

Note: Subject to approval at next meeting

FAVERSHAM FOOTPATHS GROUP

MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING ON 7 MAY 2019

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

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies for absence were received from Andrew Osborne and Nick Williams.
2. The meeting congratulated Julian Saunders on his election to Swale Borough Council and Faversham Town Council.

MINUTES OF EC MEETING ON 28 JANUARY 2019

3. The minutes were approved.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT ON SUBSTANTIVE AGENDA

(i) Walks (para 3)

4. Since the last EC meeting walks had taken place on 10 February (Lorenden Park), 10 March (Luddenham), 7 April (Chartham) and 28 April (Wye Downs and Crundale). Future walks were planned for 11 May (Teynham to Faversham along the coast path), 9 June, 29 June and 27 July. It was hoped that providing some walks on Saturday would be of interest to those who were not able to participate on Sunday mornings.

(ii) Website (para 4)

5. In the last 30 days 159 users had accessed the site for a total of 128 sessions, looking at 270 pages. Figures for the last 90 days were: 352 sessions, 259 users and 681 pages. The website continued to be updated regularly.

(iii) Social media etc (para 5)

6. Brian Caffarey apologised for the lack of recent Facebook postings.

(iv) Proposal for a path from Jubilee Way to the Rec (paras 5-6)

7. Anne Salmon reported that an amended application now provided access to the bottom landing of the long bridge. Brian Caffarey said that he understood from Andrew Osborne that Andrew had had a meeting with the developer of the rail yard site and that it appeared that there was scope for

'trolley access' to be provided from there to the Lodge. This was being now being pursued by Swale BC.

(v) The bund on the Front Brents (para 7)

8. In Andrew Osborne's absence it was noted that, following his complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman, he had been in correspondence with various agencies about the remedial work required following the erection of the bund and the timing, and cost, of putting stopboards in place when flood warnings were issued. Undertakings had been given to carry out most of the repair work but Andrew was still pursuing the issue of damage to the Town Green on the landward side of the bund.

(vi) Planning application in respect of former Oil Depot at Standard Quay (para 8)

9. As reported at the previous meeting, it was understood that Swale BC's Planning Committee had approved the revised application, including specific conditions – proposed by Andrew Osborne on behalf of the Group – which will require the Creekside path there to be a public right of way and enable level access in due course through to Standard Quay and Provender Walk. It was noted, however, that the application had – for no obvious reason – re-appeared on Swale BC's Weekly Planning List. Anne Salmon would investigate the reason for this.

ACTION: ANNE SALMON

(vii) Expansion of East Kent Recycling Ltd at Oare (paras 9-10)

10. As had recently been reported to members, it appeared that a formal decision on the application to expand the site would not be taken before June. In the meantime it seemed that EKR were continuing to use that part of the site which Bretts (at the insistence of Anderson Development, the housebuilders) had told them they must vacate.

(viii) Ramblers (para 11)

11. It had been confirmed that Alan Smith of Swale Footpaths Group had agreed to forward to the Group any notifications sent to him by Ramblers about proposed footpath changes in the Faversham area.

12. Brian Caffarey reported on a meeting which he had recently attended which had been organised by Kent Ramblers for volunteers, including those belonging to affiliated groups such as the Faversham Footpath Groups. He would draw members' attention to the desirability of using KCC's highly-regarded CAMS reporting system to report problems with rights of way.

ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY

(ix) Replacement Swing Bridge (para 13)

13. The meeting noted the update which had recently been given by Paul Carter, Leader of KCC, and which had been reported in the Faversham News on 25 April 2019. This said that various tests were being carried out and that he expected to be able to provide concrete details in the summer about what was planned.

(x) 'Lost Ways' initiative (para 15)

14. A progress report had been given at the Ramblers meeting which Brian Caffarey had attended (para 12 above). There had been a hiatus but it was expected that more requests to carry out preliminary field surveys would be issued shortly. Brian said that he had expressed concern at the meeting that, worthy though this initiative was, it concentrated only on apparent 'anomalies' identified by detailed scrutiny of OS maps (e.g. footpaths that ended at parish council boundaries) and did not identify paths, tracks etc which were presently used but which might be closed to the public unless they were added to the Definitive Map.

(xi) Walking and Cycling provision in Faversham (para 19)

15. Trevor Payne had sent a second reminder to the Town Clerk about the Group's letter of 6 September 2018, which had proposed an initiative to encourage walking and cycling in Faversham. Trevor said that he understood from the Town Clerk that consideration of this proposal had been deferred till after the local elections. In discussion it was suggested that there was considerable scope for improving the signage of footpaths e.g. indicating where they led and how long it would take to walk there. Julian Saunders and Brian Caffarey agreed to meet to discuss firming up some proposals.

ACTION: JULIAN SAUNDERS/BRIAN CAFFAREY

(xii) Footpath ZR408 at Selling (para 21)

16. The Group had supported Sheldwich and Selling parish councils in opposing a proposed diversion of this footpath but the outcome was not known. Brian Caffarey undertook to follow this up.

ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY

(xiii) Proposal to charge for disposal of certain types of non-household waste (para 23)

17. The Group had written to KCC to oppose this proposal, primarily on the ground that it would encourage even more fly-tipping. KCC had decided, however, to proceed with the proposal, which would be implemented shortly.

(xiv) Path at Purifier Building and Morrisons (para 32)

18. The Group had commented on the Purifier planning application, pointing out that nothing should be done to inhibit pedestrians from using the route that ran from Flood Lane, alongside the Purifier Building and then along the Creekside in front of Morrisons. Andrew Osborne had also unearthed the planning application relating to the conversion of the former Co-op building to Morrisons. This had made it clear that the Creekside would be for public use.

TREASURER'S REPORT

19. Julian Saunders reported that £382 had been received to date in membership subscriptions for 2019. After payments for website hosting and the Ramblers affiliation fee the Group currently had £910.80 in its account.

20. A further grant of £100 had been agreed by Bensted's Charity which could be drawn on to help meet costs.

21. The Group had had 78 members at the end of 2018. 72 members had so far renewed their membership. In most of the remaining cases standing orders had been set up for later in the year and had not therefore been received yet. 6 new members had joined this year.

22. Julian said that, while the work as Treasurer of the Group was not time-consuming, he thought that, in view of his new commitments as a Borough and Town Councillor, it would be sensible if the Group sought a replacement Treasurer. He hoped he would be able to remain on the Executive Committee. It was agreed that Brian Caffarey would write to members to see if anyone would be interested in taking over the Treasurer role in advance of the AGM in the autumn.

ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY

CREEKSIDE PATH AT FAVERSHAM REACH AND WATERSIDE CLOSE

23. KCC had advised that the next step would be to deal formally with the application which the residents had submitted shortly before the public inquiry in January 2018, seeking to extinguish the obstructed footpath from the Definitive Map on the ground that it had been mistakenly added. Letters would be sent to the councils concerned and to the Group seeking information to enable KCC to reach a decision.

24. The Executive Committee would give further thought to the possibility of seeking a meeting with KCC to clarify the way forward.

ACTION: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

ENGLAND COAST PATH

25. Natural England and KCC had advised that the Inspector's report of her consideration of objections and representations regarding the proposed Whitstable to Iwade route continued to be delayed by the need to consider an EU Court of Justice ruling relating to habitats regulation assessments. There was, apparently, a backlog of assessments to be carried out and it was not known when this particular one would be completed.

CLEVE HILL SOLAR COMPLEX

26. It had been agreed that the various footpath interest groups would give joint evidence, with Ramblers in the lead. The Inquiry had arranged a Preliminary Meeting on 30 May, which the Ramblers representative would attend and which would consider procedural matters. Written representations had to be submitted by 26 June and the hearing relating to 'Landscape and Visual Effects', which was most relevant to footpath interests, was due to be held on 23 July. Brian Caffarey would liaise with the Ramblers representative over the drafting of the written representations.

ACTION: BRIAN CAFFAREY

PROPOSALS FOR 'GARDEN VILLAGES'

27. Swale BC's Local Plan Panel was due to meet again in June but the composition of the Panel would first need to be revised following the local election results.

DESIGNATION OF LOCAL PATHS

28. Following the previous meeting, Andrew Osborne, John Coulter and Brian Caffarey had met again to revise the maps showing the alleyways etc in Faversham whose status, they felt, needed to be checked by KCC to ascertain whether any should be claimed for addition to the Definitive Map

ahead of the legislation which was due to come into force in January 2026. Revised maps had been sent to KCC, who, it was known, had recently been considering them.

29. Brian Caffarey mentioned that, at the recent meeting convened by Ramblers (para 12 above), KCC had confirmed that it would be advantageous to submit claims as early as possible since there was already a backlog of three to four years for most applications.

STANDARD HOUSE/NEW CREEK ROAD PLANNING APPLICATION

30. The Group had commented on an earlier application to build houses on land adjoining Standard House, supporting KCC's suggestion that the opportunity should be taken to sort out the longstanding problem of the unofficial diversion of the public footpath that runs from Standard Quay through to the Iron Wharf Boatyard. The Group had indicated that, while it regretted the diversion of the path from its official line, it would be willing to see it changed to reflect the route now walked. The Group had also suggested that the two landowners should dedicate the path as a public right of way. A revised application had confirmed that improvements would be made to the condition of the path as far as the boundary of the site in question. KCC had offered to meet the landowner to discuss the wider issue. The Group had reiterated its views and indicated its support for KCC's approach.

LOG OF ISSUES RAISED

31. 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

32. The following matters were raised:

(i) Local Election results – the meeting discussed possible implications of the recent local election results, especially in regard to the Creekside path, to which the Liberal Democrats had expressed opposition

(ii) Application relating to the land adjoining the Albion Taverna – it was noted that Swale BC had turned down the application to allow the commercial use of this land

NEXT MEETING AND 2019 AGM

33. The next EC meeting will take place at 7pm on Thursday 15 August 2019 at 130 Athelstan Road. The 2019 AGM was provisionally agreed for Thursday 14 November 2019.

9 May 2019