

# FAVERSHAM FOOTPATHS GROUP

## MINUTES OF AN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EC) MEETING HELD ON 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021.

The meeting was held at 4.30pm on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021 by the Zoom Process which was due to the Covid19 restrictions imposed at the time. Six Members were present at the meeting, Trevor Payne (TP), Ann Ashton (AA), Anne Salmon (AS), John Coulter (JC), Julian Saunders (JS), Robin Sayewell (RS).

### 1. WELCOME / APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The EC wished to welcome RS to his first EC meeting as secretary. Apologies for absence were received from Andrew Osborne (AO), who was unable to connect successfully.

### 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR EC MEETING HELD ON 9<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020

*These were approved.*

### 3. MATTERS ARISING

#### (i) Walks

*The walks programme has continued to be suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Linda Harrison has been regularly reviewing the situation.*

#### (ii) Website

*The website has not been updated since the last AGM. RS mentioned he is not comfortable in working with this facility due to his inability in remembering how to operate it for updates etc. The group had been dependent upon the previous secretary's son when required, which is not really now satisfactory. Two comments were received one being we need a website, the other that Stuart Harrison, Linda's husband was knowledgeable of computer logic. RS agreed to contact Stuart.*

#### (iii) Social media

*TP to contact previous secretary over Social Media and how it was handled.*

#### (iv) Proposal for a path from Jubilee Way to the Rec/Faversham Rail Yard application (log 6)

*The steps from Jubilee Way had been opened. It might be helpful, however, if there was some signage in the car park at the top of the steps to indicate which way to go when walking from the Rec. Work did not appear to have started on the Faversham Rail Yard development and RS would check and note if the signage had been installed. Post meeting note, no works or signage had taken place.*

(v) Front Brents/Town Green

*The Environment Agency have advised AO that both the Covid 19 restrictions and recent wet weather prevented their Operations Team from being able to complete the remedial works to the flood defence at Front Brents in the autumn as previously planned. They aim to complete the remedial works this spring once the weather improves and the ground begins to dry out. They will complete the repairs alongside some other maintenance to the flood defence which will include mowing, weed removal, topping up and reseeding low spots along the embankment and some tree maintenance.*

*In terms of the tree planting they will work with their biodiversity colleagues to look into the suitability of planting saplings in the area suggested. Their current priority is to complete the remedial works and maintenance to the flood defence at Front Brents in the spring, and then potentially look at tree planting in the autumn depending on the availability of both funding and resources.*

(vi) Lost Ways Initiative

*Following correspondence with Ramblers HQ, Trevor Payne had written to Helen Whately MP on 21 August asking her to raise with Defra the possibility of deferring to 2031 the deadline for making claims for 'lost paths'. She had confirmed that she had forwarded the Group's letter. Colin Sefton of Kent Ramblers had advised the Group that he had picked up this project from Neville Machin. He would be in touch if he required our help.*

(vii) Walking and Cycling provision in Faversham

*TP had written to the Town Council on 15 August to express the Group's support for the 20s Plenty initiative. JS indicated that KCC probably wouldn't confirm the order to make the scheme permanent until the autumn after it had been to the Swale Joint Transportation Board.*

*JS reported that SBC was exploring whether town centre pedestrianisation should be made permanent after the pandemic in Faversham, Sittingbourne and Sheerness, because of its potential economic benefits. .There would need to be extensive consultation before this could move forward.*

*FTC and SBC would also be working on a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. This would be a costed plan sitting alongside the Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan and be used to try and attract developer and external funding for improvements in cycling and walking.*

(viii) Standard House/New Creek Road planning application (19/501612/FULL)  
(paras 9 and 25 (i))

*Brian Pain, the owner of the Oyster Bay Warehouse, had indicated, in discussion with Brian Caffarey, that he had no intention of improving the condition of the path running alongside the building even though it was frequently covered in puddles during wet weather.*

*It is considered possible this will be taken up by Natural England now the English Coast Path has been approved by the Secretary of State*

(ix) Faversham Creek Bridge (para 13)

*AO had again asked KCC to comment specifically on the point he had raised about the need to ensure that the plans for the bridge did not preclude subsequently creating a Creekside path on the Shepherd Neame side of the Inner Basin. AO is still awaiting a further response*

(x) Vicarage Lane / Eastling Road (para 14)

*The Chair had written to David Simmons on 30 May to seek his views in principle on the suggestion that a permissive path might be created to run inside the hedge line from the corner of Vicarage Lane / Eastling Road to the corner of Lorenden Park. Reminders had been sent on 29 June and 30 August but no reply had so far been received. It was noted again that walkers faced considerable dangers on the stretch of road between Vicarage Lane and the entrance to Lorenden Park. TP will write to David again.*

(xi) Proposal for Faversham Neighbourhood Plan (para 28)

*Trevor Payne had written to the Town Council on 31 July 2020 about the importance of ensuring that the proposed new Neighbourhood Plan should respect and build on the footpath and streetscape-related policies in the Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan. He had also queried why the Steering Group's meetings were not being held in public, as required by the Council's own rules and national provisions. The Town Council's initial reply had not really addressed these points but the Group had now been assured that its views would be conveyed to the Chair of the Steering Group, Cllr Irwin, and that, beginning with the Steering Group's meeting on 21 September, meetings would be open to the public. Post Meeting Note, TP had subsequently e'mailed Cllr Irwin to ask if he still intended to send us a draft of the generic footpath policy in the plan, for us to comment on. He responded straight away, saying 'yes'. TP has now received the draft and it was circulated to the committee for comment.*

