



MANX FOOTPATHS CONSERVATION GROUP

Minutes of the AGM

held at

The Fairway, Peel Golf Club, Peel

7pm on Thursday 23rd March 2023

1. Welcome,

Alistair Lothian opened the meeting welcoming 28 members to the AGM.

Alistair Lothian explained he had stepped down as Chairman several months ago and Peter Gunn had taken over as the acting Chairman. With Peter Gunn having to give his apologies Alistair Lothian offered to Chair the AGM.

There were no objections to that and no one else offered to Chair the AGM.

Proposer: Peter Corkish

Seconder: Paul Castle

2. Apologies:

20 apologies: Peter Gunn, Lesley & Jim Parkington, Gill Smith, Roberta Arden, Sue Harvey, Pauline Murray, Graeham Quilliam, Dot Winrow, Jane Lothian, George Sharpe, Janice McCGuigan, Mark & Moira Pendlebury, Ken Harding, Chris Swinger, Vanda Murray, Rob Wright, Heather Clague.

3. To approve the minutes of the previous year's Annual General Meeting held on 24th March 2022

Proposer: David Leiserach

Seconder: John Radcliffe

There were no matters arising from last year's minutes.

Minutes duly approved.

4. Committee's Report

As you are all aware the MFCG constitution defines our objectives shall be:

- To foster and encourage walking for recreation and pleasure...
- To pressurise Government bodies to carry out maintenance promptly according to their obligations....

To that end the committee works tirelessly.

Firstly, thank you to all our members for supporting MFCG by walking and enjoying each other's company and especially to our volunteer walk leaders and co-ordinators, you are the backbone of the walking group.

2022 has been a more normal year with Covid having less of an effect on all of our lives. Unfortunately, Long Covid still affects many people and some of our members have been hit hard with it. Hopefully a cure will be found and everyone with Long Covid will in time get back to full health.

Your committee has worked throughout the year to bring extra activities to the group such as the visits to the Ayres Nature Reserve and previously the boat trips to the Calf, both of which were very popular. We are currently working on several ideas for other events such as these and if you have any ideas that you would like us to look into, please let a committee member know.

On Boxing Day several members joined in with the old Manx tradition of 'Hunt the Wren' at St. Johns. The committee are looking into other 'Manx Traditions' that can be linked to our walks - watch out for these on your summer programme.

Our annual carol service at St. Luke's went very well although numbers were down a little due to icy road conditions. Many thanks to those who read the lessons, and to those who braved the weather conditions. A big thank you to Sue and the team at St. Luke's for all their help. A special mention to Rev. Jo Dudley for accompanying the carols on the Organ.

The New Year Lunch was, once again, very successful with everyone enjoying the delicious carvery and quizzes. - Our thanks to the Talk of the Town for making it a special day.

The committee will be inviting members to take part in First Aid courses later in the year. This is a very basic course and is always a useful certificate to have. Details to follow.

Do you have any of the original MFCG walking books?

Updating the website history page is ongoing. The plan is to scan some of the past published books onto the web-site so they are not lost forever but we are having difficulty sourcing them. If you have any old copies tucked away in a drawer, please let a committee member know.

And last but not least...Jack Verity and David Leiserach.

Jack is retiring as Treasurer and from the committee. He has been on the committee for many years and will still remain a valued and active member of the group having offered to lead 'special interest' walks on occasional Wednesday evenings throughout the summer. We thank you Jack for all your hard work and good humour.

Due to other commitments and after many years of diligent work David has decided to step down as Footpaths Officer but has kindly agreed to stay on the committee to share his invaluable experience. We thank David for his meticulous reports and all his hard work liaising with the appropriate government departments. Paul Castle has been co-opted onto the committee in order to take over this role with immediate effect to retain continuity.

5 Treasurer's Report

Jack Verity...

The only change to the accounts is the amount against membership represents an accurate amount of paying members on the register.

There were no extraordinary income or expenditure.

A question was raised regarding the future income from book sales and how this stood with the contract agreement with Lily Publishing. It was explained that Lily Publishing are not willing to print and distribute any more MFCG walking books and as the agreement stands Lily Publishing will distribute and sell the remaining books they have in store and cease working with MFCG.

The income over many years has been reasonable at the high hundreds of pounds per annum but this revenue stream has now more or less come to an end.

