



MALAGO VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP

NEWSLETTER

No. 101
Spring
2014

IT'S SPRING! That means daffodils – especially the ones M.V.C.G. has planted over the years – and it means potholes where the roads took a hammering in the dreadful winter weather. It means bird song in the morning and lighter evenings. And, of course, it means the M.V.C.G. Annual General Meeting and our report-back to members in this edition of the *Newsletter*.

In some cases, the reports to the A.G.M. had news which happened between the last *Newsletter* and the end of last year, so there are some updates in the A.G.M. report between pages 2 and 10, and some in the usual articles about Manor Woods Valley (page 12) and Planning (page 15).

As usual, our accounts at the A.G.M. showed a decent amount in the bank. You may remember that much of this is money we ‘inherited’ when the Dundry Hill Group had to fold a few years back. Although the cash came with no legal conditions, we have always recognised a moral obligation to maintain the Malago Spring Artwork on Dundry Hill which was one of the lasting legacies of the Dundry Hill Group (you can read more at the D.H.G. website, linked from our own website). Last year, the walling around this ‘source’ of the Malago (one of many, if truth be told!) was damaged by too much water flowing off the hill. Working with CSV Environment, who were the founders and mainspring of the D.H.G. many years ago, we will be paying for the wall to be rebuilt and ‘re-engineered’ to keep this special place attractive.

You will have received a postcard from the City Council about the roll-out in our area of the city-wide 20mph speed limit. M.V.C.G. has never been ‘anti-car’ in a ‘fundamentalist’ way (our Elm Tree Corner plan includes more and better parking for the shops), but we welcome in principle an initiative which will keep traffic and people in a more civilised balance.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

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REPORT FROM THE A.G.M.

PETE CRISPIN welcomed everyone to the meeting. As usual, there were reports on our activities during 2013, followed by elections to the Committee. Our topical talk was from our old friend Richard Bevan who brought us up-to-date with the plans for the future of the Bishopsworth Swimming Pool site [see page 15]. Drinks and nibbles rounded off the evening which marked M.V.C.G.'s nineteenth birthday.

Programme Report: PAUL MIZEN reported that, as promised at our last A.G.M., we did have a Summer Outing, and we did have a Christmas Party. A small but select band of intrepid explorers set out on a sunny evening to investigate the Northern Slopes. These stretch from Novers Hill, across Glyn Vale, and on again beyond Wedmore Vale, a surprisingly large piece of land and one certainly worth a visit. Views to our own Manor Woods Valley, Ashton Court and the Suspension Bridge, and across much of Bristol were alone enough to make our trip worthwhile. A good if tiring walk was had by all! The Christmas party certainly lived up to expectations, with the usual trusted helpers delivering the goods. The Heatons came up with a new version of their picture quiz, by setting a series of 'conundrums' that had many scratching their heads. Mary was 'entertainer in chief' with a series of games that brought many shrieks. Marie Jo and Kate kept the refreshments coming and André sorted the raffle, and our American Supper was a feast. A nice time was had by all.



Left: What some people will do for a bar of chocolate ...



Right: The catering staff lay out the goodies

(Thanks to Martin for the photos)

Planning Issues: ANDRÉ COUTANCHE reported that, as usual, he had been monitoring the weekly lists of planning applications which we receive by e-mail from the City Council. For a few of the applications in our three wards which seem significant we look up the details on the Council's website, and a few of those go to our Committee. In many cases, the Committee doesn't want to make a comment, and in a handful of cases each year we oppose an application, usually on the grounds of over-intensive development, or access or parking. Very occasionally, we support a good planning application.

