

FAVERSHAM FOOTPATHS GROUP

MINUTES OF AGM ON 14 NOVEMBER 2019

The Group's fourth AGM was held at 7.30pm on 14 November 2019 in the Jubilee Room at the Alexander Centre. 26 Members were present.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

1. Trevor Payne (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting, including Ian Wild from Kent Ramblers, who was to give a presentation after the official business was concluded.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. There were apologies for absence from John Chadwick, Cindy Davies, Bill Harbour, Simon macLachlan, Pam and Alan McLean, Rod Morley, Marion Ripley, Marion Shoard, Brian Turner and Nick Williams.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF AGM ON 15 NOVEMBER 2018

3. The minutes were approved.

MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS AGM

4. There were no matters arising that were not covered in the Executive Committee's report for the present meeting.

REPORT ON WORK OF GROUP SINCE 2018 AGM

5. The meeting had before it a report by the EC, which had been circulated in advance, setting out the Group's activities since the previous AGM. Trevor Payne drew attention to a few developments which had occurred since the report was written.
6. KCC had recently determined the application which the Faversham Reach Residents' Association had made to delete from the Definitive Map of Footpaths the original obstructed path there on the ground that it had been added to the Map in error. As expected, KCC had rejected this application but the residents had a right of appeal. In response to a question from the floor, Trevor said that it was not possible to give a timetable for opening of the path since this depended, amongst other things, on whether an appeal was lodged and, if so, whether it would be determined through another public inquiry or on the basis of written evidence only. However, until this

matter was resolved, KCC would be unable to settle the question of any compensation or mitigation for the residents.

7. Trevor also mentioned that East Kent Recycling Ltd had put forward proposals for improved pedestrian refuges on the track leading to their recycling plant near Oare. In the Group's view these proposals were unsatisfactory since we believed that it would not be too difficult or expensive to provide a separate footway, with cantilevered sections where necessary. Our views had been submitted to KCC.
8. Another very recent development had been the receipt of the Inspector's decision on the appeal by Shepherd Neame against the refusal of outline planning permission to build on the site of the former cherry orchard on the corner of the A2 and the Western Link Road. The Group had objected to the intention on the part of Shepherd Neame and Network Rail to obstruct access to the railway crossing (on public footpath ZF9). The appeal had been dismissed but on grounds relating to the development's impact on the nearby Syndale Conservation area.
9. Trevor ended by thanking members for their support and by expressing special thanks to Linda Harrison for leading so many of the Group's walks, which were an important aspect of the Group's work and a very welcome source of new members.

REPORT BY TREASURER

10. Ann Ashton briefly introduced her report on finances and membership, which had also been circulated in advance. She drew attention to the fact that the Group's income in 2019 so far had been £932, including a £500 donation, while expenditure to date had been only £121. The Group had £1396 in its account but the premium for public liability insurance remained to be paid. She intended to make progress in the New Year with the plan to reclaim gift aid. The Group had 83 members, 51 of whom had paid their subscription electronically.

ELECTION OF NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

11. Trevor Payne noted that Julian Saunders had stepped down as Treasurer following his election to the Town and Borough Councils, although he wished to remain on the Executive Committee. The EC were very grateful to Julian for his work as Treasurer and were also indebted to Ann Ashton for offering to take over from him. Nick Williams wished to stand down from the Executive Committee, who would like to express their appreciation of his contribution. All the other Officers and Members of the Executive Committee had indicated that they were content to stand for election and no new nominations for Officer or Member positions had been received. Accordingly, he recommended that the following should be elected to serve on the Executive Committee: Trevor Payne (Chair), Ann Ashton (Treasurer), Brian Caffarey (Secretary), John Coulter (Member), Andrew Osborne (Member), Anne Salmon (Member) and Cllr Julian Saunders (Member). This was agreed unanimously.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION FOR 2020

12. The meeting agreed that the subscription for 2020 should remain at £5 per person.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS RELATING TO THE GROUP

13. No other matters were raised.

Trevor Payne declared the meeting closed at 7.50pm.

Ian Wild, Coastal Access Officer for Kent Ramblers, then gave a talk which focused on his work in helping to develop the route of the England Coast Path in Kent. He recalled how in 2010, as Lead Volunteer for Ramblers, he had walked the whole of the coastline (some 345kms), keeping as close to the coast as possible, recording and photographing points of interest, in particular those places where private ownership seemed to prevent public access. His lengthy and detailed report had been the foundation for Natural England's subsequent work in proposing the route of the Coast Path in Kent. He had continued to liaise with NE as they tackled different sections, with the reports on Sheppey and Iwade to Grain due to be published shortly. Resolution of the Ramsgate to Whitstable section continued to be held up by problems at Kingsgate Castle, while the Inspector's report on objections to the Whitstable to Faversham route still awaited a habitat regulation assessment, following an EU Court ruling of wide application. He confirmed that the report would rule on the question of the 'coastal margin' at the Faversham Reach and Waterside Close estates if the route, either temporarily or permanently, went round the back of Faversham Reach and the Brents Industrial Estate.

Ian observed that it had been necessary for NE and Ramblers to adopt a pragmatic approach and noted that the main obstacle to public access had in fact proved to be the concerns of environmental groups, especially in relation to birds.

Trevor Payne thanked Ian for his interesting talk and for his support on the Coast Path, the 2018 public inquiry and the joint representations concerning the proposed Graveney solar park .

18 November 2019