

SANDBACH FOOTPATH GROUP

Minutes of Inaugural Meeting held on Monday 12th October 2015

Present (in no particular order):

Stella Anderson, Jason Dix, Bob Baxter, Craig Bayley, Sean Ray, Ralph Browes, Rodney Daniels, Kevin Dean, Martin Forster, Keith Haines, Janet Jepson, Carolyn Lowe, Dick Macaulay, Dave Peever, Claire Pickford, Christine Smedley, David Sproson, Harold Sproson, Graham J Whitehouse, Bill Whittaker, Phil Wyatt, Trevor & Pat Boxer, Jan & John Cooper, Nikki & Nathan Greenford, Paul & Doreen Hebden, Kath & Dave Millington.

Note: AP is Action Point

1. Welcome and introductions: Housekeeping presented by Dick Macauley (DM), who also gave a brief explanation of the Enterprise Centre.

DM acknowledged the fantastic number of people attending the first meeting of SFG.

General introductions were made by all present.

2. Progress to date: DM briefly explained the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) and how it contains provision for footpaths but that the footpath element needs to be strengthened, therefore the idea of a footpath group was initiated.

The Sandbach Footpath Group (SFG) was first mentioned in Sandbach Partnership/Sandbach Today and this generated enough interest to lead to the establishment of SFG and the calling of this inaugural meeting.

3. Draft Constitution: to get funding a group needs a constitution. Trevor Boxer (TB) then ran through the draft constitution, referring to specific sections. A question was raised regarding the number needed to agree a motion. DM confirmed that it would be a majority of those present.

It was also confirmed that there is no charge for the room hire at The Enterprise Centre as SFG is affiliated to The Sandbach Partnership. Also DM confirmed that SFG's insurance is covered by Sandbach Wildlife & Woodland Group (SWWG) through affiliation as both group's objectives are similar.

Another question was raised about the date of the next AGM. It was agreed that it should be set after the end of the financial year and that 2 weeks notice will be given.

It was also agreed that consideration to staggering the changes of committee members would be discussed at the next AGM. This would avoid all the committee leaving after the agreed period of service.

Votes carried in favour of agreeing the constitution. Constitution passed.

4. Nomination and Election of Chairman: DM proposed TB. Votes carried in favour of TB as chairman. TB elected as chairman.

5. Nomination and Election of Officers:

Greg Cooper (GC) proposed as Treasurer. No further nominations. Votes carried in favour of GC as treasurer. GC elected as treasurer.

Janet Jepson (JJ) proposed as secretary. No further nominations. Votes carried in favour of JJ as secretary. JJ elected as secretary.

6. Financial Report: DM presented this in GC's absence. An account has been opened at RBS and the current financial state of SFG is:

Income £	Expenditure £
375*	10**

* Grant from Sandbach Town Council (STC)

**Subscription to Sandbach Partnership

SFG is awaiting the proceeds from the Waitrose Green Token fundraiser, which is approximately £300.

The Group needs to decide on a financial year-end and also what the funds are going to be used for? The grant from STC is to be spent on waymark signs and associated posts etc. A question was raised about how often these grants are available? DM stated that STC like to support local groups but in order to obtain another grant the group needs to demonstrate real progress. It was suggested from the floor that SFG should look for Match Funding.

The important resource for SFG is people.

Tasks To Be Undertaken

7a: Way Marking and Signs: a way marker was passed around the room. A question was asked from the floor about whether the picture of The Crosses could always be upright. It was stated that this was cost prohibitive.

Manufacturing cost quotes have been received and a decision needs to be made as to how many are required. The larger the order the cheaper the individual cost.

The meeting then discussed where the way markers should be placed, including the merits of them for publicity of not only the local footpaths but also SFG. The possibility of conflict between SFG way markers v Cheshire East way markers was discussed. It was agreed that a duplication of way markers would probably be confusing. Consideration would be given to prioritise SFG way markers for walks from the town centre. Walks such as Brook Wood, which were not PROW [Public Rights of Way], but were definitely footpaths open to the public, would very likely be a priority for way markers.

AP: Volunteers required to help Dave Peever (DP) to decide where the way markers need to go and therefore how many to buy?

Volunteers: Claire Pickford, Christine Smedley and Ralph Browes.

