



Milford Conservation Volunteers



www.milfordconservation.org

Minutes for MCV 10th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

held on Saturday 19th March 2022

Milford Community Centre

Chairman's Introduction: David Horne welcomed people to the meeting and talked about the sad loss of Tony Locke during the year. He was delighted to welcome members of Tony's family to the meeting. The next few minutes were spent quietly thinking of Tony and all his amazing work for MCV while we watched a series of photographs of him performing task work.

1) **List of apologies:** Di and David Cobbett, Lorraine and Steve Mabbett, Martin Gretton, Paul Gayford, Anne and Richard Bickle, Mike Collison, Andy Hallows, Ian Ramus, Douglas and Rosemary Marcuse, Heather and Lionel Allery, Sheila Wicks, Yvonne Mercer, Wendy Ray, Ron and Maureen West, Ginny Campbell, Gerhard and Hannie Croeser, Peter Hopkins.

Present: 29 Members and 8 guests.

2) **Approval of minutes of previous AGM held on 31st March 2021.**

2 Items were corrected: 8) should read Tim Light – Not Lightfoot.

12) should read G3-24

3) **There were no matters arising.**

The minutes were then approved.

Proposer: William Reed

Seconder: Bruce Haliday

All agreed by a show of hands and DH signed them as a true record of the meeting.

4) Chairman's Report:

My tenure as MCV Chairman began on a high with the group being awarded the "Queen's Award for Voluntary Service" in June 2020.

The formal presentation by the Queen's representative, the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire Nigel Atkinson, was much delayed but eventually took place on 14th July 2021 at the South Lawn Hotel.

The invitation to a Buckingham Palace Garden party was cancelled in 2021 and we presumed that was the end of it, however out of the blue we received an invite to go to the Palace this May. Keith and I are planning to attend and are awaiting final details.

The MCV group activities have been severely blighted by the covid pandemic. However, as the restrictions have gradually eased, we have endeavoured to get back to some semblance of normality.

- 1) Committee meetings have continued, initially in zoom format and more recently in person. Indeed, as many of you will recall we hosted a successful zoom AGM last year.*
- 2) The bird observatory and bird hide at Sturt Pond have now fully re-opened. The latter after extensive refurbishment. Birding for beginners open sessions continue to be operated on specific Saturday mornings.*
- 3) Newsletters and Keyhaven Pans reports have been regularly circulated to members thanks to the efforts of Keith and Chris.*
- 4) Task activities have re-convened with a number of sessions organised by Steve and Lorraine Mabbet mainly clearing fallen timber from the Pleasure Grounds.*
- 5) A Himalayan balsam eradication program was operated over the summer months with the aim of removing the plants throughout the entire Danes Stream catchment. This project was co-ordinated by Catherine Chatters from the Hants Wild-life trust but expertly organised at a local level by Mary Macmillan.*
- 6) Salt marsh and creeks boat trips have resumed under the control of Keith.*

Going forward is not going to be easy as a couple of our key committee members are standing down.

However, we are making positive progress in the following areas:

- a) A new online bank account has been opened thanks to David Cobbett. This will make our financial management more straight forward and secure.*
- b) The MCV website, expertly set up by Angela Bunting is currently undergoing rejuvenation by Julie Hallows, with the aim of making all the information it contains*

totally up to date and regularly refreshed. It is planned that in future members will be advised on the website of all forthcoming activities.

- c) *Active planning is taking place on Phase 2 of the Biodiversity Action Plan for the parish area with the aim of recording, protecting and enhancing species of wild-life under threat. One such project will be the study of our local bat population this Summer. For such work we need enthusiastic local people with either existing knowledge or a willingness to learn. I am aware that there are a number of people who would like to help in such matters so I would ask members to keep an eye on newsletters and the website and then offer their services where they think they can make a positive contribution. In the bat study for example we are looking for volunteers, in pairs, to make visual observations and try out bat detection meters that we are being loaned.*

I very much look forward to hearing from a number of you in due course.

5) **Treasurer's Report:** The accounts and relevant papers were circulated to Committee members prior to the meeting. The final accounts, on the back of the AGM agenda, were handed to all comers on arrival.

With reference to the accounts for last year: The Chairman read the Treasurer's report:

"Overall income was down mainly due to the fact that there were less Specific Donations and there were no Social Events, and Log Sales were down. Bird Hide Donations have started to pick up with the re-opening of the hide.

