



MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT MYLCHREEST COURT.

2pm Wednesday 2nd June 2021

Those present: Ken Harding – KH, Lesley Parkington – LP, Jack Verity – JV, David Leiserach – DL, Peter Gunn – PG, Pat Mudie – PM, Peter Corkish – PC.

KH brought the meeting to order and welcomed Peter Corkish onto the committee.

KH thanked DL for the handover to PC of the position of walks list compiler.

1. Apologies: Gill Smith

2. Minutes of the previous meeting: having been circulated beforehand, were approved, and duly signed by the Chair, Ken Harding.

3. Matters Arising from previous minutes:

There were no matters arising.

4. Correspondence: Lesley Parkington

- The only correspondence was an email from MNH confirming dates for Heritage Open Days as being 1st to 3rd October and 8th to 10th October.
- As a member of Green Lanes User Group (GLUG), DL had received an email from MHK Tim Baker asking them to review the scope of Glug and member organisations. DL gave a brief description to the committee of Glug's remit. He stated that Glug was developed to include all users of Green Lanes to preserve and limit damage. Glug will now be known as Countryside Access Group (CAG) and will include, green lanes, bridleways, rights of way, heritage trails etc. The addition of extra stakeholders, i.e., MNH, NFU, Manx Landowners Association, Dept. of Enterprise etc. KH commented this will be a potential positive move forwards and thanks DL for attending the Glug meetings.

5. Treasurer's Report: Jack Verity 2nd June 2021

Our thanks should be recorded to George Sharpe who scrutinised the accounts for the year ending 31st December 2020 before signing them fit for publication. To have a man of his qualifications and experience giving freely of his time is a wonderful bonus to the group.

As of today, the balances are:-

Current a/c.	£2265.95
Savings a/c.	£14424.85

Major income	
Subscriptions	£1910.50 (+£160 prepaid + those who paid May)
Lily Publications	£249.81

Major payments	
Insurance.	£285.57
AGM food.	£280.00
Website upkeep.	£50.00
Stamps.	£80.60
Sundry expenses	£89.09
Printing.	£35.20.

The Treasurer is giving notification of his intention to leave the post at the next AGM.

Jack Verity, Treasurer

JV wished it to be known the George Sharpe had intensely scrutinised the accounts and is very highly qualified to do this.

The extra 50p in the subscriptions is due to an unidentifiable member paying £7.50p for their subscription. £160 was prepaid subs but until May statements are received we will not know exactly how many fully paid up members we have. We may then have up to 250 members which will result in £2500 in subs..

With the increase in subs to £10 approx. 60 members have not re-joined and we suspect these are people who no longer walk and awaiting confirmation on this.

A major necessary expense is the insurance at £285 p.a.

The AGM cost £280 for the buffet.

The £50 website cost was to cover necessary adjustments.

LP clarified that £30 for flowers for the outgoing Membership Secretary and £20 for hire of Church Hall for the Annual Walk tea are included in the Sundry Expenses as well as beverages and biscuits etc., for Winter Talks and events.

Lily Publications are now up to date with the royalties for the walking books with a payment of £249.81.

There were no questions relating to the Accounts.

ACTION: LP to write a letter of thanks to Mr George Sharpe.

6. Membership Secretary's Report:

As we are between Membership Secretaries LP gave the following details:

As of 27th May there were 220 fully paid up members including 5 Life Members i.e.

Sir David Wilson, Peter Gunn, Dougie Newton, Gill Percival and Maree Harper.

There were 14 new members in the last quarter.

7. Date Protection:

There are no known breaches.

KH stated that we will update the Privacy Policy. A point to be amended is to increase the disclosure of the contact details on the application form from the Membership Secretary and the Treasurer to include the group's Chairperson and Secretary. We will remove from the list the walk organisers who may ask permission from each individual member in their respective groups to use their contact details to advise them of changes. The organisers will not share that information with anyone else.

ACTION: KH to update the Privacy Policy and forward it to the committee.

8. Footpaths Officer's Report: David Leiserach

Only one defects has been reported. The Raad ny Foillan near Santon is temporarily closed due to landslip. It is the steps at the gully near Meary Voar. It is possible to avoid this area with a detour of approx.. 2 km. DL suggested that if it is to be an extended closure diversion signs should be put in place. LP said that DoI should repair this area and not be allowed to close it permanently. Discussion turned to the 'cattle damage' on the Raad ny Foillan from Peel to Glen Maye. It was agreed that repair is futile unless the field fences are replaced. DL has complained to DoI re: paths that have been closed in excess of 5 years. He has been assured this will be looked into.

