

EAST GRINSTEAD MEMORIAL ESTATE LTD

Registered Charity No. 305211 Company No. 468425

MINUTES**DIRECTORS MEETING 01/2018**

7pm, Wednesday 14th March 2018
Chequer Mead Community Arts Centre,
De La Warr Rd, East Grinstead, RH19 3BS

1. Present
 - 1.1. Nunn, Russell, Graysmark, Thurlow, Phillips, Fisher, Stagg, Yeoman, Sweatman, Funnell, Davis,
2. Apologies for Absence
 - 2.1. Baker
3. Minutes of previous Directors Meeting 04/2017, 22nd November 2017
 - 3.1. These were approved as being a true record of the meeting. The Chairman would sign them (and redact as necessary), and post on the web site for members to view, and also in the document archive.
4. Matters arising from Meeting 04/2017 not covered elsewhere
 - 4.1. Minutes of Meeting 03/2017 had been posted on the website and added to the document archive.
 - 4.2. Discussions with the Charity Commission had continued with the help of Lorraine Young. We still hadn't agreed a version of our Articles that would satisfy them, but would have one in good time for the members to consider at this year's AGM.
5. Membership
 - 5.1. The introduction of the Membership fee had gone reasonably smoothly, and as expected, membership numbers had reduced significantly from 300+ to 92. This was still felt to be a good number though, and about 3 times what we had before 2014. Members without email addresses had reduced from 20+ to 3, reducing the burden of posting significantly. Regrettably some of our longest standing members hadn't renewed. There were some minor glitches for members who shared email addresses and this had been fed back to the software house, who promised improvements during 2018.
 - 5.2. A newsletter had been sent to members in February, with another scheduled for May (with the AGM notice)
 - 5.3. There had been no response from the members for a volunteer for membership secretary.
6. East Court Steering Meeting
 - 6.1. PT has replaced TH as our 2nd official representative on this committee
 - 6.2. A good meeting on Nov 27th. After extensive behind the scenes moaning, As expected, David Terry was falling over himself to be as positive as possible. Gary Marsh in the chair was also anxious to tie him down, and everyone seemed to agree that a better service from MSDC was overdue but would be delivered in future. Major points:
 - 6.2.1. MSDC are going to search for contractors who actually have experience of coppicing, rather than tree surgeons. Agreed that they need to get a move on so as not to miss this winter.
 - 6.2.2. Completion of the circular SANGS route is overdue and will be progressed with all haste
 - 6.2.3. The SANGS fund stands at c £500k and is expected to reach £1m. It is invested in a special fund which will yield excellent returns allowing an annual spend of £30k.

- 6.2.4. The Minutes will in future be released in a timely manner (<28days)
- 6.2.5. Gary Marsh wants to attend the new quarterly meetings (good news)
- 6.2.6. DT to come up with some solution for cars leaving the roadway between the ACG container and the Pavilion.

6.3. At the quarterly meeting on 28th Feb:

- 6.3.1. Present: CN, Dave Terry, Greg Sweeney (not Gary Marsh)
- 6.3.2. I updated them on our now smaller, but more committed, membership base.
- 6.3.3. DT told me that he is taking early retirement as from the end of May. He will be replaced by a Team Leader who will have a wider remit of Landscape and Leisure, this to be within a grouping of Landscape/Leisure and Waste. CN expressed some concern that landscape was being grouped with, and possibly led by, people with skill sets rather unrelated, but agreed that we would wait and see.
- 6.3.4. GS seems to have been particularly active since our last meeting - maybe because of the task/monitoring list that I sent him, or perhaps he's trying to impress for a bigger role in the new organisation?
- 6.3.5. In particular he's very involved in the work on the Scout Land with CTS. He has talked to the Forestry Commission who say that Ashplats is sorely in need of management. He's also talking to the Woodland Trust and 3 Woodland Contractors who could bring extra resources to the party (he acknowledges that CTS just don't have the capacity). He warns though that Woodland Contractors would need machinery and I accepted that this would be ok providing the work was planned to minimise damage, and that there was a reinstatement plan incorporated.
- 6.3.6. CN had developed a task list to monitor MSDC activities and this was proving useful in tying MSDC down. A copy had been circulated to the Directors before this meeting and there were no comments of questions arising.