(xii) Planning application for Ordnance Wharf (20/502408/FULL) (para 30 (ii))

*The previous secretary had earlier submitted comments on behalf of the Group expressing support for the public access aspects of the application. It was noted the current Planning Application had subsequently been withdrawn.*

#### **4. TREASURER'S REPORT AND MEMBERSHIP**

*AA reported on the summary of FFG's financial position as of 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021 :-*

<i>Balance at Bank 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021</i>	<i>£1,640.37</i>
<i>Cash in hand</i>	<i>£ 65.00</i>
<i>Balance</i>	<i>£1,705.37</i>

RS mentioned that since sending out his reminding e'mail for subscriptions, he had received forty-six responses from eighty-three members. AA would contact RS upon the receipt of the February 2021 Bank Statement when it will be more accurate to advise who has actually re-contributed. It was noted only one member indicated they would not be re-joining and had given no reason for that decision.

## **5. CREEKSIDE PATH AT FAVERSHAM REACH AND WATERSIDE CLOSE**

*The previous meeting was reminded that the Faversham Reach Residents' Association had until 17 September 2020 to seek any judicial review of the Planning Inspector's rejection of their appeal.*

*It is understood no appeal took place. AO had advised the group previously by e'mail, that the KCC once COVID 19 restrictions were lifted would appoint a contractor for the works (The FFG website for this section basically advises the same situation currently).*

## **6. ENGLAND COAST PATH**

*The group were informed via e'mail by DEFRA on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2021 that the Secretary of State had fully approved the England Coast Path, details of which were circulated to members shortly after receipt.*

*When the Coast Path is opened all the common areas, those being roads, paths and green areas not within the curtilage of a dwelling such as Waterside and Faversham Reach Estates, will become the Coastal Margin and therefore open to the public. However Natural England have accepted our suggestion and undertaken that as soon as the associated creek-side path is open they will introduce a diversion order to move the Trail on to the path which would prevent public access to the estates and enable the residents to close their access gate if they wished.*

*(The FFG Website currently has not been updated to reflect this approval, and it should be noted that the DEFRA link will need adding to the text which is the how the previous secretary has set it up and is one of the difficulties RS has globally mentioned earlier).*

## **7. EAST KENT RECYCLING LTD (EKR) PLANNING APPLICATION**

*AO recently had a conversation with a KCC Rights of Way officer (ROW) in late 2020 where the current position seems to be that Brett's who own the road have refused EKR permission to construct the refuges which were a condition of the EKR planning permission.*

*As a result, the KCC have accelerated Brett's application to divert ZF1 from the lagoon to the road. The application is now being dealt with by another KCC ROW officer. The impression is that the KCC are not keen on the diversion onto the road which is not thought to be a satisfactory alternative footpath.*

*We would like the KCC to meet on site with Brett's and try and persuade them to construct a footpath along the lagoon side of the road even if it has to have pinch points of say only a metre width at points. We have asked if the KCC would like us to attend any such meeting but this is probably up to the KCC ROW officer concerned.*

*Probably, our best option is to simply sit back and see how things develop, and hopefully the recent approval of the England Coast Path along here, will bring Natural England into the negotiations at some period.*

## **8. PROPOSALS FOR GARDEN VILLAGES/NEW HOUSING**

*AS previously advised that Swale BC's decision to favour Option C in drawing up proposals for its new Local Plan pointed to some 3,500 new houses being built in Faversham in a 5-year rolling period from 2022. This would include 2,500 houses on the Duchy of Cornwall site. It remained to be seen how the Government's aims to reform the planning system would affect future plans.*

*AS also reported Network Rail had objected to the current planning application for 180 houses at Abbey-fields on the grounds that it would increase the use of the Chambers Crossing which is on footpath ZF39. This application has not been determined yet. However, the land north of Graveney Road allocated in the Reg. 19 Local Plan could have a greater effect on use of the level crossing. The Group will make comments supporting the need for the line of the footpath to be retained.*

## **9. DESIGNATION OF LOCAL PATHS**

*AO and JC to report on any further progress in finalising the maps showing the paths for which the Group envisaged making a claim for additions to the Definitive Map of Footpaths.*

## **10. SECRETARIAL DUTIES**

*RS commented he is muddling along, gradually getting his feet under the table and getting his fingers burnt occasionally. Managing the Website as previously mentioned is of concern.*

## **11. AGM 2020**

*This took place by Zoom in November 2020 and provisional minutes were issued. It is hoped a meeting at the Alexander Centre may be feasible this year*

## **12. LOG OF ISSUES RAISED**

*The log would commence being updated by RS, following the issuing of these minutes.*

## **13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

*This is provisionally arranged to be by Zoom on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> April at 4.30pm*

## **14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

*RS suggested a way of administering adding comments to the minutes over the more detailed items that were covered which post meeting note has been helpful, thank you.*