MANX FOOTPATHS
Conservation GROUP

Affiliated to The Ramblers

The Island's Premier Walking Group

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT St. PATRICKS COURT, PEEL

10am. Friday 3rd July 2020

Those present: Ken Harding – KH, Lesley Parkington – LP, Maree Harper – MH, Jack Verity – JV, David Leiserach – DL, Pat Mudie – PM, Peter Gunn – PG, Bob Garrett – BG

1. **No Apologies** received, all members present.
2. **Minutes of the previous meeting:** having been circulated beforehand, were approved and signed by the Chairman, Ken Harding.
3. **Matters Arising from the previous meeting:**
   - Diana Kouvel had asked about the possibility of training courses for members to be able to undertake repair work to footpaths. KH has spoken to the non-executive chairman of the Department of Enterprise who stated that there is nothing in place for this but there are plenty of opportunities on Island to do volunteer work for the environment. DL said that we now have Footpath Friends.
4. **Correspondence:**
   - The Wildlife Trust have asked for confirmation of our participation in this event. LP has replied giving details of walks, Saturday 29th August, Thursday 3rd Sept, Sunday 6th Sept. Details are shown on the walks schedule.
   - Fiona Vaz has emailed asking the committee to consider changing the name of the MFCG to something that better reflects what we do i.e. walking rather than conservation as this is confusing to prospective new members. Fiona suggested a new name could be 'Manx Walking Group' which more accurately reflects what we do. DL agreed and suggested it be put forward at an AGM. KH said that the AGM is already set so it cannot be included for this year. PG said he would be happy to just delete the word 'conservation' from the title. BG agreed and suggested 'Manx Ramblers'. KH thought that we should take this to the membership. JV said that we should let the members choose between just 3 names, DL agreed. KH said that we should introduce this at the AGM and ask members for suggestions for a new name. The three most popular would be taken forward to the 2021 AGM for a vote. DL said that it was a very good letter and we should thank Fiona.

     ACTION: LP to write to Fiona with thanks.
5. **Treasurers Report:**

   JV stated that we have received up to date commission from Lily Publications of £157.80. As at 30.06.20 the current account stands at £4050.56 and the savings account £14,423,42. £472.50 has been paid as part payment to the new web designer, Callum Staley of CJS Photography.

6. **Appointment of new Auditor:**

JV asked, following the retirement of our previous auditor, is an auditor necessary? He has researched other groups of our size and the majority do not have auditors. As we have a separate membership secretary and dual signatories, checks on the accounts can easily be made. The main purpose of an auditor is to prepare the accounts, which is what JV does. The cost of an auditor would be approx. £300 p.a.. MH stated that JV's accounts are very well kept. KH said that JV does an excellent job and is very transparent with the accounts and feels that there is no need for an outside auditor. The committee agreed that we should dispense with an auditor.

7. **Membership Secretary's Report:**

MH stated that we have 290 members, 4 are life members, Bob Garrett, Peter Gunn, Dougie Newton and Sir David Wilson. At this time there are 16 people who have not paid and these will be deleted from the membership list. JV thanked MH for her efforts in chasing members for subs and all agreed.

8. **Data Protection:**

MH has researched online and there are no changes to the legal requirements for data protection. There has been one breach, by Tony Archibald. MH addressed this with him and it was corrected immediately.

9. **Footpath's Officer's Report:**

DL said that he had not produced a report. He stated that he was receiving reports from members and the public about overgrown footpaths which are not actually PRoW's. KH feels that DoI are doing their best with their budget. KH said that DL should use his judgement on dealing with complaints. DL advised the committee that the bridge below Glen Mona is in a dangerous state of repair and should be avoided if possible. LP said that she feels there has been an improvement in the maintenance of footpaths.

10. **Safety Officer's Report:**

- Risk Assessments: No report has been produced but PM said that she is receiving risk assessments. KH said that as the website is not active at this time a message on the Home page advises that any enquiries should go to LP and risk assessment forms can be obtained from himself. The new website should be operational by mid August when risk assessments can be filled in online or printed off.

- Incident reports: KH asked if an incident report was completed regarding the incident with Jacqui Ward. KH said the incident was handled well and JW was happy and sent a letter of thanks. This matter is now closed. DL felt that there had been difficulties in directing the emergency services to the correct location. KH said that the 'What3words' system that was used is not suitable for the IoM but the OS locate apps. is very helpful, is well known amongst the group and it's use should be promoted.

- PM asked for expenses for ink for printing off R.A's. KH responded that the new website will archive all R.A's and Incident reports.

11. **AGM 7 pm 23rd July 2020** at Meadows Pavilion, Douglas Golf Club

All paperwork was sent to members in February. Due the delay with Covid 19 KH suggested that we send out an additional notice stating that if members had any questions for the AGM they should send them in writing to LP by 16th July. These will then be read out by LP. The committee agreed.

ACTION: MH to forward notice to members.