TB explained the SFG action plan including:

- our partners;
- the aims to Protect, to Improve and to Extend footpaths;
- investigating and promoting disabled access for paths where possible;
- to become known by developing walks, publishing walks (circular); and
- initiating an "Adopt-a-Path" scheme.

Carolyn Lowe (CL) volunteered to be SFG's publicity officer.

AP: One aim discussed was to try and make one or more circular walks with gates rather than stiles.

One of our partners, briefly mentioned, was the Cheshire East Rangers. Genni Butler is our contact and she has sent to TB various insurance and covering letter documents when we are working on PROW. These will be circulated later.

7b. Circular Walks: the circular walks don't need to be totally in Sandbach Parish, but at least part of the walk should be.

TB demonstrated some of the circular walks on his map and confirmed that he had updated two of the walks from the "Walks Around Wheelock" booklet, which was last printed some years ago. Copies are available of the updated walks:

- School Farm and Jacob's Ladder
- Daisy Bank from Malkins Bank

A question was asked about pictorial guidance for the walks, TB confirmed that the included maps were from Open Street Map, which is apparently free of copyright as long as the source is "attributed" on any publication. All map illustrations to be attributed accordingly.

A further question was asked about the cost of using OS maps and the ability to publish them?

AP: research OS charges and rules governing publicity.

Since the meeting the OS website was visited, link below, which stated the minimum charge was £47.50, plus a per printed page charge.

<https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/business-and-government/licensing/licences/publishing.html>

7c. CL is to deal with publishing the walks/routes. When is the best time to publish? Start sooner rather than later to stimulate interest. SFG needs publicity. It was suggested that TB's circular walks be placed in all available pubs/cafes.

AP: TB to coordinate the circular walks.

7d. Response to planning applications: DM suggested that SFG get in touch with Cheshire East and ask for a Named Person [NP] from the group to be notified of any planning applications made, which may affect footpaths. He further stated that having the NP should make a difference, as there is a statutory duty to comply with a NP, when it becomes adopted.

Get in at the start of the process to improve chances that the developers will not only protect footpaths but enhance them as well.

AP: volunteer/s needed for this role. Volunteers: Phil Wyatt [nominated as the NP] and Keith Haines.

7e. Adopt a path: TB explained that the purpose of this task is to walk your chosen path every couple of weeks in the summer months and to report any issues with access or other problem. Maybe take some secateurs to prune as necessary.

AP: volunteers needed, TB passed slips round for members to select a path they would like to adopt. TB to coordinate responses.

7f. Links to Congleton Ramblers: GC nominated.

7g. Website/Blog/FB: Kevin Dean volunteered for the development of a website. DM suggested a private group on Facebook (FB). JJ said she could set up a private group (however this is only useful if the majority of the group use FB).

7h. Accessible routes: Craig Bayley from Grass Roots Disability Sandbach said that he was looking for routes, that with nominal changes, could be made accessible to all wheelchair users.

The group suggested that maybe the Wheelock Rail Trail could be a good place to start, but an assessment of any potential access probably needs to

be undertaken (radar key/stiles/gates). It was also suggested that Google be used to see how other areas deal with access problems including radar lock and key on accessible routes.

AP: Volunteers needed to walk the Wheelock Rail Trail to assess all access points and take relevant pictures. This can then be referred back to SFG and Craig and decisions made how to take forward.

Volunteers: Graham Whitehouse (GW) and JJ.

7i. Fundraising: GW volunteered

8 Committee Members:

- Trevor Boxer [chairman]
- Greg Cooper [treasurer and Ramblers liaison]
- Janet Jepson [secretary]
- Carolyn Lowe [publicity and SCWG liaison]
- Dave Peever [Waymarking etc]
- Phil Wyatt [planning and Named Person]
- Keith Haines [planning]
- Kevin Dean [website]
- Dick Macaulay [SWWG, Sandbach today and other liaison]
- Graham Whitehouse [fundraising and accessibility]

9. AOB:

CL mentioned The Sandbach Conservation Area Working Group (SCWG) and asked if anyone from SFG wanted to volunteer to be the representative? CL volunteered as she is already on the working party.

10. Next meeting: 18th January 2016 at 7pm.

Venue to be confirmed.

AGM to be arranged at a later date.

To be signed, when agreed at the next meeting.

Trevor Boxer, chairman

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