In 2013, we were involved with plans for the former United Reformed Church on Church Road. The new owner, who bought the building when the church closed, did the right thing by contacting us for what is known as 'pre-app. consultation' – discussing his ideas with local amenity and community groups before formally submitting a planning application. This is in his interests and ours – his, because he finds out whether there will be opposition to his plans and he can avoid the trouble and expense of a failed or an amended planning application, and ours because we have a chance to influence a development – for the better, as we would see it! The owner of the U.R.C., and his business partner, whom André met on site, appreciate the architectural value of the church building and intend to keep the art deco shell of the building and the stained glass (except the religious stained glass over where the altar was, which would be returned to a descendant of the original artist). So far, so excellent! However, to make the scheme pay, he intended to build a new block of flats on the site of the church hall. We don't have a problem with demolishing the hall, nor with the principle of new flats, but we really didn't like the design of what was being proposed. But all this became academic when it turned out that the arrangement he thought he had with an adjacent landowner on Fernsteed Road to acquire the back of their back garden to improve access to the new flats no longer applied. So at the moment, things have gone quiet. We hope there *will* be a solution, because a new life for the church building would be very welcome, coupled with – we hope – well-designed new flats behind.

We also appreciated the very good pre-app. consultation we had with the architect for the owner of the former Methodist church hall, next door but one to Zion on Bishopsworth Road. This is a tricky building to redevelop. Housing is the obvious choice, which is fine, but there is no parking possible on the site without demolishing the existing hall and building anew – and that would be expensive and a waste of a serviceable existing building. And the zig-zags from the adjacent pedestrian crossing would actually rule out driving across the pavement into the site. So the proposal was to have seven small flats – seven



U.R.C. (left) and Zion hall (right) – two church buildings looking for an afterlife

would match the existing windows – with them being sold on the clear basis that there was no on-site parking but there was a good bus service just outside. We were happy in principle with that, but there were also problems with overlooking the very close adjacent properties, especially as the intention was to have the front doors on the side of the hall, so residents would be coming and going just across the side wall of the adjacent back gardens. The planning officer who was considering the scheme thought this was an insurmountable problem unless access to all the flats was through the existing front door, so the planning application was withdrawn and we now await the next step.

We finished the year with a very contentious planning application – for 131 Bridgwater Road. Although the address is Bridgwater Road, it's effectively an extension of Kings Walk, and all vehicular access would be along Kings Walk. There was a planning permission for this site for eight houses which was granted 3½ years ago – but this application is for 14 houses. We thought the scheme was over-intensive, and the scale of the houses was out of keeping with the neighbouring properties in Kings Walk. Access and parking would also put unacceptable strain on Kings Walk. In sharp contrast to the previous schemes, we had no approach for pre-app. consultation from the developers or their agents. Both we and the Neighbourhood Planning Network – the grouping of voluntary organisations like M.V.C.G. and Bristol Civic Society who consider planning matters across the city – have objected to this failure to respect the City Council's policies on consultation. The applicant's response was that they consulted on the previous scheme which received permission, and this was a minor change. That's not just a sharp contrast, it's sharp practice – this scheme was significantly more intensive and dominating than the previous one was. The application would go to the planning committee the next day. *[See the Planning Update on page 15]*

There was another planning application which started in 2012 which was dealt with in a much more satisfactory fashion. Wessex Water needed to do some major work on the drains at the junction of Highridge Road and Bishops Cove. As a responsible organisation, they consulted us and other local groups well in advance, and, of course, we had no objection to the work. It did involve removing some trees – unfortunately, trees which were recently planted as a further step in our Elm Tree Corner plans – but Wessex are good at reinstatement, so we didn't have a problem with that. The fly in the ointment was that the pub wanted a fence put up along the edge of their car park as part of the works, which Wessex were happy to do for them, and the Parks Department wanted to see the hedge removed and replaced with wild-flower planting. We definitely did have a problem with removing one of the few surviving links with Bishops'worth's past as a rural village, and we said that if removal of the hedge remained part of the planning application, we would reluctantly oppose it. That was where we were up to at last year's A.G.M. Fortunately, we were listened to, and the hedge, like the trees, will be reinstated in due course.

