

FAVERSHAM FOOTPATHS GROUP

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF AN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EC) MEETING HELD ON 10th AUGUST 2021.

The meeting was held at 4.30pm on 10th August 2021 at the Guildhall in Faversham. All seven Members were present at the meeting, Trevor Payne (TP), Ann Ashton (AA), Anne Salmon (AS), Andrew Osborne (AO), John Coulter (JC), Julian Saunders (JS), Robin Sayewell (RS).

1. WELCOME / APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

TP welcomed everyone to the meeting. This was the second Face to Face meeting since restrictions had been reduced.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR EC MEETING HELD ON 8th June 2021

These were approved. The AGM 2021 heading date will be corrected.

3. MATTERS ARISING

(i) Walks

The FFG Sunday walks programme has returned with the first outing on 27th June 2021, followed by one on 1st August 2021 (see website for details). Another walk is planned for 12th September 2021 (details to be advised).

(ii) Website

Stephen Caffarey has been putting new entries on to the website in way of meeting minutes and the walks programme as directed. There were issues within the last month with his logging on details which now appear he has resolved with the website provider,

(iii) Social media

TP has been sent the link to the group's Facebook page by the previous secretary and will look at using it when necessary.

(iv) Path from Jubilee Way to the Rec and proposed Faversham Rail Yard Application

TP had contacted George Wilson Developments Ltd about the parking place posts that obstructed the line of the stairs from the Rec. Josh Wilson, from the company,

contact TP and arranged for the repositioning of the posts that have now been completed.

As agreed at a previous meeting TP, advised by AS, had submitted an objection to SBC concerning the application for residential development on the railyard site not including a direct footpath to Jubilee way, which was present in the previous application for commercial development. Josh Wilson, as the applicant, had said this was because of land ownership issues but the EC cannot see how this was not the case with the commercial development, which included the footpath. The resident's association from the Edward Vinson Estate had decided not to raise an objection themselves, but indicated they supported our view. The residential application is still awaiting determination by Swale BC that JS will follow up.

(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. The Environment Agency had recently carried out some works in the area, including raising the height of the bund and re-turfing the top. AO would continue to monitor the situation with respect to tree planting

(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 and to date no contact has been received.

(vii) Walking and Cycling provision in Faversham linked with future proposals for the Faversham Neighbourhood Plan

(Walking and Cycling)

JS had previously advised that Faversham Town Council (FTC) has been given funding by SBC for two Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure projects as follows :-

a. “Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)”. This will be a plan with outline costings for improving the infrastructure for cycling and walking so more residents and visitors make journeys not using cars. It will be developed in line with D for T guidance and will ideally be signed off by SBC and KCC so that it can form part of their plans for improving active travel infrastructure.

b. “The Town to Parishes Project”. This will identify walking and cycling routes from local villages to the three largest communities in Swale East – Boughton, Faversham and Teynham and make proposals for improving them so that more journeys are made via active travel.

The FTC has commissioned Phil Jones Associates and Berendt Consulting to deliver the two projects. Both of them have worked with FTC in the development of the Twenties-Plenty scheme. However, the FTC also need the active involvement of expert local organisations and everyday cyclists and pedestrians to make the project successful.

They subsequently asked for the Group EC’s help with the LCWIP scheme and a day was provided by members of the EC on 29th July 2021 to provide comments to the Consultants by taking part in an audit of certain routes around the town.

(Neighbourhood Plan)

TP had received a draft of the Footpath Policy FAV6 which was circulated to the committee for comment on the Footpaths policy. These were passed back to FTC’s Councillor Irwin, who agreed to incorporate what the group had recommended. TP has written to Cllr Irwin recommending that the sites along the Creek including the inner basin and Ordnance Wharf that were to be developed under the plan should include a requirement for the provision of a Creekside footpath, as was the case with the Creek Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Irwin has replied by saying these would all be considered.

An exhibition was held by FTC at the Town Hall recently where it was generally noted that was not well advertised.

(viii) Faversham Creek Bridge

AO previously 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 both the Shepherd Neame car park side and the Inner Basin. JS advised that the Design Drawings should be issued shortly.

(ix) Creek Basin

AO had suggested we should write to the Town Council and TP has since had a reply from Councillor Irwin that had been distributed.

