

Monmouthshire Meadows Group (MMG)

Registered Charity no 111345

Minutes of the 17th Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 20th October 2020

Online via Zoom (Covid-19)

Video link of AGM available if required-please email carol.cook266@gmail.com

Present:

Chairperson: Rachel Morgan

Committee members: Marilyn Dunkelman, Stephanie Tyler, David Llewellyn, Steph Poulter, Sheelagh Kerry, Judith Carruthers, Sarah Cheese, Dick Coates, Pam Manfield, Clare Adamson, Carol Cook and members

Total 29 people

1: Chairperson welcome: Rachel's first AGM as chair, Aprils AGM postponed until now due to Covid.

2: Apologies for absence: Andrew and Janet Cormack, Sarah Prince

3: Minutes of the 2019 AGM: no matters arising, approved by MD, seconded CC.

4: Chairperson's report:

Wye Valley AONB Farming and Conservation Award- won by MMG. MD and DC collected on behalf of MMG, trophy on display in MD's hall. Award for MMG work, including work with our members. Plus cheque for £400.00.

MMG attendance at Chepstow and Usk shows 2019, not Monmouth shows. Displayed new display boards and leaflets at these shows, these were paid for from Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) Pollinator Programme and Nature isn't Neat initiative. Shows are good for members to attend and new membership to join.

Members- 2019/2020 41 new members, 215 paid members to end of year. Current year since April 2020- 11 new members and 226 paid-up members, plus 55 members yet to pay subscription.

Virtual Meadows Day- available on the MMG website.

Nature isn't Neat- funded by MCC supported by MMG, but was an initiative of Mon Town Council. This campaign paid for display panels and leaflets mentioned above at the shows, plus series of monthly talks, first talk by MMG member Cheryl Cummings. Monmouth is the Britain's first Bee Town, MMG also attended National Bee Day in Monmouth.

Bee Orchids at Cornpoppy Lane Monmouth- ST surveyed area with 76 bee orchids on land owned by Rockfield Estate developer. Unfortunately, developer presently not on board with conservation of site and has engaged in excessive mowing meaning orchids can't flower. Ongoing discussions to try and resolve this and protect site.

AGM 2019- Elsa Wood talk on Changes in Monmouthshire Flora over 100 years.

October 2019 Social- Carol Cook talk on hedgehogs

Meadows Open Days- including at Blaentrophy, Shirenewton, Ida's Meadow Maryland and Wet Meadow Trellech, thanks to Gwent Wildlife Trust for their support and help with open days.

Wet Meadow has been main area of MMG work this past year. Payments received from Rural Payments Wales for managing the land in right way- applies to Wet Meadow, Ida's Meadow and Kingcoed. MMG applied for two grants for Wet Meadow, received £1300 from Trellech United Community Council and £597 from Welsh Church Fund, this money will be used for boardwalks and gates. Already installed interpretative sign at entrance to Wet Meadow.

Wet Meadow managed jointly with Gwent Wildlife Trust (GWT) - share rent equally, great partnership as GWT have access to machinery MMG doesn't

Church Pews- two pews purchased and placed at Wet Meadow proving very popular, now has its own Twitter handle @TrellechPew

Work party- recent work party at Wet Meadow and thanks to DL for his hard work at MMG sites and members meadows with MMG Tracmaster.

Fungi Book- great displays of wax caps at Wet Meadow. MMG had a stand at Gwent Fungi Group open day at Pentwyn. Fungi Book written by MMG members Elsa Wood and Jon Dunkelman has been so popular that first edition sold out, second edition just released, available through NHBS website online.

Marilyn Dunkelman also listed in book and played very large part in second edition, thanks to MD for this and for hosting tonight's AGM, running website, organising newsletters and recently updated contractors list. RM asked for feedback on contractors list as most useful for members.

M4 Relief Road scrapped which would have impacted Gwent Levels

Plantlife - Road Verges Campaign- highlighted meadows and wildflowers. MMG working with MCC to improve verge cutting regime.

Plantlife Cymru- using MMG model to encourage meadows Wales's wide. RM encouraged members who know people across Wales to get in touch if they want meadow advice.

Thanks:

To MMG ponies Jacinth and Jemima for their hard work grazing and Steph and Alan Poulter who care for them.

To Steph Tyler, Elsa Wood and Sheelagh Kerry for surveying members land, they've visiting 24 sites in 2019, 21 sites in 2020 and new Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) still being found, 2020- 3 sites qualify as LWS

To all the members, we exist because of members and we love to hear how people's meadows and projects getting on and members share pictures and stories.

5: Treasurer's report: by David Llewellyn, Treasurer- accounts on website

Numbers comparable with last financial year

Balance: opening bank balance as at 1 April 2019 £39,303.70, closing bank balance as at March 31st 2020 £47,867.17- missing Gift Aid receipts at present, credit of approx. £1000 due.

Grazing payments- increase due to new and developing meadows.

Grants- two from TUCC and WC mentioned by RM above

Expenditures: comparable with last financial year. Meadow maintenance work increased that relates to fencing and mowing at meadows, meadows equipment refers to two pews as mentioned by RM above. Plus annual rental of £760 on Wet Meadow shared equally with GWT.

DL available for questions or queries.

6: Election of officers and committee:

Honorary President - Steph Tyler

Chair - Rachel Morgan

Treasurer - David Llewellyn

Secretary (pro tem) - Carol Cook (will be leaving Monmouthshire area but staying on until new secretary found)

Membership secretary, Newsletter and Website Editor - Marilyn Dunkelman

Publicity officer - Pam Manfield

Pony Officer - Stephanie Poulter

Wet Meadows Officer - Dick Coates

Clare Adamson Judith Carruthers and Sarah Cheese

Committee stood down. Re-election of committees-proposed by Jill Featherstone, seconded by Elsa Wood.

New committee member Clare Catto – absent - RM proposed, seconded by MD

Officers - proposed by Cheryl Cummings, seconded by Clare Adamson

All elected unanimously

Conversion to Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

Requires quorum of 22 people, 10% membership. Vote to convert MMG to CIO carried by following membership (Appendix 1)

Film of MMG involvement in virtual Wye Valley Rivers Festival (WVRF) - filmed Sept 2020 by WVRF for their Meadows Conservation and Restoration films, featured Wet Meadow, Steph's own meadows and couple of members meadows.

Q and A session for membership- lively and engaging including questions on hedges, refuges, grazing by cattle, ponies, sheep, thanks from David Emerson for Jon Dunkelman's excellent piece on micro management of meadows in latest newsletter, acknowledged by membership. Plus lovely thanks from David Emerson for Marilyn's efforts with newsletter. Pont Welsh grazing project. Managing meadows for insects, butterflies and ant hills.

Closing thanks from RM

We survived our first online AGM!

Appendix 1: AGM Attendees

1. Steph Tyler
2. Rachel Morgan
3. Marilyn Dunkelman
4. Carol Cook & Philip Cook
5. David Llewellyn
6. Clare Adamson & Jeremy Harris
7. Judith Caruthers
8. Sarah Cheese
9. Dick Coates
10. Pam Manfield
11. Steph Poulter
12. Sheelagh Kerry
13. Jon Dunkelman
14. Nick Beaugié
15. Clare Catto
16. Brian Bocking
17. Cecilia Davies
18. Cheryl Cummings
19. Steve & Jane Gilliard
20. Pam Lloyd
21. Rob Richardson
22. Jill Featherstone
23. Elsa Wood
24. David Emerson
25. Hamish Sanderson
26. David Rooke

Total 29 people