

Note: Subject to approval at next meeting

FAVERSHAM FOOTPATHS GROUP

MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING ON 22 JANUARY 2020

Present: Trevor Payne (Chair)
Brian Caffarey (Secretary)
Ann Ashton (Treasurer) (Paragraphs 1-3)
John Coulter
Andrew Osborne
Anne Salmon

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Julian Saunders was unable to attend and sent his apologies for absence.

MINUTES OF EC MEETING ON 15 OCTOBER 2019

2. The minutes were approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT

3. Ann Ashton said that she had spent some time putting in place her own system of membership records and that she and Brian Caffarey would now liaise to ensure that her records and Brian's list of contacts matched. Her records showed that the Group had 85 members at the end of 2019. Membership renewals from those who paid by cheque or cash seemed to be coming in at a good rate but it would not be possible to give a precise figure until the next bank statement was received. Similarly, that statement would be required to give an accurate update on the Group's present bank balance, which had been reported at the November AGM as being £1396. The updated records of past and present members would also enable Ann in due course to address the issue of claiming gift aid.

ACTION: ANN ASHTON/BRIAN CAFFAREY

4. It was noted, too, that steps needed to be taken to renew the Group's public liability insurance.

ACTION: ANN ASHTON

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES NOT ON SUBSTANTIVE AGENDA

(i) Walks (para 3)

5. Since the last EC meeting walks had taken place on 20 October, 17 November, 15 December and 5 January. Walks were planned for 9 February, 8 March and 22 March. The EC expressed its thanks to Linda Harrison for organising and leading walks.

(ii) Website (para 4)

6. The website was up to date. In the previous 30 days it had been accessed by 111 users for 132 sessions, viewing 274 pages.

(iii) Social media etc (para 5)

7. It was noted that a new Faversham walking group had recently been established via the Faversham Matters Facebook page and that its walks were proving popular. The new group differed from our own Group in being simply an informal walking group rather than one which also campaigned on public rights of way but it provided further, welcome, evidence that there were a large number of people in Faversham who were interested in walking. It was hoped that some of those who had taken part in the new walking group might also take an interest in promoting and protecting public rights of way. Brian Caffarey said that he would take steps to publicise the Faversham Footpaths Group on other Facebook sites.

ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY

(iv) Proposal for a path from Jubilee Way to the Rec/Railyard application (para 6)

8. The path from Jubilee Way to the Rec was under construction. Andrew Osborne reported that Bensteds Charity had been asked to contribute to the cost of gates at the Whitstable Road entrance to the Rec but had indicated that they would consider doing so only if the gates were to be kept shut since otherwise vehicles would continue to drive up the main path, endangering pedestrians and spoiling the Rec's amenity value. He added that, for the same reason, it was important that the planned development of the Railyard off Station Road continued to include the means to allow deliveries to the Lodge to be conveyed there by trolley from the new development. It would be helpful if this could be emphasised when the Town Council considered the amended planning application. Brian Caffarey undertook to pass this point on to Julian Saunders.

ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY

9. It was noted that the amended Railyard application also included provision for a new access to link the development with the existing development at Jubilee Way via Sidings Close. Although there would not be a pavement along all of its length, this would nevertheless provide a welcome pedestrian route between Jubilee Way and Station Road.

(v) Front Brents/Town Green (para 7)

10. Andrew Osborne noted that the remedial work to the flood defences had not been carried out to date. He would pursue the matter.

ACTION: ANDREW OSBORNE

(vi) 'Lost Ways' initiative (paras 10-11)

11. No update had been received from Kent Ramblers about progress with their 'Lost Ways' initiative, to which EC members had contributed four surveys of apparent 'anomalies'. Brian said that he had still not received any reply to his letter to Kent Ramblers in which he had asked if any initiative was planned to try to identify other paths which had existed in the past but which had been lost as a result of, for example, landowners' action in closing them off. He would write again.

ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY

(vii) Walking and Cycling provision in Faversham (para 12)

12. Julian Saunders had reported that the Town Council was pursuing with KCC a proposal for shared pedestrian/cyclist use of three pathways: Athelstan Road/School Road underpass, Flood Lane and St Catherine's Drive/Preston Park. The Town Council was also discussing the possible improved signposting of the footpath (ZF22) leading from the A2 towards Preston Church. A KCC-funded audit report by Sustrans on improving cycling in Faversham was also due to be published.

13. In discussion Andrew Osborne said that he thought that any shared use of the Athelstan Road/School Road underpass should be on the basis of marking of separate lanes. The general view was also expressed that shared use should only be permitted where it could be achieved without significant risk to pedestrians.