9. Safety Officer's Report: Pat Mudie

- PM said that Risk Assessments are under control with most members happy with the online forms. One particular member refuses to do a R.A. LP asked if PM could contact leaders, perhaps the day before the walk, who fail to send in a R.A. form and remind them that unless they provide a R.A. it will not be an official club walk as we will not be covered by Insurance. The walk can still go ahead but will be unofficial. KH asked PM to produce a plan for protocol for the Safety Officer to follow if this situation arises in the future.

ACTION: PM to produce a plan for the Safety Officer to follow for the situation detailed above.

- **Incident Report:** Pat Mudie
There are very few incident reports, the latest being a member of the Thursday group (PM advised that he is doing well).

The correct protocol regarding Incident reports is:

1. Incident report giving full details of incident (preferably written by a walk leader with information from any witnesses) is sent automatically to Safety Officer when completed on the MFCG website form, and the S.O. shall also be notified by phone.
2. Safety Officer to inform our Insurers within 48 hours by email giving our Policy number and name of group. They will then keep it on file. PM asked for a template of the notification for the Insurers. KH will forward one.
3. If the Safety Officer is unable to do this it is to be passed to the Secretary to take forward.

If this is not done at the earliest possible opportunity we may be denied Insurance cover.

KH will forward a standard letter for the Insurance company to PM.

PM advised the committee of her intention to step down at 2022 AGM.

10. AGM: 27th May 2021:

KH felt that the AGM went well and the venue was excellent and perhaps we should use the Fairway at Peel Golf Club for future AGM's.

PM stated at the AGM that she feels that we are not adhering to the 2011 Constitution.

- In particular section 3b which states 'The affairs of the group shall be managed by an executive committee comprising a Chairman, Secretary, Membership Secretary, Treasurer and six others'. PM asked that this be amended as we do not have nine committee members. It was suggested that this could be amended to read 'up to six other members'. KH stated that all members are welcome to stand for the committee.

- Also section 3k 'The Group's Books of Account and supporting records shall be audited at the end of each financial year by the auditor appointed at the preceding Annual General Meeting. The Auditor shall prepare an Auditor's report which will be presented, with the accounts and balance sheet, at the Annual General Meeting'. It was suggested that this could be amended to read 'Independent Financial Examiner' instead of Auditor. Although those present at 2020 AGM voted to have an Independent Financial Examiner instead of an official auditor, which will cost several hundreds of pounds p.a. PM feels that this person should not be a member of the group. After a lengthy and in-depth discussion, it was agreed that all committee members would send their suggestions for amendments to the constitution to the Chair and a resolution will be put before the 2022 AGM to update it. As we have under £20,000 in the funds we do not legally have to employ an auditor and this was agreed by 45 members at the 2020 AGM. All agreed that the constitution should be reviewed and should be a relevant framework and economical.
- LP suggested a compromise in the interim regarding a change of name for the group. It was clear from many of the members at the AGM that they feel new members are deterred from joining because the current name suggests path clearing etc., but not walking. LP felt we should amend the home page to show:

Welcome to Manx Footpaths Conservation Group and a clear positive message that MFCG is a walking group and provide clear guidance of the groups function.

The Club History page could begin with something similar too :

'The Manx Footpaths Conservation Group, being a highly popular and respected walking group, holds four walks per week (five in the summer) to suit all ages and abilities and also has a varied social calendar'.

then continue...Manx Footpaths Conservation Group (MFCG) was originally established in 1971 etc.. LP said that the group has to encourage new and younger members by letting people know that we are a walking group.

- KH suggested that we introduce a different type of walk for this demographic. This could be shorter, exciting, themed, not necessarily just increasing the strenuous nature/ distance of walks or a combination of all with potentially including shorter walks for families. JV suggested a grading system to show more strenuous walks. Younger people now want a challenge for their leisure time. PC suggested we could link up with other groups e.g. Paddle boarders etc.. LP said that several of our regular Saturday walkers are now walking with another group which is offering a challenge. This proves the point that we have to come up with new ideas. KH will meet/discuss with our younger members to ask what they feel could be potentially a addition to the walk schedule. LP felt that we should make membership free to children under sixteen years of age.

