



# Milford Conservation Volunteers



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## MCV 13<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

Friday 21st March 2025

Milford on Sea Community Centre (The Bridge)

**The evening event opened with a fascinating illustrated talk on The White Tailed Eagles given by Imogen Lloyd from Forestry England.**

**The Chairman, David Horne (DH), welcomed everyone** to the thirteenth MCV AGM thanking the members and visitors for attending and remarking on how pleasing it was to see them.

**1 Apologies for absence:** Julie and Andy Hallows, Adrian Palmer, Liz Couzens, Mary Macmillan, Mike and Carolyn Plows, Paul Versey, Chris and Wendy Thomas, George Everett, Jennifer Spring-Smyth, Alistair Smith, Penny Senior, Alice McLuskie, Wendy Ray, Lynton Robins, Angela Gradidge, Sheila Wicks, Janet Nunn, Pat Smith, Colin Fry, Anne and Richard Bickle.

34 Members attended the meeting.

**2. Approval of the Minutes of the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

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

**Proposer:** Penny Gladman    **Seconder:** Chris Barrass    **All agreed by a show of hands**

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

**4. Chairman's report for 2024:**

Generally, planned activities over the past year have run smoothly. This was made possible by having a stable management committee and a willing band of keen members happy to get involved.

Monthly volunteer task sessions have been co-ordinated by Adrian Palmer. For the most part these have involved working closely with staff from the parish council office predominantly within the Pleasure Grounds doing pathway repairs, improving drainage and clearing overgrown vegetation. Where practical inappropriate highly invasive plants such as Himalayan balsam, bamboo and rhododendron have been removed. More recently thick undergrowth was cleared from the Community Orchard off Studland Meadow and new fruit trees planted.

The popular monthly locally led walks have continued now ably co-ordinated by Gill Palmer. A fortunate few of us also had the privilege of a very productive autumn cruise on Gill's boat on the Beaulieu River where both white-tailed eagle and osprey were observed at close quarters.

The ever-popular winter Keyhaven creeks and 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 informative monthly summary reports backed up by fantastic photographs.

During the past year the Environment Agency have replaced all but one of the tidal flaps along the Keyhaven harbour seawall. This has effectively largely blocked off seawater entering the Avon Water and Pans. The residual water levels on the Pans is now much reduced, stable and largely freshwater. This bodes well for attracting more wading birds and encouraging the regrowth of reeds more suitable for breeding warblers and bearded reedlings.

Also recently announced is the exciting news that the Environment Agency is now the new owner of the Observatory, Avon Water reed beds and most of the open land at Aubrey Farm. We are hoping that this new arrangement may enable further enhancement work such as sand martin banks and protected breeding islands to be constructed as future new potential projects.

On a more depressing note, on August 15<sup>th</sup> last year there was a catastrophic pollution incident affecting the Dane Stream. A large quantity of crude sewage escaped from a Southern Water Pumping Station at Ashley and wiped out many hundreds of fish downstream all the way to Sturt Pond. This event will inevitably have a long-term harmful effect on the ecology of the Dane Stream.

On a more positive note of we are currently working closely with the Hampshire Wild-life Trust with the aim of providing better long-term protection and a higher profile to the Keyhaven and Hurst Spit nature reserve. This involves both advising the many visitors of what can be seen, as well as active protection of ground nesting birds using barriers to stop inadvertent trampling and dog disturbance.

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 2024 and look forward to the rest of 2025 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 which allow us to manage and maintain the two bird hides and plan for new projects going forward.

Thank you everybody.

5. **Treasurer's Report:** Copies of the Annual Accounts for 2024 had been circulated prior to the meeting.

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

Again, we had a comparatively quiet year but our income was slightly below last year's level because of the decision to cease the logging activity, subscriptions and members donations were both slightly increased, the AGM broke even and Bird Hide donations were slightly down

Expenditure was considerably more than last year, which was mainly due to the new stairs at the Bird Hide at Sturt Pond.

As usual, we have anticipated our Income and Expenditure for the year and identified nearly £18K for Projects and Contingencies, which may be viable this year and we remain in a strong financial position.

One change will be to our banking costs, as Lloyds have now decided to follow almost all of the other banks in charging us to use their bank. If you remember we left HSBC a few years ago because of this but now there are now very few options to us as we need to have a Community type of account and we don't have regular income. I anticipate that it will cost us about £100 to maintain the account, a cost that I believe we can stand.

Our membership seems to be very strong with the same number of new members as last year at this time and so far, we have had over 75 % of last year's members renewing their subscriptions which is exactly the same as last year. We continue to have a significant number of people joining us and it is really good to see some of them here tonight.

**6 Acceptance of Accounts:**

**Proposer:** Ian Ramus **Seconder:** Penny Gladman

**All Agreed by a show of hands.**

**7 Appointment of Examiner of Accounts for 2025**

Tim Light of Lighter Touch has been our auditor for 9 years now.

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

Are you agreed that we continue to appoint Lighter Touch as our Examiner of Accounts for 2026

**Proposer:** Ian Ramus **Seconder:** Keith Metcalf **All Agreed by a show of hands**

## **8 Setting MCV Membership fee for 2026:**

Your committee has discussed the Membership Subscription for 2026. It has been steady now for many years but it has been decided that it should remain at £7.50 per member for next year although we will obviously keep it under review.

**Proposer:** Chris Barrass      **Seconder:** Paul Gayford

**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

**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.

Gill Watson, a new member has agreed to join the Committee.

**Proposer:** William      **Seconder:** Ian Ramus

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

**The Winner of the Award for 2025 is Julie Hallows.**

Julie has served on the Committee for some years and has created and updated the MCV website very efficiently. She has also maintained the rota for the Bird Hide to be opened on a daily basis and has monitored the key fob usage. Although she no longer sits on the Committee, she still spends her spare time on conservation work, currently setting up a Bee group.

## **12 Any Other Business:**

Paul Gayford raised the issue of the plot of land recently acquired by the Parish Council for the use of the village. He felt quite strongly that the MCV views on how this extra land should be used should be put forward to the PCC. In order to have a democratic view he suggested that a survey should be sent out to all members. David Horne is to attend a preliminary meeting about this and will report back before considering a survey.

**Date of next AGM: March 2026**

The Chairman closed the meeting at 20.55, having thanked the members for attending and the team for putting the AGM together.