Expenditure was considerably more than Income. Projects accounted for most of the spend with the Log Store and Bird Hide roof taking most of the expenditure also MCV were able to invest in training for the use of the chainsaw and some money was spent on improving the signage at the Bird Hide and the Observatory

Since last year's AGM we have been trying to gain Internet access to the account and it was agreed that the Treasurer proceed with this.

Finally, in the past couple of weeks, MCV have managed to open a new account that gives access to Internet Banking whilst preserving the controls of the constitution.

This means that we have new bank account details. These will be available to members when needed.

As usual our Income and Expenditure for the year ahead has been anticipated, and £17K for projects and Contingencies have been identified, many of which may not take off this year but never the less MCV remain in a strong financial position.

A decision was taken for a replacement charge of £5 for the Observatory key-job, but because of the disruption in charges and the restricted use of the Observatory in 2022, the opportunity was taken to bring the key-job payments in line with membership and make them renewable every January.

Membership is a little uncertain so far this year. Over 75% of last year's members have renewed but of the total recorded membership only about 60% have renewed so far.

On the plus side, already this year MCV have had 24 new members".

6) Acceptance of the Accounts:

Proposer: Jenny Spencer

Secoder: Anne Jenks

All agreed by a show of hands

7) Appointment of Examiner of the Accounts:

Tim Light of Lighter Touch has been the auditor for MCV for 5 years now.

He has been very helpful in ensuring that all the necessary requirements are met.

Agreement to appoint Lighter Touch as our Examiner of Accounts for 2022:

Proposer: Julie Hallows

Secoder: Peter Hebard

All agreed by a show of hands.

8) Setting MCV Membership Fee for 2023:

The Committee had discussed the membership subscription for 2023. It has been unchanged for 5 years but the Committee considered that it should remain at £7.50 per member for a further year.

Proposer: Keith Metcalf

Secoder: Penny Ramus All agreed by a show of hands

9) Proposed changes to the MCV Constitution:

David Horne outlined the proposed changes to the MCV Constitution which the Committee felt were needed to accommodate the increased activities and interests of the Group.

All agreed by a show of hands

10) Conservation Officer's Report:

Keith Metcalf presented his report in the form of a whistle stop tour of the area with a series of slides with the emphasis on why Milford on Sea is such an amazing place to live. Aerial views showed the Hurst Spit and the marshes where so much wild-life can be seen so easily. The work of MCV over the past few years was depicted, examples of bird life that is increasing in numbers but also those which are dropping in number, mainly associated with climate change. Work was depicted with the local school children, scouts and brownies and encouraging adult beginners to enjoy wildlife. Work with the school involved a £500 grant last year which was spent on hedgehog houses, bat boxes and tree planting.

The tour was concluded with the stark warning of the ever-increasing sea level which poses a huge danger to the marshes and local communities. This was portrayed very clearly with photos of the Solent Way footpath and Salt Grass Lane which are regularly flooded and will disappear in the near future unless a board walk can be funded and built.

There is also a grave concern over the marshes from Hurst Spit to Lymington and much work and thought is being put into various options for long term solutions, by a consortium of interested parties – The Stake Holders advisory Group,

Chris Barrass's work at the Observatory was shown by daylight and also, interestingly by night vision camera showing foxes, badgers, deer, otters, and even a pole cat.

11) Election of Honorary Officers and Committee Members:

David Horne announced that sadly Keith Metcalf and Mary Macmillan would both be standing down, although it is inevitable that they will continue to be visible, pursuing their specific interests in wildlife and conservation work in the area. A vote of thanks was made for the many years of invaluable contributions they had made serving on the committee. A presentation was then made to both of a pollinator friendly, perennial climbing plant.

The remaining Officers and Committee Members were duly re-elected by a show of hands.

12) Presentation of The Volunteer of the Year Award:

A member of Tony Locke's family accepted the Award for 2020 awarded to Tony posthumously for his dedication and amazing work over many years for MCV and the previous group (WRG).

The Award for 2021 was given to Martin Gretton for his years of help often using his engineering background skills. Unfortunately, he was unable to attend.

13) Any Other Business: None

The meeting was closed at 19.55.

After a 20-minute break for socialising we were treated to an excellent talk by Pete Durnell, reserve manager with the Countryside Service of Hampshire County Council on the Lymington / Keyhaven Marshes Nature Reserve.