

# EAST GRINSTEAD MEMORIAL ESTATE LTD

Registered Charity No. 305211 Company No. 468425

## MINUTES

### DIRECTORS MEETING 02/2021

7pm, Thursday 25th March 2021

Held on Zoom web platform

1. Covid-19
  - 1.1. Social distancing is still required, hence this Zoom meeting.
2. Present: Barlow, Fisher, Funnell, Graysmark, Nunn, Richards, Stagg, Russell, Phillips
3. Apologies for Absence:, Sweatman, Baker, Davis
4. Minutes of previous Directors Meeting 01/2021, 21st January 2021
  - 4.1. The meeting agreed the draft Minutes were in order. CN to sign, redact as necessary, archive, & MB to post on the website.
5. Membership
  - 5.1. Total Membership is static at 53:
  - 5.2. We have heard a report that [REDACTED] had regrettably died of [REDACTED], but await "official" confirmation of this.
  - 5.3. The next members newsletter is due on April 1st. [CN]
6. East Court Steering Meeting
  - 6.1. After significant pressure from our side, an East Court/Ashplats Steering meeting had been held on Microsoft Teams on 12th March. Our notes are below in italics:

*CHAIR*

*John Belsey*

*EGMEL*

*Chris Nunn*

*Lloyd Richards*

*MSDC*

*Rob Anderton*

*Jo Reid*

*Stuart Brown*

*Mark Hayler*

*Jennifer Hollingum*

*EGTC*

*Julie Holden*

*APOLOGIES*

*2 x EGTC Councillors*

*2 x MSDC Councillors*

*Katie Chatfield*

*MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING*

*Approved*

## *ACTIONS ARISING*

*“Some work” has been done to renovate the Yew Hedge  
Parking outside the Ambulance station is still a problem and is likely to worsen when the (empty) police station is renovated. In addition people are pulling onto the grass to the south of The Lodge. MSDC agreed to review and possibly install ditches/bunds or bollards  
It had been established that SANG money could not be used to fund path improvements for the Park Run.*

## *FINANCIAL REPORT*

*£850k received. Fluid situation, but maybe £1.25 - £1.5m eventually anticipated. £1k spent.  
Budget £28k/year  
Agreed that SANG fund is only for creation or maintenance of enhancements.  
MSDC committed to better open-book accounting around this issue.  
Holtye Track, although outside the SANG area, is considered an enabling project and so SANG funds can be used.*

## *MSDC UPDATE*

*Very challenging 18 months (C-19)  
Personnel changes have also disrupted continuity but new Countryside Officer due to start at end of March. RA positive about “new team”  
More emphasis being given to trees after near disaster in Haywards Heath.  
Green flag “mystery shop” expected in 2021.*

## *ACG UPDATE*

*Not much happening because of C-19.  
Hope to restart around June  
MSDC will then help them devise a programme*

## *EGMEL UPDATE*

*Sold Lodge  
Giving out ca £20k/year grants  
Struggling to keep Members happy about lack of MSDC performance*

## *EGTC UPDATE*

*EGTC have improved the path down from the War Memorial to ?  
Lots of rubbish at East Court during pandemic (inc Helium balloons)  
Working with MSDC to improve signage re not parking in EGTC car park if using East Court  
Debuff Holdings own the trees behind the Lodge on the Sussex Border path, and are to blame for the poor tree work there.*

## *HOLTYE TRACK*

*Original (“forestry”) concept has now proved to be too ambitious.  
MSDC should have foreseen complexity issues  
Legal status of Sterling Way now addressed  
All agreed a more modest scheme would be more suitable, but CN emphasised that it must not be a financial burden on future revenue.  
Construction possible when it dries out in Spring 2022.  
Agreed for EGMEL/MSDC to walk the site when C-19 restrictions allow (>12th April?)  
RA to send us a copy of the English Woodlands report*

## *SITE MANAGEMENT PLAN*

*They will be doing the 5-year review “over coming months”  
EGMEL would support a much simpler Plan going forward and would be pleased to assist draughting*

*AOB*

*MSDC will be talking to other local DC's whose SANGS also relate to Ashdown Forest about a common approach to Visitor Surveys (which are a SANG requirement). Probably not until 2022.*

