

Manor Woods Valley Group
Minutes of Annual General Meeting
Tuesday 28th June 2022, 19:00, Zion Community Space

Attendees:

Committee members: Martin Grant, Peter Loy-Hancocks, Adriana Moraru, Maggie Evans, André Coutanche, Jay Croney, Clive Weston, Ellie Bacon.

Other attendees: Andrew Mason, Lynda Wherlock, Cheryl Loy-Hancocks, Angela James, Tony James, Marie Jo Cautanche, Marian Green, Kevin McBride, Margaret Swatton, Dave McCrawley, Helen Moody, Brendan Joyce, Sue Willingham, Vicky Smith, Warren Sneary, Helen Gray, Rachel Harvey, Jess Wright.

Apologies: Sophie Thompson, Davina Blake, Heather Barham, Cllr Eddy, Cllr Quartley, Jennie Shivers.

1. Welcome and introductions

Martin welcomed everyone and reviewed the agenda.

He drew attention to the Zion Community Space Crowdfunder which is up for sale to the community, crowdfunding achieved 75% of its target, deadline extended to July/Aug 2022.

2. Minutes of last quarterly meeting (15Mar22) and last AGM (22Jun21)

No questions or corrections, all minutes agreed. Great progress on all the items included as 'Future plans' in the last AGM; work to improve access at the entrances is still ongoing.

3. Our money - treasurer's report Jun 2021 to May 2022 incl.

June 2021 Balance: £5481.22

Income June 2021 to June 2022: £1213.74

(Donations: WECA £35.74, Collection £2, Walks £101, Trees £75, Grant £1000)

Expenditure: £1310.54

(Bank charges £0.20, Leaflets £10, Labels £39.24, Screws £8.73, Venue hire £35.74, Fruit trees £232.43, Crox Bottom £79.99, Forest School £840)

June 2022 Balance: £5383.22

4. Elections of chair, secretary and treasurer

- Davina was confirmed for the position of treasurer.
- Peter was nominated and seconded for the position of chair.
- Secretary position has become vacant after Sophie left; Adriana was nominated and seconded for the position of secretary.

Martin and Sophie were thanked for their hard work in their roles at MWVG.

5. Highlights of 21/22 (incl. planning)

Peter, Clive, and Jay described the highlights of the last 12 months:

- 15 students from UWE provided valuable support with their work in MWV (clearing vegetation, planting trees, habitat management and surveys, rebuilding the Classroom).
- Manor Woods Orchard: good crop of apples in 2021, 60 bottles of juice. Over 30 people attended the wassail in January this year, which was not widely promoted due to the COVID surge.

- Brambles were cut down in the rabbit field; more cowslips are coming out each spring.
- The cut grass from the Valley Heights meadow was raked and some wildflower seeds were sowed.
- The trees in Hope Wood are all doing very well in their 2nd year; some of the field bindweed has been removed recently and some trees were re-staked.
- The Classroom was rebuilt by installing some permanent log seating out of dead Elms which had been felled by the council for safety reasons. Coppiced hazel was used to build hurdles around the seats.
- Great progress on the repairs of the Woodland Path with the help of GoodGym, ParkWork, UWE students and regular volunteers. 4 tonnes of gravel were shifted to fill the potholes along the length of the path.
- Access into the orchard was improved by clearing and widening the path.
- Half a tonne of apples was harvested last year, which resulted in 60 bottles of Manor Woods Orchard organic apple juice, 30 were donated to the Carpenters Foodbank.
- Regular litter picking across the site, thanks to the dedicated informal litter pickers.
- 2 new benches were donated and installed at the top of the main wildflower meadow.
- Trees donated by local residents were planted.
- Invasive species work continued with Peter surveying the Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam.
- Clive gave a short presentation on the Forest of Avon Trust who run wellbeing groups in MWV including 'Forest Fridays' for people who are struggling with mental health. Some of the activities involve fire making, foraging and cooking in the Classroom, sensory activity. Mindful walking sessions through MWV are organised a couple of times a year.
- 10 way-mark posts with trail arrows were installed for the 2.5km exercise trail. This was possible thanks to the grant received from Travelwest.
- Ecological surveying continued with the help of the UWE students. Fish survey was carried out at night in the Malago, where lots of bullheads and a large eel were sighted. Butterfly surveys were conducted by Rachel.
- Wildlife spotted: lots of wildflowers, damselflies, nuthatches using woodpeckers' holes in trees for nesting. A roe deer and an otter were spotted in a garden bordering MWV.
- Guided walks were organised as part of the annual Bristol WalkFest walking festival: guided walks and mindful walks were run by Peter and Clive.
- Britain in bloom: Manor Woods Valley Group was awarded an Outstanding award by the RHS Britain in Bloom. The assessor will revisit the site this month.
- Jay gave a short presentation on the Forest School project which he runs on Saturday mornings in MWV. Children from Years 5 and 6 at Parsons Street School attend the Forest School. Due to its popularity, there are plans to roll it out to younger age groups. The suggestion of opening it up to the wider public was discussed.
- Local planning:
 - Bristol City Council (BCC) owned Western Slopes have been saved from development.
 - An objection to the planning application to build on the West Side of Novers Hill has been submitted, still being considered.
 - Wring's Yard: breaches of planning affecting MWV are being progressed by BCC.
- Over 1700 hours of onsite volunteering (500hrs in 20/21) with more than 800 hours of student volunteering. Over 80 volunteers with more than 70 volunteering work parties (including the 35 student volunteering work parties).