(x) Vicarage Lane / Eastling Road

We were still awaiting David Simmons 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. It was noted again that walkers faced considerable dangers on the stretch of road between Vicarage Lane and the entrance to Lorenden Park.

TP has had a response from David who agrees that the road is dangerous and, while he had concerns about costs, would talk to his land agent about the situation. TP will follow up.

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

It was still noted the current Planning Application had subsequently been withdrawn, but for any future scheme, the group would be checking that a perimeter Creekside path was included and as previously noted included within the Neighbourhood Plan. Councillor Irwin as in (ix) confirmed this was covered.

(xii) Rail Crossing for footpath ZR328 and other Footpath Issues

(ZR328) TP has subsequently written to the Kent PROW officers advising that the general condition of the path needs improvement, and possibly because it is so steep, that they should consider installing steps and railings. In response KCC have indicated they will investigate and report back.

(Footpath Issues) Both TP and RS indicated two other footpaths with similar access issues, the first from Homestall Lane where KCC PROW have confirmed that the path (ZR496) will be cleared of crops to a minimum width of 1 meter by the land owner in the near future. The other, between Vicarage Lane and Water Lane, Ospringe alongside the M2 where RS has subsequently had confirmation from PROW, that improvements to the path alongside the M2 are to be carried out.

(xiii) Crab Island Bridge

AO previously advised his preference over replacing of Crab Island bridge with a proper period style structure where he believed funding could be made available from various funds and trusts.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT AND MEMBERSHIP

AA advised the bank balance as at 10 August was £1321.94. Currently we have no outstanding outgoing payments to be made. There are 18 members who have not yet paid their fees for the current year.

RS also discussed with the EC various ways he believed were possible in providing additional funds to assist the costs in maintaining the website due to the contributions being lower than last year.

5. CREEKSIDE PATH ALONGSIDE FAVERSHAM REACH AND WATERSIDE CLOSE

As previous AO had a meeting with KCC in June 2021 to agree a way forward and has produced a drawing of an alternative proposal of a cantilevered path at the slipway to push things along. He has had it confirmed the County Council have appointed consultant civil / structural engineers and have started the preparation

work for the construction of the path. He believes physical works will commence during this financial year.

6. ENGLAND COAST PATH

We are currently awaiting Natural England to commence works on the East side of the creek where the wall at Provender Walk is to be demolished. RS and TP have written numerous reminders to them over this and will continue to do so. RS reported there is now a further issue where between Hollowshore and the Oare Creek Road, a smallholder has moved his boundary onto the route of the England Coast Path. Upon informing PROW, they have confirmed that they and Swale Planning were already aware, and were investigating further.

7. EAST KENT RECYCLING LTD (EKR) PLANNING APPLICATION

RS had previously submitted a report and photos to the EC of works that have been commenced on seven number refuges. However, upon RS informing PROW, they have confirmed they are still pursuing Bretts over providing a dedicated footpath to be formed on the Lagoon side of the road.

8. SWALE LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION - Reg19 (previously minuted as 'Proposals for Garden Villages / New Housing')

AS advised previously 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 ZF29. 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. We have submitted comments on the footpath aspects of the plan to SBC. AS considered that it is likely there will be a public enquiry next year.

9. DESIGNATION OF LOCAL PATHS

AO has reported on 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. AO has subsequently indicated that he no longer wishes to lead this project, although wishing to contribute, and feels someone else in the group should take over in putting the proposals to FTC.

It is likely that an exhibition in the new Town Hall would be beneficial to obtain support and TP will write to the Town Clerk seeking the Town Council's support with this project.

A meeting regarding the 'Definitive Map Project' took place at Faversham Town Hall on 3rd August 2021, and the Group EC's proposals were well received, but the freehold ownerships could be an issue.

10. AGM 2021

It is provisionally arranged to hold the meeting this year at the Guildhall at 7.30pm on 18th November 2021. RS has booked this date with FTC.

11. LOG OF ISSUES RAISED

The log will be updated following this meeting.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Has been arranged for 4.30pm at the Guildhall on 26th October 2021 and the venue is now booked with FTC.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No further business was discussed during the meeting.