As well as normal planning applications, we have also been monitoring the same major planning issues on and near our patch during 2013 as we did the previous year. One of them is the South Bristol Link, which received planning permission in November. M.V.C.G. has been consistently against this road, which we see as a road chasing money, since the government have agreed to provide most – but not all – of the money for its construction. We simply don't believe the consultants' claims about jobs which the road will create in South Bristol, and even the consultants don't claim very much for the saving in journey times if the road is built. What the road will definitely do is cut a swathe across Highridge Common, and plough across the Green Belt at Ashton Vale – hardly a good advertisement for Bristol as a Green Capital. Planning permission was without doubt a significant step – but there are more steps to come, and it's still not inevitable that this stupid and damaging road will be built.

We've also continued to monitor the Town Green saga which arose from the planning permission granted to Bristol City Football Club for a new stadium at Ashton Vale. The Stadium and Town Green are outside our patch, so we haven't taken an official view or got involved, but the issues raised – development on the Green Belt and town greens – are of direct concern to us. The situation on the Town Green is that the legal side is in semi-limbo at the moment, but meanwhile the Football Club have received planning permission for the redevelopment of their existing site at Ashton Gate – an application which was universally welcomed. We take no view on football stadiums as such outside our area, but we would very much welcome the Green Belt not being built on.

We reported last year on the excellent process to identify what should happen on the site of Bishopsworth Swimming Pool. We're now very close to a final decision on a good way forward. Cllr Richard Eddy has been involved with the steering group of local people and Council officers. He couldn't be present, but Richard Bevan will give us an update on what will be happening.

The Site Allocations process has been reported on for the last couple of years. We were delighted last year to report that the Quarries area of Manor Woods Valley had been confirmed as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest and had its designation for industry and warehousing removed. There was a further round of consultations on Site Allocations in 2013 and this has resulted in no change to that good result, but a welcome change at the site of the former City of Bristol College at Hartcliffe, where an informal wild flower meadow on a former tennis court is now recognised for retention. This is the result of positive pressure from Keith Way, who got the Dundry View 'Pride of Place' Group to put forward an amendment to the document which has now been accepted.

Progress with Manor Woods Valley: MARIE JO COUTANCHE, as Convenor of the Manor Woods Valley working group, reported that 2013 had been a good but challenging year at times. The group always finds it rewarding to look back to see what has been achieved.



Putting some glitter on the litter

Spring is the time when we feel we can make a difference on the ground. We started by tidying up the bank behind Bishopsworth Library to keep the brambles in check for the wildflowers. Then we went into the Library garden, pruned the few shrubs we planted a couple of years ago and tidied up the border along the fence. Later we decided that we would wash the outside of litter bins as they were covered with mud from winter rain. We also cleaned the three interpretation boards which looked so much better afterwards.

A few M.V.C.G. members took part in the two Himalayan Balsam 'Big Pull' sessions with a group of employees from Lloyds, Canons Marsh. They brought delicious doughnuts which we all enjoyed. It was hard work but also a lot of fun. This year we were pleased with the Invasive Weeds treatments against Himalayan Balsam and Japanese knotweed.

As usual we kept an eye on litter. This year we concentrated on the Valley Road entrance. Finally we were successful in obtaining a litter bin for this entrance. It will help. In August we had a litter pick in the area of woodland down from the Valley Road entrance which resulted in a big heap of black bags. Do let us know if you have noticed any litter blackspots.

In June, Manor Woods Valley was one of the locations around the city for the 'Bristol 99' Project – a celebration of the Sites of Nature Conservation Interest throughout Bristol. A large group of people cycled to Manor Woods Valley where they were met by the well-known local naturalist, Ed Drewitt – and a small gang of M.V.C.G. members keen to show off our favourite Local Nature Reserve! Ed tutored us in some of the techniques needed to do a 'bio-blitz' and we had great fun finding and identifying all sorts of mini-beasts.