12. New Website:

Callum Staley of CJS Photography is a young Manxman just starting out and will be providing our new website, (which should be online by end of August) at a very competitive one off price of £980 plus yearly security certificate and hosting fee of £60 p.a.. Our previous cost was £700 p.a.. We will have almost total control of the new website and be able to add many new features. Until the new one is operational there will be a message on the old home page referring people to mfcgenquiries. There will be a 'Members Page', with a password for members only access, for Minutes of meetings etc.. KH and Fiona Vaz have both sent Nick Hill a letter of thanks for his work over the years. KH will send a copy of the 'History Page' to committee members for their comments and asked for old photographs of the group. KH said that our logo is not sharp enough for the new website so eventually a new logo will be needed. Most committee members would like to keep something similar.

ACTION: KH to forward a copy of the propped 'History page' to committee members.

ACTION: KH to try to enhance the current logo for new website.

13. Heritage Open Days:

Details of our HOD walks have been sent to Katie King. Brian Beattie's walk will start from the sheep pens on Brandywell Road on Sunday 4th October. KH walk will start from Rushen Abbey on Sunday 11th October.

14. First Aid Courses:

LP has been in touch with St. John Ambulance. There will be 2 groups of 12. Their preferred dates will be w/c 24th August or 31st August. The first three hour session will be 2pm to 5pm and the second, 6pm to 9pm and will be tailored to problems we might incur during walks. The cost remains at £600 total. The certificate lasts for three years. The date of Monday 24th August was agreed. This course is only for those who did not take part previously.

ACTION: LP to confirm booking with St. John Ambulance.

15. Hills Skills Courses:

KH has been in touch with Andrew Foxon who will contact people personally. These courses will take place later in the year.

16. Winter Talks:

Several suggestions have been offered, The Hedgehog Conservation Group, Wildlife Trust, Whale and Dolphin Group etc., Manx Bird Club, Edward Bryan of Bryan Removals, RNLI. KH said that we should have three diverse talks, Wildlife, Heritage, and general. It was decided on RNLI for 4th November 2020, Edward Bryan for 6th January 2021 and Manx Bird Club for 3rd February 2021.

ACTION: MH to contact Manx Bird Club.

ACTION: LP to contact RNLI and Edward Bryan.

17. 50th Anniversary Celebrations:

KH said the response to a Club Holiday has been very positive and he is making enquiries through on-island companies for mid May 2021. There will be half board hotel accommodation and coach travel from Heysham with guided walks, possibly in the Yorkshire Dales. MH asked if group funds will subsidise any of the events. KH replied that any subsidy will be used for on-island events. Other events suggested are a Ceilidh Band, Baron Otto's Ompah Band, Paul Costain Hog Roast at Moorhouse Farm Rushen, Lunch at the Palace, Tea party. LP suggested the events could be approx.. every three months throughout the year.

18. Any Other Business:

- MH asked if the proposal to raise the subs in 2021 to £10 will go ahead. DL said that as we have £18,000 in the bank delaying the increase of £4 will not affect the club. KH said that the subs have not increased since 2003 and the members get good value for £6. PM feels we need the increase to cover continuingly increasing club costs and to subsidise club events. KH said that other clubs charge considerably more for much less than we offer. All agreed and KH will present the arguments for the increase to the AGM.

- BG suggested that we find a new co-ordinator for Tuesday walks as he may not be walking as often in future. PG said that BG could carry on as co-ordinator whilst taking a back seat. BG will carry on for now.

- DL asked if we still need to do a register of walkers. KH replied that this is no longer necessary but a register of attendance should be kept in the interim so that we are ready if Covid 19 returns.

- MFCG have been asked by DFE to inspect new signage on the Millenium Way. DL will now lead walks Southbound on Saturday 11th and 18th July only. This leaves Saturday 8th and 15th free. DL will organise the northbound route separately.

- DL has received emails from 'Judy Needham' regarding the redundant railway track from St. Johns to Kirk Michael. DoI plan to make this route user friendly for wheelchairs, bicycles and walkers as per the Heritage Trail whilst also reinstating bridges and viaducts. DL asked the committee's views on the Heritage trail. Ms. Needham is looking for our support to stop the Kirk Michael section. DoI have implied that MFCG have been consulted and are in agreement, which is incorrect. LP said that we have to share with other parties and the Island has lots of naturally wild footpaths. The committee agreed that these are positive improvements and support the DoI.

- DL said that DoI have signed the 'Undercroft' footway in Port St. Mary as a 'share with care' path for cyclists and walkers. The committee agreed that this is not wide enough to share and DL will draft a letter to raise our concerns.

- KH suggested that we should apply to IoM Biosphere to become a partner. There is no cost and we are pledging to our members to do what is best for our island. This will also allow us to add the Biosphere logo to our website.

- LP asked if the contact details for Footpaths Friends could be added to the website.

ACTION: DL to forward draft letter to LP to raise out concerns with DoI

ACTION: KH to contact IoM Biosphere with our proposal.

19. Date of next meeting:

10am Wednesday 16th September 2020 at Mylchreest Court, Peel.

20. Meeting Closed at 12.25pm

Signed; K HARDING CHAIRMAN