

Minutes of the Milford Area Preservation Group AGM

Thursday 27th April 2023 at the Bourne Community Farm

1. Apologies

Cllr and committee member Charles McGrath was unable to attend due to ill health issues.

2. Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair, David Lovibond opened the meeting by welcoming members and guests. He emphasised the fact that the MAPG are duty bound to protect our countryside which is at peril along with our history, landscapes and buildings. Our work here in Wiltshire is of great importance and protecting our connection with the past is paramount. He went on to explain that this last year has been very busy with the introduction of speed watch, the extension of the 20 mph zones, litter picks, planting of the oak tree, publication of The Milfordian and a number of fund-raising events. The proposal of becoming a charity will bring a change of status and a developing sense of pride.

Approval of the minutes for Milford Area Preservation Group's last AGM in 2022 was proposed by Tony Goddard and seconded by Peter Hicks.

3. Treasurer's Report: Louise Gay

Louise distributed copies of the accounts for the previous year up to 31st January 2023. With an increase in membership and donations from businesses, the account is very healthy. She explained that the account is no longer with HSBC. The switch to Lloyds took place in September 2022. The new bank details are in The Milfordian. The MAPG has also opened a savings account with Lloyds. Charity status would enable us to claim tax relief thereby generating more funds. Louise thanked John Perry for his sterling work as auditor of the accounts. Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Andy Howard and seconded by Tony Goddard. The appointment of John Perry as auditor for the coming year was proposed by Jim Boyers and seconded by Jo Boyers.

4. Membership: Barbara Lovibond

Barbara explained that membership of MAPG now stands at 307 households, 33 more than last year. 82% of occupied houses are now members. Action days and events have raised awareness of what we do and have encouraged more people to join us. Since 2019 membership has increased by 50%. We have a growing database of contacts who we email with news of events and volunteer days. Members can contact Barbara to add their details. We comply with GDPR.

5. Fundraising: Laura Jones

Laura expressed her delight at the success of last year's events. Over 50 people attended both the Quiz Evening and the Wine and Cheese event. She encouraged members to attend events, particularly the forthcoming quiz evening. Other planned events include the 'Walk in Time' led by David Lovibond, the Summer Garden Party and the October event which could be an Oktoberfest.

6. Speedwatch: Peter Hicks

Two teams have covered over 50 hours of speedwatch along Milford Mill Road. Counts of vehicles during the sessions show a huge increase in traffic with, on occasions, over 1000 travelling just one way. 809 cars have been caught speeding so far. Most were travelling over 25 mph with some reaching 35 mph. Peter thanked volunteers and appealed for more people to come forward to help. Police training is available for anyone interested.

7. Milford Hollow: Barbara Lovibond

Barbara explained that with the daffodils, bluebells and wild garlic out, Milford Hollow is at its best. This year we have added a new path and handrail, an information board, saplings and plenty of ferns. The plan for 2023 is to instal a composting system, funds for which will be raised at the Quiz Evening. More planting of bulbs will take place in the autumn. Barbara thanked the small team of 'Hollowers' who help to look after the area and asked that if anyone was interested in joining them, to let her know. To secure the future and protection of Milford Hollow, the committee have approached the council with a view to leasing the land. Members present were asked to vote on the proposal by a show of hands which resulted in a positive vote.

8. Becoming a Charity: Peter Hicks

The committee have discussed the pros and cons of becoming a charity. As an unincorporated charity we would gain greater standing in the community and have more opportunity to raise funds and claim tax relief on donations. It was proposed that the current committee members would become trustees. Andy Howard commented that there has been tremendous growth in the group over recent years and becoming a charity would be the next step. He pointed out that it does require greater commitment from committee members and an increase in administrative and accounting tasks. New members and succession planning would be needed. David Lovibond introduced Caroline Shanklyn who will be responsible for corporate fundraising. Jim Boyers asked whether becoming a charity would affect the committee's agility when it comes to decision-making. Peter Hicks explained that the committee would be duty bound to make honest and fair decisions. Paul Butler asked what the charity's objectives would be – a list of these were read out from the new constitution which is on the website. Andy Howard pointed out that we should refer to Milford Area, not just Milford, as stated in some of the objectives. Accepting the new constitutional changes was proposed by David Lovibond, seconded by Andy Howard and voted positively by those present. No one voted against the proposal. There were 5 abstentions. That we should become a registered charity was proposed by David Lovibond, seconded by Caroline Shanklyn. Those present voted in favour with four abstentions. David Lovibond declared that after 42 years this was a significant step forward.

9. Election of Committee Members

David stated that being a committee member meant full commitment from each member. All 10 members agreed to this and are willing to stand again. An acceptance of the committee was proposed by Jim Boyers and seconded by Jo Boyers.

10. Addresses from Councillors

Ian McLellan – Ian spoke with passion about his objections to new plans put forward by the developer for 155 houses on the field next to Church Road. He has written a viewpoint newsletter and asked for volunteers to help distribute it. He urged members to access the plans online and write objections. Hundreds of locals did this for the last

set of plans. Developers have now made alterations to the plans including a reduction in land used and removing the car park. The 16th May is the deadline for objections and comments. Ian explained the 20 mph zone which will run from Manor Farm Road through to Riverbourne Road and Potters Way. Plans for a new Asda on Pearce way were mentioned.

Nick Baker Chair of Laverstock and Ford Parish Council. Nick thanked MAPG for their hard work mentioning in particular the plantings in public areas ie Milford Hollow. The Laverstock and Ford Neighbourhood Plan is now complete, thanks to the work of many volunteers who have also managed to keep community buildings open during the cost of living crisis. On-going battles include traffic on Church Road and flooding on Milford Mill Road. Nick will continue to push Wilts Highways for decisions and actions. He invited those present to the Laverstock and Ford Council AGM to be held on 1st May in the Bourne Community Farm barn. The PCC and chief constable will be present. Local community groups have been invited to set up displays about their organisations. Nick ended by stating that the parish council is committed to being there for the local community and doing what they want.

Charles McGrath Milford Councillor and SCC: In Charles' absence due to ill health, David Lovibond summarised notes sent in by Charles. Traffic congestion continues on the A36. Plans are in place to make alterations to the roundabout to ease the flow of traffic. Decisions are to be made in the next 6 months. Cost would be a factor.

Talk by Nick Tomalin from the RSPB

11.AOB