The area around the interceptor, at the end of the River Path, has suffered from vandalism this summer. Slabs have been removed from the top of the wall and some taken away. The finger post (River Path and Woodland Path, partly paid for by M.V.C.G.) was uprooted twice. Two of our members found the fingers quite far away. We reported this – persistently – and we're delighted to say that the finger post has been re-instated, and, at the time of writing, we have been told that the wall is going to be repaired.

The Malago Greenway sign behind Bishopsworth Library had been removed and thrown into the Library garden. After reporting this for about six months it has now been put back in place.

Our big success of the year was the bench installed at the top of the flower meadow. It is a good example of what M.V.C.G. does well: taking an initiative, doing the research, using our own money to bring a project about, in collaboration with the Council. In the event of difficulties we do not give up and persistence pays. This bench is very popular for walkers who stop to admire the view. Recently we have added a plaque which says it was donated by M.V.C.G.



A plaque placed with precision

In early autumn we were contacted by Joe McSorley, the Reserves Officer from the Avon Wildlife Trust, who wanted us to show him round Manor Woods Valley and Crox Bottom, which we did with pleasure (and in the rain). The main aim of this visit was to see whether the Wildlife Trust could help M.V.C.G. by taking on an aspect of the management, as they do with other Local Nature Reserves. Joe with his Sunday Volunteer group and a group of M.V.C.G. members met in the quarry area of Manor Woods Valley on Sunday 8 December and started clearing scrub under fruit trees. It was a very successful day which will be followed by other sessions like this one. It is a great pleasure for us to see that the old quarry area is going to be more accessible as M.V.C.G. has worked hard to secure the future of this unique area which to our regret was not included in the Local Nature Reserve a few years ago. Joe McSorley called it 'The Malago Orchard' and we think it could be a good name.



*Bashing the
brambles in
Malago
Orchard*



If anyone would like to get involved with M.V.C.G.'s work in Manor Woods Valley, please look out for the announcement of events in the notice board at the Library entrance, or in our *Newsletter*, or by e-mail to those members who are on e-mail and have given us their address. If you'd like to come along to a meeting of our Manor Woods Valley Working Group, please speak to Marie Jo.

Progress with Other Projects: ANDRÉ COUTANCHE reported that many of the projects we are involved with are progressed through the 'Pride of Place' working group, the Environmental sub-group in our Dundry View Neighbourhood Partnership. It has monthly meetings which he attends, and it's a very good forum both for learning about new developments and for getting things done.

It's the Pride of Place group which discusses spending priorities in our parks and recommends them to the Neighbourhood Partnership. These are limited by what funds are available, mostly from 'section 106' money which comes from conditions attached to planning permissions. Section 106 will be almost disappearing in future and is being replaced by 'CIL', the Community Infrastructure Levy. We can't tell at present how this will work out, and whether it will mean the same, more or less money available in Dundry View from a given amount of development. Whatever happens, M.V.C.G. will continue to do what it has always done, which is to work with the relevant Council departments to maintain and improve our parks and green spaces, including sometimes contributing our own funds to small capital projects, as for the bench in Manor Woods Valley.

Last year we said: 'Unfortunately, continued reorganisation and under-staffing in Parks has meant that we have found it increasingly frustrating maintaining the good working relationship we have built up over the years.' In 2013, things got rather worse, but we soldier on, staying focused on getting improvements on the ground.

We also reported last year the excellent development which came out of the Pride of Place group – the Crox Bottom Management Plan, and new benches, picnic tables and notice boards. Since then further progress has been stalled by lack of volunteers to form a 'Friends of Crox Bottom' group, who could do for Crox Bottom what our working group does for Manor Woods Valley. We hope to arrange an event at Lakeshore, the Urban Splash development at the former Wills cigarette factory – Anton has offered to do a talk on the history of Crox Bottom which should attract people. What we really need is a collaboration between new people who live on the doorstep of Crox Bottom and people from M.V.C.G. and the other organisations at the Pride of Place group who have the experience and know-how to take things forward.

