



ACG

Ashplats Conservation Group

Minutes of The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday 11th February 2025
7:30pm, Sackville College

Attending

There were 9 members present:

Brian Auker, Michael Diebel, Mike Funnell, Neil Hancock, Katherine Meade, Stephen Metcalfe, Elaine Griffiths, Brian Akehurst, Louise Collett

1. Apologies for absence

Lloyd Richardson

2. Minutes of last meeting

The Chairman updated the group on actions arising from the last minutes:

- No suitable alternative bank had been found
- Dormice tubes are ready to be deployed
- The chipping issue had not been raised again and has not been followed up
- The MSDC microsite re Ash Dieback has not been added to the ACG website. It was noted that the microsite has not been updated recently (note a link has now been added)
- Promotion of group will be discussed later in the meeting
- No training opportunities had arisen this year
- Mowing regime to be discussed in the meeting
- Several members now using iNaturalist
- Meeting with Glendale, rangers etc planned in March 2025

The members did not raise any further questions. The minutes were approved by the meeting.

3. Chairman's Report

The Chairman's report was circulated prior to the meeting and was summarised by the Chairman.

- The weather and illness had disrupted the task programme during the year, resulting in several tasks being finished early or cancelled.
- The rangers are now reporting to Glendale. A task report is sent to them following each task.
- The meadow mowing will be carried out by Glendale who will also collect the arising.
- The Chair offered his thanks to Michael Diebel for his work as treasurer over the past 5 years.

4. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's report was circulated to the members prior at the meeting. The Treasurer advised the meeting that EGMEL now reimburses the group for any expenditure that occurs and MSDC reimburse the insurance costs. Therefore the balance remains around £1850.

There was very little expenditure during the year with the biggest expenditure being insurance. MSDC are yet to cover this cost.

There had been no progress finding an alternative bank but he suggested the group continues to look for one.

The Treasurer informed the group that he will be stepping down from the role.

ACTION: Treasurer to investigate alternative banks for community/charity groups

ACTION: Treasurer or Chair to contact MSVA for advice/suggestions

5. Election of Committee

Neil Hancock offered to remain as chair, proposed by Katherine Meade seconded by Elaine Griffith and is duly elected.

Brian Akehurst offered to stand as treasurer, proposed by Neil Hancock, seconded by Louise Collett and is duly elected.

No secretary was elected so the chair will undertake the necessary tasks.

Stephen Metcalfe and Elaine Griffiths offered to stand as committee members and were duly elected.

6. Recruitment and retention of volunteers

- The chair noted that we continue to lose regular attendees
- The EG Bonfire Society attend coppicing tasks and will utilise some of the wood for torch handles
- ACG had a stall at the MSVA volunteer fair in February. There were a few queries and contact details for two people were recorded. One couple attended the February task as a result of this.
- The meeting recognised there is a lack of engagement with younger people. A project involving technology such as iNaturalist might be useful **ACTION – Committee to look at possible tech-related projects**
- It was agreed that increasing the visibility of the group would be helpful **ACTION – display posters at the library, update photos on website, write articles for East Grinstead Living, add tasks to Town Council What's On page etc**

7. Social Media Strategy

- It was agreed that the Facebook posts are very good and informative but the reach is limited. Louise Collett and Elaine Griffiths agreed to share the posts to other local Facebook groups. The posts are already shared by EGMEL. **ACTION – add Fb button to the homepage of the website** (note: this has now been done)
- The use of Instagram was discussed but no one uses these on a regular basis.
- The Chair recognised the need to have a back-up of the contact list **ACTION – Chair to create suitable back-up which is GDPR compliant**

8. Task Suggestions

- With Glendale cut-and-collecting the meadow, there will need to be an alternative task in September. This could be focused on the Glade

- The meadow should be monitored long-term to make sure the condition does not deteriorate under the new mowing regime. It was suggested that a spring mow could be done and the brambles should be cut back before the autumn mow.
- Litterpick – it was noted that there is significantly less litter being collected at the annual litter pick. No decision was made as to whether we should continue the public litter pick.
- Vegetation clearance along the Border Path on the southern boundary of the Estate and along Pegasus Path would be beneficial
- A couple more tasks to remove rhododendron and laurel remnants
- Owl Path is still not safe to work on due to Ash Dieback
- **ACTION – Chair and committee to plan 2025/26 tasks**

9. Surveys and Environmental Monitoring

- Four – six dormice tracking tubes will be put out this spring. If the installation is successful more will be added. The locations will be added to Mergin maps. Volunteers will be needed to check them. **ACTION – Chair and Steve Metcalfe to organise installation and manufacture. Chair to organise volunteers to check**
- A bat and newt evening will be arranged for May **ACTION – Chair/Louise to arrange a date**
- There was some concern about the lack of newts in the lake due to the number of fish. GCN had previously been recorded here. **ACTION – Chair to raise this with the rangers**
- Elaine Griffiths has offered to organise a butterfly transect. She will confirm a suitable route with Butterfly Conservation and will need some help to carry out the recording. Louise Collett has volunteered to help.
- Elaine Griffiths has offered to organise a fungi walk in the autumn

10. Any other business

- Brian Auker advised that he may not be able to attend tasks as regularly and asked if there was another qualified first aider who would be able to take his place. Steve Metcalfe will be undertaking a first aid course this year.
- The meeting was advised that EGMEL are considering prioritising paths for maintenance by Glendale and would like feedback.

The meeting closed at 9:30pm

ACTIONS

BY

Investigate alternative banks for community/charity groups.

Treasurer/Chair

Contact MSVA for advice/suggestions

Look at possible tech-related projects for younger people

Committee

Display posters at the library, update photos on website, write

ALL

articles for East Grinstead Living, add tasks to Town Council

What's On page etc

Add Fb button to the homepage of the website

Chair

Create suitable back-up of contact list which is GDPR compliant

Chair

Plan 2025/26 tasks

Chair/committee

Organise installation and manufacture of dormice tubes and organise volunteers to check

Chair/ Steve Metcalfe

Arrange a date for bat and newt surveys

Chair/ Louise Collett

Raise issue of fish in the lake with the rangers

Chair

Minutes taken by Katherine Meade