

MANX FOOTPATHS
Conservation GROUP



Affiliated to The Ramblers

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT MYLCHREEST COURT, PEEL
2pm Wednesday 18th November 2020

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

1. **Apologies:** No apologies received, all present
2. **Minutes of the previous meeting:** having been circulated beforehand, were approved and signed by the Chairman, Ken Harding.
3. **Matters arising from previous meeting:**
 - KH stated that Heritage Open Days had been a success and that while we understood that many members were unable to book places on the walks, due to Covid 19 we had to abide by the rules of MNH. Hopefully it will be different next year and we will deal with the situation then. For 2021 the HoD walks will be member friendly.
 - Hills Skills. KH has received good feedback from several people about the course and everyone enjoyed it. KH will pay back £200 to the Lottery Trust for the two places that were not used.
ACTION: KH to forward cheque to Manx Lottery Trust.
 - KH will write to all co-ordinators advising them that walks should not be cancelled in advance of the day. Leaders should go to the assembly point and discuss with those present whether or not to continue with the walk. The leader will make the final decision. In the rare event of a cancelled walk the leader should go to the assembly point for anyone not informed of cancellation. PM asked that, for insurance purposes, she be informed of any walks cancelled. MH reminded members that all emails regarding walks should be sent from the membership secretary to all members, not just individual groups. DL asked for leaders to be reminded that, particularly during the winter months, they should have an alternative route planned in case of adverse weather conditions.
ACTION: KH to write to all co-ordinators.
 - We are now Biosphere partners.
ACTION: KH to put details on the website.

4. Correspondence:

- Ramblers have confirmed that our annual subscription has been received by Direct Debit.
- LP read out a detailed correspondence received from a Mr. Exton regarding his concerns about the use of mountain bikes on public footpaths due to the visible damage and risk of accident involving walkers. Mr. Exton raised his concerns with the local MHK who had dismissed involvement and refused to share any concerns on considering the subject. Relevant authorities were contacted, but no satisfactory answer received so would value the opinion of MFCG. The committee agreed, KH reminding the committee members that the IoM Government clearly state "Public Rights of Way are public footpaths where the public have a right to pass only on foot. Bicycles should not be taken onto public footpaths". So it is illegal to ride a bicycle on a public footpath. The committee agreed that we should write to the police asking their policy on this as it is against the law as the possibility of some public wide clarity could be required to avoid unnecessary confusion or confrontation.

ACTION: LP to write to Chief Constable, Gary Roberts and inform Mr. Exton of the outcome.

- Following our contribution last year to the Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation they have asked MFCG to participate once again. The committee felt that there are many deserving charities on the Island so we will contribute to a different one each year. Starting in January we will ask for voluntary donations from members on group walks in that month and for 2021 the charity will be Manx Birdlife for their Ayres Gravel Pit regeneration project which we will all be able to enjoy. A donation will be presented to Neil Morris at his talk on 3rd February. Thereafter each charity will be nominated by the President.

ACTION: LP to notify Roy Castle Foundation of our decision.

- Katie King of Manx National Heritage have thanked MFCG for our contribution to the Heritage Open Days events.
- KH received correspondence from a Mr. Gottrell living near to the 'Scout Camp' PRoW 423, Athol Bridge to Grenaby. This path has been closed due to erosion for over three years and, having no satisfactory response from Government and recent planning application, concern is that it may never re-open and Mr. Gottrell is asking MFCG opinion on this. Part of the path has been renewed and the remainder scheduled for May 2021. Positive and cordial options have been discussed and MFCG will keep a close eye on developments. If no progress has been made by May, MFCG will contact the appropriate authorities in support of this gentleman. In the meantime we will write to Dol expressing our concern that this footpath has been closed for so long. All agreed that we must not lose this footpath

ACTION: LP to write to Dol.

5. Treasurer's Report: for MFCG Wednesday 18/11/2020 - Jack Verity

Current a/c balance	£979:36
Savings a/c balance	£14,424:14
Expenditure this quarter has included:-	
Training fees	£500
Donation to IOM Hospice (Bob Garrett)	£100
Donation to RNLI	£30
Ramblers Affiliation Fees.	£65:50
Income	
Subscriptions.	£62

Income from Lily Publications for books sales is not expected until December.
Jack Verity

JV stated that there has been no significant expenditure this year but in 2021 renewals are due for the St. John first aid courses taken in 2018. The club is also subsidising the 50th Anniversary celebrations. The increase in subscription should cover the extra expenditure next year. The increased expenditure on courses over the year has contributed to us incurring a probable loss of approx £2,000 over this current year.

6. Membership Secretary's Report: Wednesday 18.11.20 - Maree Harper

Total Membership at the last meeting was 288 and is now 295 so 7 new membership.
 R.I.P. Hilary Kermode last Friday, a longstanding member.
 Maree Harper
 MH requested that JV advise her of payments made by Standing Order.

ACTION: MH to write to members with a gentle reminder to change their Standing Orders to £10.

ACTION: JV to forward copy of statements to MH.

7. Data Protection Report:

I am unaware of any recent breach of the law for Data Protection.
 Maree Harper

8. Footpaths Officer's Report: 18 November 2020 - David Leiserach

Long Term Closure of Public Right of Way (PRoW)

As at 17 November 2020 the following PRoWs (in numerical order) are currently closed.