Much more progress was made this year on Dundry Slopes, that perennial environmental Cinderella in our area. There is a slightly informal 'Friends of the Slopes' group though which Keith Way pursues his long-standing concern for the area, and they and CSV Environment, supported by us where we can, have got things moving through the Pride of Place Group. The Avon Wildlife Trust are also involved, and their environmental consultancy have produced an ecological management plan for a part of the Slopes. CSV Environment have done some maintenance work on paths and steps and are applying for various grants which will allow more to be done.

We continue to go to the quarterly meetings of the Parks Forum, and their very good e-mail circulation keeps us informed.

‘Elm Tree Corner’ is the first project that M.V.C.G. started. The computer file which has the report of our working group – a working group in which John Taylor made a major contribution – is dated March 1997! Even back then, we were realistic – the report contains these words: ‘Even when overall agreement by all concerned is reached on the principles, no-one will have any money to do anything. Malago Valley Conservation Group will act as a catalyst, bringing together as many sources as possible.’ And we’ve continued to do that for seventeen years. We’ve had some results – the zebra crossing; some excellent tree planting, much of it which we paid for; and the daffodil planting which we did, again using our own funds. But the major part of our plan involved traffic engineering works – i.e. fairly serious money. We have been reporting for a couple of A.G.M.s that we had hopes of some of the works being started soon. It hasn’t happened for various reasons, but it hasn’t gone away either. On the contrary, the Traffic sub-group of the Neighbourhood Partnership, whose quarterly meetings André attends, now regards it as the top priority for funding. Anything is possible in these financially difficult times, but it may be that we’ll be reporting actual progress at the next A.G.M.

We spoke last year about the historic wall at the Elm Tree pub. During 2013, Parks Department kindly agreed to remove the plant growth which was breaking up the wall using labour from Community Payback. This even though the wall is really the responsibility of the pub. We were grateful for this, and Parks have agreed to spray the wall before regrowth starts. This isn’t a permanent solution, of course, but we’re cautiously optimistic that we can make more progress this year.

Finally, the ‘project’ which never stops – publicity. The Manor Woods Valley working group produced a little A6-sized flyer to hand out to people we got talking to in Manor Woods. Our website is regularly updated, and this includes our *Newsletter*. At the A.G.M. last year we had a discussion about the future of the *Newsletter* – too much work was falling on too few people to print, fold and distribute paper copies. The committee had decided to go electronic and distribute the *Newsletter* to our members and friends by e-mail. We recognised that not all our members had e-mail or wanted to, and we promised to make sure that no-one was left out. This has worked well – we now produce less than 20 paper copies as opposed to over 100, and those who get the electronic version can now see it in colour.

ACCOUNTS FOR 2013

Here are the accounts for 2013 which Beryl Heaton presented to the A.G.M.:

Income	£	Expenditure	£
Membership	222.00	Bench for meadow	498.32
Donations	23.00	Hall Hire	120.00
Christmas party raffle	26.00	Printing	46.60
Sale of aluminium cans etc.	56.80	Plaque for bench	40.00
Book sales	4.00	Postage	3.40
Written-off cheque	330.00	Christmas Meeting	15.60
Bank Interest	<u>3.41</u>	CPRE Subscription	34.00
		Refreshments at A.G.M.	13.87
		Internet domain fee	<u>5.39</u>
Total	665.21	Total	777.18
			£
Excess of expenditure over income			111.97
Brought forward from 2012			5566.58
Balance carried forward to 2014			5454.61
Made up of:			
Cash in hand			3.31
HSBC Money Manager account			4878.80
HSBC Current account			572.50
Note to the accounts: The 'written-off' cheque is the one mentioned in last year's accounts. It was made out to Bristol City Council to purchase trees and despite several reminders they failed to cash it. Hence we have now written it off as it was given over two years ago.			

