

Note: Subject to approval at next meeting

FAVERSHAM FOOTPATHS GROUP

MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING ON 16 FEBRUARY 2017

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

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Brian Turner sent his apologies for absence.

MINUTES OF EC MEETING ON 12 DECEMBER 2016

2. The minutes were approved.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT ON SUBSTANTIVE AGENDA

(i) Recent and forthcoming walks (para 3)

3. Well-attended walks had taken place on 8 January and 5 February. Linda Harrison had kindly arranged further walks for 19 March and 30 April.

(ii) Website hits (para 4)

4. In the last 30 days 66 users had used the website for 73 sessions, looking at 167 pages in total. The lower usage than usual no doubt reflected the lack of new postings during Brian Caffarey's absence on holiday.

(iii) Social media etc (para 5)

5. The website was fully up-to-date and several Facebook postings had been added. John Coulter confirmed that he would update the information on faversham.org., including ensuring that the Group was added to the list of clubs.

ACTION: JOHN COULTER

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

6. John Coulter said that there had been no change, with the proposal for securing limited vehicular access from Jubilee Way to the Rec still being considered by Swale Borough Council. Andrew Osborne suggested that it would be helpful if some pressure was applied to move things forward.

(v) Neighbourhood Plan (para 7)

7. Andrew Osborne noted that the judicial review action concerning Swan Quay had been lost, with the result that it was now expected that the draft Plan would be approved at a referendum to be held at the same time as the County Council elections.

(vi) The bund on the Front Brents (para 10)

8. As agreed at the last meeting, Brian Caffarey had written to KCC to say that the revised arrangements governing the Order and the temporary closing of the footpath were acceptable. However, Andrew Osborne reported that the subsequent experience of the first use of the flood barriers in mid-January had been very unsatisfactory, with the barriers left in place much longer than was stated in the operating arrangements. Other unsatisfactory features were the damage to the Town Green caused by its unauthorised use by the contractors to dump soil there; and the decision to seed, rather than turf, some areas, contrary to the landscape details in the planning permission. Although the Environment Agency had written to him to assure him that the operational procedure would be fully complied with in future, he was not convinced by their assurances and would continue to pursue the matter with them. The Committee noted the position and thanked Andrew for continuing to follow this up.

TREASURER'S REPORT

9. Julian Saunders said that the Group had had £282.16 in its account at the end of 2016 and had since received £170 in membership subscriptions, with no expenditure. So, the Group currently had £452.18 in its account.

10. Turning to membership, Julian said that the Group had had 67 members at the end of 2016, six of whom had joined in the last quarter and who were therefore deemed to have paid their subscription for 2017. To date, 34 of the 61 members whose subscriptions fell to be renewed had done so: a reminder had recently been sent to the members who had not so far renewed. Three new members had also joined, so the present paid-up membership was 43. In discussion it was thought that most of those who had not re-joined had simply not got round to doing so at a busy time. A further reminder would be sent once the next bank statement had been received in early March: this would show any new standing orders which had been set up in the meantime. The Committee thanked Julian for his work on finances and membership.

EXPANDING THE GROUP'S ACTIVITIES/EC MEMBERSHIP

11. The Committee discussed the response which had been received to Brian Caffarey's note to members seeking offers of help in respect of: monitoring the state of public footpaths; organising and taking part in occasional work parties; and designating footpaths in order to safeguard their future. Only one offer of assistance, from Marion Shoard – concerning the designation of footpaths – had been received. This was gladly accepted, and Brian Caffarey was asked to contact Marion to thank her and to take matters forward. **ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY**

12. It was also agreed that a work party would be arranged, when the weather had improved, to see whether some members would be willing to volunteer for a specific task once it had been set up.

ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY

FOOTPATH ZF5 AT FAVERSHAM REACH AND WATERSIDE CLOSE

13. Andrew Osborne said that he understood that work on the Orders to give effect to the diversion of footpath ZF5 was still continuing. While the continuing delay was disappointing, it was important that the Orders and supporting documentation should be watertight.

ENGLAND COAST PATH

14. Brian Caffarey said that, as had already been notified to members and explained on the Group's website, Natural England (NE) had now decided that they were unable to propose precisely the same route for the Coast Path as would be set out in KCC's Orders. This was, apparently, mainly because they did not feel that the plans regarding work at the slipway were sufficiently advanced for them to rely on that part of the route. They had said, however, that their report would say that, if the Orders were agreed and implemented, the Coast Path route would be modified to follow the route in the Orders. NE would, instead, propose that the route should leave Faversham Reach via the entrance there and then enter Waterside Close via the main entrance, following which it would run along the promenade as envisaged in the s.106 agreement.

15. It was agreed in discussion that it was potentially confusing that there should be this disparity between the Orders and NE's proposals but there was confidence that this would eventually be resolved by the approval of the Orders. It was also noted that the delay in submitting the Orders for approval meant that the two timetables were now more closely aligned.

DESIGNATION OF FOOTPATHS BY 1 JANUARY 2026

16. Andrew Osborne reported that KCC had said that they would try to reply soon to the detailed queries which had been raised by the Group to the response which it had received about the status of various paths/alleyways etc in Faversham. In the meantime he and Brian Caffarey had been in touch with Ramblers and the Swale Footpaths Group to see what action, if any, they planned to take. Ramblers had replied to say that they had recently sought volunteers in Kent, initially to look at maps to try to identify unrecorded paths, both those in use and those which had probably been in use in the past, but had not yet started work. They had expressed the hope that the Group could work in co-operation with them. No reply had yet been received from the Swale Footpaths Group. The way forward would be considered by Andrew Osborne, John Coulter and Brian Caffarey at their next meeting.

ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY

LOG OF ISSUES RAISED

17. 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

18. The following matters were raised:

- (i) Planning application re the Oil Depot – it was noted that the application which had just been submitted included a Creekside path. While this was welcome, it was important that it should be capable of being easily connected with Provender Walk, which would form part of the Coast Path, and that, pending any development of the coach depot site, the path should then run out to Belvedere

Road. Brian Caffarey was asked to write to Swale Borough Council to make these points and also to draw NE's attention to the application and its potential implications for the Coast Path route. **ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY**

- (ii) Preston footbridge – the Committee noted the present discussions concerning the replacement of the present footbridge over the railway, in particular whether there was scope for providing disabled access.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

19. The next meeting will take place at 7pm on Thursday 18 May 2017 at 130 Athelstan Road. A provisional date of Thursday 9 November was agreed for the AGM.

18 February 2017