraged to attend.

11. Christmas Tree

RP has agreed to co-ordinate the Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony in 2018. The Church have requested that it is brought forward to 1st December but, after some discussion, it was agreed that this will be impractical, particularly since In Choir are unavailable on that date. The preferred date is Saturday 8th December. PP is happy to source the Christmas Tree from North Farm Plantations.

12. Future Expenditure/Funding

PP proposed holding a separate meeting specifically to discuss future projects. MCG has a healthy bank balance and funds are available. This was agreed = date to be confirmed.

13. AOB

13.1 KO said there have been complaints about the parking situation outside the Village Shop. One resident has three vehicles and has been obstructing a Right of Access. KO said that, as a Parish Councillor, he is happy to speak to the resident. PP said that the parking issue is a Parish Council matter, not an MCG issue.

13.2 JS advised that he and John Mason intend to look at the oak trees on The Rec, some of which may have died in the recent drought.

13.3 SS/GH/PP need to set a date to discuss the new MCG Website.

13.4 PP advised that there is now a defibrillator at the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.25pm. The next meeting is scheduled for 7.30pm on 3rd October 2018 at The Chequers.