

MANX FOOTPATHS CONSERVATION GROUP

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held 7pm on Thursday 23rd July 2020

At Douglas Golf Club, Pulrose

1. Welcome:

Chairman Ken Harding welcomed the 46 members present and called the meeting to order at 7.05pm.

Apologies:

Eleven apologies for absence had been received and were noted en bloc.

2. To receive the minutes of the AGM held on 21st March 2019 for approval.

Approval of the minutes of the AGM held on 21st March 2019, having been previously circulated, was proposed by Belinda Pilling and seconded by Gill Percival and were duly approved.

3. To receive the Chairman's Report:

Thank you everyone for attending, it is lovely to see so many of you. It has been a testing year due to Covid 19 and we are blessed that we are able to reconvene all MFCG activities without restriction. Thank you to all the walk leaders, co-ordinators and members who have used their knowledge and passion to create interesting walks for us. The new summer schedules have now come out and you will see that there are links with various Island organisations and trusts. The committee has been very active over the past year and their hard work and commitment is truly appreciated. I thank you all for your help and support. On a personal note I would also like to thank our President Bob, who has handed over the reins of co-ordinator to Peter Corkish. Thanks Bob, for your efforts and good luck Peter.

The good work carried out by Lesley is highly valued and membership secretary Maree has worked hard to update and review our Data Protection administration. Both roles require a lot of time and effort, which is given willingly.

The information provided through the website is an excellent opportunity for members and visitors to access current details of walks and events and has been ably managed by Fiona Vaz and I thank her for her assistance and support in researching future requirements.

New legislation has led to new requirements to safely run our walking group. Through sponsorship from the Manx Lottery Trust we are able to offer Hills Skills Courses and these will be available to members and have been taken up. It is something that we are looking to continue in the future. Further walking based education opportunities are also being investigated.

Dates have been announced and there is an opportunity for those members who haven't done so to attend free St. John Ambulance First Aid Courses too.

The government has recently improved certain walking routes and is committed to future footpath maintenance. This is a real, positive step forward which will benefit all members and visitors to our shores alike. Thank you to our Footpaths Officer David for his ongoing communications, which I know at the time is testing, with the relevant government maintenance departments.

Thank you to our treasurer, Jack, for a sterling job in keeping the funds well managed particularly given the increasingly costly requirements of insurance premiums, copying, postage, website requirements, correspondence and health and safety requirements. The club has savings generated over the years through the commitment of members past and present.

Previously funds had been earmarked for projects associated with footpath maintenance around the Island but today through changing legislation, this has become increasingly difficult. The committee will continue to explore avenues and projects that the group can support.

In 2020 the committee is keen that some funds can be used to improve the infrastructure of the group with benefits to members which will include a new, fully interactive website, further first aid courses available to all members, social events and contributions towards events for the group's 50th anniversary celebrations. The committee proposes to increase the annual subs from 2021 from £6 to £10 p.a.. Despite the seemingly large savings in the club's account, it would be unwise to supplement the day to day running costs from savings. The last rise in subscriptions was 2003.

Does anyone have any questions?'

George Sharpe asked if the committee had considered family membership where a family group could join at a discounted rate to encourage multi-generational membership of the group and perhaps bring more youngsters in. KH replied that the committee have discussed various ways of futureproofing the club.

There were no further questions raised.

4. To receive the Treasurer's Report:

The Treasurer, Jack Verity produced copies of the accounts for those present.

The Treasurer presented his report: 'These were completed by the first week in January (copies having previously been sent to all members in February). As you can see, had it not been for Ken's timely grant from the Lottery Trust of £1500 we would have incurred quite a loss this year. We actually had a surplus which has gone into our funds. Everyone has had a copy of the accounts, does everyone agree with them and does anyone have any questions?'

No questions were raised.

5. To receive and approve the balance sheet and accounts for the previous financial year:

The approval of the balance sheet and accounts for the previous financial year was proposed by Belinda Pilling and seconded by Bob Garrett and were duly approved.

