

FAVERSHAM FOOTPATHS GROUP

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 18th NOVEMBER 2021.

The Group's sixth AGM was held at 7.30pm on 18th November 2021 at the Guildhall, Faversham. Twelve Members were present.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Unfortunately, Trevor Payne (Chair) was unable to attend this year's AGM and therefore Julian Saunders had previously agreed to take Trevor's place and welcomed everyone to the meeting. He noted that this year was a return to a physical meeting format and regretted that Trevor and Anne Salmon could not be present because of Anne being unwell and that the secretary, Robin Sayewell, could not attend due to a bruised back from a cycling accident.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies for absence from Marion Ripley, Brenda & John Rayner, Derek Carver, Pamela & Alan McLean, Brian Caffarey & Jackie Westlake, Sheena Roberts, Trevor Payne & Anne Salmon, Mike Cosgrove, Sue & Chris Taylor, Mick & Margaret Gates, Chris Oswald-Jones, Robin Sayewell and finally Iris Neel.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF AGM ON 12th NOVEMBER 2020

The minutes were approved.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS AGM

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

5. REPORT BY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ON WORK OF GROUP

This report summarises briefly the main activities of the Group since the similar report produced for the 2020 AGM.

6. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The EC has met four times since the last AGM; a 'virtual' meeting in February and three 'real' meetings in the Guildhall. Minutes of meetings have been posted on the website (and delivered to members without internet access) and updates on the main developments have been supplied regularly to Members. Between meetings EC members have liaised as necessary by email.

7. CREEKSIDE PATH AT FAVERSHAM REACH / WATERSIDE CLOSE

Present position. Because of delays, largely due to the pandemic and pressure of work on the KCC PROW department, the Order temporarily closing the path was extended to 21st September 2023. Of course, if the works constructing the path are completed earlier, the path can be opened at that time.

In the last year the EC has continued to liaise with the KCC, who have appointed an Engineer and are proceeding with design work on the ramps and other aspects of the path.

8. ENGLAND COAST PATH

Present position. In January the Secretary of State accepted the Inspectors report and confirmed Natural England's recommended route for the Whitstable to Iwade section of the England Coast Path that was published in June 2017.

The Inspector's report also dismissed arguments by the Faversham Reach Residents' Association and the Waterside Residents' Association that the communal areas of their estates would not be subject to public access if the Coast Path were to run round the back of Faversham Reach/Brents Industrial Estate. In theory at least this should soften their resistance to the Creekside Path, which would confine public access to the promenades only once the Cost Path is diverted onto it.

In the last year the EC has liaised regularly with Natural England over the expected timetable for opening the Coast Path. Delays have been largely attributed to the pandemic. We have recently had confirmation from Natural England that they expect enabling works will be completed between April and June 2022, after which the Coast Path can be opened. Once this takes place all the features of the Coast Path, including the public's right to access 'spreading room' areas between the path and the coastline, including all common areas in Faversham Reach and Waterside Close, come into effect.

9. ORGANISED WALKS

Due to the pandemic walks remained suspended. For health reasons Linda Harrison was unable to arrange walks when restrictions were lifted, we wish Linda a speedy recovery. Members of the EC organised walks in June, August and September, before health issues intervened again and we had to suspend walks until the New Year. We will see how things develop and will start walks again as soon as this is possible after then. If a member of the FFG is interested in helping with organising and leading future walks please contact a member of the EC to discuss this.

10. OTHER MATTERS

The EC has also acted in the following main matters:

- a) 'Lost Ways' / 'Don't Lose Your Way' initiatives, Colin Sefton of Kent Ramblers is now dealing with this matter. We have expressed our willingness to help and are waiting to hear from him.
- b) Designation of local footpaths - The EC has continued to liaise with the Town Council on claiming paths in Faversham that are used, but not shown on the Definitive Map, before the deadline in 2026. The TC has passed a resolution supporting this and we had a meeting with TC representatives on 2nd August to discuss the project. Work is underway with TC support to produce the necessary maps and an exhibition, to identify witnesses of the paths being used, will be held, probably next year.
- c) Replacement swing bridge – we continued to monitor progress but this project now appears to be caught in a complex of negotiations between KCC and Peel Ports.
- d) East Kent Recycling Ltd at Oare – we continued discussions with KCC and Bretts (the landowners). The 'refuges' have been constructed on the road in accordance with EKR's planning permission. KCC/PROW have confirmed that they are still pursuing Bretts to create a dedicated footpath on the lagoon side of the road.
- e) Cleve Hill Solar Farm – the site has recently been sold to another developer. Work is now expected to start in 2022.
- f) Faversham Neighbourhood Plan – we made comments on the draft footpaths policy in the FNP and have continued to stress the importance of providing Creekside pathways on any sites identified for development that have a Creek frontage. We will make further comments at the next consultation stage expected soon.
- g) Proposal for a footpath from Jubilee Way to the Recreation Ground/Railyard planning application – a revised application for residential development on the site was submitted to SBC by the applicant. We have objected to this on the basis that it did not provide the dedicated footpath that was in the previous application for commercial development.
- h) Front Bretts/Town Green – Andrew Osborne has monitored developments in carrying out agreed landscaping improvements. The Environment Agency have said that other existing commitments mean they will have to programme this for Spring/Summer 2022. Tree planting near the bridge will require the permission of the Town Council as the landowner.
- i) Walking and cycling provision in Faversham – we have supported the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and members took part in an audit of some of the proposed routes in July. The Town Council will be considering a report from the consultants, that proposes a number of interventions to improve these routes, in January 2022.
- j) Proposal for a permissive path from corner of Vicarage Lane/Eastling Road to corner of Lorenden Park – Cllr David Simmons (landowner) has agreed that it is dangerous for walkers to use the road at this point and will talk to his land agent about the situation. We will monitor developments.