Beryl reported that the committee has decided to write off the uncashed cheque. The big expenditure this year has been the purchase and installation of a bench at the top of the meadow. This time Marie Jo went to some trouble to ensure that the cheque was cashed. It was felt that otherwise we were carrying out works under false pretences.

Our running expenses have recently reduced now that we only have two indoor meetings per year. The cost of printing the *Newsletter* is considerably less now that it is in e-mail format. For just a handful of members without computers a hard copy is produced.

Beryl said that she had been comparing our income and expenditure for 2013 with that of 2012 and it has mainly remained the same. The written-off cheque of £330 has helped to balance the £498 which was the cost of the bench. The excess of expenditure over income is not a cause for concern when we consider the large balance remaining in the Money Manager account. There has been talk in financial circles of interest rate rises. Who knows, we may return to the heady days when the interest on that account generated interest of around £130 for our funds!

BERYL HEATON, *Hon. Treasurer*

NEWS FROM MANOR WOODS VALLEY L.N.R.

A RAVEN WAS CIRCLING high over the quarry area of Manor Woods Valley on 10 March. The distinctive call was heard among many other bird songs. This area is popular for birds as there is a lot of cover. We can report that the Avon Wildlife Trust team have now cleared the central area of what we are now calling 'Malago Orchard', and the fruit trees are accessible.



Bramble-bashing in December

A few weeks ago a Wildlife Trust training group came with a management expert to study orchard management techniques – we're looking forward to reading the report. Our deepest thanks to the Wildlife Trust.

As we reported to the A.G.M., the finger-post near the interceptor which was uprooted in the summer has finally been reinstated. And we have been told that the wall nearby is going to be repaired. Vandalism in the area has also meant graffiti over the interpretation boards and bins. Our group has cleaned them several times but we have also reported it to the contractors, Quadron Services.

Several of our members reported recently they had picked up litter in various places. We will be keeping an eye on litter as summer approaches.

Two trees fell in the gales, one across the path in the woodland and another at the Vale Lane entrance. We have reported them and are now waiting for the job to be done.

On 26 February five M.V.C.G. members gathered to do their annual clearance job at the entrance behind the library. It is always fun and we also cleaned the outside of the bin and the interpretation board which were covered with graffiti. We were wearing our hi-viz jackets with artistic drawings at the back or simply M.V.C.G. written in big letters.



*Spring-cleaners
at work (as usual,
the photographer
escaped being in
the picture!)*

Have a good summer!

MARIE JO COUTANCHE
Manor Woods Valley Working Group

JUSTIN SMITH

WE RECEIVED sad and shocking news at the beginning of March. Justin Smith, the Woodland and Wildlife Officer of Bristol City Council, died of a heart attack at the dreadfully early age of 46.

Justin was a great friend to M.V.C.G. and to many other parks groups throughout Bristol. He was always available to advise and help our Manor Woods Valley working group, and could be relied on to find a way of getting things done – sometimes independently of the more ‘official’ channels. He started the clearance in the Quarries area of Manor Woods Valley to re-open the access which had become overgrown which has now been carried on by the Avon Wildlife Trust.



One of his specialities was fungi and he led ‘Fungi Forays’ for us in Manor Woods Valley on a couple of occasions which many members will remember. He was incredibly knowledgeable but communicated his knowledge easily and with humour. Everyone who had been to a talk by Justin came away having learned something – and having had a good time.

Justin’s funeral on Friday 21 March at the South Bristol Crematorium was packed to overflowing – a mark of how many people whose lives he had touched and made better. Nor was it a solemn occasion; we had been asked to wear greens and browns – earth colours – and it was a celebration of a life well lived but far too short.

