

Note: Subject to approval at next meeting

FAVERSHAM FOOTPATHS GROUP

MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING ON 22 AUGUST 2018

Present: Trevor Payne (Chair)
Brian Caffarey (Secretary)
Julian Saunders (Treasurer)
John Coulter
Andrew Osborne
Anne Salmon
Nick Williams

MINUTES OF EC MEETING ON 23 MAY 2018

1. The minutes were approved.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT ON SUBSTANTIVE AGENDA

(i) Forthcoming walks (para 2)

2. Walks had taken place on 3 June (from Selling Primary School car park), 1 July (from Selling station), 22 July (around Oare Gunpowder Works) and 19 August (Uplees and Luddenham). The next walk was on Sunday 2 September, starting at Blean Woods Nature Reserve car park. The EC thanked Linda Harrison for organising and leading the Group's walks, which continued to be popular.

(ii) Website hits (para 3)

3. In the last 30 days 219 users had accessed the site for a total of 235 sessions, looking at 389 pages. The website continued to be updated regularly.

(iii) Social media etc (para 4)

4. A few Facebook postings had been added.

(iv) Proposal for a path from Jubilee Way to the Rec (para 5)

5. There had been no further developments. John Coulter confirmed that it was not proposed that there should be a vehicular access from the Eurolink site.

(v) The bund on the Front Brents (para 6)

6. Andrew Osborne said that he was continuing to pursue his concerns about this matter. These included the inadequate arrangements for predicting flooding at the Brents, which resulted in the unnecessary closing of the footpath at a cost of some £800 a time, the poor repairs to the bank, the draining of rainwater across the green and the failure to act in accordance with the agreed procedures. He had had a meeting with the Environment Agency and received an unsatisfactory

response to his concerns, which had now been elevated within the Environment Agency. If he did not receive a satisfactory reply to his complaint, he would pursue the matter with the Local Government Ombudsman.

(vi) Planning application in respect of former Oil Depot at Standard Quay (para 7)

7. Anne Salmon confirmed that Swale BC's Planning Committee had deferred a decision on the application when it met on 24 May. It was understood that revised drawings had now been submitted and that the application might be considered again in October.

(vii) Expansion of East Kent Recycling Ltd at Oare (para 8)

8. The FFG had submitted amended comments to KCC following the revised planning application in respect of the waste disposal site. It was not known when the new application would be considered. Kent Law School had submitted, on behalf of Uproare, an application for a Definitive Map Modification Order in respect of the existing track. Uproare had asked the FFG if any of the Group's members could submit evidence in support of the application and it was known that several had done so. It seemed clear from previous declarations made by Bretts that the track was a public right of way and this was of course supported by the evidence of people who had used it for many years.

(viii) Affiliation to Ramblers (paras 9-10)

9. No meeting had yet taken place with Ramblers regarding the suggestion that the Group might take over from Swale Footpaths Group the task of commenting on Ramblers' behalf on footpath issues in the Faversham area. A delay had been expected because of a change of personnel at Ramblers but Brian Caffarey would send a reminder. **ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY**

10. As agreed at the previous meeting, Brian Caffarey had arranged for public liability insurance to be taken out by the Group, making use of the arrangements for Ramblers affiliated groups, at a cost of £217 for one year.

11. In discussion it was felt that affiliation to Ramblers was helpful in providing backing for the Group, as a resource for advice and insurance cover and in showing support for the main body representing walkers. It was considered, therefore, that the Group should continue to be affiliated.

(ix) Replacement Swing Bridge (para 11)

12. The EC noted the 'Where Is Our Bridge?' campaign and the response given by Paul Carter of KCC. Andrew Osborne reported that KCC had declined his request to see a copy of the legal advice which they had received about responsibility for navigation and the bridge. The FFG would continue to monitor the situation to ensure that the footpath aspects were not overlooked.

(x) Perry Court (para 12)

13. Anne Salmon reported that the full set of revised drawings which had been submitted failed to deal with the objections which KCC and the FFG had raised on footpath aspects. It was agreed that the FFG should write again. **ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY**

(xi) Data Protection (para 16)

14. Brian Caffarey would write shortly to those non-members who had written in support of the Group's stance at the Creekside public inquiry to update them and would give them an opportunity at the same time to say if they did not wish to continue to receive correspondence from the Group.

ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY

TREASURER'S REPORT

15. Julian Saunders said that the Group now had 76 members compared with 67 at the end of 2017. Turning to finances, he expected that the Group would end the calendar year with a balance of income over expenditure of some £130, taking into account the sum spent on public liability insurance.

16. Julian said that he had not been able to make any progress so far in reclaiming gift aid.

ACTION: JULIAN SAUNDERS

CREEKSIDE PATH AT FAVERSHAM REACH AND WATERSIDE CLOSE

17. The EC noted that KCC had extended the Order suspending the use of the new footpath till 21 September 2019. It was understood that KCC and Swale BC had appointed the Official Valuer to deal with negotiations over possible compensation and mitigation and that the residents had appointed a firm of valuers to represent their interests. It was frustrating that these matters seemed likely to take some time to resolve but, as so often with public rights of way issues, it was necessary to take a long-term view. Andrew Osborne was asked to check with KCC the position regarding the present obstructed footpath.

ACTION: ANDREW OSBORNE

ENGLAND COAST PATH

18. The Inspector appointed to consider Natural England's recommended route between Whitstable and Iwade had apparently started site meetings in July. Natural England had said that they hoped to receive the Inspector's findings in the autumn. Brian Caffarey would ask for an update shortly.

ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY

LOST WAYS INITIATIVE

19. EC members had carried out two preliminary surveys, at the request of Ramblers, of possible cases in which a Definitive Map Modification Order might be needed to preserve footpaths in danger of being lost as a result of legislative changes due to come into force in 2026. A third survey would be undertaken shortly.

20. It was noted that a long outstanding reply was awaited from KCC to queries which the Group had raised following the survey which it had carried out of alleyways etc in Faversham town centre. The Group had been reluctant to press KCC about this in view of the priority which KCC had had to give to the Creekside public inquiry and its subsequent work in revising its Rights of Way Improvement Plan (see below), but Brian Caffarey would now send a reminder.

ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY

DESIGNATION OF LOCAL PATHS

21. As agreed at the previous meeting, Andrew Osborne and Brian Caffarey had met to take forward the proposal to seek Definitive Map Modification Orders in respect of a couple of local paths. An email had been sent to the Tester family on 30 July about the 'Tram Road' (the

continuation of Ham Road leading to Ham Wharf and the section of road leading off Ham Road heading towards the Shipwrights' Arms.) A response had not so far been received. A letter would also be sent shortly about paths in Abbeyfields.

ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY

CLEVE HILL SOLAR COMPLEX

22. As agreed at the previous meeting, FFG members had been consulted about the EC's draft response opposing the proposed solar complex at Graveney Marshes. It was clear that the vast majority of the Group's members supported the draft comments and a formal response was accordingly submitted on 30 June, which had received some publicity in the Faversham News. Helen Whately MP, who had been sent a copy of the Group's comments, sent a letter to the Group outlining her own objections to the proposal.

23. Anne Salmon said that a formal application had not yet been submitted but that, when it was, there would be a six-month consultation period. The FFG would wish to comment again then.

DUCHY OF CORNWALL WORKSHOPS RE LAND SOUTH OF SELLING ROAD

24. Anne Salmon had attended the public and 'by invitation' workshops regarding the Duchy's plans to put forward to Swale BC, for inclusion in the review of the latter's Local Plan, a proposal for a 'garden village' on land which it owned south of the Selling Road. The Duchy had now written to say that it had submitted the proposal to the Council, who were expected to carry out a round of consultations in spring 2019 on this and other potential sites. It was noted that the Duchy's response did not refer explicitly to footpaths, although there was a reference to measures to ease traffic congestion and pollution. Anne said that the workshops had highlighted the need for footpaths and the Duchy had appeared to be sympathetic to this demand. The FFG would need to emphasise this aspect in the next round of consultations.

KCC'S RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

25. The FFG and other bodies had been invited to comment on the draft which KCC had produced, updating for the next ten years its plans for public rights of way and other public access in Kent. The EC approved draft comments, to be submitted online, which had drawn on observations by EC members. The Group's main reservations were uncertainty over funding, the lack of tangible objectives and the apparent lack of emphasis on encouraging walking in urban and suburban areas. Brian Caffarey would submit comments by the deadline of 12 September.

ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY

WALKING AND CYCLING PROVISION IN FAVERSHAM

26. The EC discussed a note, partly prompted by a meeting with representatives of Faversham Future Forum, about possible means of encouraging walking and cycling in Faversham. This was a desirable objective for a host of reasons, including fitness, improving air quality and easing traffic congestion, all of which would become even more important as new housing developments added substantially to the population. It was noted that, as the KCC draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan confirmed, a substantial obstacle preventing non-users from using the rights of way network is lack of knowledge about where they are, where they lead and how long it would take to get there. An aspect of this was that, in contrast to the position often found in other countries, footpath signs (e.g. the sign at the beginning of the path leading off the A2 towards Preston church, the footbridge and the town centre) provided no information at all. Faversham was well provided with paths and

alleyways of various kinds but a number of these were probably not well known other than to long-time residents or keen walkers.

27. It was felt that it would be useful if information could be provided, both for residents and visitors, in accessible and interesting formats showing the main walking routes that could be used from different areas to reach the town centre. It was recognised that there were a number of bodies and individuals who had an interest in this issue and that it was not at all clear how best consideration of it could be taken forward. It was suggested that the Town Council should be approached and Brian Caffarey was asked to prepare a draft note accordingly.

ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY

28. On the wider question of how improved footpath and cycling provision could be encouraged in new developments, it was noted that the Duchy had been unusual in consulting in advance of putting forward a firm proposal. Too often it seemed that a planning application maintained, at best, the existing footpath provision without any serious thought having been given to possible enhancements. The FFG would need to try to ensure that the revised Local Plan reflected the Group's concerns.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE AGM ON 15 NOVEMBER 2018

29. Existing EC members said that they would be willing to stand for re-election but several said that they would be content to stand down if other suitable candidates put themselves forward. Brian Caffarey would write round to members nearer the time.

30. The EC agreed that, in the light of the financial position and in the absence of any planned substantial expenditure apart from the insurance policy, there seemed to be no case for increasing the £5 membership fee.

31. Brian Caffarey would write to KCC to see if a representative could give a short talk following the AGM about some of the issues discussed in their draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan and local concerns.

ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY

LOG OF ISSUES RAISED

32. The Committee noted a revised version of the log of issues raised with, or pursued by, the Group. This would be updated as necessary following the meeting.

NEXT MEETING

33. The next meeting will take place at 7pm on Monday 22 October 2018 at 130 Athelstan Road.

28 August 2018