6 Can we approve the balance sheet and Accounts for the previous financial year

Proposer: Brian Beatie

Secunder: Paul de Weerd

7 To appoint an Auditor or Independent Financial Examiner for ensuing year

George Sharpe is happy to be the Independent Financial Examiner for 2023

Proposer: Peter Corkhill

Secunder: Clive Walsh

8 Membership Secretary's Report

In Gill's absence Alistair Lothian read out the report:

Applications for membership through the 'Join Us' section of the MFCG website continues to be very successful, and all new members now pay their subscription directly by bank transfer.

Correspondence with members is almost entirely by email, keeping the Group's costs down with regard to printing and posting.

Membership numbers remain strong; there was a total of 291 members in 2022, of whom 286 were paying members. 5 members have been awarded life membership, and therefore do not pay an annual subscription.

There were 46 new members in the year, and 2 paying members ceased membership during the year, having paid their subscription for 2022.

To date for 2023, we have already welcomed 15 new members. It is normal for around 50 members to not renew their membership at the start of a new membership year, and this year is no exception. In fact, the figure is slightly higher this year, with 23 members having confirmed that they will not be re-joining, and a further 43 membership fees still outstanding at 15/3/23. It is assumed that these members no longer wish to take part in the Group's activities, and they will be removed from our database following the AGM. 50% of new joiners in 2022 have not re-joined. Having only been Membership Secretary for 2 years I do not know if this is a higher than normal 'drop out' rate, but it does seem to be a disappointingly large percentage.

Looking forward to welcoming more new members as the weather improves!

9 Data Protection Officer's Report

There have been no data breaches during 2022.

10 Safety Officer's Report

Paul de Weerd.... **Safety Officer's report to the 2023 AGM of the MFCG**

As a group we recognise that walking carries inherent risks which can be mitigated but not eliminated, hence the regular reminders that "you walk at your own risk".

These risks include falls or illness (perhaps in remote locations), traffic, livestock, bad weather and even getting lost. The recces which walk leaders carry out before they take the group down a route are a key part of identifying and managing these risks.

Walk leaders record their recces via the form on the website. Most leaders seem to manage well. I have been impressed by the high rate of completion of this form, which runs at about 95% and the omissions seem to be down to somebody forgetting. However, I'd love us to hit 100%. If you have IT problems that prevent you from completing the form, please let me know and I can arrange to complete it for you over the phone.

The Committee is updating its guidance to walkers and leaders. There is one point to stress in advance of that; a walk leader can cancel or cut short a walk in response to adverse weather, or other circumstances. If that happens, walkers should respect and support the leader's decision. I have heard Alfred Wainwright's famous quote about there being no such thing as bad weather, but none of his pictures of the fells seem to have been drawn in fog or horizontal rain.

11 Footpath Officer's Report

Paul Castle.....

Footpath Officer's report for AGM 23 March 2003

Firstly, a big thank-you to David for having done this task for several years now. David also spent an afternoon with me explaining how to use the various tools to be able to do this job. He has also agreed to continue to monitor path closures; again thank you.

My job then is to report footpath problems that you the walkers come across on Island footpaths.

To do this effectively I need
4 things.

- 1.) The exact location of the problem. What3Words is great, but OS Co-ordinates, or Longitude and Latitude can also be used.
- 2.) The Footpath, Right of Way (or Road) number. This is what the Department of infrastructure record the fault by, if you know this, please include in your report.
- 3.) A brief description of the problem.
- 4.) A photograph (or two) of the problem. Ideally reduce the size of the photo to no more than 50K.

I have changed the format used to report faults to the Department I now send them a plain text file of the problem, which I believe is easier to read. A representative from the Department confirmed that they are happy with this format.

Statistics

So far this year I have reported 26 defects. These have been acknowledged by the Department of Infrastructure, but I have not heard that any have been rectified as yet!

On a positive note, I have spotted two footpaths in Laxey that have been re-opened. One from Laxey church to Captains Hill, and Captain's Path, from Captains Hill to the Washing floors. Both short paths of limited value, but it is good to see things being fixed!