7. Finances

- 7.1. The accounts for 2017 are being prepared but ND gave an overview which showed y/e cash at the bank rising from £19,660 in 2016 to £26,100 in 2017. In addition there was another £870 in the Membership account. Investments had also done well and were valued at £629k at the end of 2017, compared to £575k at the end of 2016.
- 7.2. ND also reported though that the "Trump effect" was having a negative effect in 2018 with our investment valuation taking a hit down to £606k.
- 7.3. It was agreed by the meeting that with our relatively strong financial position, coupled with a reduced lack of exposure to unforeseen estate costs from the MSDC lease conditions, that we could release more funds for good causes in 2018.
- 7.4. It was confirmed that we would support ACG with whatever they reasonably needed - this to be outside our grant programme. ND to contact them to establish their needs this year.

8. Property

- 8.1. In her absence, SB had submitted a written report on the Lodge. The increased rent for the Lodge was now in place and negotiations regarding the future were progressing.
- 8.2. EGTC now had Title to the road from Holtye Rd up to Estcots. MP is negotiating the details of a Deed of Easement that would allow EGTC to close the road for 24hrs max for up to 6 days/yr, with 28 days notice. MP's company (MWB) were charging a nominal fee for this which was acceptable to the Directors.
- 8.3. The fencing on the PROW adjacent to Estcots had apparently been replaced. We are still unsure who's responsibility it is.
- 8.4. It was noted that the Ambulance staff no longer seem to be parking on our grass after a letter from MSDC legal team.

9. Grants & Donations

- 9.1. CR/LG submitted a suggestion that with the squeeze on public expenditure many families were struggling to meet costs associated with "student enrichment" projects. After meetings with the headmasters of the two senior schools in EG (Sackville & Imberhorne)

they recommended giving each headmaster £6k to use at their discretion for students deprived of the opportunities open to those with better-off families. This was unanimously supported by the meeting

9.2. In addition CR/LG suggested we give significant support to EG Foodbank, which currently was running at a deficit. The numbers of residents in EG depending on the Foodbank was growing rapidly, and whilst it was felt that perhaps in the longer term they needed to look at other sources of fundraising, we should help them with a £3k donation in 2018. This was again unanimously supported by the meeting.

9.3. Potential support for Chequer Mead and SSAFA were discussed, but not supported by the meeting at this time. We would though, as always, support the Poppy Appeal.

9.4. CR/LG to provide some low-key PR on our grants for inclusion in our website.

10. Neighbours

10.1. PT circulated a draft newsletter for neighbours which he intended to hand deliver soon.

10.2. PT would be "walking the bounds" over coming months to check on any issues.

11. Insurance

11.1. GS - All up to date.

12. Website & Publicity

12.1. We had suffered some significant technical issues on our web hosting service in January which had now been resolved.

12.2. The contract for the (now redundant) egwml.co.uk site was expiring in April and our costs would fall as a result.

12.3.6 news posts had been added to the site since our last meeting.

12.4. It was agreed that we should launch our own Facebook page where we hopefully have an additional opportunity to interact with our neighbours and community. [CN]

13. Archives

13.1. CN has now scanned more of our archives and uploaded them to Google Drive. It might be some time before more can be done.

14. Any Other Business

14.1. CN was pleased to report that MSDC and ACG seem to be forming a very good working relationship.

15. Dates of Subsequent Meetings

15.1. AGM: 7pm Wednesday 20th June 2018 at Chequer Mead, to be followed by a Directors Meeting at the same venue.

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