ACTION: All committee members to bring ideas to the next meeting of how to encourage new members.

ACTION: KH to meet/discuss with younger members for their opinions.

ACTION: KH to amend the website and ask Visit IoM to change our profile as above.

11. Constitution:

ACTION: KH asked all committee members to bring to the next meeting their amendments for updating the constitution.

12. Forms on website:

LP asked for the Application and Standing order form be put on the website for prospective members to fill in online or print off. KH and LP will discuss this with the membership Secretary.

13. Heritage Open Days:

LP firstly advised the committee that the MNH Wildlife Week brochure shows our walk on 10th July as starting at 10am. Not 10.30am as agreed. It was agreed to stay with 10am and inform our members of the change.

MNH has confirmed the HOD dates as 1st - 3rd October and 8th – 10th October. Our walks will be on 3rd and 10th October and will start at 10.30am to avoid coinciding with our regular Sunday walks. There should be a heritage theme.

ACTION: LP to ask for volunteers amongst the members to lead the walks.

14. First Aid Renewal:

LP advised that two refresher courses, for 12 per course, are booked for 2nd September and said that there will be one extra space available. She will contact those eligible nearer to the time.

15. Winter Talks:

LP suggested that as we had cancelled Nicky Bryan 'The Life of Bryan' and Neil Morris 'Manx Birdlife' due to Covid, we should invite them back. Suggestions for others were discussed and it was decided on Sue King '19th Century Circus'. The dates of Wednesday 10th November, 12th January and 9th February were decided on.

ACTION: LP to book speakers and venue.

16. New PRoW listings:

DL advised that there is no legal procedure for claiming that a path is a PRoW but he feels that certain places should be e.g. there is no right of way across the frontage of Port Soderick but this is the Raad ny Foillan. It is difficult to understand the legal difference between a PRoW and a Permissive Path, e.g. the path from Black Hut up to North Barrule is not a PRoW or public ramblage so who is responsible for maintaining the boardwalk etc. as it is shown on maps as a PRoW? KH stated that he knows of three land access issues regarding permissive paths that are being considered by DoI to be formalised as PRoWs without discussion with the land owner. All agreed that this was not appropriate. The committee agreed that DL should take action regarding several paths for consideration to be designated PRoWs.

ACTION: DL to contact DoI regarding status of Permissive Paths.

ACTION: DL to develop a process for 'proving' that a path should be a PRoW.

17. Lily Publications:

JV stated that our original contract with Lily for our walking books showed 25% commission but we only received 20%. Lily now wish to drop the commission to 12.5% due to increased costs by Amazon. Our current contract ends in 2021. JV suggested that he and KH contact Lily to negotiate a possible compromise of possibly 15%.

ACTION: KH to contact Miles Cowsill of Lily Publication by letter in the first instance.

18. AOB:

- JV would like all the committee to sit together at the next AGM. LP said that this can be easily arranged but was declined during the 2020 AGM.
- LP mentioned that previously the National Week Walk ended with a faith supper at a local venue in the area of the walk. It is now just a walk with no theme. Should we continue as is? Should we drop the words 'National Week Walk'.
All agreed it should just be a walk.
- LP informed the committee that there is a very nice photo of the Saturday Group on the Knockaloe Heritage Trust site.
- PG asked if the committee wish him to stay as a signatory for cheques. All were happy for PG to remain as signatory. LP said due to the proposed increase in bank charges that we must seriously encourage members not to use cheques. KH said that there are numerous options available to members which are to be investigated.
- PM asked for a list of current personnel on the committee to be added to the AGM minutes. LP replied that a draft had been sent to members for checking before sending out the final draft taking into account committee member's comments. LP will send a full list to the committee.
- PC asked who is in charge of items on the website. KH replied that he, FV and LP all have access.

19. Date of Next Meeting:

KH asked the committee to defer booking a date for the next meeting in order to check the availability of the new Membership Secretary, Gill Smith. DL said that he would prefer not to meet on Wednesdays or Fridays.

20. Close Meeting:

Meeting closed at 16.02

KEN HARDING
CHAIRPERSON

DATE:

