

Note: Subject to approval at next meeting

## FAVERSHAM FOOTPATHS GROUP

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 'VIRTUAL MEETING' – 22 April 2020

Present: Trevor Payne (Chair)  
Brian Caffarey (Secretary)  
Ann Ashton (Treasurer)  
John Coulter  
Andrew Osborne  
Anne Salmon  
Cllr Julian Saunders

### MINUTES OF EC MEETING ON 22 JANUARY 2020

1. The minutes were approved.

#### MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES NOT ON THE SUBSTANTIVE AGENDA

##### (i) Walks (para 3)

2. Successive storms had led to the cancellation of the walk planned for February. A walk took place on 8 March, beginning at Chilham. Subsequently, the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in the suspension of walks till further notice.

##### (ii) Website (para 4)

3. The website had been kept up to date. Because of the suspension of walks fewer emails had been sent to members, resulting in less use of the website in recent weeks. But in the 90 days preceding 18 April 277 users accessed the site, viewing 631 pages.

##### (iii) Social media (para 5)

4. No postings had been made on the Group's Facebook page but one had been put on the Faversham Matters group, in response to a posting by the Faversham Walks organisers, drawing attention to the Group's work in promoting public footpaths.

##### (iv) Proposal for a path from Jubilee Way to the Rec/Faversham Rail Yard application (paras 8-9)

5. It was understood that the revised planning application for the Rail Yard still allowed for the 'trolleying' of items through to the Rec Lodge. The steps from Jubilee Way to the Rec looked as though they were virtually ready for use but were fenced off at present.

(v) Front Brents/Town Green (para 9)

6. The Covid-19 pandemic had led to the postponement of outstanding amelioration work. Andrew Osborne had obtained information from the Environment Agency about the three occasions on which the flood gates had been put in place in February. The total cost had been £1352 but the flood gates were at least taken down quickly – in two or three hours. Andrew's view, however, is that they are being deployed unnecessarily and he has suggested to EA that they try to calculate more accurately how high the tide needs to be to threaten the Front Brents cottages.

(vi) Lost Ways Initiative (para 11)

7. As agreed, Brian Caffarey had written again to Kent Ramblers about the need to consider other 'lost' footpaths, not only 'anomalies' suggested by perusal of OS maps. However, the reply informed us that the leader of the Kent Ramblers' initiative, Neville Machin, had resigned as a result of disagreements with Ramblers HQ over the relationship of the Kent initiative to the national project. Neville will collate the information collected to date and thereafter the lead will be with the Ramblers Kent Area Management Team. It was agreed that the present position was very unsatisfactory and Brian Caffarey was asked to write to the Kent Area Management Team to seek more information on how the work was to be taken forward once Neville's involvement ceased.

**ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY**

(vii) Walking and Cycling provision in Faversham (paras 12-13)

8. Julian Saunders said that work on a Faversham Neighbourhood Plan was being led by a working group of Town Councillors and Faversham Future Forum members and that the Transport Technical Group was interested in developing plans to make Faversham more of a 'walking town'.

(viii) Standard House/New Creek Road planning application (19/501612/FULL)  
(para 14)

9. Brian Pain had not responded to either of the letters sent to him regarding the state of the footpath running alongside the Oyster Bay Warehouse. The remaining part of the path from Standard Quay had been given a new surface as part of the construction of the houses adjoining Standard House. Although the recent fine weather had meant that the Oyster Bay Warehouse section was now in much better condition than during the winter months, the situation remained unsatisfactory and the EC would consider whether any further action could be taken.

(ix) Cleve Hill solar complex (para 19)

10. No information had been provided about progress in reaching a decision, which was due to be made by the S of S for the Environment by the end of May 2020.

(x) Faversham Creek bridge (para 20)

11. Since the last EC meeting a new temporary bridge and separate footway had been provided. It was understood that KCC continued to work on the designs for a new opening bridge and supporting work as well as discussing funding with Peel Ports and others.

(x) Abbeyfields planning application (para 24)

12. As agreed, Brian Caffarey had commented on the importance of preserving public footpath ZF29.

### TREASURER'S REPORT

13. Ann Ashton reported that she and Brian Caffarey had spent some time chasing up outstanding subscriptions for 2020 and had now received them all bar some eight members who, it was hoped, would still renew their membership. Assuming those members do renew their membership, the Group had some 85 members. The Group had just over £1500 in its account, having renewed its insurance policy. Small payments would need to be made shortly for website hosting and the Group's domain name. Ann added that it was hoped to make some progress soon about reclaiming Gift Aid.

### CREEKSIDE PATH AT FAVERSHAM REACH AND WATERSIDE CLOSE

14. The Group had submitted comments on 10 February in response to the appeal made by the Faversham Reach Residents' Association (FRRA) against KCC's decision rejecting their claim that the original obstructed path had been wrongly added to the Definitive Map of Footpaths. Andrew Osborne had also submitted separate comments. Following several more rounds of comments by the FRRA and KCC the papers were eventually submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 23 March, who, it was thought, would reach a decision in a few weeks' time.

15. If the Inspectorate rejected the FRRA's appeal, it ought to be possible for KCC to proceed with trying to settle any compensation/mitigation for the two sets of residents in respect of the Creekside path. The alternative course would be for the Inspector to require KCC to make an Order in the residents' favour. The Group would no doubt then oppose that Order, resulting in a public inquiry and substantial further delay. Whatever the result of this process, it needed to be borne in mind that the Creekside path existed in law even if it was not presently capable of being used.

### ENGLAND COAST PATH

16. A recent update from Natural England informed the Group that it was hoped to submit to the S of S shortly the long-awaited Habitat Regulation Assessment, which had been holding up the Inspector's report dealing with objections to the proposed Whitstable to Iwade route.

## EAST KENT RECYCLING LTD PLANNING APPLICATION

17. Brian Caffarey reported that, as agreed at the last meeting, he had written to EKR on 17 February, urging them to provide a footway on a voluntary basis alongside the access road leading to their site. Subsequently, he and Andrew Osborne had attended a meeting with EKR and a representative of Waterman Infrastructure and Environment Ltd. One of the points to emerge from the meeting was that the original planning approval given to Bretts to extract gravel had included a requirement, which they had not complied with, to restore the original path across the lagoon. More recently, Bretts had formally applied to divert the definitive line of the path onto the access road.

18. In recent correspondence KCC confirmed that they had failed to enforce this requirement but said that, in their view, it was no longer enforceable and indeed doubted whether it was practicable to restore the footpath on its original line. They had indicated that they were content for EKR to explore other possibilities but made it clear that they still expected them to provide the pedestrian refuges approved in the planning permission.

19. In discussion it was agreed that the Group should continue to press KCC to take the lead in considering other options, in particular the Group's proposal that a separate footway should be provided on the lagoon side of the access road. It was thought that KCC had an obligation to do this, given their failure to enforce the original planning condition and the fact that they had a legal requirement to deal with the obstruction of a public footpath. Moreover, it was felt that a proposal simply to divert the public footpath onto the access road would be strongly opposed and would be unlikely to be acceptable. **ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY/ANDREW OSBORNE**

## PROPOSALS FOR 'GARDEN VILLAGES'/NEW HOUSING

20. Although the Covid-19 pandemic had led to delays in holding meetings, Swale BC continued to work on preparing a new Local Plan.

## DESIGNATION OF LOCAL PATHS

21. The Group had received belated responses from KCC to queries which it had lodged with them a long while ago about the status of various paths/alleyways in Faversham. Andrew Osborne was studying these before preparing new maps showing the Group's proposals for designating certain paths.

**ACTION: ANDREW OSBORNE**

## SEEKING A NEW SECRETARY

22. The email sent to members of the Group on 20 February about the need to find a new Secretary had not produced any response. While Brian Caffarey's planned house move would inevitably be delayed by the Covid-19 'lockdown', further thought would need to be given to finding a successor, possibly combined with exploring whether some of his current tasks could be carried out by other people.

## 2020 AGM

23. The Group's 2020 AGM was provisionally arranged for 7.30pm on Thursday 12 November.

## LOG OF ISSUES RAISED

24. 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.

## ANY OTHER BUSINESS

25. The following matters were raised:

(i) Use of public footpaths during the 'lockdown'- it was noted that the use of public footpaths had greatly increased during the 'lockdown': KCC had estimated that the increase might be as high as 300% in some cases. It was suggested that this development might serve as a 'peg' on which to encourage greater support for the Group's work in protecting and promoting public rights of way in the Faversham area. A draft letter to the Faversham News would be prepared.

**ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY**

(ii) Vicarage Lane/Eastling Road - walking out of Faversham along Vicarage Lane is a popular route for walkers but leads to a dangerous section once the Eastling Road is reached, especially if the aim is to walk along to the entrance to Lorenden Park. It was agreed that the Group should look into the possibility of securing agreement to a permissive path running inside the hedge line between the corner of Vicarage Lane/Eastling Road and the corner of Lorenden Park. **ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY**

(iii) Maron Cottage, Perry Wood (20/501366) – it was agreed that the Group would write in support of a comment from Michael Ellis of KCC's Rights of Way Service about the need to maintain the width of a bridleway. **ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY**

## DATE OF NEXT MEETING

26. The next meeting was provisionally arranged for 7pm on Wednesday 22 July.

6 May 2020