(viii) Standard House/New Creek Road planning application (19/501612/FULL) (para 13)

14. It was noted that part of the path from Standard Quay to the Iron Wharf boatyard had been diverted while construction took place of the new houses next to Standard House. Once that section of the path had been properly surfaced the contrast with the section alongside the Oyster Bay Warehouse would be even more marked. It was often at present largely under water. Brian Caffarey said that he had written to Brian Pain, the owner of the land, to ask if he would provide a proper surface. He had not yet received a reply and would follow up as necessary.

ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY

(ix) Cleve Hill solar complex (para 19)

15. Anne Salmon said that the inquiry's report was planned to go to Ministers in February. A decision was then due to be made within three months but it was possible that this timetable would be extended in practice.

(x) Proposed development at A2/Western Link Road (17/505079) (paras 22-24)

16. Anne Salmon reported that, following the informal hearing in October, the Inspector had rejected Shepherd Neame's revised plans on grounds relating to the "setting of the conservation area". This meant that the present threat to the use of the rail crossing (public footpath ZF9) had been removed, although it seemed likely that other plans would come forward in due course to develop all of the land between the Oare roundabout and Ospringe.

AGM ON 14 NOVEMBER 2019

17. The EC noted that the AGM had gone off smoothly, with all the official business quickly and successfully concluded.

CREEKSIDE PATH AT FAVERSHAM REACH AND WATERSIDE CLOSE

18. It was noted that KCC had formally rejected in early November the claim made by the Faversham Reach Residents' Association (FRRRA) that the original obstructed public footpath at Faversham Reach had been wrongly added to the Definitive Map of Footpaths. (The Group had submitted observations to KCC in June, arguing that the FRRRA had failed to provide any convincing arguments that an error had occurred.) The FRRRA had now submitted an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate, to which KCC would be responding by 30 January. The Group would be sent a copy on 3 February and that we would then have 14 days to submit any observations.

19. In discussion it was noted that the grounds of appeal submitted by the FRRRA largely focused on claims that KCC had not followed the correct procedures in considering their claim but they also included some reiteration of points made at the two public inquiries, few, if any, of which seemed to address the relevant legal criteria governing the question whether an error had been made. It was agreed that Andrew Osborne, John Coulter and Brian Caffarey would consider, once KCC's response had been received, whether the Group should comment.

ACTION: ANDREW OSBORNE, JOHN COULTER AND BRIAN CAFFAREY

FAVERSHAM CREEK BRIDGE

20. It was noted that the temporary bridge, with a separate footbridge, was due to open in a couple of days. Andrew Osborne said that he had discussed with KCC officials the issue of the width of the footway on a permanent bridge, indicating how a wider footway could be provided even if the present bridge configuration was preserved.

ENGLAND COAST PATH

21. It was noted that the Inspector's report had not been published by the end of 2019, as had been hoped. Brian Caffarey had sought a progress report but it had not been received to date. He would pursue as necessary.

ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY

EAST KENT RECYCLING LTD PLANNING APPLICATION

22. KCC had approved EKR's proposals for pedestrian refuges along the access road to EKR's site, rejecting the Group's view that a separate footway should be provided. It was agreed that the Group should write to EKR urging them to provide such a footway voluntarily.

ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY

PROPOSALS FOR 'GARDEN VILLAGES'/NEW HOUSING

23. Trevor Payne and Anne Salmon said that, although it had been thought that the Gladman (North Street/Sheldwich) proposals might be eliminated from the list of possible development sites, the Members of Swale BC's Local Plan Panel had decided to retain them at least for the time being.

24. It was noted that a planning application had recently been submitted for 115 dwellings at Millfield. Public footpath ZF29 ran through the site but it appeared that its route would remain unaffected. It was agreed, nevertheless, that the Group should comment on the plans, drawing attention to the importance of preserving this right of way.

ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY

25. Anne Salmon explained the revised plans which had been submitted regarding the proposed development off Ham Road (19/503278). It was agreed in discussion that it was neither necessary nor practicable to press for any amendment regarding footpath access towards the North Preston estate.

DESIGNATION OF LOCAL PATHS

26. John Coulter, Andrew Osborne and Brian Caffarey had met to finalise proposals to put to the Town Council to support applications to KCC for the designation of various local paths. These now needed to be reflected in new maps, which Andrew Osborne would prepare.

ACTION: ANDREW OSBORNE

LOG OF ISSUES RAISED

27. 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

28. To be arranged.

26 January 2020