Sample report:-

Manx Footpaths Conservation Group

Fault Report

MFCG REF 23/18

DATE REPORTED 13 FEB 2023

LOCATION DESCRIPTION Lhergy Cripperty, Ballerghy

RIGHT OF WAY NO 221

START POINT

END POINT

LATITUDE LONGITUDE 54.161987 -4.539404

WHAT3WORDS amount groups amber

FAULT DESCRIPTION Very slippery stile

SUGGESTED SOLUTION Mesh needed

12 To fix the Annual Subscription payable from 1st January 2024

Committee is suggesting the annual subscription is maintained at £10.00 per annum

Proposer : Paul Castle

Secunder : Phil Kneen

13 To elect members to the Executive Committee

We can have One President and up to 10 committee members.

At the moment.

President Brian Beatie, one year term

On the committee: 9 members

Committee Positions (3 year term)

Acting Chair Peter Gunn,

Secretary Lesley Parkington,

Treasurer Jack Verity,

Membership Secretary, Gillian Smith

Data Protection Officer, Gillian Smith

Footpaths Officer, Paul Castle (co opted)

Safety Officer, Paul de Weerd

Committee Members, David Leiserach,

Peter Corkish

Alistair Lothian

Jack Verity is resigning from the committee after many years as the treasurer.

Angela Weston has volunteered to become Treasurer

Nominated by : Lesley Parkington , Diane Turner,

Seconded by : Jim Parkington , Denise Eckersley.

Paul Castle Co opted onto the committee as Foot Paths Officer

Nominated by : Diane Turner, Lesley Parkington

Seconded by : Denise Eckersley, Jim Parkington

Lesley Parkington three year term has passed. Lesley has volunteered to carry on for a further three years.

Nominated by : Alistair Lothian, Diane Turner,

Seconded by : Paul Castle, Denise Eckersley

Geoff Clague has volunteered to become a committee member.

Nominated by : Paul Wilkinson

Seconded by : Jud Doyle

Alistair Lothian volunteered to step back up as Chairman.

Nominated by : Lesley Parkington , Diane Turner

Seconded by : Paul Castle, Denise Eckersley

Brian Beattie volunteered to carry on as President for this year.

Proposer : Geoff Clague

Secunder : Phil Kneen

Alistair Lothian asked if everybody at the meeting if they were happy with the above?

One question was raised: Was the offer of joining the committee open to any member of the MFCG. The answer to that is yes. Every member had the opportunity to put their name forward with a proposer and a seconder. It was explained that the indication was there was going to be more members offering to join the committee than spaces available and a contingency had been prepared organising a blind ballot. In the end only the above offered to join the committee and therefore no election was necessary.

Alistair Lothian thanked the committee for all their hard work and dedication.

Alistair Lothian again thanked Jack on behalf of the committee for his hard work and dedication and as a small token of appreciation the committee gave a small present of two bottles of wine.

14 Resolutions

No resolutions were received by the cut-off date of the 23rd of February. One resolution received after the cut-off date. The committee will discuss this at a future committee meeting.

15 AOB

15.1 Mr Colin Jelfs who passed away has left many maps and books. His wife Olwen has passed on the walking books and maps to the committee. Olwen has no need of them anymore. If any are of interest Olwen has kindly offered them to members MFCG. To take away and keep.

15.2 The funds are growing year on year. What should the MFCG do with the funds? Agreed to write to members asking for suggestions for the committee to investigate.

The last significant project was the happy hikers at a cost of circa £7201. This included carving the happy hikers and purchase of the land the happy hikers sit on stated by Jack

Verity. A question was raised requesting the committee to research the information regarding the Happy Hikers and confirm if MFCG do indeed own the land the Happy Hikers sit on and if so should the purchase value of the land be stated in the Balance Sheet? What liability if any and responsibility has MFCG?

(The comment above by Jack Verity regarding MFCG owning the land the Happy Hikers Memorial Bench sit on was incorrect. After some research and advice from Brian Beatie and clarification from DEFA , a Mr Graeme Watson , it has been confirmed MFCG do not own the land but have indefinite use while the Happy Hikers are in good repair)

It was explained that the money historically was for helping maintain foot paths and contribute to capital projects such as foot bridges and styles etc but the government departments such as the DOI are not interested or cannot accept funds from MFCG and that is why it has been accumulating.

16 Close meeting

Everyone was thanked for attending and invited to join the committee for a light buffet supper.