- Growing support with nearly 1300 followers on Facebook, more than 5500 people reached on Facebook and over 250 members on the email list distribution list.
- Valuable support from Bristol City Council parks team, Bristol Parks Forum, GoodGym, Forest of Avon Trust, Your Park, UWE Bristol.

6. Future plans

We will manage our groups going forward through meetings at Zion Community Space and Whatsapp. Martin shared hard copies of the action plan for 2022/2023 and introduced Ellie, a graphic designer, who joined the committee and will help redesign the poster templates, leaflets, website and interpretation boards.

- Respond to the Climate and Ecological Emergencies.
- Maintain and improve wildlife habitat in MWV.
- Improve aquatic life of Malago.
- Continue eradication of non-native invasive weeds.
- Maintain new tree plantations (Hope Wood, Orchard, Butcher's Broom Spiny).
- Keep MWV clear of litter and fly-tipping.
- Respond to local development plans.
- Support health and wellbeing and social prescribing in MWV.
- Maintain and promote the exercise trail in MWV.
- Support student research studies and volunteering programmes.
- Harvest and juice fruit.
- Organise guided walks.
- Organise Forest School courses.
- Continue with repairs to the Woodland Path.
- Keep paths accessible.
- Promote information about MWV and related events.
- Redesign and install new interpretation boards.

7. Sharing ideas and concerns

- André mentioned that the pond used to be a major attraction of MWV, and that people would like to see it come back. Martin clarified that this would require a lot of effort and funding, involving dredging and destroying the woods that is growing where the pond used to be. The idea of creating a new fenced-off wildlife pond was discussed.
- Vicky raised the issue of rubbish and stagnation causing unpleasant smells present in a lot of areas in the Malago, especially around the Interceptor. Peter commented that the smell is probably due to the sewage from the Combined Sewage Overflow (CSO) following recent storms. The rubbish will be cleared in an upcoming cleaning session.
- Angela raised the issue of the bench near the pond which needs to be removed by BCC.
- Ellie raised the issue of a tree with an unsightly graffiti at the entrance in the MWV and the barrier with concrete in the Malago. BCC needs to remove the barrier. A graffiti clearing job was suggested.
- Marian raised the issue of the steps next to the flats which are getting overgrown with brambles making the handrail inaccessible. A work party to clear the path will be organised soon.
- Jay raised the issue of dog mess in the park and volunteered to check out success stories and find a solution which could be applied in MWV (campaign to raise awareness). Martin mentioned a successful campaign in Redcatch Park. The campaign organised by the BCC to

remove the rubbish bins from the park was also mentioned with mixed reception from the group.

8. Date and time of next meetings

Public meeting – 7pm 13 Sep 22 (Zion tbc)

AGM – 7 pm 13 Jun 22 (tbc)