- k) Reporting footpath issues to KCC PROW. The group have reported a number of issues and have generally had a good response from the KCC PROW department. This included the recent installation of steps to the north of the railway crossing on ZR328.

11. REPORT BY TREASURER

- a) **Introduction:** Ann Ashton introduced her report on finances and membership, which had also been circulated in advance :-
- b) Membership of the Faversham Footpaths Group (FFG) becomes due on 1 January each year and as a result, financial records are kept using the calendar year as the financial year.
- c) For COVID and logistical reasons this report has been drawn up as at the end of September 2021.
- d) **Accounts and membership 2021 :** During 2021 the group had an income of £375.00, most of which came from subscriptions with the remainder coming from donations. Our expenditure included web site hosting, insurance and a group subscription to the Ramblers Association and that came to £308.53. Additionally, this year we have needed IT support. This is being provided by Stephen Caffarey, to whom we have paid £250.00. We are unsure how long this sum will last for services provided. Additionally, the committee gave a gift of a print to the outgoing secretary that cost £35.00. This has left a deficit for the year of £218.43, which left us with an overall bank balance of £1,326.94.
- e) Membership renewal is down this year on previous years, presumably COVID has made an impact. 17 members have so far failed to renew this year. At the end of September' 2021 the Group has 65 members, including one new member, and 44 members paid their subscription electronically which is very helpful to the Group. Ann hoped that resumption of walks in January 2022 will bring in new members.
- f) **Other actions :** A Data Protection Policy and Privacy Statement have been in place since April 2019 in order to ensure that the Group is acting in line with the new Data Protection regulations.
- g) **Conclusion :** The Group's income has this year not met its expenditure. None-the-less we currently have an acceptable surplus of £1,326.94 in hand.
- h) There now follows a tabulated report showing the current Financial and Membership situation of the group :

Financial and Membership situation of the group

2021 INCOME

Subscriptions	325.00
Grants	
Donations	50.00
Bank interest	
TOTAL	375.00

MEMBERSHIP

Membership end of 2020	83
Members at end of 2021	83
Renewed 2021	64
New Members	1
Current 2021 membership	65
Paying by Bank Transfer	44

2020 EXPENDITURE

Professional fees	26.33
Event costs (2020 online)	0.00
Bank charges	0.00
Insurance	216.60
Ramblers Memberships	65.50
Outgoing secretary	35.00
IT services	250.00
TOTAL	593.43

Surplus/(Deficit) for the year -218.43

Opening Balance at 1/11/2020 1,545.37

Closing Total at Bank 1,326.94

Net assets 1,326.94

Ann Ashton
Treasurer
October 27th 2021

If any member wants further information on our finances or a copy of our annual financial and membership report please feel free to contact Ann by e'mail on ann_ashton@hotmail.co.uk

12. ELECTION OF NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Julian Saunders reported that all the 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), Robin Sayewell (Secretary), John Coulter (Member), Andrew Osborne (Member), Anne Salmon (Member) and Cllr Julian Saunders (Member). This was agreed unanimously. Julian also said that if anyone wishes to join the Executive Committee, they should speak to Trevor or Robin

13. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION FOR 2020

The meeting agreed that the subscription for 2021 should remain at £5 per person.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS RELATING TO THE GROUP

Richard Filipczak, the Graveney and Goodnestone footpath warden said he had been trying to get styles near the railway line replaced with kissing-gates. KCC wanted removal of styles, but Network Rail was not keen on access. Julian suggested sending a note to our secretary and the group would try to help.

No other matters were raised.

15. GUEST SPEAKERS

Julian Saunders introduced Adrian Berendt of Berendt Consulting who is leading the LCWIP (Local cycling and walking infrastructure plan) scheme for the Faversham Town Council and who made an interesting presentation of his works with the Town Council at the meeting.

Julian Saunders declared the meeting closed at 8.40pm.