



MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING at MYLCHREEST COURT, PEEL

2pm Monday 27th March 2023

Those present: Alistair Lothian – AL, Lesley Parkington – LP, Angela Weston – AW, David Leiserach – DL, Paul De Weert – PdW, Paul Castle – PAC, Geoff Clague – GC.

1. Chairman Alistair Lothian welcomed Angela and Geoff to the committee
2. **Apologies:** Gill Smith, Peter Gunn, Peter Corkish.
3. **Minutes from the previous meeting:** having been circulated beforehand were approved by the committee and signed by Alistair Lothian, Chairman.
4. **Matters arising from previous meeting:**
 - Ken Harding, as the new walking champion, had asked to attend our meeting to explain his role. This is still his intention but meanwhile several committee members attended the first walking forum and he would like the MFCG to continue to be involved in this. The purpose of the 'champions' is to promote the Island.
 - LP has obtained the relevant forms to change from IoM Bank to Lloyds.

ACTION: LP to forward banking forms to AW and AL.

- Guidelines & Code of Practice: The guidelines have been updated and a Code of Practice added. A 'Duty of Care' has been added to the Walk Leaders Guidelines and an explanation for walkers.

ACTION: AL to update guidelines and forward to committee members for approval.

- Happy Hikers. AL & PAC assessed the carving. They, along with two volunteers, will obtain the necessary equipment at a cost of approx. £100 and carry out the maintenance.
- Club 'days out'. Members are encouraged to suggest possible days out e.g. Calf trips, Ayres Nature Reserve etc.
Suggestions from committee: PAC - walk to include picnic lunch at Knockaloe Beg Farm, PdW - walk to include Pie 'n Mash train
GC suggested Pie 'n peas on Snaefell with members either walking up, down, or both or just using the tram. This would need to be booked early due to cruise ships and tours.
AW suggested walking our national long-distance trails such as Triskellion Way and Raad ny Foillan over several months. It was agreed to plan a long distance walk for the second Saturday in the month.
LP suggested Barrule to Barrule. It was agreed that we should plan to do Barrule to Barrule during the summer followed by R n F.

- Membership Cards. Millets do not require a membership card for discount, but other outlets do. After discussion regarding cost and regulating the use, it was decided not to proceed with membership cards.
- Footpaths Defects: PAC suggested that we should prompt members to forward photos, W3W and map ref when reporting effect. GC asked that we explain to members how to find What3Words.

ACTION: Committee to produce crib sheet for members with comprehensive details.

5. Correspondence: Lesley Parkington

- PC has forwarded details of walks required for summer schedule.
- LP read out an email from Rushen Heritage Group asking for MFCG walking books to sell in their centre. LP advised them that we no longer have stocks and will not be re-printing them.
- LP confirmed that we have received the relevant paperwork from Lloyds Bank to change banks.

ACTION: LP to forward details to AW and AL.

- LP and PC received a complaint from a walk leader regarding members walking ahead of the leader. It was agreed that this is very difficult to regulate and no further action will be taken.

6. Treasurer's Report: AW has now taken over as Treasurer and will update the report at the next meeting. AW has asked requested a copy of the latest insurance policy from Howdens via email for ease of distribution to other members.

ACTION: AW and PdW to initially review the policy to ensure it fits with current expectations.

7. Membership Secretary's Report: Gill Smith 23.03.23

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!

8. Data Protection Officer's Report: Gill Smith

There have been no data breaches during 2022.

9. Footpaths Officer' Report 23.03.23: 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.

10. Safety Officer's report 23.03.23: Paul de Weerd

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 walking 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. Walks Schedules – Discussed in a previous item.

12. Heritage Open Days: After discussion, the committee agreed that the club should no longer take part in Heritage Open Days as we are not involved in heritage.

13. Annual Walk: The date was previously agreed as Saturday 13th May at Mylchreest Court, Peel. The long walk to be approx. 8 miles and led by AL and the short walk, starting at 1.30pm, approx. 3-4 miles. DL suggested JV as leader. However, another walk has been arranged for this date so it is suggested to move this to 20th May.

ACTION: LP to contact JV to lead short walk.

ACTION: AL volunteered Jane Lothian and DL volunteered to organise the tea and cakes at Mylchreest Court.

14. National Week Walk: PdW will organise a walk on Wednesday evening 5th July followed by refreshments.

15. First Aid packs: Seven packs have been returned for renewal. One is damaged and needs to be replaced. DL suggested checking if Ramblers recommend a First Aid Pack.

ACTION: LP to check availability of recommended packs.

16. Rambler's Grant: DL had previously approached DEFA about applying the grant of up to £2000 to any project they have in mind. Little interest was shown by DEFA. LP asked PAC to approach them again as she feels that working in conjunction with DEFA and Ramblers would be beneficial to the club.

17. Change of Bank: LP will forward the mandate to change signatories on the IOM bank account and paperwork to open a new account with Lloyds bank to AW and AL. It was agreed to try and pursue staying with the IOM bank if possible due to the ease with managing the collection of subscriptions etc.

ACTION: AW to complete the necessary paperwork to amend the current signatories with IOM. Lloyds to be considered as a back up if the IOM Bank does not progress

18. Matters Arising from AGM 23.03.23: The meeting went well. One question raised was, 'Is membership of the committee is open to all club members. AL replied that any paid-up member could stand for election onto the committee. In the event of too many applicants a blind ballot would be held.

A second question was 'do we own land on Peel Hill'. Information received since the AGM is that we do not. The land on which the Happy Hiker is situated is not owned by us but we have indefinite use of the site of the Happy Hikers memorial bench.

We thank Mrs. Olwen Jelfs for donating walking books and maps in memory of her late husband Colin. Several members made use of them.

19. AOB: The first Saturday of May was originally cancelled as it is King Charles' Coronation. It was agreed by the committee that it should go ahead. A volunteer is needed to lead the walk.

20. Date and time of next meeting: 2pm Monday 22nd. May at Mylchreest Court.

21. Meeting Closed at 15.45pm

ALISTAIR LOTHIAN - CHAIRMAN