6. To appoint an Auditor for the ensuing year:

As our previous auditor has retired and after having checked regulations and guidelines, KH suggested that for the size of the club and finances involved, we do not need an auditor. JV said that the accounts are presented to the committee bi monthly, and to the AGM annually for checking. Two signatures are required on the chequing account so all is transparent. Other groups with income below £20,000 are dispensing with the services of an auditor. Peter Corkhill thought it inappropriate to have only one person in charge of finances and a second person should oversee the accounts. George Sharpe kindly offered to do this due to his background in finance, but not as an auditor. The members were very appreciative and applauded George's offer.

Sue Harvey proposed and Peter Gunn seconded the motion that we do not appoint an auditor.

7. To Receive the Membership Secretary's Report:

Maree Harper: 'As of 31.12.2019 there were 286 members, including 4 life members: Bob Garrett, Dougie Newton, Peter Gunn and Sir David Wilson. There are still a large number of members who pay yearly subscriptions by cheque. This creates a huge burden to the membership secretary and she would encourage members to pay by standing order. Since December 2019 we have had sixteen new members'.

8. Data Protection Officer's Report:

Maree Harper:

'Our Privacy Policy sets up the basis on which any personal data we collect data we collect from you. When you send me your application form with your signature you agree to us storing & processing your information.

Disclosure of some of your contact details is limited to the Treasurer and the Walk Organiser and also of course, the Membership Secretary, and that's me, just with a different hat!

There are been a few breaches which proves that we are all imperfect.

Members are quick to spot a breach and let us know so quickly all is restored.

Please do know that we are committed to protecting your privacy'.

9. Footpaths Officer's Report:

David Leiserach reported that: 'As of 19.07.20 there are three PRoW's that are closed. In 2019 129 defects were reported to DoI and DFE. Between January and July 71 defects were reported. DL asked members to send map refs and photos of defects to him. GLUG is working on problems. DL is asking the government for improvements on the Raad ny Foillan and has reported poor signage on Millennium Way to DoE and will do the same for the Herring Way. Port Soderick still has no legal route through.

10. To fix the annual subscriptions payable from 1st January 2021:

KH said that the committee is proposing to increase the subs from £6 to £10 p.a. and asked if anyone had any comments on this. There were no comments so KH proposed that the annual subscription is raised from £6 to £10 from January 1st 2021. Maree Harper seconded the proposal.

11. To elect a President for the ensuing year:

It has been decided to make the Presidency a two year role which Bob Garrett is happy to fulfil for his second year.

Denise Eckersley asked if the constitution would be updated as currently it is one year. KH replied that it would.

12. To Elect Committee:

KH said that a number of committee members have left and thanked them for their efforts over the years. There have been no proposals for new members so KH suggested that the current committee continue en bloc until the next AGM. Fiona Vaz proposed and Catriona Livingstone seconded.

13. Resolutions:

As there were no resolutions members were given the opportunity to present written questions. Fiona Vaz suggested a new name for the group. As we are developing a new website this would be a good opportunity to update the name as we do not do conservation work, we are walkers. Fiona and others she has spoken to didn't initially recognise the MFCG as a walking group and shied away. The committee often receives enquiries about conservation, which is misleading. Also, we now have 'Footpath Friends' which do the physical conservation work. Fiona suggested the name 'The Manx Walking Group'.

Fiona's suggestion was well received. KH said that this must be put forward as a resolution at the 2021 AGM.

Margaret Brown agreed with Fiona but asked if 'Manx Walking Group' might lose our status with the Manx government.

Pat Mudie would like 'Footpaths' to remain in the name.

George Sharpe agreed with Fiona but would like the words 'Rambling' and 'protection' in the name.

Catriona Livingstone said that the group 'Footpaths on the Isle of Man' has 4839 members on Facebook and asked if the MFCG could also join on Facebook.

KH replied that we are looking into it.

Ann Roberts agreed with Fiona and had a similar experience when looking for a walking group.

Chris Turner asked if it would be an advantage to be known as a 'club' rather than a 'group'.

Bob Garrett felt that we should use the words 'Isle of Man' instead of 'Manx'.

KH replied that this could be an option and the committee will explore all options. The general feeling from the members appears to be that change is needed.

David Grimshaw said that we could link the website to walking or rambling.

KH thanked everyone for coming.

Meeting Closed at 19.45

Signed: K. HARDING

CHAIRMAN