PRoW	From / To	Closed because of	Status
329 Raad Ny Foillan	On the outside of Onchan Head – Closed Monday to Saturdays during working hours.	Building work	Till 23 Jan 2021 but might be extended
348 and 352	348- Diverted 352 - Closed from Scarlett Farm Lane to Witches Mill	Construction of earthworks for new playing fields for CRHS	Closure and diversion extended till 24 th May 2021
423	"Scout Glen", from Athol Bridge on the A3 through to Grenaby	General deterioration and weather damage	Works might be carried out in Spring and Summer 2021 !.
423	The "highest" path alongside the Silverdale Burn from Grey Towers to the A3	General deterioration and weather damage	Likely to be closed permanently – but there are 2 alternatives
632	From Riverbank Road to Gardeners Lane, Ramsey	Weather and water related damage	DoI say this PRoW should not be walked at present. Next closure will probably be until May 2021
U24	Pack Horse Lane, Laxey - From Breeze Hill up to the A2 Main road	Work by Manx Utilities	'Til 20 November

If there is an **OFFICIAL** closure, PLEASE do not use a PRoW.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW) Defects

Between 14 September and 10 November 2020, I recorded 24 reports of footpath defects. 22 were passed on to the DoI and 2 were passed to DEFA for action.

If you see a defect, please let me know – but I can only report it IF you supply an exact location and a picture!

GLUG

I attend meetings of the Green Lane User Group (GLUG) which is chaired by the Department of Infrastructure.

The next meeting is scheduled for 2 December 2020.

David Leiserach Footpaths Officer 17 November 2020

- DL advised that we will not be getting involved in the discussion between DoI and the land owner regarding the path known as 'The Donkey Track'.
- Quiggins Lane, from Ballakilpheric to the Sloc. The new owners of the cottage known as 'Potters Cottage' are saying that this is not a Prow/footpath. DL has advised DoI that this is a U class road and we will not support any change to its status.

9. **Safety Officer's Report:** Pat Mudie

- **Risk Assessments:**

PM reported that currently 100% of risk assessments are being recorded, which is excellent and our thanks go to the walk leaders. PM asks, that for insurance purposes, walk leaders advise her when walks are cancelled for future reference.

- **Incident Reports:**

There have been no incidents.

10. **Annual General Meeting Thursday 25th March 2021:**

- KH asked which committee members are due for re-election in 2021. Membership Secretary Maree Harper is due for re-election in 2021 and has advised the committee that she will not be seeking re-election as she has held this post for many years and it is time for someone else to step in, ideally before the end of the year so that she can work with them over the busiest period. KH suggested that MH put an item on the website detailing the duties of the membership secretary and asking for interested members to come forward. Peter Gunn will stand for re-election. KH feels that all committee members should contribute to the running of the club.

ACTION: MH to advertise position of membership secretary on the website.

- JV asked about a new President. JV said that Gill Percival has been suggested and we should bear in mind Brian Beattie and Peter Gunn for instance. KH said this can be discussed once the constitution has been clarified with regards to term of office. PG said the constitution needed to be updated with regard to the change of name for the club and the role and function of the President. The appointment of President has historically been an annual appointment. KH said that we will discuss a suitable candidate at the next meeting. KH asked PG to put something in writing for this particular item in the constitution with regards to the change. PG replied that we do not have a full committee of ten, should we remain at seven? It was agreed that this works well with most committee members having a responsible position.

ACTION: PG and KH to review Constitution for items which need to be updated or clarified.

- DL said that he is stepping down from his position of producing the walks schedules. KH said that this position needs to be kept within the committee and asked PG if he would be interested. PG replied that he does not have the necessary computer skills. LP said that we need to have someone in place before the AGM in order to produce the Summer schedules in time. We should co-opt a suitable member to do this with a view to joining the committee at the AGM. MH could add it to the item on the website regarding a new membership secretary.

ACTION: MH to add vacancy for someone to produce the Walks Schedule to website item for new membership secretary.

- JV has approached George Sharpe regarding him being an independent Examiner for the MFCG accounts due to his background in finance. George is happy to do this and will liaise with JV.

- Name Change. KH suggested that giving the membership various options was the sensible and fair solution. One option could be for no change. All members of the committee have differing views to including different key words e.g. 'Walking', 'Manx', 'Footpaths' etc.. KH asked all the committee to speak to club members whilst out walking and bring their favoured proposal to the next meeting. After discussion three potential names would be put forward to the membership. A committee vote will conclude the matter if no agreement can be reached. KH and DL agreed that a strict but simple voting structure was needed in order to get a definitive decision.

ACTION: All committee members, except KH, to bring a suggestion for a new name to the next meeting and discuss with members what they would like the name to be and possibly have a vote for the three other potential name changes.

11. Any other business:

- JV feels that when asking members to vote on a new name we should emphasise DL's contribution to conservation on behalf of the club.
- LP asked if there is a cut-off date for booking the group holiday. KH replied that he will send a reminder to members.

ACTION: KH to remind members about group holiday.

- LP said that she is concerned that Woodbourne House might be too large for the 'Oompah Band' event in June and suggested the Vagabonds Rugby/football club. The room will cost £180 and they can provide a hot buffet for £9-£10 p.h. The committee agreed.

ACTION: LP to book venue and Oompah band.

- PG asked if help was needed for the carol service. LP replied that Sue Sayle from the church organises the tea. John Kneale is preparing the order of service. It was agreed to have members from each group to do the readings.
- KH said the Best Western have not yet decided if they will be doing the Sunday carvery in January for our annual club lunch. Various promenade hotels are available but parking is difficult, so different venues are being investigated. The Grosvenor, Bradda Glen, and Douglas Golf Club were suggested.

ACTION: KH to investigate alternative venue.

12. Date of next meeting: Wednesday 13th January 2021. 2pm at Mylchreest Court.

13. Meeting Closed at 4.15pm

KEN HARDING

CHAIRMAN

DATE