We will remember Justin Smith with fondness and gratitude. He made a difference.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

PLANNING MATTERS

WE REPORTED in the last *Newsletter* about the planning application at 131 BRIDGWATER ROAD and gave an update at the A.G.M. (see page 4). The application was approved at the planning committee meeting which happened the day after our A.G.M. We regret this, because the application was too intensive and out of scale with the adjacent properties, and it will lead to increased pressure on Kings Walk for traffic access and parking. There was another cause for concern here as well – the appalling consultation by the applicants and their agents. Moves are afoot behind the scenes to try to ensure this doesn't happen again.

Also at the A.G.M., we had a very informative and entertaining presentation from Richard Bevan about the future of Bishopsworth Swimming Pool. This is still some way from being a formal planning application, but it's looking pretty certain that it will be used for indoor skate-boarding, run by a community-interest (not-for-profit) company called Transitions Skate. They already have a centre at Winterbourne (you can find out more about it at www.campus-skatepark.co.uk) which is running very well. They won't need the parking or the outer grassed area of the pool site, so this space could become a 'village hub' – this could include a war memorial, parking, a market and a community café.

A small but attractive feature of the Bishopsworth & Malago Conservation Area looks as though it will be disappearing. The traditional wood-framed shop front at 25 Highridge Road – what used to be the 'Marpets' pet shop – has received planning permission to be replaced by an aluminium frontage. The central recess, which still has the logo of the Bristol Co-operative Society for whom the shop was built, would go, and a second door would be inserted on the left of the frontage. We opposed this application, as did the owner of the adjacent florist, but the planning officer, while acknowledging that 'the proposed shop front is not hugely sympathetic' and 'the loss of the timber shop front with recessed doorways is regrettable' has given planning permission.

ANDRÉ COUTANCHE

THANK YOU to everyone who has renewed their subscription. Inevitably, some people haven't got round to it yet, so you'll find a renewal slip attached to this *Newsletter* if we still haven't heard from you. There's no need to fill in the form unless your details have changed – just let us have a note of your name with your cheque or cash – but **do please let us know if you have a new or changed e-mail address.** Please send your sub. to either Beryl Heaton (3 Kings Walk) or André Coutanche (14 Queens Road). *Thank you!*

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



THERE ARE NO DATES for M.V.C.G. events to note this time, though Paul Mizen would be delighted to have any ideas for a SUMMER OUTING – you can contact him on 964 0825 or p.mizen@blueyonder.co.uk.

However, our friends across the Pigeonhouse Valley, the NORTHERN SLOPES INITIATIVE, have a series of walks planned, on **Saturday mornings**, starting from **The Park in Daventry Road at 10.30am**. Several M.V.C.G. members have been on these walks when they started last year and commented how interesting they were. There is now a modest charge for the walks of £2 (children free), or £3 for the ‘walking talks’ (children £1). The dates are:

- 12 April: ‘April golden, April cloudy’
- 19 April: ‘Bird Flocking Behaviour’ (*a walking talk*)
- 17 May: ‘Queen o’ the May’
- 24 May: ‘Bird Feeding behaviour’ (*a walking talk*)

The NSI’s excellent website at www.northern-slopes-initiative.co.uk also has a series of walks leaflets which you can download, along with a ‘Nature Diary’ booklet.

Malago Valley Conservation Group

Chairman	Peter Crispin	907 0623
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Hon. Secretary	André Coutanche	964 3106
Hon. Treasurer	Beryl Heaton	964 5780

Committee Members

Anton Bantock, Heather Leeson, Paul Mizen, Lis Pibworth

Co-opted Committee Members

Diana Porter, Don Smith, Sue Walker, CSV Environment, Cllrs Mark Brain, Richard Eddy, Helen Holland, Tim Kent, Derek Pickup, Kevin Quartley (*All the City councillors for Bishopsworth, Hartcliffe and Whitchurch Park wards are invited to become co-opted Committee members*).

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Letters, articles and suggestions from readers are welcome.

The opinions in this *Newsletter* do not necessarily represent those of M.V.C.G.