



# Milford Conservation Volunteers



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## MCV 12<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES (DRAFT)

27<sup>th</sup> March 2024

### Milford on Sea Community Centre (The Bridge)

*The meeting opened with a picture show of local views and wildlife taken by local photographers, compiled by Julie Hallows*

**The Chairman, David Horne (DH), welcomed everyone** to the 12<sup>th</sup> MCV Annual General Meeting, thanking the members and visitors for attending and remarking on how pleasing it was to see them.

**1 Apologies for absence:** Peter Hopkins, Alastair Smith, Marian Butcher, Ron West, Wendy Thomas, Ginny Campbell, William Bennett, Diana and Ian Colquhoun, Anne Bickle, William Read, Mike Collinson and Mary Macmillan. There were 37 members in attendance.

#### **2. Approval of the Minutes of the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

These minutes had been circulated prior to the meeting and were also on the website.

**Proposer:** Ian Ramus                      **Seconder:** Diana Cobbett                      **All agreed by a show of hands**

DH signed them as a true record of the meeting.

**3. Matters Arising:** There were no matters arising

#### **4 Chairman's Report**

“ I reckon overall the MCV has had a pretty good year, although we did face some setbacks.

Shortly after the last AGM, one of our hard-working committee members unexpectedly resigned. That had an immediate detrimental impact on both our logging and small task activities.

Thankfully David Cobbett gallantly stepped up to take over the logging operation. The parish council generously built us a dedicated new shed which enabled us to store and dry logs to the legally required “Ready to Burn “standard. This enabled us to fulfil most of our outstanding orders.

We were also most fortunate that one of our new recruits to the committee, Adrian Palmer, offered to fill the gap with respect to the leading the team of volunteers on various tasks. He began liaising with the parish clerk on various projects within the Pleasure Grounds and Studland Common.

Subsequently over the year we have carried out various tasks including access pathway improvements, scrub clearance for the benefit of wildflowers, as well as Rhododendron bashing and Himalayan balsam pulling, the removal of which leads to enhancement of the habitat by opening up the ground to other more beneficial plants thus improving the biodiversity within the Pleasure Grounds.

As a recreation and educational activity monthly walks were organised by Julie Hallows and led by a selection of members. These proved to be popular with knowledge shared on birds and plants encountered.

The ever-popular winter Keyhaven Creeks & Saltmarsh boat tours organised and led by Keith Metcalf have again been successful with close encounters of various unusual birds and often a grey seal as a bonus.

Both the bird hides under our control are proving popular with visitors and productive for the species observed. Chris Barrass has continued his invaluable daily visits and observation records at Keyhaven, and produced for us without fail his popular monthly summary reports. He and others have been frustrated by the exceptionally high-water levels present within the Pans most of the year. The Saturday morning "Open Sessions" and organised group visits are increasingly well attended by appreciative visitors.

The Sturt Pond hide had a new staircase installed in December costing in excess of £2000. A word of thanks to Julie and her security team for their diligent locking & unlocking activities which to date has stopped any form of vandalism.

A new activity last Summer was survey work aimed at identifying the presence and type of bat species present at various local sites. Specialist electronic bat detectors were used and we were grateful for the assistance and advice from our local bat expert Lisa Malter.

Another new recruit to our committee team has been Penny Gladman. Her enthusiasm and energy to take on new tasks has been invaluable. She has been responsible for the production of our two most recent newsletters and is currently working on designing & obtaining new display banners for the group.

I am sure everyone will agree that our MCV website is attractive easy to use, well managed and maintained to a very high standard. This is solely down to the efforts of Julie Hallows.

As well as the website Julie co-ordinates the locking of the Sturt Hide, fob usage at the Keyhaven Observatory and organises the monthly walks program. Sadly, for us, for next year Julie has decided to stand down from the MCV committee and she will be very hard to replace. Fortunately for us, she has agreed to carry on managing our website, at least until someone else can be suitably trained up. The new organiser for the monthly led walks will be Gill Watson.

