

Note: Subject to approval at next meeting

FAVERSHAM FOOTPATHS GROUP

MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING ON 21 OCTOBER 2015

Present: Trevor Payne (Chairman)
Brian Caffarey (Secretary)
John Coulter
Andrew Osborne
Anne Salmon
Brian Turner

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies for absence were received from Roy Campbell (Treasurer).

MINUTES OF EC MEETING ON 1 SEPTEMBER 2015

2. The minutes were approved.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT ON SUBSTANTIVE AGENDA

(i) Walk on Sunday 4 October 2015 (para 3)

3. Eleven people had taken part in this very enjoyable walk in splendid weather. The next walk has been arranged for Sunday 15 November, led by Linda Harrison. If there appears to be sufficient interest Brian Caffarey will lead a walk on Sunday 10 January 2016. Steps are being taken to publicise the November walk on-line and through posters.

(ii) Proposal for an exhibition at the Fleur (para 4)

4. Brian Caffarey had written to Clive Foreman, Deputy Chairman of the Faversham Society, as agreed at the last meeting, saying that the Group would be happy to help with an exhibition and asking for some guidance about what he might want by way of material. A meeting was due to be arranged but had been delayed by respective absences on holiday. Andrew Osborne said that Ramblers were sending him some material for possible use.

ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY

(iii) Website 'hits' (para 5)

5. In a recent 30 day period 64 users had accessed the website, accessing, on average, nearly five pages each.

(iv) Social media etc (para 6)

6. The website etc had been updated on a regular basis.

(v) Walkers' groups (para 7)

7. No reply had so far been received to the request to Antony Millett to publicise the Group and its walks. Internet searches seemed to confirm that there were no local walking groups of which the EC was not already aware.

(vi) Lakeside Close (para 9)

8. KCC had confirmed that the revised planning application in respect of Lakeside Close had not included the requirement to improve footpath ZF3 leading from the rear of the development. KCC would, however, inspect it to see if some improvement was necessary. The Secretary would write to Chris Oswald-Jones, who had raised the issue with the Group.

ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY

(vii) Proposal for a path from Jubilee Way to the Rec (para 10)

9. John Coulter said that the proposal for securing limited access from Jubilee Way to the Rec, with a view to ending vehicular access from the promenade leading from Whitstable Road, was still being pursued by the Municipal Charities.

(viii) Court of Appeal judgement (para 11)

10. No reply had yet been received from KCC to the query whether there were any known implications for the Faversham area of a judgement relating to the effect of enclosure measures early in the 19th century.

(ix) Ramblers' Big Pathwatch (para 12)

11. Because of absence on holiday and other more pressing matters the Secretary had not so far been able to follow up this issue.

(x) Log of footpath issues

12. A log would be prepared for the EC's next meeting.

ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY

(xi) Google searches

13. Advice had been received about possible ways of helping to ensure that Google searches turned up the Group's website. This was to the effect that, while substantial improvement was difficult to achieve in the absence of high volumes of use, steps such as frequent amendment of the website and reference to the Group on Facebook, Twitter etc would assist. EC members would act on this advice as far as possible. John Coulter said that he would also follow up a general point raised about links from the faversham.org site.

ACTION: EC MEMBERS

TREASURER'S REPORT

14. Roy Campbell had reported that a bank account for the Group had now been opened. He and the Secretary would meet as soon as possible to take forward an application for charitable status. They would also discuss the possible use of standing orders to pay subscriptions.

15. The Group now had 49 paid-up members.

FOOTPATH ZF5 AT FAVERSHAM REACH AND WATERSIDE CLOSE

16. It was understood that KCC officials were awaiting more detailed information about the cost of the works needed to divert the footpath as proposed in the recent consultation document before putting the matter to the Council's Regulation Committee. In discussion it was agreed that the cost ought not to prove prohibitive, especially bearing in mind contributions from the Municipal Charities, Bensted's Charity and other parties, including Natural England. KCC were also under a legal obligation to act to divert the path and therefore had to take some action and incur some cost.

ENGLAND COAST PATH

(i) Correspondence with Natural England

17. The meeting considered the response which had been received from Natural England to the letter summarised in paragraph 15 of the minutes of the EC meeting on 1 September 2015. Natural England had confirmed that they would work closely with KCC and take account of the potential for linkages between the coast path project and KCC's plans in relation to Faversham Reach/Waterside Close; that the budget for the project was not fixed but was dependent on the final proposals; and that external funding could be used. It was felt that the response was satisfactory but that the situation would need to continue to be monitored closely by the Group.

(ii) Correspondence with KCC re design of footbridge

18. No response had been received to the Group's letter of 3 September 2015 expressing its concerns that the preliminary designs for the footpath provided for only a 0.6m wide footpath on the non-Basin side of the proposed new bridge; and reiterating that the designs should also allow access between a Creek-side path at the bridge's town centre-end on both the Basin and non-Basin sides of the bridge. In discussion Andrew Osborne said that the previous bridge had had a wider footpath and that it would be possible to provide for a wider footpath in the new designs. This would make access more difficult on the town side, partly depending on what was proposed to happen to the pump house, but these difficulties were not insuperable. Action would also have to be taken to deal with the resulting overhang in the bridge 'hole'.

19. It was agreed that the Secretary should contact KCC again before the next meeting to ask about progress with the designs.

ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY

(iii) Natural England's drop-in sessions

20. EC members' experience of attending the Faversham drop-in session had been positive, with NE representatives expressing an interest in views put forward and information provided, including reference to the Creek Streetscape Strategy. There was concern, however, that while the sessions had apparently been intended for landowners and the public, little or no effort had seemed to have been made by NE to publicise the sessions to the general public. It was agreed that the Secretary should continue to liaise with NE about progress.

ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY

DESIGNATION OF FOOTPATHS BY 1 JANUARY 2026

21. The meeting considered a preliminary response from KCC to the Group's letter about the process for achieving the designation of footpaths and bridleways that existed on 1 January 1949 but which were not on the definitive map and which would fall to be extinguished by 1 January 2026 unless designated before then. It was clear that KCC had not given any detailed consideration to this issue to date, although they recognised that there was potentially a huge amount of work involved. In discussion it was noted that, while a good deal of research might be needed to provide evidence in some cases, there were other paths (e.g. the alleyways in Faversham) for which evidence ought to be capable of being provided fairly readily. It was agreed that, as a first step, KCC would be asked if it would be sufficient in respect of the latter cases simply to complete the standard form and supply twenty or so statements of truth by way of evidence.

ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY

PROPOSAL FOR A LOG OF FOOTPATH ISSUES

22. A log of issues raised with, or initiated by, the Group would be prepared for the next meeting.

ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

23. The following matters were raised:

- Independent examination of the Creek Neighbourhood Plan – it was noted that there had been some disappointingly negative references to Creek-side footpaths from some critics of the Neighbourhood Plan. Some of these seemed to be based on a misunderstanding about the timescale for implementing the Streetscape Strategy.
- KCC budget cuts - the Secretary was asked to write to KCC to express the Group's appreciation of the service provided by the Council's Public Rights of Way department in spite of an extremely heavy workload and very limited resources and to urge that its budget should be safeguarded.

ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

24. Further EC meetings have been arranged for Tuesday 1 December 2015 and Wednesday 17 February 2016, both at 7pm at 130 Athelstan Road.

23 October 2015