*EGMEL had come across a consultation about a CCTV camera at EC. We (reluctantly) support this, but it would have been nice to have had a direct approach from MSDC.*

*JB asked if there were any plans for the Boating Pond. Apparently not.*

*MSDC said the rental invoice would be paid soon.*

*DATE OF NEXT MEETING*

*Agreed to have a walkabout in the summer, followed by a sit-down review (hopefully) in East Court Mansion.*

6.2. LR summarised that

6.2.1. The clarification of the Financial Position had been helpful

6.2.2. There appeared to be a consensus that the plans for the Holtye Track needed to be downgraded to make them more realistic and achievable

6.2.3. The Holtye Track work could be paid for out of the SANG money as it was an "enabler".

6.2.4. The next action is to walk the Holtye Track with MSDC when Covid regulations allow.

6.2.5. The 5-year review is overdue and the next iteration needs to be more focused.

6.2.6. We need a better way of reviewing progress rather than huge meetings with 14 invitees.

6.2.7. LR will be keeping the pressure on MSDC to deliver the actions agreed at the meeting.

## 7. Grants & Donations

7.1. MB declared an interest in Foodbank at this point and excused himself from this part of the agenda.

7.2. CR and LG presented a proposal to support 16 local organisations in 2021 that aligned with our Objects:

Mid Sussex Mencap Gateway Club	£1,500
Meridian Radio	£5,000
Fegans	£750
EG Mental Health	£500
Age UK – EG District	£750
Yarburgh Community preschool	£3,500
Sackville College	£550
Family Support Work	£1,000
Hindleap Warren London Youth	£500
EG Foodbank	£2,000
Glow Youth	£500
COPD Support Group,	£480
Stone Quarry Café & Community Fridge	£671
Halsford Park (Friends of)	£1,000
Advance Centre	£500
Education at Ashdown Forest	£750
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£19,951</b>

7.3. At our Meeting in January we had agreed to cap our 2021 Grants programme at £18k, but those present thought that these were all very worthwhile causes, and in addition, the C-19 outlook was now much improved. The £2k difference was insignificant within our £1m+ savings and the Meeting unanimously approved this “full” programme.

7.4. CN was reluctant to support this without agreement from ND, our Financial Director, but undertook to seek his agreement within 5 working days.

## 8. Finances

8.1. ND was not able to attend the Meeting, but CN advised that as far as he was aware our financial situation showed no surprises.

8.2. ND had been investigating the use of “Xero” a financial software package for small businesses. Cost for the basic suite was £10/month, less 25% charity discount. Adoption should offer benefits including better long term records and collaboration (both internally and with auditors) and potentially a cheaper, faster yearly audit.

8.3. From other experience, LR thought our audit fee could be reduced

## 9. Property

9.1. Nothing to report

## 10. Neighbours

10.1. Nothing to report

## 11. Insurance

11.1. Our brokers had responded that it would be unusual for an organisation such as ours to have £5m Professional Indemnity as discussed at our last meeting and it may be difficult to get such cover. After due consideration, the Meeting agreed that £1m Professional Indemnity cover was sufficient, but it was noted that we have £5m Public Liability cover.

## 12. Website & Publicity [CN]

12.1. MB had increased the security on our website

12.2. MB reported that he hadn't had much time to progress the photo/art competition idea, but had identified a suitable judge, i.e. Frazer Visser, a local Councillor.

## 13. Any Other Business

13.1. SB had recently tabled some ideas to be considered at the next meeting:

13.1.1. Additional signage to show who owns the Estate

13.1.2. Additional signs to show names of tracks

13.1.3. Bench to remember Alfred Wagg

13.1.4. Fold out leaflet

13.1.5. 25% of our funds are ring-fenced for maintenance and improvement of Ashplats Wood.

13.2. MF wished to remind us all that the wood is an SSSI (Site of Nature Conservation Interest) as he felt that this was sometimes forgotten.

## 14. Dates of Subsequent Meetings

14.1. Directors Meeting, TBA depending on progress with MSDC. 7pm on Zoom platform.

14.2. Hopefully this year we will be able to hold our AGM "in person" once Stage 4 relaxation of the rules was implemented post 21st June.