I would like to offer my personal thanks to each and every member of the committee for their contributions to the smooth running of the MCV over 2023 and look forward to the rest of 2024 with optimism.

As always, we could do with additional help on the committee particularly in the roles of a General Secretary and Vice Chairman.

Finally, I must offer a really big thank you to the overall membership for your invaluable help both physically on the task sessions and financially through your subscriptions and donations to allow us to manage and maintain the two bird hides and our ancillary equipment such as chain saws, log splitter and trusty, highly versatile power barrow.

Thank you everybody ”.

**5. Treasurer’s Report:** Copies of the Annual Accounts for 2023 had been circulated prior to the meeting.

**2023 Accounts:**

**With reference to the accounts for last year**

“We had a comparatively quiet year with our income maintaining the same level as the year before with subscriptions and donations almost identical.

We had two special donations totalling £500 which was spent mostly on bat monitoring equipment and identification books. We also made a little profit at the AGM and other events that we attended. Bird hide donations increased a little and log sales were back up although I am not sure about this year as there is very little wood that has been identified by the parish clerk for future felling.

Expenditure was considerably less than income this year. That was mainly due to the fact that some larger costs that we did incur were not invoiced until this current year current, and have now been paid.

As usual, this year we have anticipated our income and expenditure for the year and identified over £18K for projects and contingencies, which may or may not be viable this year. Never the less we remain in a strong financial position.

Our membership has increased again from a tremendous year last year, so far, we have had over 75 % of last year’s members renewing their subscriptions which, once I put those of you who have paid tonight into the system, will bring it in line with last year. We continue to have a significant number of people joining us and it is great to see some of them here tonight”.

**6 Acceptance of Accounts:**

**Proposer:** Adrian Palmer      **Seconder:** Eric Read      **All Agreed by a show of hands.**

**7 Appointment of Examiner of Accounts for 2023 and 2024: -      Tim Light**

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

He has been very helpful in ensuring that we meet the necessary requirements.

Are you agreed that we continue to appoint Tim Light of Lighter Touch as our Examiner of Accounts for 2024?

**Proposer:** Eric Read      **Seconder:** Keith Metcalf      **All Agreed by a show of hands**

## **8 Setting MCV Membership fee for 2025:**

Your committee has discussed the membership subscription for 2025. It has been steady now for 6 years, but we felt it right for it to remain at £7.50 per member for next year, although we will obviously keep it under review.

**Proposer:** Andy Hallows    **Seconder:** Tani Read    **All Agreed by a show of hands**

9. **Any Proposed changes to the MCV Constitution:** - No changes had been recommended by the Management Committee and none had been received from Members.

## **10 Election of officers and Committee Members:**

**Chairman and Conservation Officer:** David Horne.

**Treasurer and Membership Secretary:** David Cobbett

**Minutes Secretary:** Penny Ramus.

**Committee Members:** Chris Barrass, Adrian Palmer and Penny Gladman.

All had been proposed and seconded prior to the meeting and were duly elected by a show of hands.

## **11 Presentation of the Volunteer of the Year Award and Youth Bursary.**

**Winner of the Volunteer of the Year Award for 2024 is Keith Metcalf.**

Keith has worked tirelessly over many years having been one of the MCV founder members and long-term Conservation Officer, serving on the Committee and being very much involved in the establishment of both the Bird Hide at Sturt Pond and Keyhaven Observatory. This year he has continued to run the ever-popular boat trips around the marshes, lead on a number of guided walks along the sea wall and host the "Birding for Beginners" sessions at the hides.

**Winner of the Youth Bursary Award for 2024 is Skye Edwards.**

Skye has shown a passionate interest in bats for some time and the Committee were unanimous in agreeing to support such enthusiasm in a young person by providing her with digital monitoring equipment and identification literature.

## **12 Any Other Business:** None

**Date of next AGM: March 2025**

The Chairman closed the meeting at 19.45, having thanked the members for attending and the team for putting the AGM together.

*After a 20-minute break Nigel Owen and Jacqui Adams gave a wonderful talk about Butterflies relating their experiences and knowledge very much to our own local habitat.*